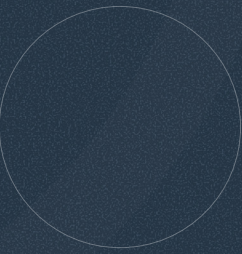




betterworld

Out of office.
Not out of donors:
The nonprofit fundraiser's roadmap.



The onset of summer often prompts a widespread operational pause across the nonprofit landscape. With teams shifting to summer hours and traditional campaigns deferred until the fall, organizations frequently give into a familiar sector narrative. This narrative assumes that June through August represents an inevitable period when supporters completely disengage and communication efforts yield no return.

This guide serves as a practical, actionable roadmap for staying visible, engaged, and funded during the quiet season. By shifting focus from financial pressure to gratitude, interactive mobile engagement, and automated impact reporting, organizations can transform the summer slump into a strategic runway.

When using a friction-free tool like the BetterWorld fundraising suite, executing this high-impact roadmap requires zero platform overhead and minimal staff time, leaving teams with a highly receptive donor pipeline primed for the year-end giving boom.





The data behind the summer slump.

When you look closely at the data, the summer slump is a predictable shift in donor behavior. By understanding exactly where the pipeline leaks, organizations can position themselves to capture attention while their peers go quiet.

Summer brings a steep decline in revenue.

On average, nonprofits historically collect less than 5% of their annual fundraising income during the months of July and August. This creates a severe operational imbalance, as organizations are forced to use cash reserves from the previous Q4 year-end giving surge to sustain three months of overhead and programming.

Data aggregated across major digital giving platforms reveals that overall donation volumes during June, July, and August drop by 18% compared to the baseline average of the rest of the year. This deficit represents a drop-off in both the number of individual gifts being processed and average gift size.

This drop isn't a sudden loss of affinity for the cause, but a shift in how donors are consuming digital media. As summer vacations, family travel, and outdoor activities ramp up, they are less likely to sit at a computer reading long-form appeal letters. As a result, traditional direct mail and text-heavy digital appeals see their lowest open and conversion rates of the entire calendar year.

When an organization sends a traditional, high-pressure financial ask to a donor who is mentally checked out on vacation, not only does it fail to convert, it risks alienating the donor and driving up unsubscribe rates.



Institutional distributions slow to a crawl in late summer.



The summer slowdown is not limited to individual donors, but extends to major institutions. For example, Fidelity Charitable consistently reports its lowest volume of donor-advised fund (DAF) grant recommendations during the month of August.

Because foundation board members, corporate social responsibility (CSR) directors, and high-net-worth wealth managers travel extensively during this window, review committees rarely meet. Grant cycles dry up, and corporate partnerships are pushed into the fall. This freeze means that nonprofits cannot rely on institutional capital to bridge the summer gap, making individual donor stewardship the best alternative.

While one-time donor acquisition and conversion metrics fluctuate wildly during the summer, recurring donor retention holds steady at 78% to 80% year-round. Monthly giving programs act as a financial anchor, providing predictable recurring revenue that shields nonprofits from the worst of the seasonal revenue drop.

According to the Gail Perry Group, 50% of recurring donors will make an additional one-time gift during the year if they are properly engaged with consistent, non-ask stewardship. Because these donors have already automated their baseline support, they do not suffer from ask fatigue. Using the quiet summer months to show sustainers the real-world impact of their loyalty primes them to step up when high-stakes fall and year-end campaigns are launched.

The retention solution: The 80% recurring anchor.





A tactical summer roadmap.

A successful summer strategy requires a deliberate shift from operational transactions to continuous relationship maintenance. This summer roadmap breaks down how to segment audiences and engage with them monthly without causing inbox fatigue.

Building an effective audience framework.

Before launching your summer communications, clean up your donor database and segment your lists, building a strategic communication pipeline designed to optimize donor behaviors (NIO Methodology).

1. Monthly (Sustainers)

Focus on exclusive impact reporting and show them exactly what their recurring gifts are building in real time.

2. Active (Recent givers)

Donors who have given within the last 12 months. Keep them warm with intentional, non-ask stewardship touchpoints.

