

# Cut Through the Clutter

With Your Year-End Fundraising



NextAfter Institute  
FOR ONLINE FUNDRAISING

2019  
EDITION



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**In Part 1 of this book, you'll discover:**

**5 key insights** to help you cut through all of the year-end fundraising clutter.

**In Part 2, you'll find:**

**10 proven strategies** based on real-life fundraising experiments to help you improve results.

# A Note From the Authors

The end of the calendar year is a potential fundraising gold mine. In fact, our data shows that the average nonprofit brings in 35% of their online revenue during the year-end season.

But each year, it's increasingly apparent that we need new online strategies to cut through all of the year-end noise.

During the 2018 year-end season (Nov. 15, 2018 – Dec. 31, 2018), we **analyzed the emails we received from 243 nonprofit organizations** spanning various sizes and verticals.

Our primary goal was to find unique insights that you can use to craft strategies that will cut through the noise of the year-end inbox and ensure that your message stands out.

To get an even clearer picture, we compared our observations

to **real online revenue figures from 25 organizations** with active online fundraising programs.

By comparing these two data sets, we've found **5 insights that you can test** this year-end season to make sure your message has the best chance of reaching your donors.

But this report doesn't stop there...

We've also outlined 10 strategies proven through real-world experimentation that can help you get more opens, clicks, donations, and revenue this year-end season.

It's our sincerest hope that these 5 insights and 10 proven strategies will lead to your best year-end fundraising campaign ever.

Enjoy the study, and best of luck in all of your fundraising efforts.

– **Nathan, Brady, Tim, and all the folks rooting for you this season at NextAfter**



# Insights from Analyzing 7000+ Emails from Year-End 2018





#1

INSIGHTS

# You Can't Expect People to Give to You

if you never ask them to donate.





58%

***58% of organizations sent emails on Giving Tuesday 2018.***



52%

***52% of organizations sent emails on December 31st, 2018.***

December 31<sup>st</sup> and Giving Tuesday are two of the largest giving days of the year. According to our data, ***these two days represent 39.8% of total year-end revenue.*** Organizations that decline to send emails on these critical days are missing out on significant potential revenue.

***Be sure to email your donors on both Giving Tuesday and December 31st.***





#2

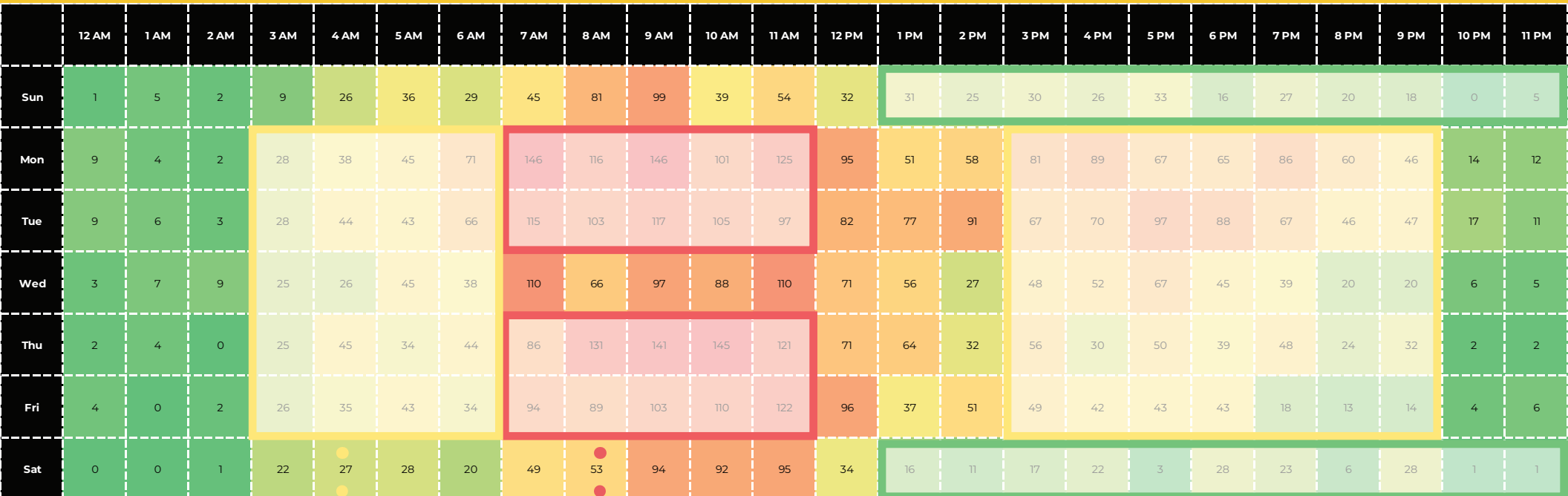
INSIGHTS

# Most Year-End Emails are Sent at the Same Times.

But sending on the weekends is an option.



