



Your 6-step donor acquisition plan

A practical roadmap for smarter charity growth

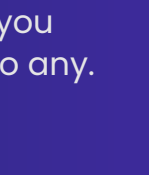
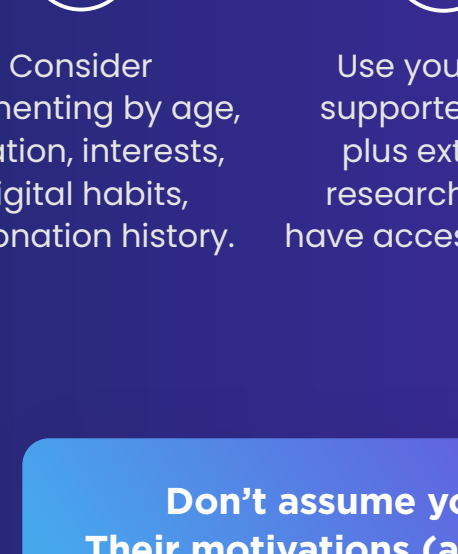


STEP

1

Define your audience

Who are you trying to reach, and why?
Build detailed donor personas based on real data.



Be specific:
"women aged 25–40 in London who care about climate change" is better than "general public."



Consider segmenting by age, location, interests, digital habits, or donation history.



Use your own supporter data, plus external research if you have access to any.



Segment first-time givers, regular givers, lapsed donors, and high-value prospects.



Ask: "Who are they? Why would they give? Where will you reach them?"

Don't assume younger donors act like older ones. Their motivations (and channels) are likely to be different.

STEP

2

Set clear goals

Are you aiming for volume, value, or reactivation?
Tie your goals to tangible outcomes.

Avoid vague goals like:

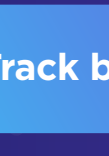
Get more donors

Break goals down by:

Campaign

Channel

Audience



Decide what matters most:
Volume: grow your supporter base
Value: target fewer but higher-value donors
Reactivation: win back lapsed supporters



Make goals measurable and time-bound.
Example: "Acquire 500 new donors in three months, each with a lifetime value (LTV) of £50+."

Track both short-term wins and long-term value.

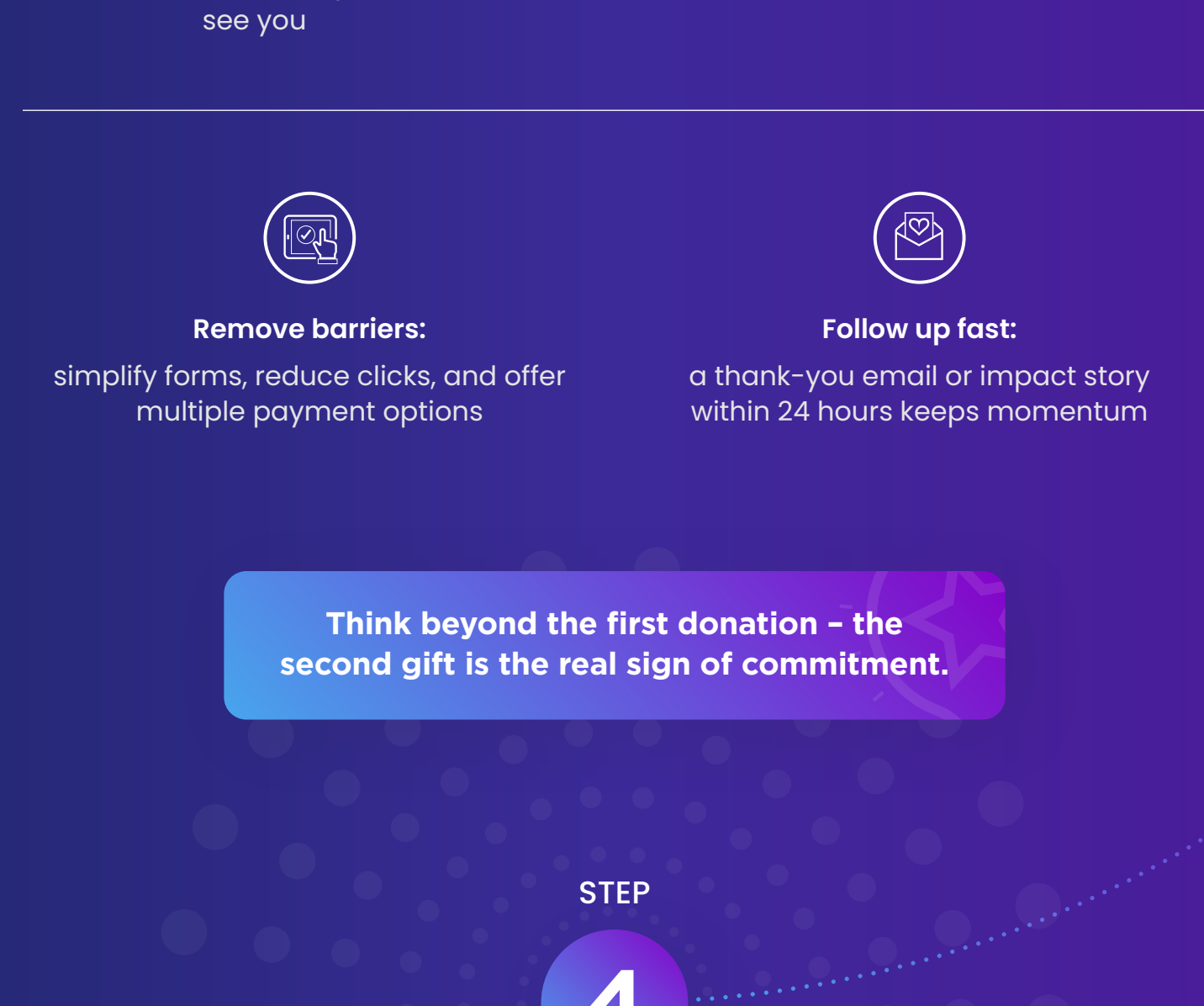
STEP

3

Map your journey

Plan the full journey, from first impression to second donation.
Make sure each step is joined up across channels.

