

# The savvy development leader's guide to building constituent relationships

Use relationship selling to earn constituents for life



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**Imagine having  
a relationship built  
on trust with each  
of your constituents.**

# Introduction

## If you could significantly expand your outreach to constituents and still maintain a more personalized relationship with each of them, how would that impact your mission?

Nonprofits constantly have to do more with less, but what if you could do more with more? Intelligent constituent engagement and fundraising empowers nonprofit organizations to provide an end-to-end digital experience for constituents across every stage of their journey—from prospect to major gift. In so doing you can attract new constituents and build stronger affinities with them to make them lifelong supporters of your mission.

Today's rapidly evolving customer relationship management (CRM) tools and technologies, such as Dynamics 365, support that approach by providing unified relationship data across the full constituent lifecycle. That data, combined with artificial intelligence can generate actionable insights to help your organization engage and create more meaningful connections with donors, volunteers, and other constituents.

You'll get a holistic view of donors' giving trends and volunteers' skills and interests that you can use to guide your actions. For example, adjusting to seasonal fluctuations by scaling your resources and training major gift officers to identify the next best action to take with constituents to further them on their journey.

Embracing the intelligent constituent engagement and fundraising approach can also help nonprofits align marketing and fundraising teams around common constituent data, connected processes, and Office 365 collaboration to help reduce costs and enhance constituent management. You can take contextual information into every conversation to help increase both the number and size of donations and help retain donors and volunteers over time.

You can also use this data to connect beneficiaries with the services and information they need most, resulting in better outcomes. Communicating those results can help you nurture your current constituent network, reach new donors and volunteers, and increase grant awards and corporate partnerships.

This eBook is your guide to navigating this process. You'll find clear examples of how to identify and nurture prospects, how to expand your outreach, and how and when to reach out to gain the best results to earn supporters for life.

Let's get started.

## Learn new ways to engage constituents and reimagine fundraising

Gain valuable insight on how nonprofits are using technology to continue the important work of their missions and to act on new priorities as they arise. Watch the Microsoft Nonprofit CXO Summit session "[Ideas for enhancing constituent engagement and fundraising](#)".



## Stage 1

# Identify the right prospects

**"Without data, we would be blind when making decisions on where to open new stores. This solution provides new insight on our customer base and helps us reach them."**

– Mathias Haller, CIO and Head of IT, The Salvation Army Switzerland

Identifying and creating natural ways for your nonprofit to foster and maintain relationships with your constituents leads to deeper connections and long-term loyalty and trust that translates into maintaining and expanding your mission. At this first stage of the journey, you need to identify donors and volunteers who have the potential for becoming lifetime supporters.

You certainly have more resources today than nonprofits did a decade ago. The internet, social platforms and professional online groups help you cast a much wider net, but how can you best capture the right contacts? Blindly shooting for the moon and hoping you land among the stars sounds great, but it's just not realistic. There are several challenges to finding the right prospects.



**Challenge:**  
**Identifying key philanthropic decision makers**

Even after you spend a great deal of time and energy, it can be difficult to identify the right people. Your job is to build personalized relationships with dozens of decision makers and influencers who work in diverse fields and are responsible for a wide variety of functions. Given that roles are always changing and prospects are moving from one organization to another, identifying these decision makers appears a seemingly never-ending task.

**Solution:**

Imagine being able to connect with a large number of potential donors or volunteers and prioritize your efforts based on valuable insights into the best way to approach those prospects. Then you can take advantage of your existing connections to reach out to new prospects and create a list to focus on those that matter most.

