



# MULTIPLY 417

**Passion: The Bridge between People and Purpose**

## **Weekly Tip February 9, 2026**

Dear Ministry Leader,

Despite so many continual changes and new technologies popping up every day, there is still a need to stay grounded on some of the existing communication platforms "most" still use in some form or fashion. Regardless of your particular generation or culture, email is still a widely used tool by many, including the preponderance of most of your donors/partners.

With that assumption (I think it is a fact, but it's okay if you just want to view as an assumption) here are 5 suggested concepts you need to consider and possibly adjust your systems and practices to include.

### 1. AI-powered personalization becomes table stakes

Gone are the days when "Dear [First Name]" felt personal. In 2026, donors will expect emails that reflect their giving history, interests, and engagement patterns. Organizations that leverage AI to craft genuinely individualized messages — not just mail-merged templates — will see dramatically higher response rates. The nonprofits still sending one-size-fits-all appeals will struggle to cut through.

### 2. SMS and email integration deepens

The line between email and SMS continues to blur. Expect to see more sophisticated multi-channel journeys where a text message reinforces an email appeal, or a quick SMS thank-you follows an online gift. Nonprofits that treat these channels as a unified conversation — rather than separate silos — will build stronger donor relationships.

### 3. Inbox competition intensifies (especially at year-end)

With more organizations investing in digital fundraising post-pandemic, donor inboxes are crowded. In 2026, standing out requires more than a clever subject line. Think: unexpected send times, interactive email elements,

#### 4. Privacy-first strategies reshape segmentation

As email platforms continue tightening privacy protections and open rate tracking becomes less reliable, nonprofits will shift toward engagement metrics that matter — clicks, conversions, and replies. Smart organizations are already building first-party data strategies and asking donors directly about their preferences.

#### 5. Gratitude becomes a year-round practice\*\*

The most successful nonprofits in 2026 won't save their thank-yous for December. Expect to see a rise in "stewardship-first" email strategies — regular impact updates, surprise appreciation messages, and donor milestone celebrations that keep supporters engaged between asks.

\*\* Pointer #5 above actually blows me away. To think that anybody in the fundraising/development world needs to be reminded about timely thank you receipts and letters is mind boggling. Repeat after me...48 HOURS. Again...48 HOURS!!

Passionately,

Rick

P.S. Not sure? I get it. Let me encourage you to call one or two of my clients. Brad Bills from Hosea Youth Services at (541) 301-8553, Ron Riemersma from Badgerland Youth for Christ at (920) 251-5217, Stacy Young from Noble Warriors at (804) 347-7593.

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