

CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

UNCF



“The most important thing to our donors is the story. They want to know ‘Where are the students? What are they doing? How did the money that I sent help them?’”

—Denise Scott, UNCF National Director of Direct Response Programs

UNCF (United Negro College Fund) amplified its GivingTuesday fundraising as part of an orchestrated end-of-year campaign with increased emphasis on storytelling and captivating designs spotlighting UNCF’s student champions. The latest gains reflect the larger success UNCF has realized in online giving with the support of Blackbaud solutions and consultants.

UNCF continues to drive digital fundraising with Blackbaud solutions, expertise.

Founded in 1944 to help more African Americans attend and graduate from college, UNCF has embraced GivingTuesday since the annual day of giving began in November of 2012. Yet, after the first five years, the national nonprofit saw the potential to amplify its GivingTuesday efforts in collaboration with the Blackbaud Services consultants who help power UNCF national and local fundraising throughout the year.

“We have really upped our game,” said UNCF National Director of Direct Response Programs Denise Scott in explaining significant subsequent increases in GivingTuesday and overall digital fundraising revenue over the next four years. “The approach is much more sophisticated, much more organized and coordinated.”

UNCF is powered by:

Blackbaud Luminate Online®

Blackbaud Digital Marketing Services

Blackbaud TeamRaiser®

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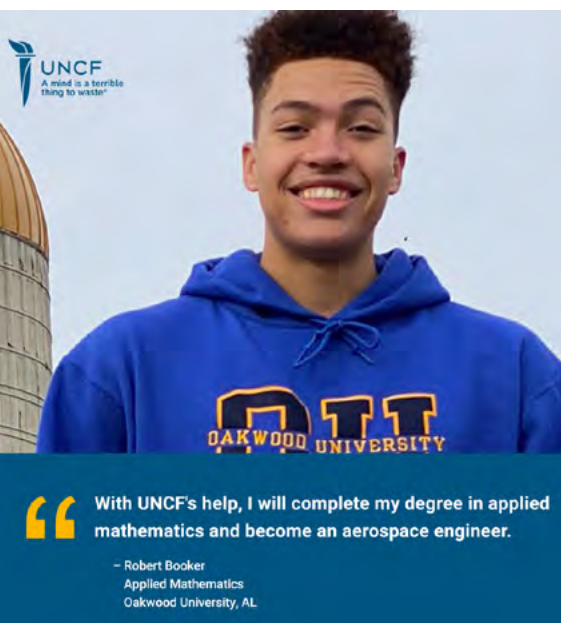
Cohesive Storytelling in End-of-Year Campaigns

Scott had applied effective storytelling through the years in UNCF's direct mail campaigns, so she was receptive when the Blackbaud Digital Marketing Services team encouraged a greater emphasis on cohesive storytelling in UNCF digital campaigns, which are powered by Blackbaud Luminate Online, the cloud-based solution for nonprofit online fundraising, marketing automation, and engagement.

They started the strategic shift in 2017 with UNCF's end-of-year online fundraising, which incorporates GivingTuesday as a critical component in a series of emails and supporting digital elements that also seeks to mobilize UNCF supporters on social media.

“They are Olympians—I'm telling you. I truly appreciate Blackbaud Digital Marketing Services and the work they do for us. They really help make us look good.”

—Denise Scott, UNCF National Director of Direct Response Programs



UNCF's GivingTuesday strategy focuses on telling stories of students, like this future aerospace engineer.



With the support of Blackbaud and a strategy built on storytelling, UNCF was prepared to meet the moment as 2020 unfolded and GivingTuesday online fundraising totals jumped 300%.

“The most important thing to our donors is the story,” Scott said. “They want to know ‘Where are the students? What are they doing? How did the money that I sent help them?’”

With the benefit of a Blackbaud creative consultant who specializes in digital strategy and design, that message “just jumps right off the page into a person’s heart,” Scott said.