# Email Send Times Heat-Map



The inbox is

**Less Crowded**

in the early morning, late afternoon, and evenings.

The inbox is

**Most Crowded**

on Mon, Tues, Thurs, and Friday from 7am to Noon.

The inbox is the

**Least Crowded**

in the afternoons on Saturday and Sunday.





# #3

## INSIGHTS

Most Emails aren't Being  
Sent by Real Humans.

Yet donors prioritize emails from people.



Research from Litmus\* has shown that 42% of people look first at ***the name of the sender*** when deciding whether or not to open an email.

Additional experimentation from NextAfter has proven that sending from a real human being (not the name of an organization) can significantly ***increase email opens***.

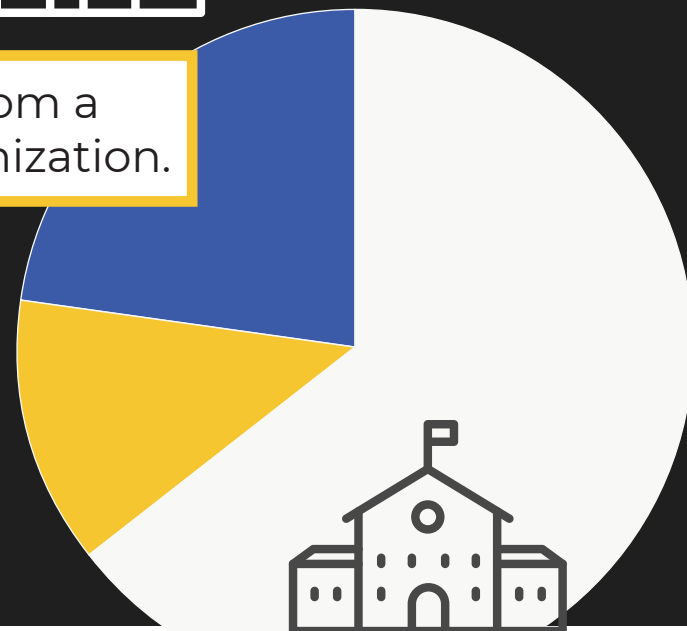
Yet, only **13% of organizations used a person as the sender** name in their year-end emails.



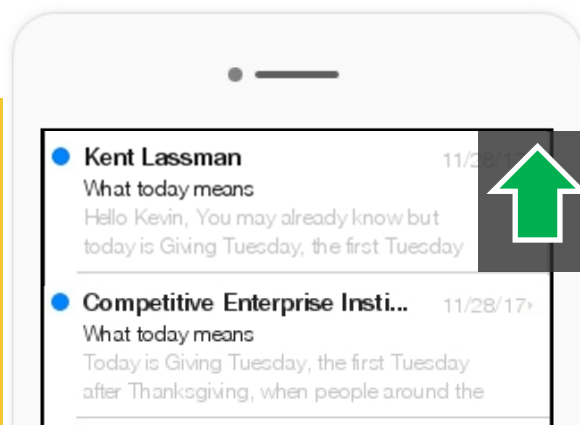
23% sent from a person & organization.



13% sent just from a person.



64% sent from a non-human sender.




**28%**  
In Email Opens

By ***sending from a real person***, this organization saw a 28% increase in email opens.

\*Litmus research based on a survey of 1,361 American adults on July 5, 2016.





# #4

INSIGHTS

## Everyone is Saying the Same Things.

Especially on December 31<sup>st</sup>.



