As 2015 winners of the Times Higher Education Award (THELMA) for Development and Alumni Relations, the University of York has pioneered the use of technology to rapidly grow donor numbers and help diverse projects find success.
THE CHALLENGE

During 2013, the University of York saw students and faculties turning to crowdfunding platforms for a variety of research and sports-based projects; because funding was either unavailable or not easily accessible. The Development and Alumni Relations team identified the need for new and alternative means to fund the breadth of projects and ideas coming from across the campus. The team were also struggling to find budget to engage young donors and wanted a way to excite the next generation of supporters for the university. They decided that the best way to meet these needs was with a branded crowdfunding website, supported and managed by the university itself.

THE SOLUTION

Hubbub provided the University of York with their own branded crowdfunding website that allows students, societies and staff to raise funds for projects - from apps and anthologies to science experiments and student produced films. By naming it YuStart, the University of York integrated this website into their annual giving strategy and worked in partnership with the Students Union to ensure its position as a university-wide fundraising tool.

YuStart helped the University of York to grow donor numbers through:

STUDENT DRIVEN FUNDRAISING
Students and societies use YuStart to fundraise for innovative projects, ideas and campaigns.

POWERFUL PERSONAL STORYTELLING
Each project has a fundraising page where the campaigners can tell their stories with videos, images and text.

PERSONALISED REWARDS FOR DONORS
Campaigners offer donors rewards to incentivise giving. Example rewards range from thankyous on social media to VIP tickets for shows.

EMAIL STEWARDSHIP
Built in email stewardship to guide the project creators and donors through their crowdfunding journeys and keep everyone updated on campaign progress.

SHARING TOOLS
Social media and email sharing tools to make it easy to spread the word, share campaign updates and to connect with donors on their preferred channel.

REFERRAL LINKS
Supporters can use a unique referral link to track their influence when sharing campaigns. Each campaign page has a leaderboard to encourage supporters to share more and allow project creators to thank their supporters.

CONNECTING DONORS DIRECTLY TO PROJECTS THEY CARE ABOUT
Campaigns are funded by friends, family and alumni, donating different amounts to reach a target in a set time. Campaign supporters can follow, share and donate to projects they feel personally connected to, resulting in a positive donor experience.

Click here if you would like a demo of Hubbub’s branded crowdfunding features.
THE RESULTS

Through the use of Hubbub, the University of York has significantly increased its donor numbers and broadened support for student activity by securing donations from the wider community, students and staff. Building a giving culture on campus has meant growth in young alumni support through all aspects of the programme.

INTEGRATE DONOR DATA INTO REGULAR GIVING

The University of York receives all the data about each project creator and each donor which it imports into its central fundraising CRM. This allows for valuable donor analysis, as often YuStart donors are first time donors. It makes identifying capacity, affinity and propensity much simpler and allows for these donors to be included in the annual giving program. This provides a stewardship route to convert donors into regular supporters.
WANT TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT GETTING YOUR OWN BRANDED CROWDFUNDING PLATFORM FOR YOUR INSTITUTION?

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