




Launch Your **CHARITABLE GIFT GUIDE:**

*Grow donations and offer
a unique way for donors to
give to your cause*



You may have seen gift guides from other charitable organizations and wondered if and how they could work for your cause.

If so, this e-book is perfect for you. In this guide you will learn how your organization can benefit from a gift guide, how to quickly and easily launch one, and how to make sure it's successful. And, to make it even more tangible, the Mercy Ships Gift Catalogue is provided as an example.

Content

- ① *Why do a gift guide?*
- ② *Will it work for my organization?*
- ③ *How to create a gift guide*
- ④ *How to promote my gift guide*

Why do a gift guide?

We all love giving or receiving gifts, and the most memorable gifts are the ones that are meaningful and unique. A charitable gift is a great option to offer your donors around various holidays like Mother's Day and Valentine's Day, or all year-round for special occasions such as birthdays and weddings.

Not surprisingly, the time of year when you might see the best success with a charitable gift guide is the holiday season. Canadian consumers spend on average \$400-\$500 on holiday gifts each year and increasingly they're choosing the convenience of online shopping. So, why not offer your donors a more impactful way to spend that money and boost your donations in the process?

When it comes to charitable giving, donors are increasingly educated and motivated to give when they know the tangible impact of their donation. We've all seen the gift guide campaigns such as buying a bed net, a goat for a family, or a water well for a village. They are memorable and offer donors a very clear understanding of where their money is going. A charitable gift guide is also a great way to offer your donors a variety of ways to give to suit their budget and interests. In short, they really work.

Last but not least, a gift guide is a simple way to help your donors better understand what it is your organization does and the impact you're having in the community, nationally or globally. It's a simple and effective way to increase your donations without asking people to spend more money than they would if they were buying another gift.

Don't just take our word for it. Here's what Canadians think:



59%

of Canadians prefer to
receive a charitable gift
over a traditional gift



73%

of Canadians like the
convenience of buying
gifts online



26%

of the gifts that
Canadians give during
the holidays are
purchased at the last
minute or within a day
of giving the gift



65%

of donors say they are
likely to increase their
total annual donations
if they knew the impact
their specific gift will
make

(Source: Ipsos Reid, December 2015 and CanadaHelps Donor Survey, April 2016)

Will it work for my charitable organization?

A gift guide is a simple and effective way for charitable organizations of all types and sizes to boost donations and to better connect with their donors. Whether you're a well-known global organization or a small, local charity, the key to success is in how you package and launch it. You know there are people out there who care about your cause and would love to support it without going deeper into their pockets. All you have to do is to provide them with an easy, impactful solution.

Mercy Ships Canada is an inspiring example of a successful charitable gift guide. It incorporates beautiful photography, gifts in a wide range of price points, and a clear understanding of each gift's impact. The Mercy Ships Gift Catalogue was created using CanadaHelps Customizable Donation Forms and includes gifts that range from \$10 bandages to \$550 orthopedic surgery.



"CanadaHelps' Customizable Donation Forms was the perfect solution for us when creating our Gift Catalogue. CanadaHelps allowed the flexibility to create multiple donation forms which correspond to each one of our unique gifts. Our Gift Catalogue has been in market for over a year now, and we have seen a great response from our supporters" — *Colleen Bronson, Mercy Ships*

How to create a gift guide

Does a gift guide seem like a great idea but also an overwhelming project? Don't worry. With a little bit of planning and support from CanadaHelps, you too can be on your way to launching an amazing gift guide for your charity. Follow these three steps to get started.

① Plan Your Gifts

First, you have to decide what selection of gifts makes sense for your organization and make sure you offer varying price points for every budget. Your gifts should be virtual but their impact tangible. Meaning, the gift is a monetary donation—nothing physical is actually sent to the donor—but its impact is clearly identified. For example, a \$25 donation to buy school books for one child or \$500 to buy a water purifying kit that will provide clean water to a family for three years. An ideal gift is something you can represent symbolically with an image, whether a photograph or illustrative icon. Remember when planning your gifts, this is a perfect opportunity to really showcase the type of work your organization does. The gifts should represent the impact you have as an organization.