**Subject:** Quick, before midnight!

**Subject:** URGENT: One request before midnight 🕒

**Subject:** FWD: Don't delay! 🕒 Extend the impact of y

**Subject:** You're not too late for 3X match, but hurry!

**Subject:** 🕒 Down to the wire

**Subject:** FWD: We're racing against the clock.

**Subject:** At midnight, our QUADRUPLE match offer expires

**Subject:** Today is the LAST DAY to make your gift in 2018!

**Subject:** LAST CHANCE to give in 2018

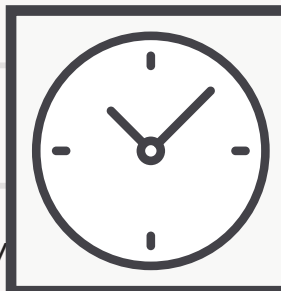
**Subject:** The countdown starts now! [3X MATCH EXPIRING]

**Subject:** It expires tonight!

**Subject:** [Urgent] Last chance to DOUBLE your gift in 2018!

**Subject:** 5X MATCH: going, going...

**Subject:** Deadline: Midnight Tonight



**63%** of Dec. 31st emails directly referenced the ***year-end deadline*** in the subject line.



**40%** of Dec. 31st emails offered some type of ***donation match*** in the subject line.

Adding urgency in a subject line is a proven way to ***increase email opens***. And matching gifts are often effective at incentivizing a donation.

But if your ***subject line says the same thing as everyone else's***, it's possible that your message is getting diluted.

Be sure to ***communicate why someone should give to you***, and use deadlines and matches as incentives to give ***now instead of later***.





#5

INSIGHTS

The last week of the year is  
being overlooked.

While Giving Tuesday might be getting too  
much attention.



9.9% of emails  
were sent on

**Giving Tuesday.**

**3.5%** of Online  
Year-End Revenue



Canadians sent 346% more  
email on Giving Tuesday  
than Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>.

