



# Social Donor Study

UNDERSTANDING MOTIVATORS

& GIVING BEHAVIORS

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POWERFUL FUNDRAISING SOLUTIONS

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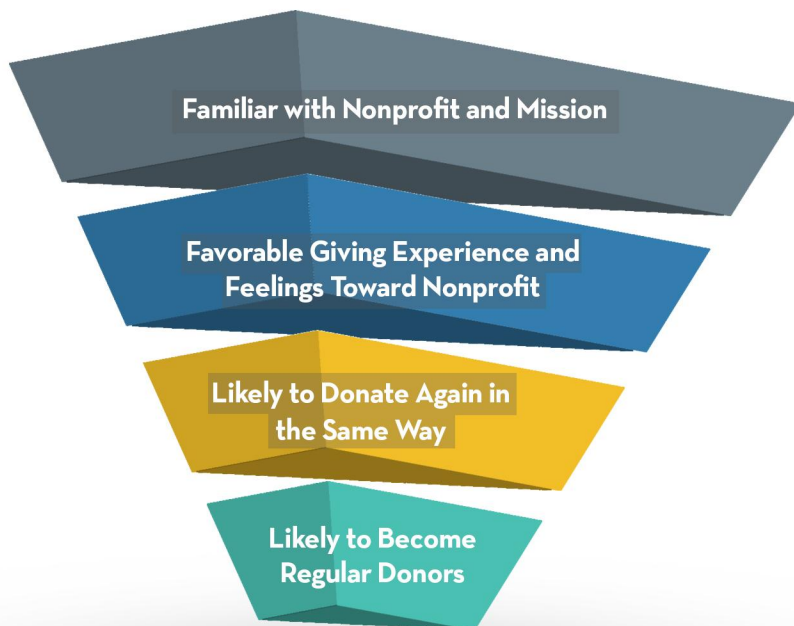
# Introduction

## Who are Social Donors?

Whether it's sponsoring a family member in an awareness walk, attending an annual gala event, or donating to a friend's birthday challenge campaign – the act of giving is centered around social relationships and interactions. Their connection to the nonprofit organization and reasons for giving can be very different than the traditional donor base.

This unique donor segment also has clear motivators, preferences and giving behaviors that increase their likelihood to give, and also to convert from single-time givers to regular donors.

## Social Donor Conversion Funnel



**There's been a gap in knowledge about these unique types of donors, until now.**

**We surveyed 1,056 Social Donors in the U.S. to better understand the unique motivators and mindset.** Study results are based on an online survey conducted by Edge Research of self-reported Social Donors who gave to a nonprofit organization in the past 12 months.

Nearly a quarter of U.S. adults identify themselves as Social Donors. While these donors can be harder to retain, the revenue gained from their event and peer-to-peer donations can contribute significantly to a nonprofit's annual budget.

We designed this study to help nonprofits better understand what attracts Social Donors to their cause, motivates them to give, and converts them to regular donors. We've included actionable tips throughout this report, so organizations can leverage the findings to not only bring in more Social Donors, but also move more of them through the conversion funnel, and create engaged and loyal donors.



# Key Findings

## Many Social Donors aren't deeply committed to a nonprofit.

Fifty-one percent of Social Donors are only somewhat familiar or unfamiliar with an organization prior to donating, with 38 percent of Social Donors giving to a new nonprofit for the first time.

## Social networks are critical to the success of event-based and peer-to-peer fundraising.

Majority of Social Donors find out about giving opportunities from a friend, family member, or colleague through word-of-mouth, social media, and email.

## Ease, mission, and impact are top motivators.

The number one reason why Social Donors give is because it is easy to do. Ease of the giving experience is also a top priority when evaluating different giving opportunities. While eight-in-10 (81 percent) donors found their last social donation "very easy," there are still nearly 20 percent who did not, marking a significant opportunity for nonprofits to streamline the donor activation process.

## There's great opportunity for increasing Social Donor retention and conversion.

Little more than a quarter (28 percent) of Social Donors say they will become annual or monthly donors in the future. About half (54 percent) anticipate repeating their giving behavior in the next 12 months.

## Pre- and post-event communication impact conversion.

Donors who did not receive follow-up communication are significantly less likely to say they will convert to a regular monthly or annual donor. Social Donors are most open to being solicited by a friend, colleague, or family member.

## Social Donors care more about impact than recognition.

The biggest factor driving likelihood to convert to a monthly or annual donor is that Social Donors understand the true impact of their donation - that is a key driver to long-term engagement.





# Social Donors: Who They Are

In this study, Social Donors are self-reported as someone who has given through a fundraising event (like a gala or golf event), sponsored someone in a fundraising event (like a walk, run or ride) or contributed to an occasion or campaign (such as a birthday, memoriam, or challenge). The largest number donated to an occasion/challenge in the last 12 months (see **Figure 1**). Social Donors like to repeat the same giving behavior, with only three-in-10 donors giving in more than one of these ways within the last year. Social Donors are also active volunteers with 45 percent having volunteered their time in the last year, and 21 percent specifically volunteering to help organize a fundraising event.