② Design a Landing Page

The landing page is a page you design and make available on your website, that's accessible from your main navigation year-round, and that you direct your supporters to when promoting your Gift Guide socially or via email. The landing page is your opportunity to showcase your gift options in a visual and enticing way. Use high-quality images, simple but impactful names, and include a strong 'Buy Gift' call to action. When donors land on your gift guide page, they should be able to quickly understand the gift options, their impact and how to purchase them.

③ Create a Customizable Donation Form for Each Gift

CanadaHelps offers simple, cost-effective, and reliable Customizable Donations Forms which can be used for each of your gifts. You can decide to link to or embed the donation form on your website for a seamless transaction experience where donors never leave your site. You can create as many donation forms as you need and optimize them for different campaigns (or gifts). Creating a form is easy and takes just a few minutes. For best results, take advantage of the extensive branding and feature customization options when creating your pages. Other best practices to keep in mind:

- Create a consistent look and feel for your Gift Guide reflective of your brand and campaign. Choose the same colour options for the page background, title text, title bar background and buttons for each gift.
- Make it clear to your supporter that they are purchasing the correct gift. Use the gift image from your main Gift Guide landing page on the top of the Customizable Donation Form for the corresponding gift. Ensure your introductory page description copy is about the gift, set the gift amount, and gift impact statement.
- Delight your buyers by customizing the free eCard and the thank you email. Buyers will have the ability to send a free eCard to announce the gift. Enhance the experience for both the buyer and gift recipient, taking a few moments to add one or more custom eCard images that reflect the gift. Then, go one step further, customizing the Thank-You email instantly sent to the buyer with their charitable tax receipt.

By following these steps, you will have created an enjoyable buyer experience that will help maximize your donations. Donors come to your landing page, view all the gifts, select to purchase the gift of their choosing and complete the donation form. Afterwards, they receive a thank you email with their charitable tax receipt automatically branded for your charity, and the gift recipient receives a customized eCard if that's an option you provided.

How to promote my gift guide

Now that you've created a spectacular gift guide, it's time to get the word out and attract buyers. Social media and email are the perfect ways to promote your gift catalogue. Here are some tips to help you get the most out of your gift guide marketing efforts and maximize results.



Images and videos

will help you to visually communicate the benefits of your gift. There's nothing better than a great photo or well-made video to really connect donors to your cause.



Consider keeping your gift guide up on your website **all year-round** as an option for birthday or wedding gifts. Around various holidays, you can redesign your gift guide to suit the season—such as a Christmas or Mother's Day gift catalogue.



Is there an **interesting angle** you can use to create added appeal? In the example of Mercy Ships, they used stunning photography and provided an option to purchase prints as part of the gift to increase engagement with their catalogue.



Use **dedicated emails** to promote the gift guide to your donor base at different times of the year. Leading up to the holiday season, you can send out a few emails with different subject lines. It's also a good idea to send one last email a few days before Christmas, targeting those last-minute shoppers. And, don't be afraid to resend the same email with a different subject line to those supporters who didn't open it the first time.



There are infinite ways in which you can promote your gift guide on **social media**. Each individual gift can make for great social content. You can even write a blog post with the story behind each gift and include a call to action linking to that gift in the catalogue. Showcase each gift on a regular basis leading up to holidays or during your month(s) of giving. You may even consider sponsoring some posts around these crucial times to reach a wider audience.



With a little bit of creativity, the **same gift can be repurposed** throughout the year with little effort. Change up the messaging, images or quotes to suit the occasion, or share a quote from a buyer or gift recipient about the joy of the gift. After all, it's never a bad time to give back to a great cause — you just have to help your donors see the link between your gifts and what they're looking for.

Feeling inspired and ready to get started on your charitable gift guide? Visit CanadaHelps.org/Charities to open your free account today and start building your Customizable Donation Forms.



**Did you benefit from
this resource?**



Learn more about CanadaHelps and our fundraising solutions for charities [here](#).

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