



## CASE STUDY



+  **sanky** +  **springboard**

grown monthly  
**sustainer  
giving by  
137%**

Photo courtesy of AWF/Annie Katz

The African Wildlife Foundation uses Springboard to power its digital fundraising, sustainer program, domestic and international advocacy, peer-to-peer fundraising, and marketing.

## Background

Since 2012, the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) has partnered with Sanky Communications for assistance with strategic marketing, direct mail, and digital fundraising. Sanky extends AWF's in-house capabilities by developing and executing data-driven strategies to enhance supporter cultivation, drive sustainer growth, and broaden engagement opportunities across channels. AWF always takes the long view on supporter cultivation, putting education and awareness at the center of its efforts to build intentional relationships and to provide meaningful action opportunities for its supporters.

In early 2015, AWF was using a combination of Blackbaud products for online fundraising and communications. With their ambitious vision to nurture supporters from acquisition through to becoming sustaining donors, AWF asked Sanky to help identify a new digital marketing platform to support its strategy. The organization needed: 1) significantly more creative control over its campaigns; 2) sophisticated email marketing automation capabilities; 3) targeted segmentation abilities; and 4) better access to comprehensive, deep data to inform strategic decisions.

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**We're asking people to support wildlife and wild lands on a continent they may never see themselves. Providing an emotional connection and allowing people to experience Africa through creative digital experiences brings them closer to the critical issues they're passionate about changing.**

**David Oñate**  
Director of Marketing, AWF

## The Solution

AWF's first consideration was whether to pursue another all-in-one product or an ecosystem of tightly-integrated software solutions. The organization quickly realized that the ecosystem approach was the best way to access industry-leading tools beyond the nonprofit sphere, while still leveraging some solutions that were tailored for supporter engagement. After Sanky performed a comprehensive assessment of digital engagement tools, AWF determined that Springboard, Salesforce, and IBM Watson Campaign Automation (formerly called IBM Marketing Cloud and Silverpop) were the best fit to power the organization's Digital-First strategy.

By mid-2015, AWF and Jackson River, the creators of Springboard, jointly launched Springboard for digital Fundraising and Marketing, along with IBM Watson Campaign Automation for Email. They also rolled out Salesforce Nonprofit Success Pack as AWF's CRM for all multi-channel interactions. Because AWF wanted to continue with Raiser's Edge as its database-of-record, Jackson River integrated Raiser's Edge with Salesforce, providing a single, comprehensive data view. As AWF's strategy broadened to include new types of supporter-engagement campaigns, the organization also added Springboard Advocacy for its domestic and international actions, along with Peer-to-Peer Fundraising for its DIY fundraiser campaign, in 2015 and 2016, respectively.

**“The one constant in the digital technology market is change. So, a key driver of our decision to move to Springboard is the extensible ‘hub and spoke model’ it operates on, as opposed to the monolithic model that Blackbaud embraces. Salesforce is in the middle offering a 360 degree view of constituents, connected to IBM Watson Campaign Automation to one side, and Springboard for the front-end supporter interactions.**

**David Oñate**  
Director of Marketing, AWF

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**You make a lot of trade-offs and lose a lot of flexibility when you go with an all-in-one solution. Springboard gives AWF access to best-of-breed solutions that work well together, and offers the organization options to expand in the future.**

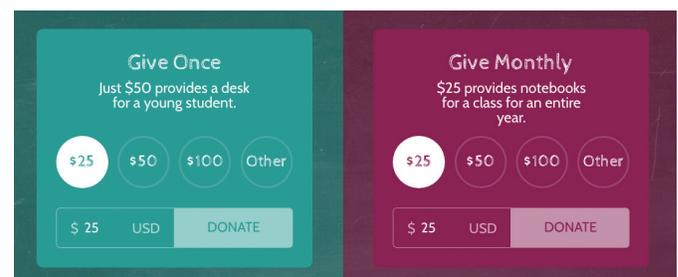
**Paul Habig**  
President, Sanky

## The Transformation

### CULTIVATING DONORS & SUSTAINERS

AWF believes that a healthy sustainer program is the lifeblood of a healthy online fundraising program. It invests in lifelong donors, with a clear path for supporters to move from low-commitment to ever-higher-commitment actions. Springboard's focus on strong donor experiences and sustainer conversion has been beneficial to AWF's strategy.

