

NewsMatch

Lesson from NewsMatch

How to build a match

A **matching gift campaign** is one in which a funder (or group of funders) pledges to match the donations made by individuals.

For every dollar contributed by an individual supporter, a dollar is also given by the matching donor.

Matching gift campaigns are highly effective at incentivizing people to make their first contribution or even increase their support for your newsroom.

NewsMatch program manager spoke with newsrooms at the Membership Puzzle Project Summit on leveraging matching gift campaigns to power up your membership program on Aug. 2, 2021. [Click here](#) to view the slides from this presentation.



Your donation



plus
A matching gift



equals
Double the impact

About NewsMatch

NewsMatch is an initiative of the [Institute for Nonprofit News \(INN\)](#).

It is a **collective fundraising campaign** that leverages the support of matching gifts to build a groundswell of individual support INN's network of nonprofit newsrooms. NewsMatch's long-term vision is to ensure relevant and reliable news for every community across the U.S. by strengthening the financial sustainability of nonprofit news outlets that serve them.

Since 2016, INN members have raised more than \$150 million from 2.3 million individual donors during the NewsMatch matching-gift campaign. This initiative is one of the most ambitious collaborative fundraising campaigns in journalism, raising more than \$21 million in pooled matching funds from 17 national and more than 300 local funders.

Learn more at inn.org.

Types of matching gifts you can offer

- ▶ **Dollar-for-dollar match:** Every dollar given by a reader is matched dollar-for-dollar by your matching funder. This means their gift of \$25 turns into \$50 for your organization.
- ▶ **Match with a contribution to another cause:** Every dollar given by a reader unlocks funds to support another cause or issue sponsored by a funder or corporation. For example, each \$10 membership unlocks 10 meals for families in need.
- ▶ **Match donations with a sponsored perk:** For organizations that have strong relationships with corporate sponsors, consider matching donations with a perk. In the [example of the Daily Maverick](#) in South Africa, a gift of R150 or more per month unlocked R100 in UBER vouchers.

The match donor cycle

Building a matching fund takes time. But if you are used to cultivating philanthropic donors or sponsors, you can build off those practices to secure matching gifts to support your organization. Here's a summarized version of the steps to follow.



Identify

Search for prospects and identify which have the ability and motivation to support your mission

- ✓ **Set your match goal.** How much would you like to raise in matching funds?
 - Consider pooling gifts from multiple donors to build your fund
- ✓ **Build your list.** Which donors, sponsors, or supporters can help you reach this goal?
 - Matching gifts can come from all types of supporters, including major donors, foundations, businesses, board members, founders, or publishers that would like to challenge readers to support your work.
- ✓ **Do some research.** Which supporters have already supporter your cause or one similar to the work you do? How much might they be willing to give?
- ✓ **Prioritize your prospects.** Which prospects are most likely to support you with the largest gifts? Which will you approach first?

- Start by prioritizing those donors you already have a relationship with. Then move to those that have the potential to make the most significant gift because they generally take the longest to cultivate.

Cultivate

Deepen your relationship by learning more about your prospects and building a connection

- ✓ **Learn their interests.** What is their interest in your work? And what are their internal priorities and goals?
 - Schedule a time to meet with their team to learn more about their interest in your work.
 - Why does our journalism (or cause we impact) matter to you? Why now, in particular?
 - What are you most curious to learn about our work?
 - What do you feel is the most important impact of our journalism (or a topic we cover)?
 - In what ways would you like to be involved with us?
 - Would you ever consider supporting our work with a matching gift?
 - [Example: Here is a template of a letter we've provided to newsrooms that participate in NewsMatch.](#)
- ✓ **Evaluate where there is alignment.** Where is the most significant alignment between your needs and their interests? What are you willing to offer in return for their matching gift? Which donors are better suited for a different offer?
 - Cultivation is all about relationship building —which takes time.

Ask

Offer a specific opportunity for a donor to contribute matching funds and make an impact

- ✓ **Share your proposal.** How much would you like them to contribute in matching dollars? And by when? By doing so, what impact will their gift have on the things they care most about?
 - Believe it or not, you should spend the least of your time asking for support. It's recommended by the time you ask, you have learned enough about the donor to have a good sense that the answer will be "yes."
 - **Script:** *We're currently operating on an ambitious campaign to raise <amount> that would power our ability to <insert intended impact here>. By offering a matching gift, <funder name's> contribution would be a catalyst to inspire more donors to support this work. Will you join us by pledging a matching gift of <amount> by <suggested deadline>?*

Steward

Show appreciation by saying *thanks* and demonstrating how their gift made a difference

- ✓ **Acknowledge.** How would you like to show appreciation for their contribution as soon as they make the gift? And during the campaign itself?
- ✓ **Tell the story of their impact.** How did their gift make an impact during your campaign? What type of work did their investment help you to achieve?
 - Be sure to tie your story of impact to what you learned during the cultivation phase about what they care most about.
- ✓ **Stay connected.** How can you continue to build a relationship with this supporter? What other things might they be interested in supporting in the future?