Development Terminology Overview

Updated Jul 19, 2021

As of July 12, 2021, this "Learn Veracross" site has been deprecated. It will remain live at least through October 1, 2021, but will no longer be updated. All knowledge content has moved to the new Veracross Community. Please update your bookmarks.

Here is the new version of this article in the Veracross Community.

Overview

Several key components exist in Veracross Development that are the foundation for a successful development cycle each year. For a detailed overview of how to use the development homepage to help throughout cycle, see the documentation on the Development homepage.

Campaigns, Funds & Events

At most organizations there are three primary means of arranging development activities; these are: funds, campaigns and events. In broad terms, a campaign and an event identify how a donation/pledge came in to an organization while a fund identifies where that money will go in the organization. Each campaign can be associated with multiple funds, and within a particular campaign, there are likely several events that happen to raise money for that campaign. Events could be something that a donor physically attends, such as an auction, banquet or a gala. However, events can also be used to indicate that communication or any other interaction between the development office and a donor has happened, such as a phone-a-thon. Learn more about these here.

Giving History

Giving History records are giving summaries that are specific to a donor (household or organization) and campaign. On each giving history record, information can be found for the donor's campaign giving, classifications and giving history. Target amounts can be assigned for each giving history in order to track giving against a goal per campaign as well as the tracking of communication and giving status. Learn more about Giving History records.

Development Classifications

Development Classifications on the giving history are used for reporting and grouping and are dynamically assigned by the system based on Development Roles, Donor Giving Categories, historical giving, and more. These are all attributes of one or more members within the household or the organization and are always campaign specific, meaning classifications can change for a household or organization each year. Learn more about Development Classifications.

Development Roles

It is common practice to create giving and participation reports based on roles; however, many donors have multiple roles and sometimes roles are defined differently in Development than they are in the rest of the school. Sometimes these reports should include donors in each role they have and other times it needs to reflect a hierarchy of roles to avoid double counting gifts. For example, if a donor is both a parent and a board member, the development office needs to decide "should this person get credit for donating as a parent? or did they give the gift as a board member?" – essentially, "which role, when creating a report, do you want to see the money counted towards?" Learn more about Development Roles.

Donors and Donor Giving Categories

A Donor is any person who has given a gift — a gift being any sort of monetary gift to the school (donation, pledge, soft credit, etc.). Donor Giving Categories can be defined to group donors into certain giving levels based on giving, usually over a given period of time. For example, donors who donated between $100 and $250 to the school's current Annual Fund campaign might be considered "Bronze Givers". The Donor Giving Category is a designation that can be automatically calculated by Veracross based on gifts entered and custom defined giving categories. Giving Categories can be defined for a set period of time (e.g. Annual Fund campaigns) or all time. Learn more about Donor Giving Categories.

Solicitation

Solicitation refers to the process of organizing and asking school constituents for money for a particular campaign. Solicitation can manifest itself in different ways, e.g. phoneathon, mailing, direct meeting, etc. However, constituents will typically only be solicited in one group, even though they may belong to many groups (e.g. a faculty member who is also a parent will be solicited only as a faculty member).

Solicitation Groups

In Veracross, solicitation groups can be created by the school to organize their solicitation. This is helpful when soliciting the various groups of constituents like Trustees, New Parents, Parents by

Grade Level, Alumni by Graduation Year, etc. Each solicitation group can be used to track giving percentage and view performance against the target amounts set for the constituent group. Solicitation groups are set on each household's Giving History record. Assignment of solicitation group membership is done manually each year. Learn more about Solicitation Groups.

Prospects

Prospects are potential donors identified by the school who could give significant amounts, and so should be handled differently than donors in a solicitation group. They receive personalized attention from the school, in particular by a solicitation manager. The potential giving threshold of a prospect will vary considerably from school to school; at one, a donor who could give $2,500 might be flagged as a prospect and be assigned a manger, whereas at another, the threshold might be $25,000. Read more about prospects and managers.

Target Amounts

On each Giving History record, a target amount can be set for that household and campaign. Target Amounts help track the progress of giving toward an overall goal. Learn more about how to set Target Amounts.

Events

Appeals and Fundraisers can be created in Veracross to track gifts that come in related to certain events. Learn more about how to create Appeals and Fundraisers.