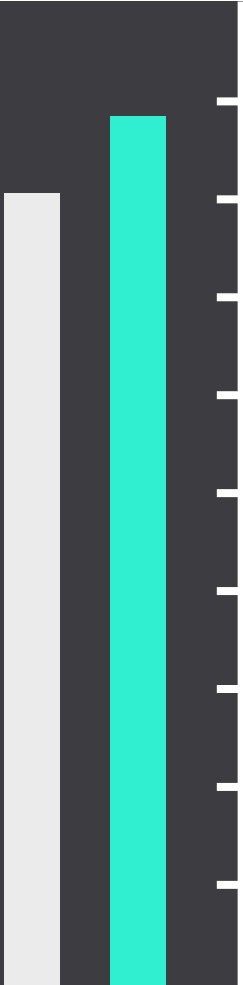
Technology makes it easier for nonprofits to find key decision makers and influencers within the business and philanthropic community. LinkedIn’s professional network can exponentially increase the pool from which you can seek out and engage with new contacts and identify prospective donors or volunteers from your first, second and third connections.

**Predictive intelligence uses machine learning – not just past behavior – to help you augment your search for companies and individuals most likely to become lifetime supporters either through contributions or getting involved with your cause.** Predictive scoring can help your fundraising and volunteer recruitment teams establish objective criteria for identifying these loyal prospects.

Over 80% of all respondents – and nearly 90% of top-performing companies – agree that

**developing authentic relationships is very important to revenue generation.**

– [The Power of Relationship Selling](#), Heinz Marketing and Microsoft



**Challenge:**  
**Connecting  
with credibility**

Targeting the right prospects used to mean making countless cold calls and repeating the same message over and over. Today, prospects have higher expectations, and nonprofits have better tools that can target new audiences and shorten the decision time.

Cold calling has flatlined, but reaching out in other ways – social platforms or email – is still a chilly attempt to make a connection. A warm referral is four times more likely to result in a response than a cold call. But turning cold calls into warm conversations is a tough proposition.

**Solution:**

Take advantage of existing relationships to increase the likelihood of getting a response from new prospects. Broaden your reach by tapping into your organization's network and your colleagues' relationships for warm introductions. Once you've begun building a relationship with a new supporter, use that connection to find others connected to that contact. Search for similar connections to other prospects to continue growing your network.

When you locate the right prospects you're halfway to your goal. Your next step is to use modern tools to make deeper connections, draw insights from data and communicate seamlessly across any device to grow your constituent relationships over time.





## Stage 2

# Nurture prospects and build relationships

**"In the year after adopting the Dynamics 365 platform customized by StratusLIVE and the new online giving portal, the average donor gift increased by 32 percent, and overall contributions increased 21 percent."**

– Epilepsy Foundation

Working on a relationship is a continuous cycle. It's not enough to connect with the ideal prospects; those prospects must be wooed. That means communicating the value and impact of your mission which potential constituents are looking for. Imagine what your fundraising and volunteer recruitment reports would look like if you could anticipate the needs of every connection and deliver a personalized, value-driven message to each of them.

In today's nonprofit climate, that's not easy to do.

**But with the right tools, you can tackle the challenges that stand in the way of turning your prospects into lifetime supporters.**





**Challenge:**  
**Capturing prospects' attention**

Although tools and technologies have evolved to provide better targeting, constituents are now inundated with messaging. It's difficult to cut through the clutter to get and keep their attention, much less earn a response.

**Solution:**

Fostering meaningful connections is the key to building strong relationships with constituents. But it's not enough to use the latest technology. You need to take advantage of that technology to capture data before you engage with potential constituents at a deeply personalized level, whether by phone, by email or in person. Powerful analytics provide a wholistic view of your constituents across multiple data sources so you can understand their giving trends and personalize your outreach to them in a manner that will build trust. Tap into your prospects' social platforms and pay attention to the topics they discuss, the issues they tackle and the insights they share. Constituent interaction data surfaces timely, relevant insights that move relationships forward.

60% of donors agree:

**"They would give up to 10% more in donations if the experience was more personalized."**

– Accenture Study on Campaign Personalization



**Challenge:**  
**Keeping pace**

Keeping up with roles, marching orders and objectives that are always in flux is difficult, especially when you have a large roster of contacts.

**Solution:**

Staying on top of changes among your contacts can provide opportunities for new connections, deeper engagements and a greater response. Machine learning and real-time alerts provide insights into what your connections are up to – and the best actions to take on each of those insights at every relationship-building opportunity.