3. Lapsed (Past givers)

Supporters who haven't given in 12–24 months. Use the casual nature of summer to re-engage them without heavy transactional pressure.

Three-month execution schedule.



June is the month to use to express gratitude for donor support. Before they check out for summer vacations, flood them with appreciation without asking for a single dollar.

Tactic 1: A three-part stewardship automation email sequence

Instead of manually emailing donors, set up a simple automated sequence triggered by any spring campaign gift.

Email 1 (Day 1 - Immediate): A receipt that reads like a thank you letter. Avoid clinical, cold invoices.

Email 2 (Day 7): Send a raw, 60-second smartphone video recorded by program staff on site. Highlight the immediate impact of a donor's gift.

Email 3 (Day 14): Ask for feedback or a non-monetary action. For example, sending a poll or survey to ask about what program updates they care to hear about most.

Tactic 2: Thank you call campaign

Dedicate one week in June for board members and staff to conduct stewardship-only phone calls.

If the donor answers, do not ask for money, event attendance, or volunteer time. Simply thank them for their support. Leaving a voicemail that explicitly states, "No need to call us back, we just wanted to say thank you," has one of the highest positive brand-association scores in donor psychology.



July requires low-barrier, highly engaging activities. Since attention spans are short and donors are on mobile devices at the beach or park, tactics must be hyper-visual and friction-free.

Tactic 1: Summer impact sweepstakes

Instead of a traditional donation appeal, run a casual summer raffle or giveaway. This allows donors to win something while still supporting a cause.

Setup: Partner with a local business to secure a summer-themed prize, like a weekend getaway, a local dining package, or outdoor gear.

Ask: Promote a low-dollar entry point.

Channel: Push heavily via SMS/text messaging and social media stories. Keep the copy punchy.

Tactic 2: Mid-summer progress update

For nonprofits operating ongoing summer programs, track the progress and update donors as each milestone is met. Send a highly visual infographic or progress circle showing how much is needed to meet that mid-summer goal. This creates a subtle psychological incentive for supporters to help the organization cross the finish line, eliminating the need for a heavy, high-pressure campaign appeal.



August is about capturing early momentum. While other nonprofits are scrambling to design their fall galas from scratch, use August to quietly secure early commitments.

Tactic 1: Late-summer virtual auction

Run a highly curated, online-only auction over a four-day weekend in late August.

Theme: Focus on “Back to School,” “Fall Prep,” or items that offer a unique experience.

Strategy: Use a lapsed donor segment as the target audience. Frame the auction as a fun, transactional way to re-engage with the mission before the busy fall season starts.

Workflow: Send a direct mail postcard with a prominent QR code leading directly to the mobile bidding page.

Tactic 2: Mid-summer progress update

Before launching your massive public fall campaigns, empower internal supporters, like board members, core volunteers, and staff to run mini-campaigns.

Equip each board member with a personalized, pre-built fundraising page. Ask each board member to reach out to five close friends or colleagues before September 1st. This ensures that when fundraising campaigns launch in September, they are already 15% to 20% funded, creating immediate social proof that inspires public trust.

Leveraging BetterWorld to solve the summer slump.

Executing an elite summer roadmap shouldn't break your budget or overwhelm a lean team. BetterWorld provides an all-in-one, completely free fundraising suite designed to maximize donor conversion while completely eliminating operational friction.

- **Zero platform fees**

BetterWorld has no monthly fees, setup fees, or licensing costs. It is supported by 100% optional donor contributions, and 95%+ of donors choose to cover the baseline credit card processing fees. Every single dollar raised during the slow season stays with the mission.

- **30%+ more funds raised**

BetterWorld's mobile-first, friction-free donation flows feature built-in modern options like Apple Pay and Google Pay. By removing unnecessary checkout steps, organizations experience an immediate lift in donor conversion rates.

- **30+ hours saved per campaign**

Summer is when teams need to rest, strategize, and clean up data. BetterWorld automates donor receipts, outbid notifications, and instant invoicing, giving organizations time back to focus strictly on relationship maintenance.

BetterWorld has the ultimate summer toolkit.