Communication

Communication can be initiated and managed in many ways, including phone calls, emails, letters, meetings, etc. There are times when communication to a large group of people is necessary and other times when one-on-one, personal communication is necessary. Veracross facilitates both types and tracks historical communication for constituents.

Individual Events

Individual Events can be used to track person and household interaction with donors such as phone calls, emails or letters sent as well as event attendance for dinners or benefits. Learn more about tracking Individual Events for donors.

Email Distribution Lists

Email distribution lists are created by the system for many different groups of people. Most groups are created dynamically based on other data/information in Veracross while additional groups can be manually created using advanced reports. Any time an email is sent through a distribution list, it will be stored on each recipient's record for subsequent reference. There are several stock Email Distribution Lists that Development offices can use within the Find Groups query under the Communication section on the Development homepage. Within the "Development" group category are groups and emails for donors by Fiscal Year, Calendar Year, Campaign, Fund, Event, Giving Category, Years Giving, Solicitation Groups and more.

Pledges

Pledges are the promise of money and can be divided into installments in order to track the payments due over the designated period of time. When donations are made against a pledge, the two records can be related to each other by marking the donation as "Apply to Pledge". Learn more about Pledges.

Donations

Donations can come in many types – basic cash donation, donation with reward (such as an auction item), a pledge payment, stock gift, in-kind gift, or a matching donation. Every donation can be associated with the proper fund, campaign and event in order to ensure proper reporting. Learn more about Donations.

Soft Credits

Soft credits are a way of associating multiple people with a single gift for which they were not the primary donor. Each gift can have associated with it household, organization or matching soft credits. Learn more about Donation & Pledge Soft Credits.

Gift Batch Entry

Donations and Pledges can be added one by one, or in batch using the Gift Batch function. The Gift Batch functionality allows you to enter multiple gifts within a single grid for quick and seamless data entry. Learn more about Gift Batch Entry.

Gift Entry Automation

Many of the relationships between donations, pledges and soft credits can be automated to help ensure accuracy and reduce data entry within your office.

- Household, organization and matching soft credit can be automatically created based on the existence of person-person and person-organization relationships. Learn more about automating soft credit for people and organizations.

- Matching pledges can be automatically created based on person-organization relationships.
- Auto-recurring donations can be automatically created for a pledge if needed (e.g. for Payroll Deductions of staff/faculty). This greatly reduces the gift entry for donations that occur on a recurring basis. Learn more about setting up pledges to have auto-recurring donations.

Acknowledgement & Follow-up

Thank you letters, receipts, and payment reminders can all be generated and managed by Veracross using Microsoft Word mail-merge documents.

Thank You Letters

On each gift that is entered, a particular letter or receipt can be assigned in order to assure the proper letter is sent for type of gift. The date a letter was sent can be tracked on the individual gift itself. Learn more about Donation and Pledge Acknowledgment Letters.

Annual Giving Summary Document

At year end, schools must send a receipt that summarizes a donor's giving for tax purposes. Learn more about the Annual Giving Summary Document here.

Reporting

Within Veracross, there are several options for creating reports. Some stock reports are available on the Development homepage but it is important to always be clear what exactly is desired in a report because for each report, for each each school, the terms "Donor" and "Giving" can have different definitions. It is important to understand the different types of reporting options and stock reports to know exactly which type of report to build.

Queries

They query builder is the easiest tool to use to quickly access people, organizations and gifts and create results to review. Queries can be manipulated in many ways to extract data in the format you need and can also be exported to Excel with the click of a button. Use the Find Gifts, Find People, Find Households and Find Giving History queries as starting points to look for the data needed. Remember, whichever query that is used will create one row per data set being searched on (e.g. a Find Gifts query will return one row per gift in the results, a Find People query will return one person per row in the results, etc.).

Constituent Reporting

Constituent Reports can be created to generate a group of donors based on groups they are part of in order to view or filter on user-defined giving amounts. Learn more about creating Development Constituent Reports.

Summary Reporting

Development Summary Reports can be used to create reports based on development classifications in order to analyze giving, counts, participation and more in many different ways. The summary reports use Giving History records (household and organization campaign specific records) and the data related to each record to drive the results. Learn more about creating Summary Reports.