



10 Essential Questions

to Evaluate Online Giving Providers

You've decided to launch e-Giving for your organization, or maybe you are not satisfied with your current provider and want to research alternatives. Either way, when it comes to evaluating an online giving provider, choose a provider that offers the best combination of experience, service and value. Here are 10 key questions to help guide that search.



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1 Does money move securely?

When selecting a provider, there should be no compromise on security standards. So your short list should include Payment Card Industry Level 1 Compliant Service Provider. PCI Level 1 Compliant Service Providers undergo regular independent on-site audits and critical assessments to assure that credit and debit card transactions are being processed with maximum security.

2 Does money move quickly?

There should be no unnecessary delay in transferring funds. All eCheck transactions should be debited from the donor's account and credited to the church account on the same day. Credit and debit card transactions should be deposited into the church account within 2-4 business days after processing. Some companies retain donations for several days or weeks before finally sending funds.

3 Is money segregated at all times?

Donations should never be deposited into the operating account of a giving provider, commingled with its operation funds, held in an interest-bearing account for its benefit, or mailed to the church by check in order to create float.

4 Is the pricing straightforward and the contract flexible?

Pricing and contract length both become important considerations in selecting an online giving provider. Look carefully at fees and

compare. Among providers, you'll see a per transaction fee, start-up fees, monthly fees and even some hidden fees (i.e. compliance fees, convenience fees and statement fees). Does the provider charge flat-rate pricing or interchange rates? Also pay close attention to contract length. While some providers require a long-term contract, other providers simply offer a month-to-month contract with no cancellation fees—allowing you to cancel without penalty. At Vanco, all we ask is that you give us a 30-day notice.

5 Are fund options versatile?

Churches typically maintain different funds for different purposes. Operating funds, capital funds, mission funds and more must all be accounted for separately, and in some cases, must be deposited into accounts at different banks. If all electronic donations were deposited into a single account, church personnel would be unable to correctly assign them to the appropriate fund. Providers should offer the tools to make it easy to properly account for every dollar.

6 What kinds of support services are offered?

Choose an online giving provider that offers complimentary training and support for staff members. Support should be available for the life of the relationship, not just the first few weeks.

7 What are the reporting capabilities?

When it comes to reporting and analysis needs, the last thing you need is an online giving provider that makes your job harder rather than easier! Flexibility is essential. Check that

the providers you are evaluating offer a number of reporting capabilities. For example, can you generate reports based on date range, payment type and by member? Don't hesitate to request sample reports.

8 Is there easy software integration?

Choose an online giving provider that integrates seamlessly with your church management software systems for error-free posting. With a seamless integration, you'll quickly learn how easy it is to accurately import and post payments in a fraction of time.

9 Does the provider offer additional launch and management resources?

To assist you in making the church's online giving program a success, look for a provider that offers a variety of tips, tools and resources for promoting e-Giving to members. For example, upon enrollment with Vanco, church personnel receive a guide with several simple ideas for introducing electronic giving in their church. We continue support through our blog and other assets that highlight e-Giving success strategies.

10 Is there a wide diversity in e-Giving features?

Look at the big picture and ask if the provider's online giving page can do the following:

- Accept one-time contributions, recurring contributions and even event registrations?
- Accept donations by credit card, debit card and eCheck?
- Let donors designate dollars for different programs and purposes?
- Deposit funds into different accounts—or even into different financial institutions?
- Generate easy-to-post payment files and easy-to-read reports?
- Offers the option to quickly change the message, funds, graphic scheme and more at no charge?

Wonder what e-Giving looks like in action?

Give online giving a test drive with our [demonstration pages](#).

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About Vanco Payment Solutions

Vanco Payment Solutions is focused on addressing the unique needs of clients that count on predictable, recurring revenue. Faith-based and other relationship-oriented organizations—and the software providers and professional associations that serve them—rely on Vanco’s specialized approach to adding electronic payment options and enhancing current capabilities.

The company’s experienced team helps more than 30,000 clients across the U.S. conveniently, securely and efficiently accept a broad range of electronic payments, and more effectively manage their operations. Industry leaders Vanco Services (founded in 1998) and Veracity Payment Solutions (founded in 2007) recently merged to form Vanco Payment Solutions.