## How Social Donors Support Causes

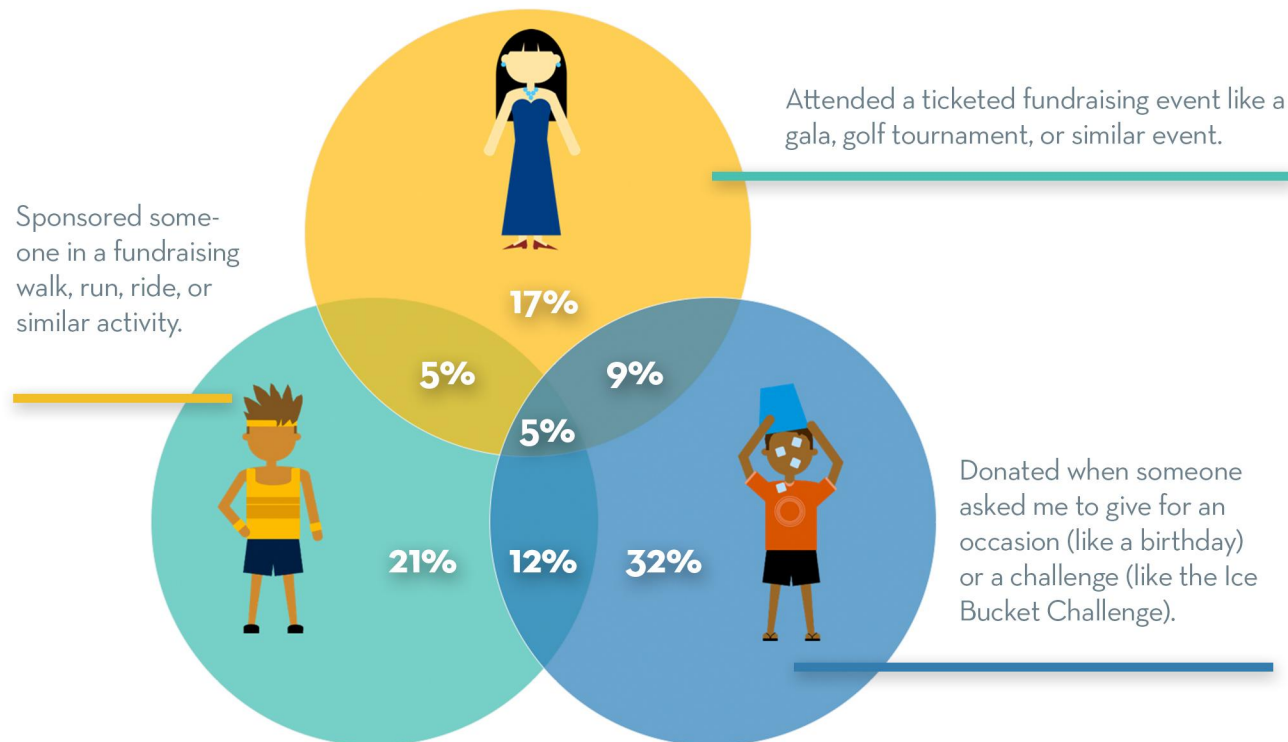


Figure 1: In the last 12 months, in which of the following ways have you supported nonprofit organizations, charities and/or causes? (Select all that apply.)

## LEGEND



Event Donors



Sponsor Donors



Occasion/Challenge Donors

## Social Donor Study

### How They Give

For the purpose of this study, donors were asked to consider the last donation they made through event-based fundraising (i.e. ticketed-fundraising event, sponsoring someone in a run/walk/ride, or a virtual challenge). Fifty-nine percent of Social Donors had most recently given to a nonprofit organization they had previously donated to, however, four-in-10 social donors (38 percent) engaged with a new organization for the first time.

The majority of donations were between \$50-\$199, with an average donation of \$197.90 (see **Figure 2**). The largest percentage of Social Donors gave by cash or check in person (55 percent), followed by 38 percent donating online (see **Figure 3**). Millennials and GenXers are most likely to have donated online, while 21 percent of Gen Z donors gave a mobile donation in the past 12 months. Interestingly, higher level donations were just as likely to have been made online. Nearly 20 percent of donations that were more than \$500 were made on a mobile device, with 11 percent gifted via text (see **Figure 4**).

### Typical Social Donor Gift

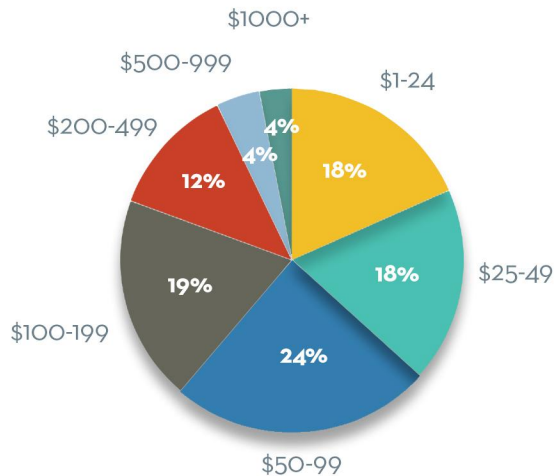


Figure 2: How much was your donation? Your best estimate is fine.

### How Social Donors Give

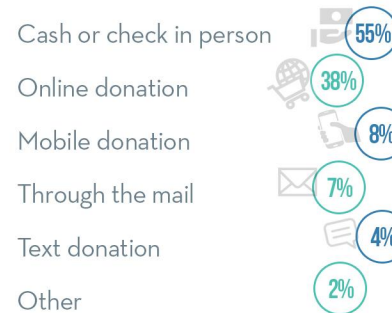


Figure 3: How did you make your donation? (Select all that apply)

### Donations of \$500+



Figure 4: Donations of 500+

## Actionable Tips

- Don't be afraid to ask for larger gifts from Social Donors. Donations of \$100+ accounted for 39 percent of giving with surveyed Social Donors.



- Get creative with higher-level giving opportunities at your next event or peer-to-peer campaign, such as fund-a-need donation levels, VIP tickets, and unique "priceless" auction packages.
- Also, be sure to add those higher donation levels when building online donation forms and participant fundraising pages.



## Social Donor Study

### Types of Social Donors

Donors were segmented into groups based on the type of event or campaign they most recently engaged with to better identify unique influencers and behaviors. While there are similarities across the different types of Social Donors, there are also some key differences (see **Figure 5**). The findings show there needs to be some familiarity and positive feelings towards an organization to instigate a donation. Event Donors are most familiar with the nonprofit they are supporting and typically give larger donations, while Occasion/Challenge Donors are more likely to be first-time donors.

### Social Donor Giving Behavior



Event Donors



Sponsor Donors



Occasion/Challenge Donors

	Event Donors	Sponsor Donors	Occasion/Challenge Donors
<b>Donated Before</b>			
Yes	67%	61%	46%
No	31%	36%	49%
<b>Amount of donation</b>			
Average	\$382	\$113	\$99
Median	\$100	\$50	\$50
<b>How they donated</b>			
Cash or check in person	64%	53%	46%
Online donation	27%	42%	45%
<b>How familiar they were before donating</b>			
Very familiar	56%	47%	43%
Somewhat familiar	35%	38%	39%
Not too familiar	5%	9%	12%
Had only heard of the name of the org.	1%	1%	2%
Had never heard of the org. before	2%	4%	3%

Figure 5: Giving behavior of Social Donor groups

## Actionable Tips

- Build peer-to-peer occasion/challenge campaigns with first-time donors in mind.



- Appeal to their preference to be connected to the causes they support - share your mission in all communications and outreach.
- Follow-up communications and cultivation strategies are critical with these new donors.

## Social Donor Study

**Figure 6** shows the demographics breakdown for different types of Social Donors. Event Donors are more likely to be men giving at higher donation levels. Sponsor Donors and Occasion/Challenge Donors are more likely to be women donating online. Event Donors are more likely to have a higher amount of education and household income. There are few generational differences between the three Social Donor groups.

