

How Michigan Medicine Crushed Pipeline-Building Goals with Digital-Focused Campaigns



MICHIGAN MEDICINE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

&

DonorDrive®



📷 Photo by Joe Hallisy/Michigan Medicine



ABOUT MICHIGAN MEDICINE

Michigan Medicine is a nationally-ranked hospital and one of the largest research institutions in the country. For over 170 years, they've specialized in treating patients, conducting critical research, and educating future doctors to advance health through a mission of transforming healthcare through philanthropy.



What Michigan Medicine needed

Michigan Medicine saw the impact online crowdfunding and peer-to-peer fundraising could have and set out to build a digital fundraising program from the ground up. In their initial phase, they'd run three successful campaigns, begun to prove the value of digital fundraising, and created a dedicated team. But if they wanted to continue at this level of growth, they'd need a fundraising platform that was easy to use and could keep up with their expanding fundraising efforts.



How DonorDrive helped

As Michigan Medicine continued to grow at an incredible pace — exceeding fundraising and participation goals again and again — they quickly outgrew their cumbersome multi-technology platforms. DonorDrive helped them expand their fundraising experience with a scalable and easy-to-use platform, giving them the ability to quickly respond to the fundraising appetite of their supporters. Now with an innovative technology partner, Michigan Medicine could quickly launch new fundraising programs, taking their turnaround times from multiple weeks to hours.



The Results

Michigan Medicine not only significantly decreased campaign turnaround time, but today their team can focus on strategy and finding new growth opportunities rather than maintaining out-of-date and cumbersome systems. These efficiencies have improved supporter stewardship and acquisition, **increasing their total number of annual campaigns by 48% and total fundraising dollars by 18%.**



"WE NEEDED TO GET OUT OF A PLACE WHERE WE WERE FIXING THINGS WITH BAND-AIDS, AND INSTEAD GETTING THE TOOLS THAT DO THE WORK THAT WE NEED TO DO."

Kristen Kurtz

Director, Digital Fundraising
Michigan Medicine

The Challenge

Michigan Medicine is a highly-established institution, but they were continuing to execute their numerous amounts of campaigns on multiple systems and it was holding their fundraising growth back. Consistently setting up campaigns for others within their organization while using prior fundraising technologies that lacked sophisticated tools and failed to meet both their needs and supporter expectations was no longer acceptable.

Michigan Medicine knew to continue supporting their numerous fundraising efforts they would need to build a digital fundraising program from the ground up. They'd have to address challenges like:

- Proving to the larger University of Michigan that digital fundraising is a valuable annual revenue generator for the organization.
- Debunking the myth that digital fundraising is as simple as just setting up a fundraising page and seeing the money flow in.
- Marketing themselves to their community in a new way that goes beyond just crowdfunding.
- Building a pipeline of new and retained supporters, showcasing how easy it is to fundraise for causes those in the community were passionate about.
- Resolving poor reporting functionality that lacks the campaign metrics they need to show their impact.
- Finding a fundraising platform that could offer new tools and solutions to provide a better overall experience.



“You cannot just put up a crowdfunding site and hope that people will find it. We knew early on that our success was going to require more internally-driven efforts on our part meaning we’re putting together these campaigns, we’re launching them, we’re doing the marketing work, we’re going out and recruiting people to participate. Early on maybe 10% of our campaigns were requests from our supporters asking us to help them fundraise. Now things have shifted. The bulk of our work is externally-driven and servicing the community with those efforts.”