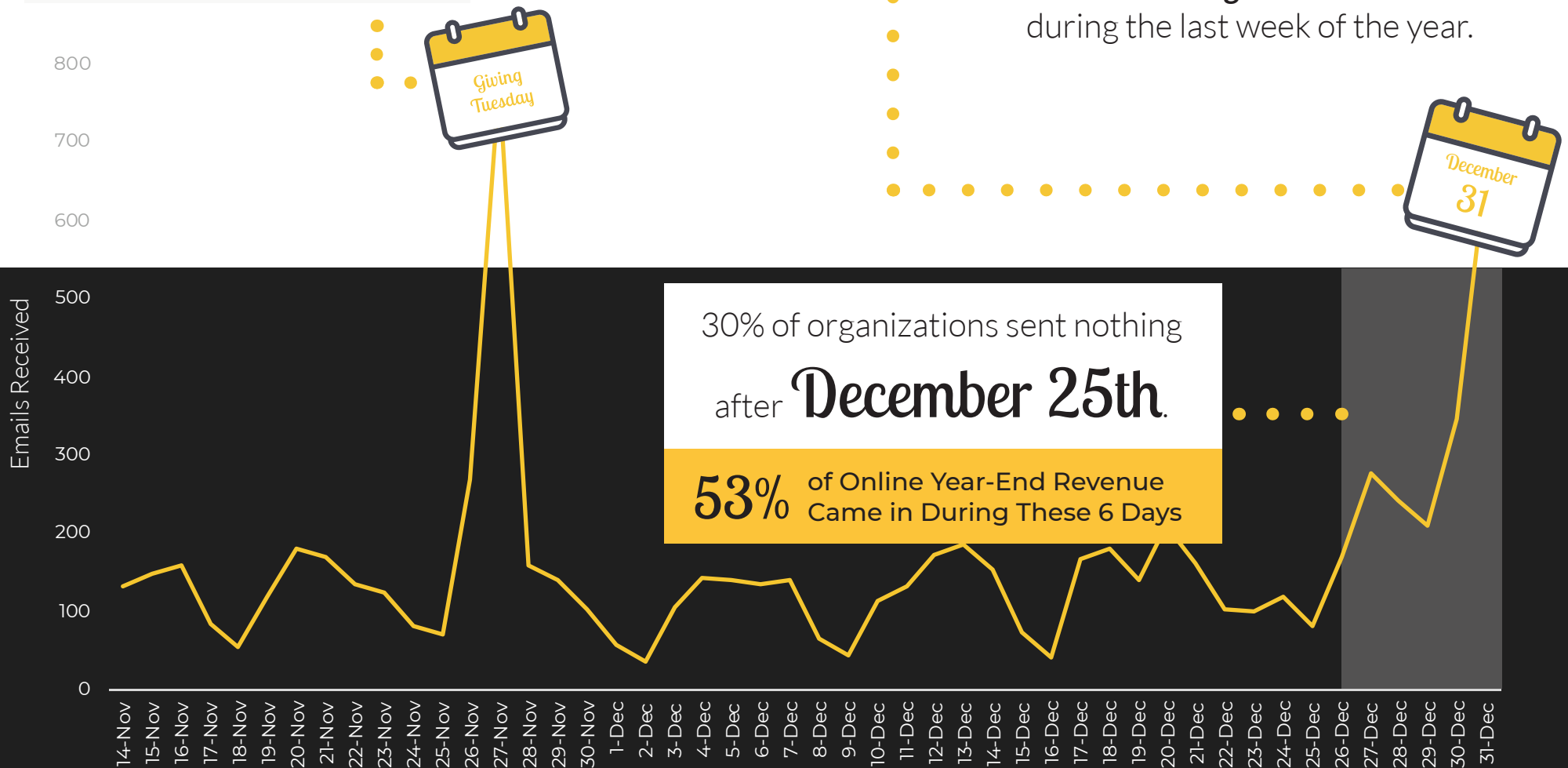
8.5% of emails  
were sent on

**December 31<sup>st</sup>.**

**36%** of Online  
Year-End Revenue

Nonprofits invested more in  
communicating to donors on  
GivingTuesday, despite **significantly  
greater revenue opportunity on the  
last day** of the year.

Don't give up on Giving Tuesday,  
but be sure to **spend more effort  
communicating on December 31<sup>st</sup>** and  
during the last week of the year.





# Strategies to Test


Based on More Than 2000  
Online Fundraising Experiments



# #1

**STRATEGIES**

*Make Your Case for  
Support Before You Even  
Send an Email.*









#2

STRATEGIES

Communicate Like A Real  
Human Being.



Give to CaringBridge by March 31 and I'll [double your donation](#), up to \$10,000.

CARING BRIDGE



Hello NAME,

I am blown away. I knew CaringBridge supporters were loyal, but when I offered up a match donation, I did not anticipate the outpouring of generosity that followed. CaringBridge is such a beloved organization.

I'm so committed to CaringBridge and inspired by all the donors who stepped up to join me that I decided to offer up another match. [If you donate between now and midnight March 31, I will double your gift, up to \\$10,000.](#)

I know that kindness is contagious firsthand—I have watched CaringBridge grow from its inception, and I've had three CaringBridge websites myself. In fact, I just recently re-read my guestbook from years ago—what a loving walk down Memory Lane.

If you join me in this match, together we'll provide double support during a health crisis. Your donation will help keep CaringBridge strong so families focus on healing. Your support is vital to bringing hearts together.

Control

Yes! Double My Donation!

Yours in strength,

Rik Lalim  
CaringBridge Advisory Council member & donor

P.S. Join me in donating to CaringBridge during today's match opportunity. [Donate now!](#)

In this experiment, the original email appeal used a very typical email template including a colored background, visible preheader text, a logo, a hero image, and a call-to-action button.

For the treatment, they wondered

if an email that appeared to be sent by a real person would increase response.

The treatment dropped the background and the hero image, although it still contained a logo and a button.

CARING BRIDGE

Hello First name,

I am blown away. I knew CaringBridge supporters were loyal, but when I offered up my first match donation, I did not anticipate the outpouring of generosity that followed. CaringBridge is such a beloved organization.

I'm so committed to CaringBridge and inspired by all the donors who stepped up to join me that I decided to offer up another match. [If you donate between now and midnight March 31, I will double your gift, up to \\$10,000.](#)

I know that kindness is contagious firsthand—I have watched CaringBridge grow from its inception, and I have had three CaringBridge websites myself. In fact, I just recently re-read my guestbook from years ago—what a loving walk down Memory Lane.

If you join me in this match, together we'll provide double support during a health crisis. Your donation will help keep CaringBridge strong so families focus on healing. Your support is vital to bringing hearts together.

Treatment

Together, we are stronger. Your donation is vital to bringing hearts together.

Yes! Double My Donation!

Yours in strength,

Rik Lalim  
CaringBridge Advisory Council member & donor

P.S. Join me in donating to CaringBridge during today's match opportunity. [Donate now!](#)

80%

Increase in Click Rate

## Key Takeaway

A more personal email increased click-through rate by 80%. And we consistently see that ***the more personal the email, the better the performance.***

Test dropping your designed email template, and send an email that looks like one you might send to a friend or coworker.



