



Click & Pledge Saves Nonprofit from Ticket Sales Crisis

Founded in 2003, Lowcountry Orphan Relief (LOR) seeks to help children who have been displaced from their homes due to abandonment, abuse, or neglect. Through their distribution center and Just in Case school closet program, LOR collects basic necessities such as clothing, hygiene items, and school supplies and distributes those items to displaced children.

“Our organization was founded by Lynn Young, a guardian ad litem, who discovered that when children were removed from unsafe homes, they were unable to take any of their belongings with them,” explains Regina Sharpe, Executive Director of LOR. “Some kids would wear the same clothes for a week straight.” For children in stressful circumstances, having their basic needs met is extraordinarily helpful. But LOR doesn’t stop there. In addition to providing basic necessities, they also host children’s events and run a program called Foster the Future in which they teach life skills to kids ages 12-19. Through everything they do, they work hard to help these children feel a little more secure.

The Challenge: Multiple Systems Resulting in High Fees and Extra Labor

In order to manage all of the in-kind and monetary donations they collect to help thousands of children each year, LOR was using an online database combined with a separate payment processing system. The trouble was that these two systems did not work well together. In order to enter everything into their database, LOR staff had to download reports from their payment processing system and then physically enter the data into their database.

“It would take hours,” says Sharpe. “And on top of that, we had to use a completely separate payment processor for event ticket sales. That meant double the data entry.”

While the data entry issue was certainly frustrating, the tipping point came when they were informed by their database provider that their monthly payment would be increasing. They were paying \$150 per month for less than 5,000 records; once LOR hit 5,000, the provider raised their rate to \$200 per month.

Sharpe had had enough. The first thing she wanted to do was avoid that monthly fee by switching databases. Then she wanted to find a payment processing system that could integrate well with the database and eliminate all of that extra data entry. For help, Sharpe turned to Julie Pearson, Principal and co-Founder of Team4Mission LLC (T4M), a consulting firm that works with nonprofit organizations on organizational management, strategic planning, and systems integration.

“The primary problem with their previous database, besides the monthly payment, was that it was very difficult to use,” recalls Pearson. “There was no training available, not enough support, and it was incredibly difficult to run reports and get the data LOR needed.” Pearson got LOR set up with Salesforce, working quickly to migrate all of their donor history over to Salesforce. She also recommended that LOR use Click & Pledge, which integrates seamlessly with Salesforce. Pearson informed Sharpe that Click & Pledge would eliminate their payment-processing headaches not only because of the easy integration, but also because of their stellar customer support, low fees, and automated deposits.

The Precipitating Event: Lost Ticket Sales

Sharpe and Pearson were still working through the process of getting Salesforce and Click & Pledge integrated when the time came for LOR’s annual Gatsby Gala, their largest fundraising event of the year. Sharpe was worried they wouldn’t have time to get Click & Pledge set up in time for the event, so she continued with the payment processing system they had used in the past.

Unfortunately, a few weeks later LOR hit a snag: the payment processor stopped taking payments for tickets. They started receiving phone calls from people trying to buy tickets to the Gala saying that they couldn’t pay with a credit card. “We were afraid we were losing sales,” recalls Sharpe. She quickly reached out to Pearson to see if there was any way to switch quickly to Click & Pledge without having too much downtime for ticket sales.

The Solution: Click & Pledge

Within 24 hours, Pearson had the Gala Event set up through Click & Pledge Event Management and linked to the LOR website, and LOR had collected their first online ticket sale through the page.

“Click & Pledge is so intuitive and customizable,” explains Pearson. “It made it very easy to get things up and running quickly.”

Sharpe was pleased. In addition to getting their event back on track, getting Click & Pledge integrated with Salesforce made everything else easier for them as well. In particular, she is grateful for the time saved on data entry. “Before Click & Pledge, someone had to manually enter sales,” she explains. “With Click & Pledge, there’s no work on that at all; it just goes right into the database. Click & Pledge has 100% eliminated that responsibility from an employee.”

A Happy Ending and Bright Future

Though the ticket sales for the Gatsby Gala were the focus of getting started, Sharpe has been happy with other benefits LOR has experienced since integrating Salesforce and Click & Pledge. In addition to staff time savings, Sharpe is delighted with how quickly LOR receives deposits from online transactions. LOR’s previous payment processors had delayed payments; one only paid out once per month while the other required a request for payment in order for funds to transfer. With Click & Pledge, each payment is automatically deposited into LOR’s checking account, eliminating cash flow headaches.

In addition, Sharpe enjoys the level of personalization and ease of reporting afforded by Click & Pledge. LOR staff now customizes ticket purchase receipts and uses the detailed, easily-run reports to help them properly thank and send photos to event attendees.

“There’s just such a comfort level that there’s not any extra work involved,” explains Sharpe. “We don’t have to monitor it or check on it. Funds go right into our bank account, and information goes straight into the database. We can cater it to our event, which really personalizes it for us and makes everything seem a bit more legitimate for an organization.”

“Click & Pledge just makes everything easier.”