## Social Donor Demographics



Event Donors



Sponsor Donors



Occasion/Challenge Donors

<b>GENDER</b>			
Male	56%	47%	32%
Female	44%	52%	67%
<b>GENERATION</b>			
Gen Z (1996-2000)	6%	5%	5%
Millennials (1981-1995)	36%	31%	41%
Gen X (1965-1980)	30%	30%	33%
Boomers (1946-1964)	28%	33%	22%
<b>EDUCATION</b>			
Less than college	43%	55%	64%
College or more	57%	45%	36%
<b>HHI</b>			
<\$25K	9%	8%	13%
\$25-50K	14%	23%	31%
\$50-100K	37%	37%	37%
\$100-200K	27%	23%	13%
\$200K+	10%	5%	2%

Figure 6: Demographics of social donor groups

## Actionable Tips

- *It may be time for your organization to review your event and peer-to-peer strategy with the new Social Donor persona in mind.*



- *Are you designing your events with male donors in mind? This could mean testing out new types of fundraising events or auction items to better engage male donors.*
- *Women are most likely to engage with birthday campaigns and virtual challenges; design communications, messaging and tone with this group in mind.*



# Attracting Social Donors

The success of event-based and peer-to-peer fundraising is tied to promoting within the social network of a prospective donor. This is where the social nature of giving comes into play for this donor group. The majority of Social Donors hear about events and donation opportunities through a friend, family member, or colleague (see **Figure 7**). This is especially true for peer-to-peer focused Sponsor Donors and occasion/challenge campaigns. About a quarter (26 percent) of fundraising event attendees hear about an upcoming event from the nonprofit itself.

## How They Heard About The Donation Opportunity

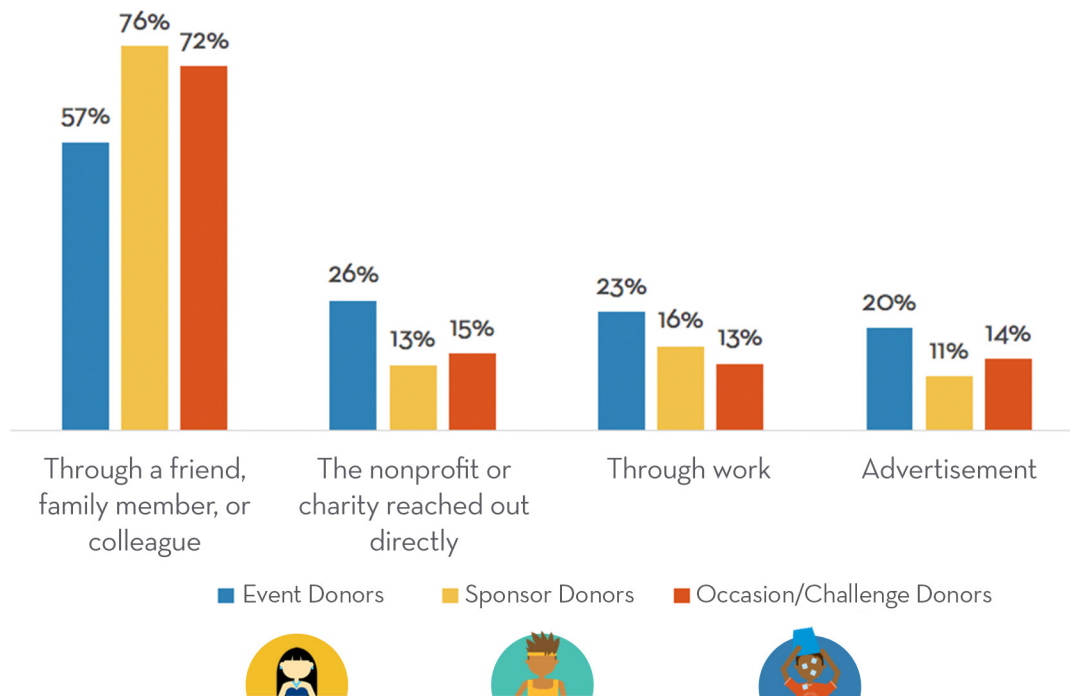


Figure 7: Thinking about that last “event-based” fundraising event you donated to... How did you hear about this donation opportunity? (Select all that apply.)

## Actionable Tips

- It's important to build a promotion plan that includes activating your most loyal supporters.



- While this may be common practice with peer-to-peer fundraising, some organizations are seeing great success with adding Ambassador Fundraising to an existing signature event such as a gala. Ambassadors can help sell tickets and sponsorships, as well as raise additional funds leading up to an event.

## Social Donor Study

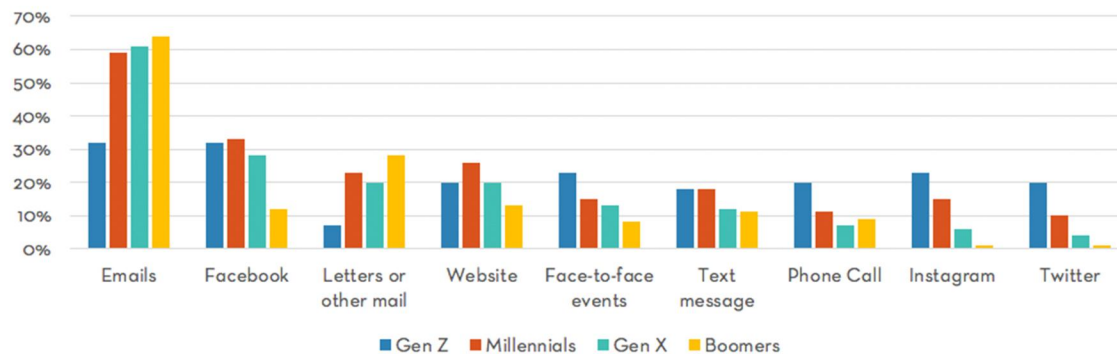
Word-of-mouth, social media, and email are the top ways Social Donors find out about fundraising events and campaigns (see **Figure 8**). Social media plays a more critical role in the success of occasion/challenge campaigns, while almost half of donors (46 percent) hearing about the campaign through a social media channel. Traditional media channels (television, radio, billboard, print) are the least successful, each reaching only four to seven percent of donors.

### Where They Heard



← Figure 8: Where did you find out about this donation opportunity? (Select all that apply.)

### Communication Channel Preference



Email is the favorite communication channel overall when donors hear directly from nonprofit organizations. As seen in other industry studies, younger generations are more open to a wide variety of communication channels. However, Gen Z is just as likely to prefer communication via social media (specifically Facebook) as they do email (**Figure 9**).

Figure 9: In which of the following ways do you most prefer to receive information or communication from that organization? (Select up to 3.)



## Social Donor Priorities

Just as we see with other donor groups, there is increased competition for a Social Donor’s attention and gifts with many competing fundraising events and campaigns. So, what makes an attractive giving opportunity to Social Donors? When asked what’s most important when considering a fundraising opportunity or event, Social Donors prioritize mission, impact, and ease (see **Figure 10**). Event Donors, who tend to be most familiar with the organization, prioritize impact. Sponsor and Occasion/Challenge Donors who are less familiar, prioritize learning about the mission. We see the importance of an easy giving experience across all types of Social Donors.