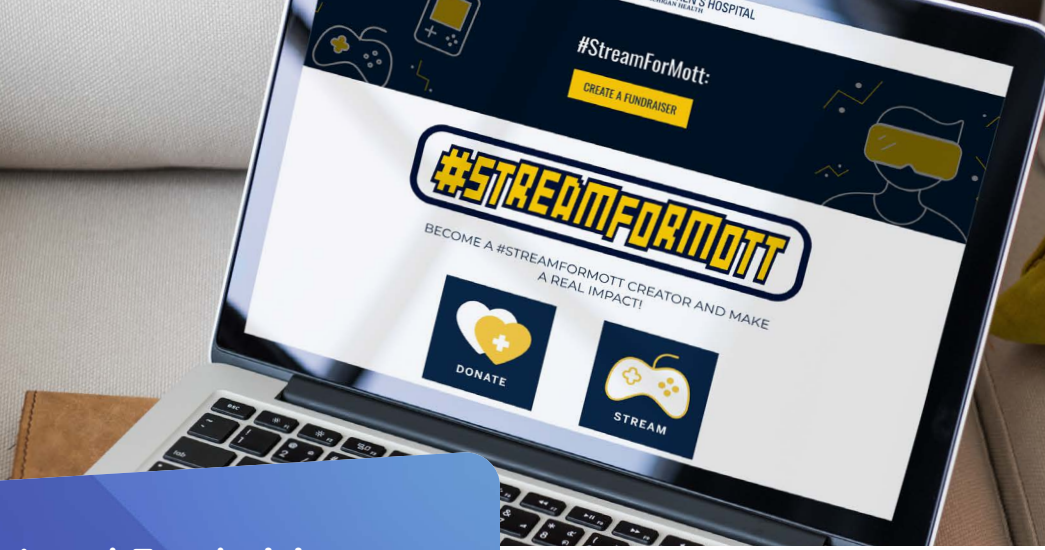
Kristen Kurtz
Director, Digital Fundraising
Michigan Medicine

The Solution

Proving Why Digital Fundraising Matters

If you build it, they will come... well, not necessarily. Crowdfunding is not the silver bullet of digital fundraising, and according to Michigan Medicine’s experience, there is a lot more that needs to happen than just building a page. The digital fundraising campaigns that do succeed are built on a strong foundation consisting of an appropriate cause, an engaging following, and significant marketing outreach. Every project that succeeds requires careful planning, time, and effort whether it’s being run by your organization or launched and executed by one of your supporters.

Historically, Michigan Medicine was focused on major donations, and heavily staffed with major gift officers. But having flexibility in the revenue stream has become crucial to their fundraising strategy and **“the pandemic especially has taught us that those donors, \$500 or less, can add up very, very quickly to large sums of money based on volumes. [Digital Fundraising] is casting a wider net and bringing in a different kind of donor. It just opens doors in ways that you can’t even imagine,”** says Kristen Kurtz, Director of Digital Fundraising for Michigan Medicine. Instead of focusing solely on the major donor, it was time to engage additional key audiences in new ways.



Next Level Fundraising

Michigan Medicine took its #StreamforMott Livestream fundraisers to the next level by partnering with corporate sponsor Dominos. As a long-standing supporter, Dominos donated gift cards to gamers as a thank you, but also used it as an opportunity to increase their network reach, giving each gamer the opportunity to engage with their own network and give away a gift card as an incentive. This partnership allowed for an expanded reach to millions through Livestream Fundraising, instead of a traditional in-person event which may have only reached a few hundred supporters.

Building a Pipeline of Supporters

The comprehensive approach Michigan Medicine took for its digital fundraising strategy has allowed them to empower its supporters from the start. They give their supporters the ability to spearhead their own fundraisers and efforts to support what they want, how they want, allowing a sense of ownership around a campaign. Creating a more deeply aligned approach builds a pipeline of engaged supporters that drives growth and retention among communities of grateful patients, corporate partners, employees, student groups, and even major donors.

From traditional peer-to-peer fundraising events like 5k walks to unique athletic partnerships with current students to finding fundraising opportunities within existing programs, Michigan Medicine is using every element of digital fundraising to allow its supporters to

fundraise how they want, supporting what they want. [U-M's football kicker](#), Jake "Money" Moody, launched a campaign that features a weekly sponsor who donated \$300 for every field goal he made during that particular game of the football season. [#StreamforMott allows content creators on Twitch and YouTube to](#) support patients who use therapeutic gaming for treatment at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital. Whatever the passion, Michigan Medicine has the tools to support the campaign.



"OUR CONSTITUENCY GROUPS EXPECT US TO HAVE THEIR CAMPAIGNS UP AND RUNNING FAST BECAUSE IT IS A DIGITAL CAMPAIGN. WE HAVE TO BUILD OFF THE EXCITEMENT AND MOMENTUM OF OUR SUPPORTERS AND GET SOMETHING UP IN 72 HOURS OR LESS."

Kristen Kurtz

Director, Digital Fundraising
Michigan Medicine

Finding an Innovative Fundraising Partner

With the number of campaigns quickly increasing, Michigan Medicine was also quickly outgrowing its previous cumbersome technology.