In AWF's fundraising campaigns, existing supporters receive a very specific ask, or dynamic gift string, that directly relates to their individual giving history. Creative, personalized donation forms also include sustainer conversion tactics, such as a modal window that offers one-time donors the chance to make their gift monthly, or an invitation for sustaining donors to upgrade their monthly gifts beyond their current gift level, which has resulted in increased gift amounts. AWF can also proactively prevent lapsed donations for donors with upcoming expiring cards and and run campaigns to easily reactivate lapsed sustainers.



AWF donation forms offer both one-time & monthly giving plus dual ask amounts in a streamlined, multi-step donation flow.

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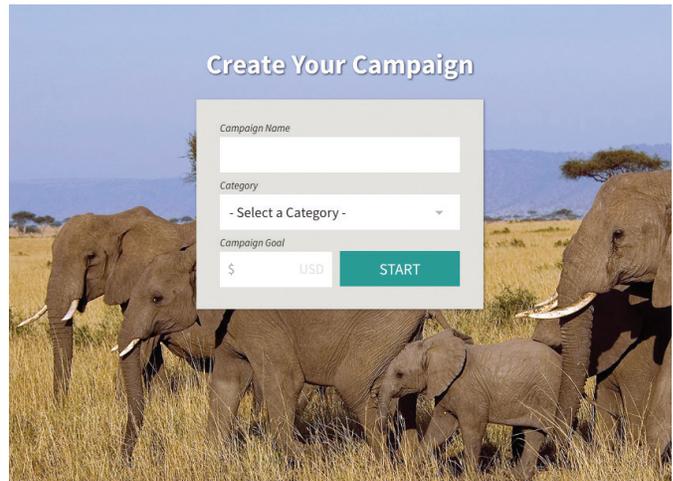
Springboard supports a variety of sustainer solutions enabling us to implement new strategies and tactics to grow the program. By closely monitoring constituent behavior and needs through the product, AWF can treat sustainers accordingly, sending them a very specific ask that is directly related to each individual’s history with us. The resulting sustainer giving throughout the year is support we can now rely on in service of our mission.

**David Oñate**  
Director of Marketing, AWF

**CREATIVE, MULTI-CHANNEL CAMPAIGNS**

Intentional, staged supporter cultivation is the keystone of AWF’s engagement program. In addition to offering their supporters targeted journeys across the lifecycle, AWF runs fundraising campaigns that begin with an awareness-building communication, which then ties to a series of follow-up actions. For example, when the 2016 elephant census revealed shockingly low numbers of African elephants remaining, AWF ran multi-channel campaigns educating supporters both on elephant issues and on the organization’s unique response to the challenge. AWF then offered stage-specific ways to engage, from taking action to making a gift to raising funds through a related peer-to-peer campaign.

Close integration across channels is also a critical element in AWF’s strategy, facilitated by Springboard and Salesforce. Across direct mail, website and microsites, email, and social, consistent visuals and messaging are used to reinforce core themes, and supporters are targeted in the channels that best fit their past behavior. Because AWF knows exactly which supporters are active in which channels, they carefully target messaging by channel to promote cross-channel interactions. The organization has consistently seen that the more channels a supporter is active in, the more likely that person is to ultimately convert.



DIY, peer-to-peer campaigns give donors a next-level way to support AWF for birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, in honor or memorial, or for other special occasions.

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For many organizations, technology is too often a barrier to building one-on-one relationships at scale and achieving goals. In our case, with Springboard, technology has gone from being a barrier to reaching our objectives to empowering us to realize the creative ideas, strategies, and campaigns we develop in collaboration with our partners at Sanky.

**David Oñate**  
Director of Marketing, AWF

# YOU CAN SAVE WILDLIFE WITH YOUR SIGNATURE.



(sign here)

Our Goal: 30,000

Advocacy asks for both domestic and international policy campaigns allow AWF supporters to sign petitions, write letters, and take deeper sustained action.