There are dozens of small actions that open doors. When a contact has changed jobs, you have a chance to touch base and wish them luck or ask about their new position. When you receive a response to a connection request or email, your reply keeps the lines of communication open. When you hear about an upcoming event or networking opportunity, you can reach out to those nearby.

**Personalizing relationship building activities can lead to better opportunities for you to engage constituents and build long term supporters.**

**"Fundraising at its core is about data and information. Having that data at my fingertips makes us more productive as an organization."**

**– Geoff DeLizzio, Chief Development Officer, Epilepsy Foundation**



## Stage 3

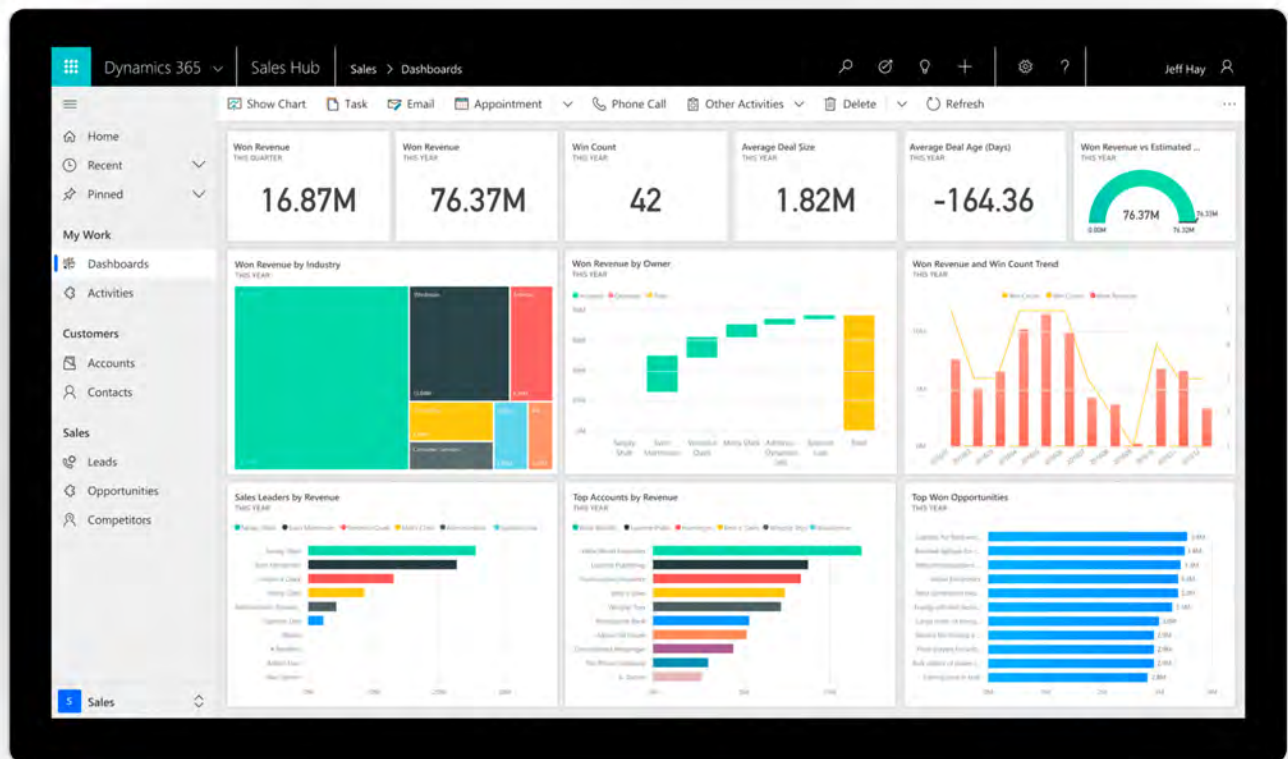
# Capitalize on opportunities to convert

**“It’s enabled us to identify trends, be more robust with our business planning, inform our decision making and encouraged new ways of working across the organization.”**

– Alison Davies, Deputy Chief Executive, Harrow Mencap

Donors and volunteers come to you because they believe in your mission and have resources they want to contribute to it. What if, rather than just accepting their money or time in a one time transaction, you used the opportunity to start building a relationship with them? By learning more about their interests and talents, you can open lines of communication that will produce far more long lasting benefits for both your constituents and your organization.