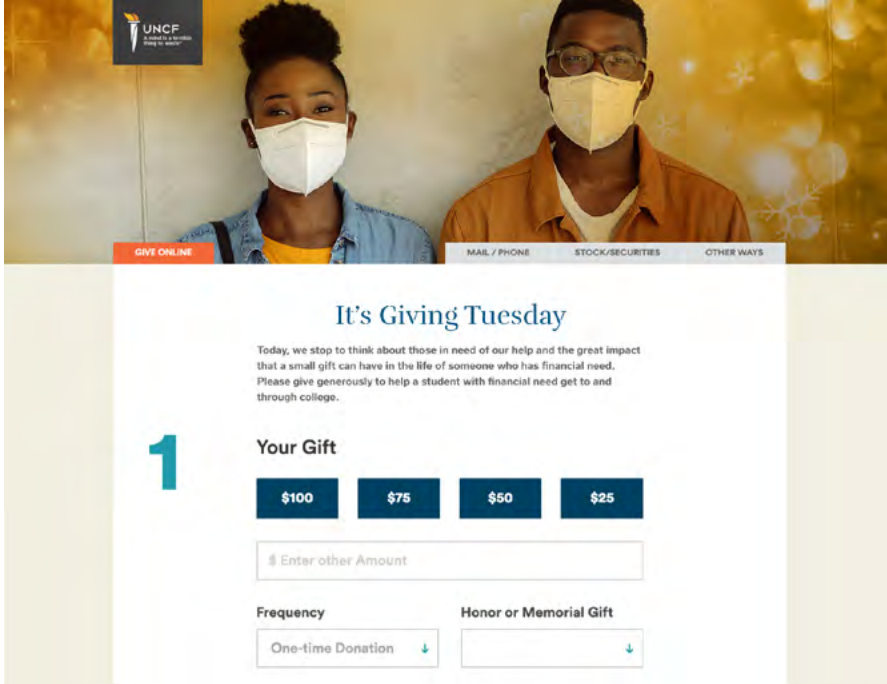
“We are using all of the elements that we know will make a donor or a friend or a supporter open up the email to look at it,” she continued. “We have the quotes, we have the pictures of our talented students, we have the great design layout and great colors, we have the message that is perfect, and we have the links that go directly to the donate page.”

With the added creative consultant and new strategies in place, UNCF's digital fundraising revenue on GivingTuesday increased by 7% in three years, and end-of-year online giving increased by 12%. And when the subsequent events of 2020 unfolded, UNCF was prepared to meet the moment. As COVID-19 heightened challenges faced by African American and other minority students and the social justice movement took hold on a national scale, UNCF saw GivingTuesday online fundraising totals jump up by an astounding 300% and end-of-year giving increase 86%.

Collaboration with a Trusted Partner

UNCF's success with Blackbaud solutions and services predates this latest set of strategic changes by many years. In 2006, UNCF had adopted Luminate Online to develop a stronger online presence and began seeing immediate results—tripling online giving in one year.

During the next decade, UNCF raised \$17 million online while honing the organization's digital strategy in collaboration with Blackbaud Digital Marketing Services. “Over the years, our relationship with Blackbaud has evolved, matured, and is producing great fruit,” Scott said.



She meets weekly with a team from Blackbaud, including the specialist in digital strategy and design who makes UNCF’s digital messaging “pop.” In addition to assisting UNCF on the national level with major initiatives, Blackbaud Digital Marketing Services and Blackbaud Luminate Online support UNCF’s 25 local area offices through a busy calendar year.

When the pandemic hit, the Blackbaud team helped shift even more of UNCF’s fundraising efforts online while supporting modifications to allow events—such as UNCF’s National Walk for Education, which supports Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)—to continue virtually. “Our national virtual walk was over 100 percent more successful than the year before. It was stunning.” Likewise, the Blackbaud team facilitated events that quickly came together around the issues of the day—including an April 2020 online party with Instagram’s Club Quarantine celebrity DJ, D-Nice, that directed over \$200,000 in donations to UNCF to support HBCUs and their students.

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Engage your audience and amplify your voice.

[Learn more](#)

KEEPING UNCF TOP OF MIND FROM GIVINGTUESDAY THROUGH YEAR’S END

A closer look at UNCF’s online giving strategy backed by Blackbaud solutions and services.

- ✓ Supporters receive a 10 a.m. GivingTuesday email with UNCF president’s call to action.
- ✓ A 4 p.m. “Re:” email from the president points supporters back to the earlier message evoking even greater response.
- ✓ UNCF tailors emails to different groups.
- ✓ A large set of students and parents are not solicited but asked to engage others through social media.
- ✓ As they are thanked, donors are also pointed to a hub of ready-to-share social media resources.
- ✓ Supporters are encouraged to share UNCF holiday cards and other e-cards as well.
- ✓ GivingTuesday outreach is a focal point in end-of-year campaign. Emails are also sent on Thanksgiving Day, Cyber Monday, mid-December, Christmas Day, and the last three days of the year.

About Blackbaud

Leading uniquely at the intersection point of technology and social good, Blackbaud connects and empowers organizations to increase their impact through cloud software, services, expertise, and data intelligence. We serve the entire social good community, which includes nonprofits, foundations, companies, education institutions, healthcare organizations, and the individual change agents who support them.