Nearly half of all Donors believe it’s important for organizations to communicate their accomplishments through the campaign or event. Low donation amounts, along with fundraiser and volunteer recognition, are far less important to Social Donors.

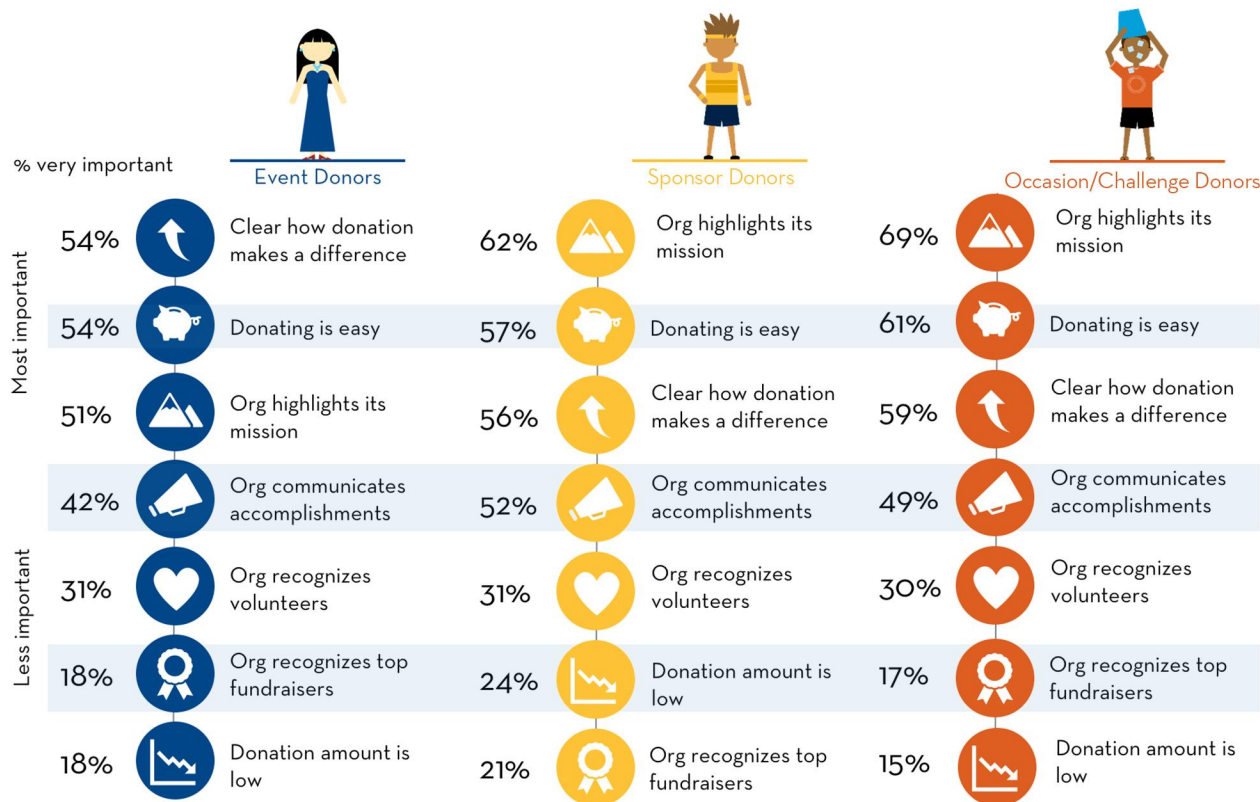


Figure 10: When you are considering going to a fundraising opportunity or event... How important are each of the following?

## Actionable Tips

- Re-examine what you are leading with when you are trying to attract Social Donors - mission and impact need to be at the forefront.



- These Donors are looking for deeper connections and are mission motivated. Think beyond themes and event taglines when designing your events and campaigns. Why you exist and how your organization parlays donations into impact should be central to your communications, messaging, and marketing.

## Social Donor Study

### Spotlight on Event Donor Priorities

When looking specifically at priorities for fundraising events, we see Event Donors care far less about celebrity guests or an open bar and more about the event location and opportunities to get the community involved (see **Figure 11**). A compelling program is just as important to Event Donors as the food or vendors. Interestingly, these donors prefer casual events over formal events. Overall, there is room for improvement in fundraising events, with only 53 percent rating their last fundraising event as excellent.

Over recent years there's been an increase in providing multiple giving and social opportunities during a fundraising event to engage different types of donors. **Figure 12** shows the most popular ways Event Donors give at fundraising events (in rank order).

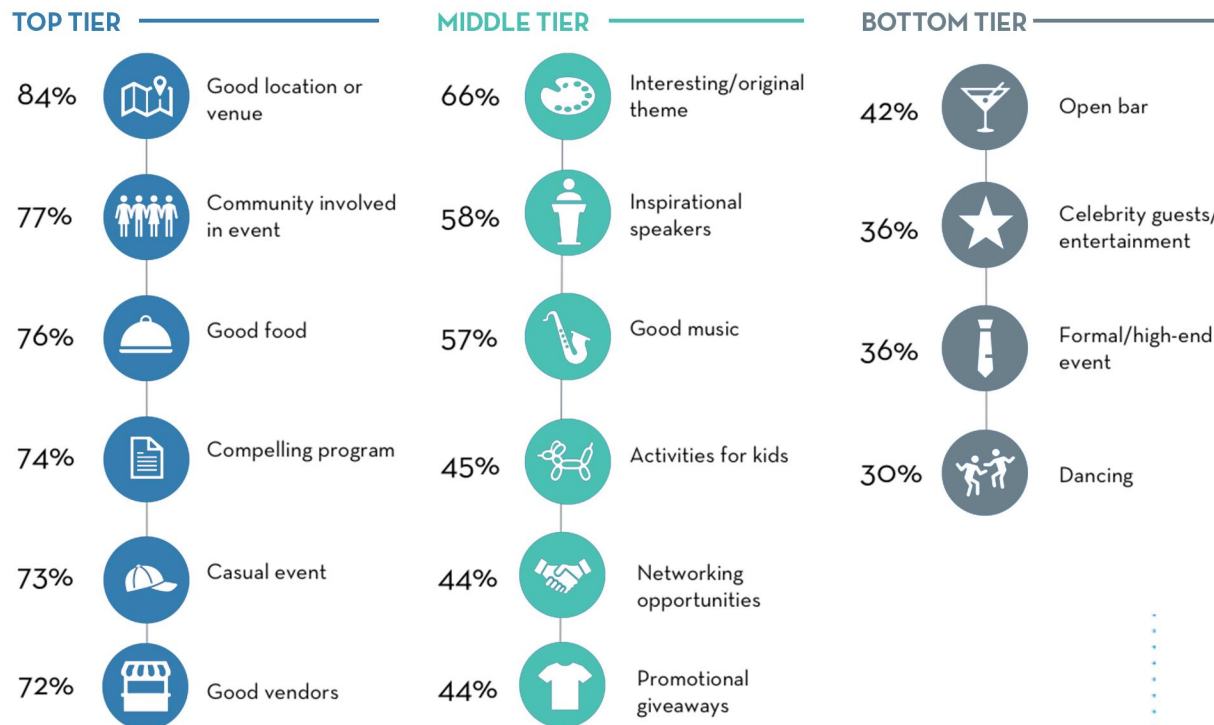


Figure 11: When you are considering going to an event (like a gala, golf tournament, etc.) for a nonprofit or charitable organization, how important are each of the following?