## TRACKING & MARKET SOURCE DATA

AWF uses a combination of market source codes and Google UTM tracking codes to gather extensive data—such as the source of a gift and of a constituent—across channels and devices. The results are actively used for measuring and reporting on the success of each campaign as it unfolds in real-time, allowing for rapid improvements and optimization. Future campaigns are designed based on the ROI of past efforts, reinforcing AWF’s commitment to making decisions that are driven by hard data.

## ADVOCACY

AWF chose to add Springboard’s Advocacy capabilities in late 2015 for both international and domestic policy work, reinforcing its Digital-First engagement strategy. When AWF began to experiment with its first digital advocacy campaign, the organization was hoping for a few thousand signatures and perhaps a few gifts.

The AWF team reports that signing petitions and sending letters to decision-makers have given supporters more ways to initially engage and to deepen their commitment to the issues, which has fed back into fundraising results. Advocacy has also offered AWF additional ways to easily identify the most engaged supporters, which then impacts its targeting and segmentation strategy.



**Digital advocacy has become a key component of AWF’s overall digital marketing program and a great engagement activity for prospects and donors. Often, constituents are committing to AWF financially, but now they’re also able to commit their voice to critical issues like wildlife trafficking and climate change. That’s been made possible to us by the technology platform provided by Springboard.**

David Oñate

Director of Marketing, AWF



**Knowing how a constituent got into our database, and being able to track how effectively a specific campaign is working has been incredibly helpful. We now have a million ways to slice and dice the data.**

David Oñate

Director of Marketing, AWF

## MARKETING AUTOMATION

When AWF chose a new digital platform, automation was the organization’s top priority. AWF’s strategy involves a high volume of acquisition, so in order to make the most of each chance to convert new prospects, they needed to automate messages based on individual interests and behaviors.

As AWF has been empowered to build ever more complex supporter journeys, it has moved beyond best-practice triggered messaging such as welcome series to offer more sophisticated behavior-dependent sequences, such as follow-up emails after donation-form abandonment and interim cultivation pieces like a spirit animal quiz with a follow-up email offering more details on the real-life animal. In addition to ongoing cultivation, AWF’s journeys include stage-specific communication matched with a specific time of year. For example, awareness-building campaigns communicating impact ramp up over the course of the fall in tandem with other asks, which prime supporters before year-end fundraising begins.

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Springboard also allows us to act on all of the valuable data we collect. For example, we’ve been able to deploy dynamic ask strings, supported by strong back-end data, that have helped to increase conversion rates for prospects because the ask is an appropriate amount. This personalized approach has helped significantly with retention as well, while also motivating many donors to become sustainers.

**Laura Cole**

Associate Director of Account Services, Sanky

**SEGMENTATION & PERSONALIZATION**

AWF’s internal team now uses the extensive data that Springboard collects to code individual supporters by interaction with the organization. Coding supporters gives the marketing team a clear picture of who their sustainers are, versus major donors, prospects, advocates, and other profiles, allowing them to easily see overlap between populations and likely sequences for future interactions.

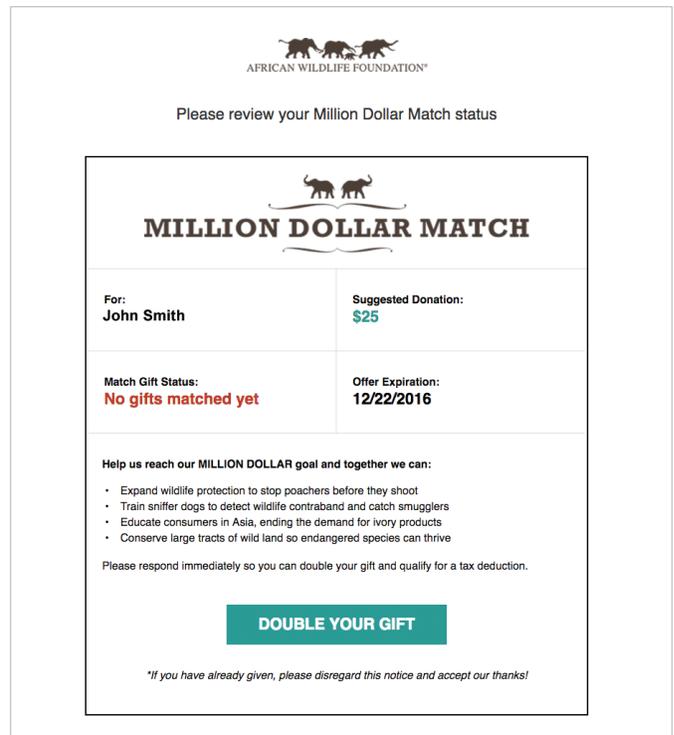
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Now we can know each person on our list and understand, big picture, their relationship with our organization.