Online & silent auctions

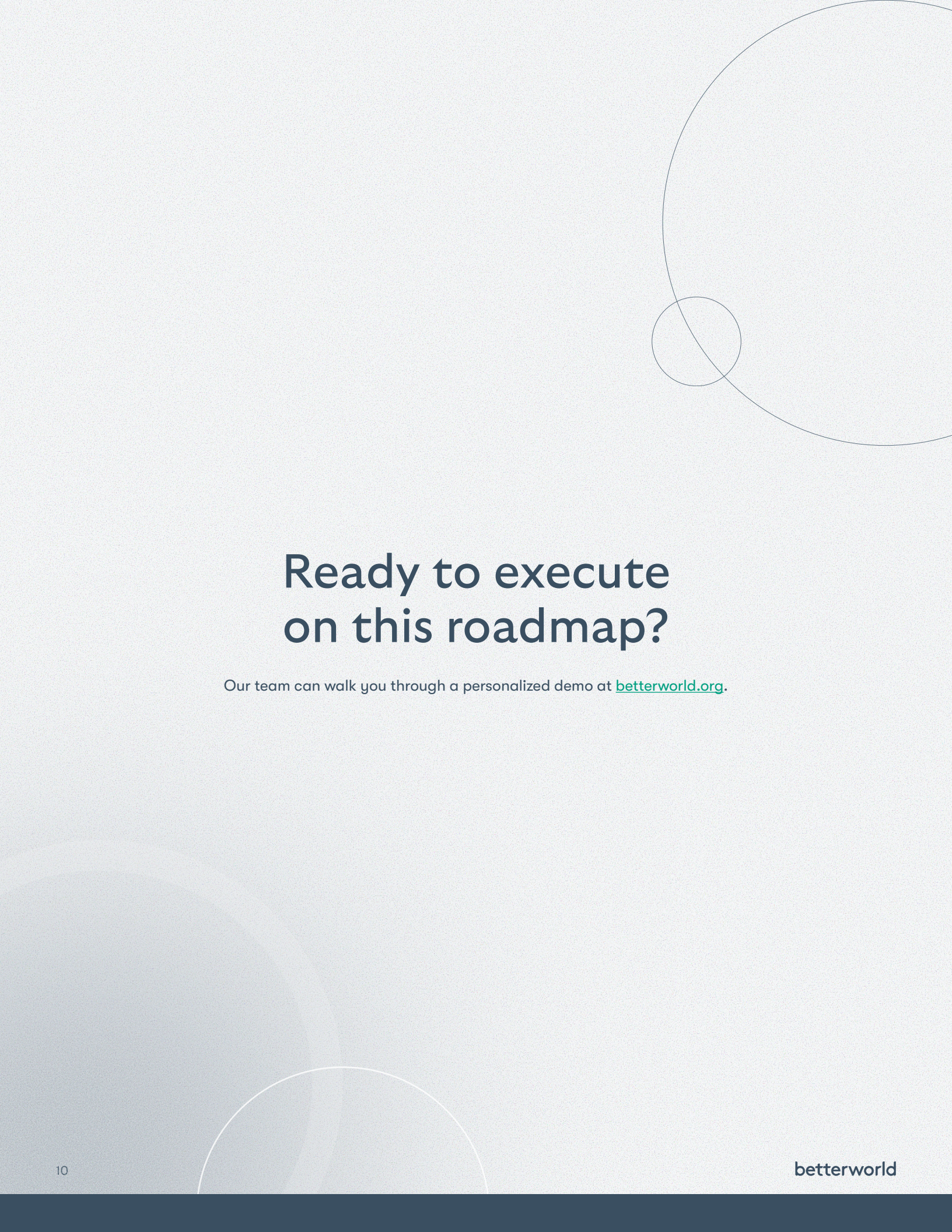
Set up real-time virtual auction in less than five minutes to keep summer audiences clicking and bidding from any device.

Raffles & giveaways

Run highly engaging summer raffles that offer an easy, low-cost entry point for small-to-mid-level supporters.

Peer-to-peer & crowdfunding

Empower your core champions and board members to tell stories and raise funds on behalf of the organization.



Ready to execute on this roadmap?

Our team can walk you through a personalized demo at betterworld.org.