

What Donors Really Do Online: Nine Years of Fundraising Data from 1.8 Million Donors Uncovered and Interpreted

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People donate during weekdays and business hours. Charity Websites have the highest amount of giving. Donors through portals and social media give less, but it is usually because of lack of familiarity and the organization is not following through.

Make the giving process short as possible. The more choices you put in front of someone, the more likely they are not going to make any choice at all.

Give them a reason to give monthly. Giving is a very social act, tell your donors what others are doing.

Need to double check your GuideStar profile. Make sure your homepage is hospitable to people coming from social media, giving portals and referrals from friends. They need to know why they need to support your organization without much clicking.

Use Causes and Network for Good's donation dashboards for reporting and to follow up with donors.

30% of giving happens in December. Also, spikes in times of disaster.

starting at the beginning again here:

The Online Giving Study - a call to reinvent donor relationships

Network For Good: back end of CapitalOne giving site, CrowdRise, Causes on Facebook, they power 10,000 small nonprofits' websites, giving portal at Network For Good, they power giving at Guidestar. They have access to a LOT of data and mined it along with TrueSense Marketing.

Scope of study: \$381 million in giving, 3.6 million gifts, 66,470 nonprofits, 1.88 million donors. This study is based on data from the Network for Good portal.

Online giving is growing, duh. Where is it growing--and why? How is the giving happening?

Raising funds online is NOT about technology; it's about the relationship between the nonprofit and donor.

Level of connection determines how often, how much

Small upgrades to donor experience make a big difference

There is NO excuse for failing to improve the online giving experience

Where are donors giving? Most is still through nonprofit websites (65%); a quarter through portals (25.5%) - but these are focused on DISASTERS (want to give but don't know who to help); social giving (10%) like crowdrise/facebook.

Which charities are being supported? Human service (30%), health (13%), animal/environment (10%), education (11%). This pie is VERY different than the overall giving pie.

People are giving while they are at WORK.

Do not get in people's way when they are trying to give. Do NOT give them options. Use PICTURES on donation form. Story and message and very short.

A little personality goes a long way.

ALWAYS ask for monthly gifts:

Always offer a recurring gift option. Right under, it says "is this a recurring gift?"

Monthly giving is the most popular choice, so make that the easiest choice

Present a compelling reason

On their sites, monthly donors make up 10% of the total.

Suggestion: "half our donors give monthly."

Test monthly giving as first option vs the second option.

Social Networks and Portals:

They give smaller gifts, they don't know the charity well and charities may not follow up well, but these donors matter.

Thank donors promptly and thoroughly--assume they don't know you.

Keep your organization's profile up-to-date.

Improve and de-clutter home page.

Causes.com - new nonprofit dashboard. Look for a box: for nonprofits. Causes for Exchange.

Gives you a window that allows you to start conversations with supporters. Keep tabs on Network For Good dashboards/reports.

Online giving is spiky. 1/3 of giving happens in December; 20% of that comes in the last two days in December.

December donors are worth more. 22% of giving is in last two days of the year. Donors who give for the first time

Mark Rothner's Procrastinators' Guide to Year End Fundraising:

- Get a game plan before you head into the month
- Build good relationships throughout the year
- Send at least two emails in the last couple days
- Send an email early on Dec. 31st.

Giving in the last two days of the year is a national habit; that is not going to change. The good news is--you're not making the case for giving; you're reminding them you're there. If they don't have a relationship with you on Dec. 31st, they're not going to give to you. So: email at 11am on 12/31.

Giving during disasters is nearly ALL online and mobile. Giving during a disaster: additive giving. No evidence that disasters depresses other giving. It makes people MORE generous. We need to tell disaster donors a good story; they tend to wane over time. Disaster giving falls and rises in lockstep with media coverage. Email Network for Good (katya.andresen@networkforgood.org), to be on the portal page when disasters happen. News outlets link to Network for Good, so exposure will be high.

Giving makes us happy.

It is good to pair giving with great images and storytelling. You can run a photo contest or ask your constituents to get quality images. Make your picture one person -- the singularity effect. People dislike slideshows on homepages. Instead, randomize your homepage images.

During disasters - use portals. These are connected to news sites.

Make the donation warm and fuzzy, and EASY. Giving (even online) is emotional. Create an emotional experience.

- Visual - pictures are hugely powerful
- Visceral - connect around the senses
- Storytelling

Don't put a paragraph of text at the top of the page with no photo!

Great analogy: HUGE photo like at the art museum, tiny placard explaining it. What is inside the frames in your organization's art museum?

How to get great photos: Daily Ray of Hope email - Sierra Club member submits a photo, anyone allowed to use them. Photo contests. Image collection device! Comment search on

Flickr. You cannot get too close. ONE person is better than multiple--dozens of studies prove the "singularity effect." Works for animals too. When you move from talking about one person to two people, giving drops off.

Diversity effect in photos. Two or three really great photos and people can switch them. DO NOT have a moving image. Most orgs divvy up home page among warring factions. That inward focus is very expensive. You satisfy internal constituencies and leave money on the table. Do you want the picture to raise money, or make you feel politically correct?

Do donors really want to log in and track their information online? The only two ways that donors log on to their platform: April 14th (consider sending out tax receipts via email). Recurring donors do want to log in.

Must give a huge benefit to being able to log in. For example, "one-click giving." Donation form again: short and sweet. Photo and four words. One page. Must see that it's a form above the fold. DO NOT take you to a landing page with options. If they clicked Donate, they're in giving mode.

National giving: \$300 million/year; 75% individual giving; 10% online giving. Total is \$20 billion-ish. Network for Good: \$150 million of that. Look at ALL the studies and be cognizant of what the different groups represent (for example, Network For Good represents lots of small and medium orgs).

Have a rapid response plan and understand which news stories will relate to you. Media spikes are a fundraising opportunity. Get copy pre-approved. Have a way to push the "we're in rapid response mode" button. THE BEST MOMENTS OF YOUR YEAR WILL NOT BE THE ONES YOU CAN PLAN IN ADVANCE. Piggyback on things that are not logically related to your cause. Be opportunistic about news media. (eg. NYC schoolkids in Oscars...good thing they had an arts program in their schools.) Make sure it is an authentic connection, though (don't just say "Charlie Sheen" in your subject line).

How fast is online giving growing? Total, aggregate giving is doubling. OR can look by specific nonprofit--how much does the same org bring in year over year? 17-20%. Typical nonprofit is getting better at it. People are moving that direction. Also: it's only 10%--don't throw out your postage meter.

Multi-channel giving. More and more, people give online at disasters and year end, but otherwise are impulsive about seeing what comes their way. Telemarketing responsiveness is correlated with people signing up for email list.

It is not about you it is about your constituents! Tell their story. This applies to email, your website, print pieces, etc. . .

PuppiesBehindBars.com = GREAT photo that tells a story. Does not need words.

Giving is personal. Be relevant. Email segmentation is not hard. Speak to people based on what their interests are and tailor content to them. Stealth tests internally to point to higher results when you do this, and then get decision makers behind you.

Champions vs. Friends. Social media has looser ties in general. There are some people who are devotees to your cause and are champions for you. You should have a special plan for cultivating them. Other people give to you because their friend (a champion) requested that you do.

Giving is, above all, about happiness and hope. "Most fundraisers probably don't think of themselves in the business of selling happiness to donors, but that is their job." The Science of Giving by M.A. Strahilevitz

RocketSurgeryMadeEasy - to do testing.