### How Event Donors Give



Figure 12: Through which method/s did you make donations as part of the event? (Select all that apply.)



# Securing the Gift: Motivating Social Donors

Once a nonprofit has gotten a Social Donor’s attention, there’s a combination of factors that move them to actually give. Ease, mission and impact are top motivators across all Social Donor groups. The largest percentage (64 percent) agree that an easy giving experience played a role in their donation. They give in the moment, when’ it’s easy, when they’ve connected with the mission and the impact of their gift is clear. See **Figure 13** for the top seven reasons why Social Donors give.

How well do each describe **WHY** you donated?



1) It was easy to do	64%
2) I care about the mission of the organization/cause	60%
3) The money raised would make a difference	59%
4) I wanted to support the person who asked me to donate	54%
5) I thought the event would be fun	47%
6) The organization made it clear exactly how my donation would be used	46%
7) I care about the person who asked me to donate, versus the organization/cause	45%

Figure 13: Thinking about the last time you donated through event-based fundraising, how well do each of the following describe **WHY** you donated? (Figure shows top 7 reasons, describes perfectly)

Less common reasons why Social Donors give include the organization persuaded them, the person soliciting them has previously donated to their causes, and the money raised would benefit them or someone they know personally (i.e. crowdfunding). Social Donors are least likely to be motivated by incentives or gifts and tax implications.

## Actionable Tips

- *No more donating in a vacuum. To reiterate, Social Donors expect the experience, mission, and giving are all tied together. This means including mission messaging throughout your appeals, materials, events, and campaign AND ensuring donors have easy ways to connect your cause (i.e. fundraising technology).*



- *The rise of mobile donations means the act of giving can be completely virtual - Social Donors may never interact with your organization at a physical event. Make sure landing pages, calls to action, online forms, and participant pages are branded and showcase impact statements tailored to your organization.*

## Social Donor Study

If it wasn't clear before, it certainly is now. Ease is a driving factor in activating social donors and moving them to complete a gift or donation. Ease, ease, ease in all three subgroups is where it is at.

The data shows that a seamless giving experience is especially important for Social Donors new to a nonprofit. First-time donors prioritize ease and supporting the person who solicited them, over the mission as seen in **Figure 14**. Sponsor Donors are most motivated to give in support of the person who asked, and for many, this is as or more important than the cause. Event Donors care more about the mission and impact than the event itself.

### Top Motivators for First-Time Donors

It was easy to do	60%
I wanted to support the person who asked me to donate	55%
The money raised would make a difference	52%
I care about the mission of the organization/cause	50%
I thought the event would be fun	43%
The organization made it clear exactly how my donation would be used	43%
I care about the person who asked me to donate, versus the organization/cause	42%
My friends, colleagues, and/or family were going to the event	39%
The organization made a good case for why I should donate	33%

### FIRST TIME DONORS

 31% of Event Donors

 36% of Sponsor Donors

 49% of Occasion/Challenge Donors

## Actionable Tips

- *In the new world of Social Donors, you are relying on someone else to be your ambassador, solicitor, storyteller and to effectively convey your mission.*





- *Take the time to develop “Ambassador” materials, everything from sample social posts, to mission emails and participant pages can easily be customized and personalized for maximum impact.*

Figure 14: Thinking about the last time you donated through event-based fundraising, how well do each of the following describe WHY you donated?

### Top Motivators by Social Donor Type

 1) Ease  
2) Mission  
3) Impact  
Event Donors

 1) Support Person Who Asked  
2) Ease  
3) Mission  
Sponsor Donors

 1) Ease  
2) Mission  
3) Impact  
Occasion/Challenge Donors



## Social Donor Study

The data on motivators and priorities show the importance of the giving experience, however, almost 20 percent of Social Donors did NOT find it “very easy” to make a donation. Millennials have higher expectations for the giving experience, making up 35 percent of those who didn’t find the giving experience very easy (see **Figure 15**). The largest portion of donors who found their giving experience not very easy gave by cash or check in-person (46 percent).

Nearly just as many Social Donors found their online donation experience very easy (38 percent) as those who found it not very easy (38 percent). Event Donors and Sponsor Donors made up the largest portion of donors who found their giving experience not very easy.

### Ease of Social Donations

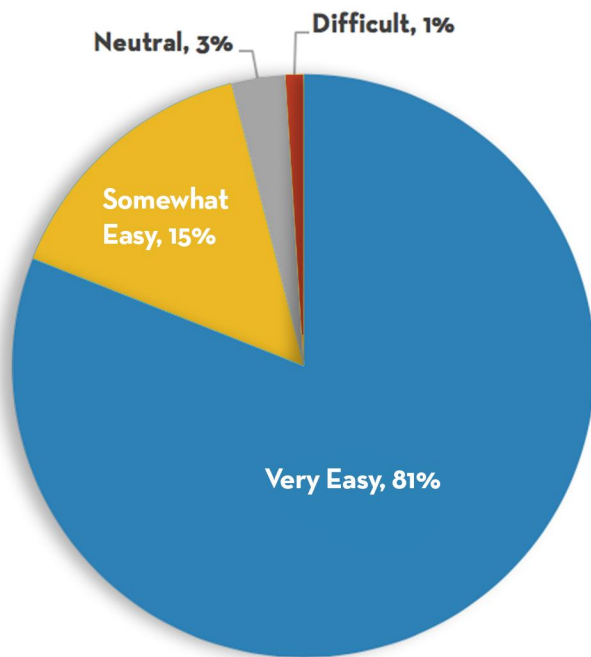


Figure 15: How easy was it to make the donation?