Plot the stages:



Remove barriers:
simplify forms, reduce clicks, and offer multiple payment options



Follow up fast:
a thank-you email or impact story within 24 hours keeps momentum

Think beyond the first donation - the second gift is the real sign of commitment.

STEP

4

Pick the right channels

Omni-channel doesn't mean spreading yourself thin across every channel. Choose your key channels and do them well before scaling.

Avoid the temptation to try to be everywhere at once.
Focus on where your audience is active. Consider:



Email:
cost-effective, personal, measurable



Social media:
visual storytelling, community building



Search and display ads:
reach new prospects, retarget lapsed ones



Events:
in-person or virtual, high engagement



Direct mail:
still powerful for older audiences

Start with two–three core channels. Prove results.
Scale once you have momentum.

Use consistent storytelling across channels. Donors should recognise you instantly.

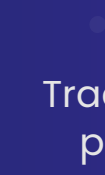
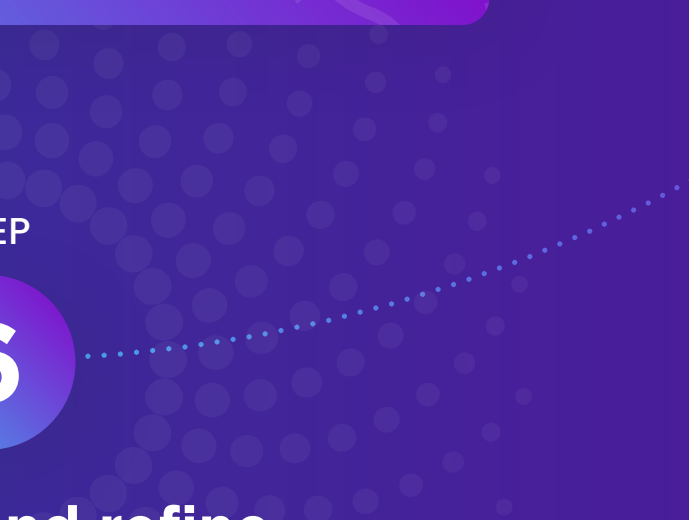
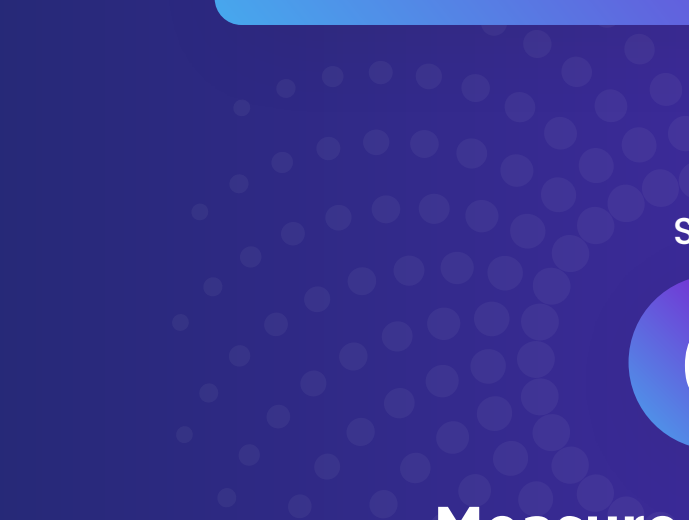
STEP

5

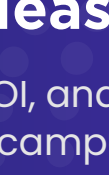
Test and optimise

Learn what works for each audience and adjust accordingly.

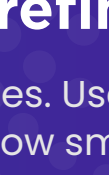
Never assume — always A/B test:



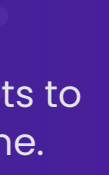
Headlines and subject lines



Images and videos



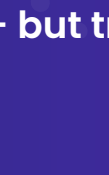
Donation asks (£5 vs £10 vs £20)



CTA buttons ("Donate now" vs "Make a difference today")



Test one variable at a time for clear results



Use small-scale tests before rolling out big campaigns



Document learnings so your team doesn't repeat mistakes

Even small tweaks, such as changing a subject line, can lift conversions by double digits.

STEP

6

Measure and refine

Track LTV, CPA, ROI, and retention rates. Use these insights to plan your next campaign – and grow smarter over time.

Numbers matter — but track the right ones:

LTV (Lifetime value):

total value each donor brings over time

Formula:

AVERAGE DONATION AMOUNT

×

AVERAGE NUMBER OF DONATIONS

×

AVERAGE RETENTION DURATION

CPA (Cost per acquisition)

how much you spend to secure one new donor

Formula:

TOTAL MARKETING SPEND

÷

NUMBER OF ACQUISITIONS

ROI:

return on investment across campaigns

Formula:

(LTV – CPA)

÷

CPA

×

100

Reactivation rate

% of lapsed donors you win back

Formula:

(REACTIVATED DONORS)

÷

TOTAL LAPSED DONORS)

×

100



Don't just measure activity — measure impact



Analyse results by channel, campaign, and audience segment



Feed insights back into planning to improve each cycle

Success isn't one campaign. It's a cycle of learning, refining, and growing smarter.



Download **Donor acquisition decoded: Fuelling growth with metrics, Martech, and the AI edge** to learn more about busting tech to grow your supporter base.

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