With DonorDrive, Michigan Medicine found a digital fundraising solution that could handle all their programs and create the fundraiser and donor experience they envisioned. With easy-to-use and scalable event templates, their internal team could create fundraising pages in just a few short hours — a significant improvement over their previous turnaround time of several weeks to even months.

They built a custom CRM integration through DonorDrive's open and continuously-maintained APIs, and their reporting went from inconsistent matching to becoming highly custom, giving the team exactly what they needed to finally show the valuable impact of their digital fundraising efforts.



"MICHIGAN MEDICINE HAS UNIQUE BRANDED INSTITUTIONS... [CONSTITUENTS] MIGHT NOT IDENTIFY WITH MICHIGAN MEDICINE, THEY MAY CONSIDER THEMSELVES TEAM MOTT CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OR TEAM ROGEL CANCER CENTER AND WANT TO DO THINGS THAT ARE SUPPORTING THEIR SPECIFIC PASSION. SO, DONORDRIVE HAS BEEN A GREAT TOOL IN HELPING US DO THAT. WE HAVE THE BIG MICHIGAN IDENTITY BUT CAN ALSO SERVE THE NEEDS OF OUR CONSTITUENCY GROUPS AND BUILD OUT TOOLS THAT ALLOW THEM TO FEEL LIKE THEY ARE SUPPORTING THE AREA OR HOSPITAL THEY WANT TO."

Kristen Kurtz
Director, Digital Fundraising
Michigan Medicine



The Results

Michigan Medicine was now in a place where they could invite more opportunities, and no longer limit their potential because of the technology and administrative time needed to set up. They saw incredible growth and efficiencies during their 2021-2022 fiscal year:



92 successful campaigns
a 48% increase



\$1.8+ million raised
an 18% increase



1,685 fundraisers
a 29% increase



10,600+ donors
a 6% increase



"DONORDRIVE TRULY TRANSFORMED WHAT WE WERE ABLE TO DO AND ALLOWED US TO PIVOT. IT'S THE SPEED AND EASE OF USE FOR HOW QUICKLY WE CAN LAUNCH... THAT IS THE THING THAT HAS CHANGED EVERYTHING FOR US."

Kristen Kurtz
Director, Digital Fundraising
Michigan Medicine

Michigan Medicine's Tips for Building a Successful Digital Fundraising Program

#1 INVEST IN THE RESOURCES

Continuing to keep tabs on your donor's behaviors has never been of more importance. As people continue to lean more and more into online behaviors, look to invest in the areas of growth that make sense for your institution. Whether that's creating a dedicated digital fundraising team or investing in a tool that lessens your administrative overhead to creating digital fundraising pages, **"Don't be scared to make the investment because [Digital Fundraising] is not going away... it's an area where the growth is just unmatched,"** says Kristen Kurtz, Director of Digital Fundraising at Michigan Medicine.

#2 INNOVATE YOUR IMPACT WITH TECHNOLOGY

Don't be intimidated by technology. Instead, embrace it as a partner who can help you achieve your fundraising goals. Entire donation campaigns can be run through a mobile device easily asking family, friends, and supporter networks to donate. Having the right tools that allow you to easily stand up these campaigns and make them accessible to your supporters will only increase your impact.

#3 MAKE IT EASY

Make giving as easy as possible for your donors. Keep the fundraising pages simple and concise. Provide your supporters with toolkits that make it easy to be ambassadors of your organization and allow them to create personal fundraising pages that connect them on a deeper level with your mission. Use a mobile-first, conversion-focused design and launch beautiful and secure campaigns and event pages.

#4 LEARN FROM YOUR DATA

Use a robust reporting tool to analyze data across your events and watch for trends. Track where your donors are coming from, how they are giving, and how they prefer to be communicated to after they've donated. Getting a comprehensive understanding of your supporters ensures you aren't wasting valuable organizational resources and money on things you don't need.



Ready to crush your digital fundraising goals?

Prioritize your digital fundraising strategies, boost stewardship and engagement, and level up your mission impact with the DonorDrive enterprise fundraising platform. Create meaningful supporter experiences with peer-to-peer fundraising events, tailored Donation Campaigns, native mobile app, Activity Tracking, and Livestream Fundraising.

≡ www.donordrive.com/healthcare ≡

DonorDrive®