	VERY EASY	NOT VERY EASY
Gen Z (1996-2000)	3%	14%
Millennials (1981-1995)	36%	35%
Gen X (1965-1980)	31%	30%
Boomers (1946-1964)	30%	22%
Event Donors	32%	38%
Sponsor Donors	39%	37%
Occasion/Challenge Donors	29%	25%
Cash or check in-person	57%	46%
Online donation	38%	38%
Through the mail	6%	11%
Mobile donation	7%	13%
Text donation	4%	6%
Other	2%	3%
Not sure	0%	1%

## Actionable Tips

- *Time to seriously examine those manual donation processes! They are dragging you and your cause down with Social Donors.*



- *Weave in technology to make giving more donor-friendly and to enable your supporters to engage their social networks.*
- *If you’ve already made the leap to technology - make sure you shine a spotlight on the whole donor experience.*
- *Ask yourself: How many steps does it take to click and give? Can they register, give, and engage in one location? Is your user interface easy to navigate?*



# Retaining Social Donors

With donor retention rates holding steady at 45.5 percent\*, nonprofits have to work harder than ever to cultivate loyal, year-round supporters. To get a better understanding of the likeliness for retaining Social Donors, survey respondents were asked to rate how likely they were to support the same nonprofit in the next 12 months. It's important to note this study gives insights into Donor intentions, not actual retention rates.

About half of Social Donors say they are very likely to give in the same way within in the next 12 months. Sponsor Donors especially have a high likelihood to be repeat Sponsor Donors in the future. Occasion/Challenge Donors are the least likely to give in the same way (46 percent).

## Very likely to support organization in each of the following ways

	Total	Event Donors	Sponsor Donors	Occasion/Challenge Donors
Give in the same way	54%	51%	63%	46%
Make a one-time donation	41%	42%	39%	41%
Donate for a specific program or giving campaign	36%	39%	34%	35%
Become a regular annual donor	24%	29%	23%	20%
Become a regular monthly donor	13%	16%	13%	9%

Figure 16: Thinking about the last organization/cause you supported through event-based fundraising, how likely are you to support that organization/cause within the next twelve months in each of the following ways? (Very likely percentage shown)

More than a quarter (28 percent) of Social Donors say they intend to become regular donors in the future with regular annual or monthly gifts. Event Donors are most likely to convert to a recurring monthly or annual gift (34 percent). Again, we see Occasion/Challenge Donors are the hardest to convert to a regular, loyal donor.

Figure 17 shows how much Social Donors intend to give to the same organization over the next 12 months. The majority (59 percent) plan to repeat their donation at the same level. Event Donors represent the best prospects for conversion at a higher dollar amount. Fewer than one-in-10 say they will give less than their original gift.

## Intentions for Additional Donations

	Total	Event Donors	Sponsor Donors	Occasion/Challenge Donors
Give more	29%	34%	27%	27%
Give the same	59%	58%	64%	53%
Give less	9%	6%	6%	15%
Average expected gift	\$309.70	\$530	\$191	\$218
Median expected gift	\$100	\$150	\$75	\$50

Figure 17: Is this more, the same, or less than you donated before the event-based donation? How much will you donate to this organization or cause in the next twelve months?

\*According to the 2018 Fundraising Effectiveness Project Survey Report: [www.afpfep.org](http://www.afpfep.org)

## Donor Recognition

Thank-yous and donor recognition still play an important role in retaining donors. Social Donors are most interested in receiving information on the impact of their donation along with the thank you for their support. However, this is something they often do not get. **Figure 18** shows how Social Donors are commonly thanked and their preference for recognition.

### Social Donor Recognition

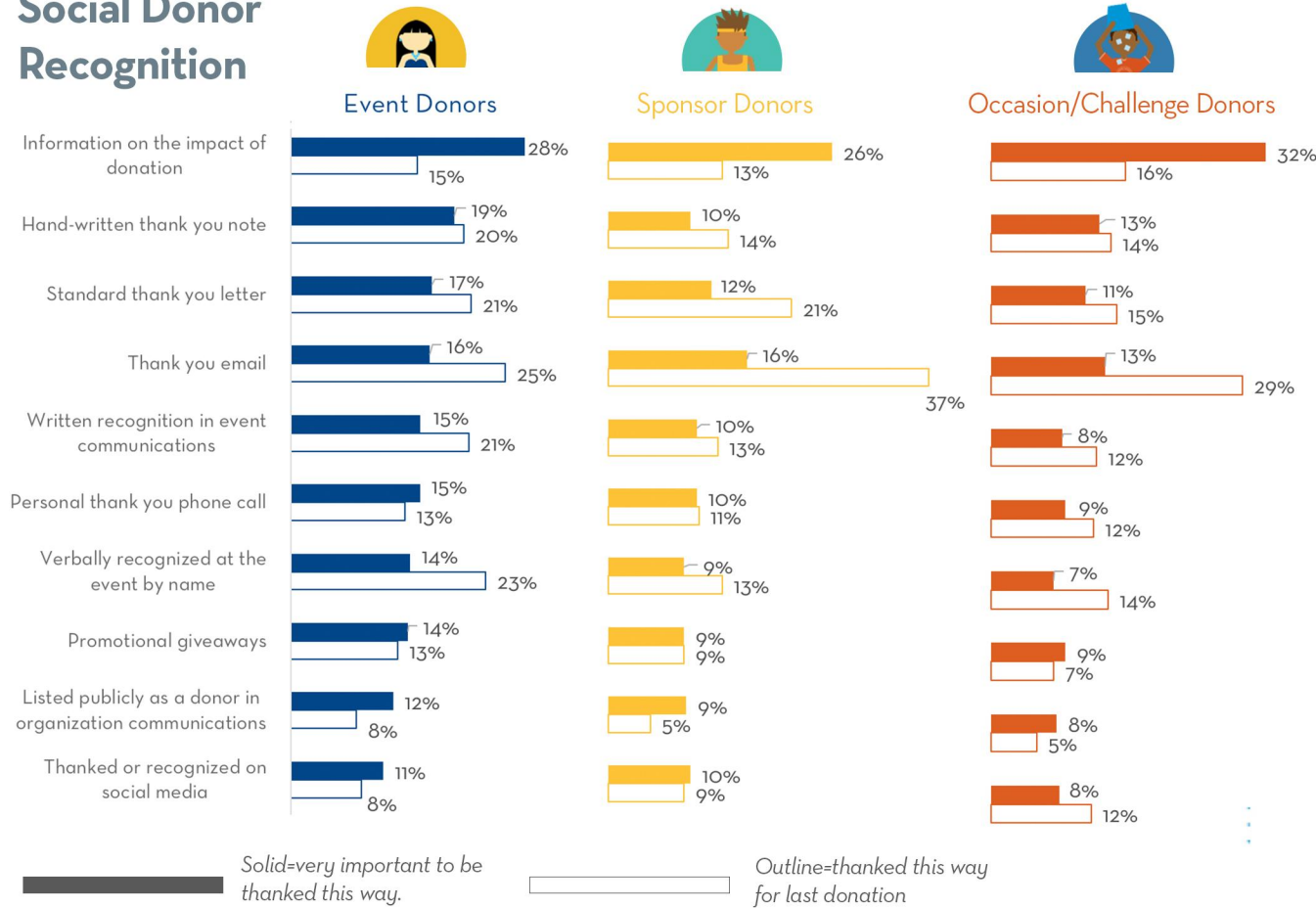


Figure 18: How important is it to be thanked or recognized for your donation in each of the following ways? In which of the following ways were you thanked for your last donation through event-based fundraising? (Select all that apply.)