The challenge at this stage is identifying those opportunities and knowing when you have the best odds of being heard.



**Challenge:**  
**Understanding  
your constituents'  
challenges, goals  
and needs**

Your constituents live in the real world where there is no shortage of potential causes they can contribute their time or money to. Because most have limited resources, they want to donate to the organizations whose missions are most meaningful to them and where they can have the most impact.

**Solution:**

Nonprofit supporters want to make sure they are making the right decisions about where to contribute or volunteer their time. To aid in decision making they typically want to know how your organization is spending its money and what results are being achieved by your programs and activities.

The ability to answer these questions with solid data and actionable insights will give you a positive story to present to constituents about the value of their support to your organization.

Nonprofit relationship building focuses on the person, not the gift. Armed with this relevant data, you can address their concerns and provide insights to begin building trust.

Online giving **grew by 6.8%**  
in 2019, but still only makes  
up 8.7% of all fundraising.

– Blackbaud 2019 Charitable Giving Report





## Challenge: Knowing when your connections are most receptive

There will be times when constituents are just too focused on other concerns to listen. Bombarding them with information or requests will only serve to push them further away, weakening the relationship you've worked hard to build.

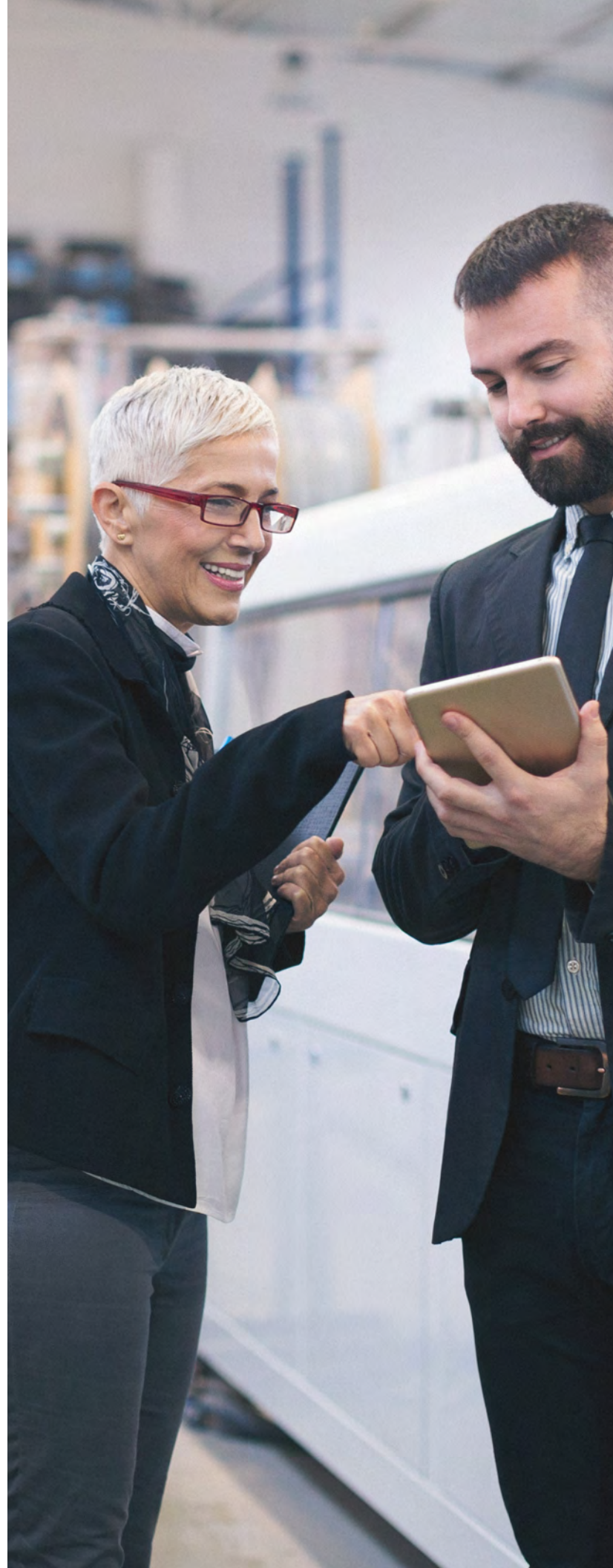
## Solution:

Evaluate each constituent relationship. Build a health profile from data based on transactions, constituent sentiment, emails and content exchanges, as well as frequency and level of interactions from CRM, email and social networks. Predictive analytics does more than just identify new opportunities. It also uncovers potential risks for each constituent like reaching out to them during their busiest time – so you know which people to contact, when, and how. With a clear picture of each relationship, you can proactively focus on constituents when they are most receptive to your outreach.

Machine learning lets you know exactly when to re-engage an inactive constituent and helps you determine which emails are the most critical. Insights driven by artificial intelligence can deliver recommended next actions that enhance the experience for you and your constituents.

**"33% of all charitable giving is  
between October-December."**

– Blackbaud 2019 Charitable Giving Report



## Stage 4

# Deliver relationship sales at scale

**You have prospect data.  
Lots of it. And you're collecting  
it every second of every day.**

Your data is analogue. It's digital. It's in people's heads. It's on laptops. It's in mobile phones. It's in the cloud. It's in ink. It's in spreadsheets. It's in water cooler conversations. It's over lunch. It's in texts. It's in phone calls. It's in email. But you can't drive revenue with your data unless you can filter it and then organize it into stories that drive the long-term relationships with your constituents.

Meaningful relationships that last are those that are continually nurtured. Nurturing a few relationships is manageable, but nurturing dozens is more time-consuming. Successfully finding and engaging with the right donors and volunteers isn't enough. **Your relationships also need to be sustainable and scalable, and that presents a few core challenges.**

**There is an average of  
\$3,781,461 untapped giving  
potential per year.**

– Blackbaud Analytics Toolkit





**Challenge:**  
**Engaging with dozens  
of stakeholders  
across your entire  
prospects list**

Engaging with large numbers of stakeholders can quickly become overwhelming, especially when you're working with multiple organizations and individuals.

**Solution:**

Create and organize personalized content to share with your constituents so that you're ready to engage when they are. Imagine having data at your fingertips that tells you when someone interacts with your content – and when it's shared with other key decision makers – to provide new leads to add to your prospects list. With predictive intelligence and machine learning, this is possible. And you can take it a step further and track your constituents' interests and activities to better anticipate the content that's most useful to them. Ramping up for exponential growth involves using tools and techniques that make it possible to nurture every single relationship.

**Challenge:**  
**Keeping up with large  
amounts of data**

The more constituents you have, the harder it is to sift through the noise. CRM tools, productivity software and social media all provide data and insights that help build these relationships. But taken alone, these tools tell only part of the story. In fact, the data gleaned from one of these sources might lead to making assumptions to fill in the blanks.

**Solution:**

Prioritize tasks and engagement opportunities to keep tabs on – and grow – your constituent relationships. Machine learning and analytics can provide valuable insights and drive actionable recommendations. Gather insights from every available source to get the knowledge you need to act. Seamless CRM integration can help you more efficiently keep track of fundraising and volunteer activity without removing the focus from those relationships.

**With automation and a guided engagement process, you can easily manage complex constituent relationships and scale with ease – to produce better results, faster.** A highly intuitive interface, productivity capabilities, robust mobile apps and familiar tools provide a connected experience that gets you up and running quickly.