# #3

## STRATEGIES

Use a Match to Incentivize  
Donors to Give Now.



In this experiment, this organization wondered just how much of an impact a matching gift challenge would make on donor conversion.

The original email was a standard case for support style email with a direct donation ask, emphasizing the December 31<sup>st</sup> deadline.

The treatment email added in language around the financial need, and leveraged a matching challenge as an incentive to donate.

## Key Takeaway

The treatment version of the email saw a 50% increase in donations by spending more time focusing on the financial need and leveraging the match challenge as an opportunity to help meet that need.

If you have the opportunity, **test using a matching gift challenge** to further incentivize donors to give during the last week of the year.

## Control

The end of the year is upon us and Museum of the Bible is working hard to meet a \$1 million goal by midnight tomorrow night (December 31).

In our first year, Museum of the Bible welcomed one million guests to engage with the history, narrative and impact of the Bible. While we are pleased so many have visited, we know there is still so much to do.

In the next year, we are poised and ready to seize exciting opportunities to engage even more people with the Bible. In order to do this, we need your continued support. The museum does not receive government funding, so we rely on donors like you to continue and further our mission.

[Can we count on you to help us engage all people with the Bible in 2019?](#)

Please join us in our mission to share the history, narrative and impact of the Bible with all people. [Make your tax-deductible donation to Museum of the Bible today.](#)

On behalf of the more than 50,000 donors, 20,000 members and our staff and families, thank you for everything you do to further the mission of Museum of the Bible. We wish you a prosperous and joyous New Year.

Best regards,



Ken McKinnis

## Treatment

The end of the year is upon us and Museum of the Bible is \$1 million goal by midnight tomorrow night (December 31).

In our first year, Museum of the Bible welcomed one million guests to engage with the history, narrative and impact of the Bible. While we are pleased so many have visited, we know there is still so much to do.

We see significant opportunities and a few challenges on the horizon. In the next year we will seize opportunities to ensure we fulfill the mission of the Bible. We also see challenges that we will need to overcome. One such challenge will be to further address the financial requirements of our mission. In order to engage even more people in 2019, we need your continued support. The museum does not receive government funding so we rely on donors like you.

[Can we count on you to help us engage all people with the Bible in 2019?](#)

Thanks to a generous donor, all gifts will be doubled via a matching grant, so your donation will have twice the impact.

You have a wonderful opportunity to play an integral part in sharing the history, the narrative, and the impact of the Bible so please [make your tax-deductible donation to Museum of the Bible today.](#)

On behalf of the more than 50,000 donors, 20,000 members and our staff and families, thank you for everything you do to further the mission of Museum of the Bible. We wish you a prosperous and joyous New Year.

Best regards,

# 50%

Increase in Donation Conversion



# #4

## STRATEGIES

Give Your Donors  
Something Before You Ask  
Them to Give.





**Thank you!**  
Your free copy of the *Portable Handbook of Texas* eBook was just sent to [kevin@texasletter.com](mailto:kevin@texasletter.com). If you would like it sent to a different email address, please click here.

## Give Back to Texas this #GivingTuesday

Giving Tuesday is a day set aside for generosity. Here's the official description:

We have a day for giving thanks. We have two for getting deals. #GivingTuesday is a day dedicated to giving back. Today, charities, families, businesses, community centers, and students around the world will come together for one common purpose: to celebrate generosity and to give.

Today millions of people will give generously to their favorite cause.

Today we are proud to give generously to Texas. Since 1897, a select group of very special people have made a pledge to keep Texas history alive.

They are a proud group.

Like the defenders of the Alamo, they stand up while others stand down.  
Like Sam Houston, they lead rather than follow.

Today, you are invited to join that group.

Since 1897, the Texas State Historical Association (TSHA) has gathered and preserved the most important lessons from Texas history. Our members are bound by a common objective to celebrate and pass on the unique and proud heritage of the Lone Star State.

And since its founding over a century ago, TSHA has become recognized as the most trusted organization for researching, documenting, and protecting the values and spirit that are uniquely Texas.

When you accept this invitation to join TSHA online today, you could receive the 2016-2017 Texas Almanac completely FREE

# Version A

exclusive invitations to digital conferences like *Texas Talks* where you can listen to and converse with renowned scholars on topics spanning a wide spectrum of Texas history.