## Actionable Tips

- Simple graphics and quick videos can tie your mission, their gift, and the difference a contribution made into one effective communication designed to show gratitude and help move givers on the journey to becoming regular donors.



- Move beyond simple text copy in Thank You emails. Most platforms allow for easy embedding of images and video. Create email messages with images and visual messaging to engage Social Donors more.

## Social Donor Study

### Follow-up Communication

It should come as no surprise that follow-up communication and engagement is very important to retaining Social Donors. Donors who did not receive any follow-up communication were significantly less likely to say they will convert to a regular donor (only four percent). **Figure 19** shows how donors continued engaging post donation.

The most common ways Social Donors stay engaged with an organization is through email, visiting their website, and social media. Nearly 20 percent of Social Donors surveyed never heard from the nonprofit organization following their donation. This accounts for about a quarter of Sponsor and Occasion/Challenge Donors.

### How have you stayed in touch?

	Total	Event Donors	Sponsor Donors	Occasion/Challenge Donors
Received emails and/or e-newsletters	31%	30%	31%	31%
Visited their website	28%	30%	24%	33%
Followed them on social media	27%	31%	22%	29%
Attended face-to-face events	20%	28%	15%	16%
Got information in the mail	18%	20%	15%	19%
Volunteered for the cause	15%	22%	13%	8%
Received text/SMS messages from the organization	10%	11%	8%	11%
Received phone calls	9%	13%	5%	10%
Used their mobile app	6%	9%	4%	6%
None of the above/never heard from them again	19%	8%	27%	23%

Figure 19: In which of the following ways have you stayed in touch with the organization after donating at an event, by sponsoring another person, or by donating for an occasion or challenge? (Select all that apply.)

## Actionable Tips

- To build a more loyal, sustainable donor base, nonprofits must spend as much time on the follow-up strategy as they do the initial promotion and appeal. Remember you're looking to move beyond the single transaction focus to building relationships that encourage additional.



- Don't just give Social Donors your templated thank-you and follow-up series. Segment your Social Donors and create a personalized follow-up series with multiple touchpoints referencing back to the event or campaign and the impact of their donation. This is especially important for first-time donors who are new to your organization.
- The post-event follow-up outreach should be as sustained as the communications efforts you put into attracting these new donors.



## Social Donor Study

### Soliciting Additional Gifts

Given the social nature of event-based and peer-to-peer fundraising, it is no surprise that peers are considered the most appropriate channel to ask for another donation. Mail and email are also considered “very acceptable” by pluralities. Younger donors are more open to other channels than Boomers are.

### Following up for Additional Donations

	Total	Gen. Z (1996-2000)	Millennials (1981-1995)	Gen. X (1965-1980)	Boomers (1946-1964)
A friend, family member, or colleague asking for a donation	52%	43%	52%	49%	55%
Letter from the organization in the mail asking you to make a donation	41%	34%	49%	40%	33%
An email from the organization asking you to make a donation	40%	43%	46%	40%	32%
A message on Facebook or another social media site asking for a donation	22%	25%	30%	23%	10%
A text/SMS message from the organization asking to make a donation	21%	27%	28%	20%	12%
Phone call from the organization asking you to make a donation	19%	34%	25%	17%	10%
A request to leave a gift in your will or set up an annuity or trust	17%	27%	27%	15%	6%

A friend, family member, or colleague asking for a donation



Event Donors

42%



Sponsor Donors

57%



Occasion/Challenge Donors

55%

## Actionable Tips

- *The traditional letters and emails for donations are still acceptable by Social Donors, but, by far and away, leveraging peer groups is the way to go. Remember the number one way Social Donors find out about giving opportunities is through their friends and family.*



- *So, how can your organization leverage social groups in follow-up communications and appeals? This could include anything from sending follow-up communications directly from the person who brought them in to an event or campaign or social posts featuring their connection to your event/campaign, results and mission impact.*

Figure 20: Below are a variety of ways that charitable organizations may follow up with you to ask for another donation. How acceptable are each of the following to you personally? (% very acceptable shown)

# Converting Social Donors

The study findings show there needs to be some level of familiarity and positive feelings towards an organization to instigate that initial donation. After that, many motivators and factors come into play to convert a Social Donor to a regular annual or monthly supporter. **Figure 21** shows overall benchmarks for the percentage of surveyed Social Donors who moved through the conversion funnel from awareness to likely become a regular donor. It's important to reiterate that the likelihood to give again and become a regular donor is based on donor intentions.

## Social Donor Conversion Funnel



Figure 21: How familiar were you with that organization and its mission before you donated?  
How favorable do you feel towards the last organization/cause you supported through event-based fundraising?  
How likely are you to support that organization/cause within the next twelve months in each of the following ways?

## Actionable Tips

- We encourage nonprofits to create their own conversion funnel specifically for Social Donors. Leverage the data in your systems and include questions in donor surveys to better understand their experience and familiarity with your mission.



- Treat this conversion funnel like a donor journey - dig into each one of these stages and identify areas for improvement. Look for opportunities to improve experiences, technology, and communications to move more donors from one-time givers to regular donors.
- For an additional challenge, set conversion goals to push your organization to focus on long-term cultivation and engagement beyond the single event.

## Conversion Benchmarks: Types of Social Donors

**Figure 22** shows the conversion benchmarks for the different Social Donor groups. Event Donors are more vested in the charities they support and are more likely to convert to regular Donors. Sponsors are driven by the individual over the cause and are most likely to give again in the same way. Occasion/Challenge giving is a good way to get a first gift (about half are new donors to the nonprofit), but the chance they will give again is more tenuous.




	 Event Donors	 Sponsor Donors	 Occasion/Challenge Donors
Familiar (very + somewhat)	91%	85%	82%
Favorable (very)	68%	69%	66%
Very likely to donate same way	51%	63%	46%
Very likely to become annual or monthly donor	34%	27%	23%

Figure 22: How familiar were you with that organization and its mission before you donated?  
How favorable do you feel towards the last organization/cause you supported through event-based fundraising?  
How likely are you to support that organization/cause within the next twelve months in each of the following ways?

## Actionable Tips

- *Event Donors are the most familiar with your mission and likely to become regular donors. But conversion starts before the event ever takes place.*



- *Segment your event attendees into three buckets: first-time attendees, those who come to an event every year but never give, and attendees who have converted to regular monthly or annual donors. What can you learn from each of these groups to help improve your targeting and conversion? Are there segmented messages you can send to move each of the groups through the conversion funnel?*



## Social Donor Study

### Impacting Social Donor Conversion

Similar to the motivators that activate Social Donors to complete a gift, the same motivators are what increase the likelihood that they continue to support a cause. Those who are likely to convert need to feel like their donation made a difference. In addition to a positive donation experience, it's also important that the organization makes it clear how donations are used. Social Donors are also greatly influenced to give again if they are asked by someone they know. An overall positive event and easy giving experience can influence an additional gift from Event Donors.