# Microsoft Dynamics 365 delivers USD 16.97 for every dollar spent

– Nucleus Research, [Microsoft Dynamics 365 Delivers USD 16.97 for Every Dollar Spent](#)



# Nonprofit story

## UNICEF Netherlands turns donors into lifetime supporters with Dynamics 365



The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) works tirelessly in more than 190 countries/regions to save the lives, defend the rights, and help fulfill the potential of millions of children, from early childhood through adolescence. Private donors and volunteers who contribute their resources, effort, and influence to support UNICEF are essential to the success of the mission. The contributions are collected by local UNICEF committees in 35 countries, such as UNICEF Netherlands.

Private donors and volunteers are increasingly hard to find and retain. Many not-for-profits compete for the time and resources of these individuals, and the expectations of these supporters have risen. “The old fundraising models are not working as well as they used to,” says Suzanne Laszlo, Executive Director, UNICEF Netherlands. “Our donors are changing. They want to give something to UNICEF, but the next day, they want to give something to another organization.” UNICEF needs to build strong, personal relationships with the donor community to find and retain long-term contributors. “We have to stay in touch. We have to tell our stories. We have to explain where the money went, how it’s spent, and what the results were,” she explains.

Although UNICEF Netherlands found that personally engaging supporters and potential supporters increased their overall commitment to the organization, personalizing interactions at scale was a challenge. Key details on donors, such as their contact information, philanthropic interests, and donation history, were housed in disparate data silos. “What made it hard,” shares Guus van Dijk, Digital Transformation Manager, UNICEF Netherlands, “[was that] data was not easy to connect. We have millions and millions of records. It was difficult to bring in all those different sources.” Without a single, unified source of information on donors, it was challenging to create and send personalized communications to each of them.

**“We chose Dynamics 365 Customer Insights because it provides us with a fully connected platform. It was a no-brainer.”**

– Bart De Ruigh: Director of Finance and Operations, UNICEF Netherlands

To solve this problem, the team needed a customer data platform (CDP) to quickly and easily combine data from multiple sources, analyze the data to derive insights, and activate the insights via marketing and communication channels. UNICEF Netherlands selected Microsoft Dynamics 365 Customer Insights as its CDP solution. “We chose Dynamics 365 Customer Insights because it provides us with a fully connected platform,” says Bart De Ruigh, Director of Finance and Operations, UNICEF Netherlands. “It was a no-brainer.” The solution is so beneficial to UNICEF Netherlands, De Ruigh adds, that the organization is teaming up with Microsoft to roll it out to “the entire NGO sector.”

“Customer Insights really helps us to segment the right audiences, to focus on them, to engage them in a very relevant way, and to retain them,” says Astrid van Vonderen, Director of Fundraising and Private Individuals, UNICEF Netherlands. The platform’s out-the-box interoperability with Dynamics 365 Marketing helps the team create and optimize marketing campaigns on the fly. “With Dynamics 365 Marketing, we can run and test campaigns at scale while delivering more precise and personalized communications,” she adds.

Michiel van Straten, Senior Data Analyst, UNICEF Netherlands, appreciates the speed of the Customer Insights and Marketing combination. “We can be faster about getting insights about our donors,” he says. Those insights can be quickly turned into action. “We can act fast on our data,” he adds. AI drives even greater efficiencies. For example, the UNICEF Netherlands team uses predictive modeling from Customer Insights to send more targeted messages to prospective donors who are most likely to respond and offer greater value.



UNICEF Netherlands looks forward to next steps. "With Customer Insights, we are more future-proof because it's adaptable, flexible, and gives us the possibility to innovate," says van Dijk. The team is using Customer Insights to develop a customer lifetime value model, which will help them identify, and optimize engagement with, high-impact donors.

"Every child matters," says Laszlo. "We have to reach more children." But, she says, "to make this happen, we need more funds." Using the easy-to-use, efficient, and scalable platform of Dynamics 365 Customer Insights, UNICEF Netherlands can secure the necessary support to expand its efforts and reach potential donors with high-converting solicitations for support. "Microsoft is a great collaborator," she says. "Its expertise helps us in our mission to save children's lives."

## Ready to boost your nonprofit team's success?



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