**David Oñate**

Director of Marketing, AWF

Because personalization is only as good as the data that lies behind it, AWF can now use its comprehensive online and offline data to perform sophisticated segmentation of its list. From direct-mail only donors to online donors to individuals who have set up their own fundraising campaign, the organization is able to be thoughtful and strategic about which constituents receive what from AWF and when. In concert with their strategy for lifelong donor relationships, the marketing team now works with the mid-level major-gifts team to identify and cultivate sustainers into even higher-level donors.



A year-end email appeal provides personalized receipt info for recent gifts and challenges supporters with targeted gift amounts as part of a match campaign.

# Partnership

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The confluence of strategy, technology, and compelling creative can drive meaningful digital marketing growth and even organizational change — they have at AWF. The results speak for themselves. The increases across key metrics that we have realized following our adoption of Springboard allow us to continue the business case for further investment in digital technology, laying the groundwork for whatever comes next.

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**David Oñate**  
Director of Marketing, AWF



## The Results

The African Wildlife Foundation & Sanky have won five Internet Advertising Awards for their stellar campaigns — including Best Nonprofit Email Message, Outstanding Social Media Campaign, & Best Integrated Ad Campaign — all powered by Springboard, Salesforce, & IBM Watson Campaign Automation.

In the almost two years since launching on Springboard, the African Wildlife Foundation has:

raised  
**\$3.6**  
**MILLION**  
online

grown monthly  
**sustainer giving**  
by **137%**, with  
annual sustainer  
revenue of  
\$500,000+

achieved  
**254% growth**,  
in housefile,  
with a list  
totaling 751,000

achieved  
**460,000**  
**advocacy**  
**actions** taken,  
with **93%**  
**deliverability** to  
decision-makers



#### **ABOUT AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION**

The African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), founded in 1961 as the African Wildlife Leadership Foundation, is an international conservation organization that focuses on critically important landscapes in Africa. AWF's programs and conservation strategies are designed to protect the wildlife and wild lands of Africa and ensure a more sustainable future for Africa's people. AWF stops the degradation of animals and the world's environment. Since its inception, the organization has protected endangered species and land, promoted conservation enterprises that benefit local African communities, and trained hundreds of African nationals in conservation—all to ensure the survival of Africa's unparalleled wildlife heritage.

Visit [www.awf.org](http://www.awf.org) for more information.

#### **ABOUT SANKY COMMUNICATIONS**

Since 1977, Sanky has been helping nonprofits improve the world. Fueled by an agency-wide passion to support good causes, the Sanky team has created thousands of innovative, multichannel campaigns for over 130 clients—with missions ranging from saving animals to promoting civil rights to fighting global hunger. Led by a strategically creative approach that harnesses leading technology, Sanky has reached millions of people, raised hundreds of millions of dollars for worthy causes and has earned numerous awards—such as Campaign of the Year in the 2016 Gold Fundraising Awards—along the way.

Learn more at [www.sankyinc.com](http://www.sankyinc.com).



#### **ABOUT JACKSON RIVER & SPRINGBOARD**

Jackson River is a Digital-First strategy and technology firm that works with influential non-profits, cause-based initiatives, and progressive foundations to help them craft results-based supporter-engagement programs with a strong technology foundation. They built Springboard, an innovative, open digital-engagement platform, on the belief that nonprofits' marketing efforts can only be as effective as the people, process, and technology that support them. Jackson River is a conscientious small business owned by veterans of the nonprofit technology space, with some of the world's best causes on their client roster.

Find them at [www.jacksonriver.com](http://www.jacksonriver.com).