### Which will impact your decision to give again? Among those very likely to become regular donors (annual or monthly)

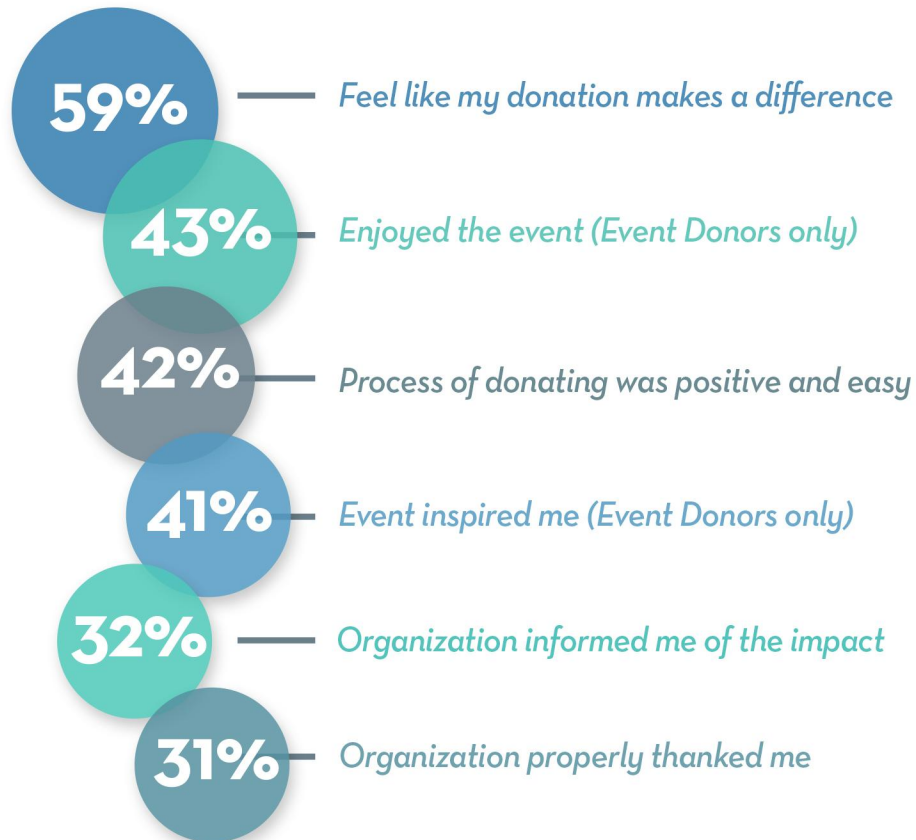


Figure 23: Which of the following impacts your decision to give to this organization or cause again? (Select all that apply.)

## Actionable Tips

- Similar to the initial gift motivators, Social Donors are most likely to give again to an organization if they understand the impact of their gift and have an easy, positive giving experience.



- Think about the items called out in Figure 23 as you're evaluating your current fundraising strategy. How can you simplify and improve the giving experience? Are you properly following-up and thanking your Social Donors? And finally, in what ways can you communicate the donation impact and show the true difference each gift makes?

# Conclusion: How To Use Our Findings

Social Donors are an active and growing segment in charitable fundraising. Changing donor demographics, the rise of fundraising technology, and the shift to social and digital communications has spawned a new group of donors. They are active. They are digitally connected. And they give for very different reasons than traditional donors.

We hope this research brings to light opportunities to better target, cultivate, and convert Social Donors into active givers and longtime, loyal supporters.

Benchmark your Social Donors – dig into your retention and conversion data, and target areas for improvement. Identify where you are connecting already with Social Donors and understand your current conversion rates. Uncover the opportunities to align your cultivation and fundraising practices with the emerging needs, motivators, and giving trends outlined in this study.

Most of all, start talking to and folding in this new segment into your fundraising. Survey your Social Donors – find out their satisfaction with past giving experiences and why those that converted stay connected to your organization. Take these findings and test new strategies (or improve old ones).

- **Create giving opportunities with new Donor personas in mind.** Rethink your existing fundraising strategy and personas based on the Social Donor psychographic and demographic trends. Align donor priorities with your campaign messaging and event programming.
- **Focus on the giving experience.** Whether it's online or in-person, the act of giving needs to be easy. A positive or negative giving experience greatly impacts donor retention. Build a giving experience that's quick and seamless. Lose the additional clicks and manual processing. Leverage the technology Social Donors rely on and use every day.
- **Keep the mission and impact at the forefront.** Whether it's in your marketing, social media, appeals, donation forms, or programming – it's critical that you lead with the difference Donors can make. The type of Social Donors you want to connect with and who will most likely convert to regular Donors care about the mission and want to feel confident their gift made an impact.
- **Unleash the power of social influence.** Don't underestimate the social nature of giving. The largest percentage of your next event attendees and peer-to-peer donors will come through word-of-mouth and social sharing. Leverage your biggest supporters to bring in your next loyal donors, create an army of ambassadors ready to spread the word, and mobilize their networks for your cause. Then keep their connection central throughout your cultivation efforts.

Now, go out there and build a Social Donor base that will help you change the world!





# Survey Methodology

The online survey of 1,056 Social Donors was conducted by Edge Research between October 11-22, 2018. Social Donors are defined as anyone who has given to at least one charitable organization through a ticketed fundraising event, fundraising sponsorship, occasion or challenge in the last 12 months. Data is self-reported, not transactional. Edge Research worked with an established industry sampling partner, consisting of opt-in research participants. This is a non-probability/convenience sample. Quotas were set to ensure incoming data (prior to screening for charitable donations) was census representative in terms of age and gender, region and race/ethnicity.

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## About onecause®

OneCause (formerly BidPal) is committed to helping cause-driven organizations amplify their message and raise more funds with easy-to-use fundraising solutions. First to market ten years ago with a mobile bidding solution to revolutionize silent auctions, OneCause now offers a full suite of cloud-based fundraising solutions including online giving, event management, mobile bidding, and peer-to-peer social fundraising. OneCause has supported more than 15,000 fundraising events and online campaigns, helping nonprofit organizations raise more than \$1.5 billion for their respective causes. Located in the technology hub of Indianapolis, OneCause has been recognized on the Inc. 500 list of Fastest Growing Companies, received a Techpoint MIRA award for Mobile Technology Excellence & Innovation, and was awarded a Silver Stevie® Award in the Customer Service Department of the Year - Computer Software category.

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