When you join TSHA this #GivingTuesday, you will join a unique group of people dedicated to protecting and promoting the proud heritage of Texas.

Plus, when you join today with a gift of \$50 or more, you'll receive *Texas Almanac 2016-2017*.

Packed with articles, hundreds of full-color photographs, maps, and data, the *Texas Almanac* is heralded as the premier reference guide for everything Texas. **And it can be yours for FREE** just by becoming a member of the TSHA.

Millions will make gifts this Giving Tuesday. Will you become one of the few who commit to support Texas?

### Texas Needs Champions to Preserve Her Great Heritage

Activating your membership is not only a fine way to show your Texas pride, it's the most important thing you can do to preserve and pass on our proud heritage.

As Texas continues to grow and expand, the need for a dynamic historical society to champion our unique state heritage has never been greater.

Will you respond to this call and accept your invitation?

"Remember... when you join today with a gift of \$50 or more, you'll receive the *Texas Almanac 2016-2017* completely FREE. Act now before this limited offer expires and it's too late (you'll always be able to buy the *Almanac* later... you'll just pay a whole lot more for it) Do not delay.

### Activate your Membership Today!

- ☐ \$25.00 - Basic Membership  
Great for students or A-C/D Educational! A-C/D educational will receive a copy of the hard-bound edition of the *Texas Almanac* in lieu of the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*.
- ☒ \$50.00 - Friend of Texas  
This is our most popular level.
- ☐ \$100.00 - Texas Ambassadors  
In addition to basic membership benefits, Texas Ambassadors receive a copy of the hard-bound edition of the *Texas Almanac*.
- ☐ \$250.00 - Texas Pioneers  
In addition to basic membership benefits, Texas Pioneers receive a copy of the hard-bound edition of the *Texas Almanac*.
- ☐ \$500.00 - Defenders of Texas History  
In addition to basic membership benefits, Defenders of Texas History receive a copy of the hard-bound edition of the *Texas Almanac* and one (1) FREE Registration to the Annual Meeting of the Texas Historical Association.
- ☐ \$1,000.00 - President's Council  
In addition to basic membership benefits, members of the President's Council receive a copy of the hard-bound edition of the *Texas Almanac*, one (1) FREE Registration to the Annual Meeting, and an invitation to attend a special VIP Reception.
- ☐ Other  
Other Gift Amount:  (minimum \$25.00)

### Your Name

First Name  Last Name   
Email Address   
Country  United States  
Street Address   
Street Address 2   
City  State     
Zip Code

### Gift Information

Credit Card Number

Verification Code  Expiration Month  Expiration Year

MAKE MY \$50 GIFT

## Our #GivingTuesday Gift to You: Get the *Portable Handbook of Texas* eBook for FREE

As part of their mission to make Texas history both accessible and enjoyable for current and future generations, the TSHA has created the *Portable Handbook of Texas*. This comprehensive publication contains the most popular stories pulled from the over 27,000 articles found in the 6-volume *Handbook of Texas*. It is the must-have eBook for any Texas history enthusiast!

Today only, the TSHA is offering this eBook, the *Portable Handbook of Texas*, for free. In this exclusive eBook, you will discover:

- ★ Over 1,000 pages of exclusive content documenting all things Texas.
- ★ The most popular stories of the people, places, and events from Texas's past.
- ★ Historical photos and maps to help bring the stories to life.
- ★ Plus so much more!

Get YOUR copy of the *Portable Handbook of Texas* eBook before #GivingTuesday is over!

First Name  Last Name   
Email Address

# Version B

**Thank you**  
Your free copy of the *Portable Handbook of Texas* eBook will be sent to your inbox within the next 5 minutes.

## Give Back to Texas this #GivingTuesday

Giving Tuesday is a day set aside for generosity. Here's the official description:

We have a day for giving thanks. We have two for getting deals. #GivingTuesday is a day dedicated to giving back. Today, charities, families, businesses, community centers, and students around the world will come together for one common purpose: to celebrate generosity and to give.

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They are a proud group.

Like the defenders of the Alamo, they stand up while others stand down.  
Like Sam Houston, they lead rather than follow.

# 70%

## Increase in Donation Conversion

On Giving Tuesday, this organization offered their donors a free eBook. And they had 2 methods of delivering the book.

In Version A, the donor was given the eBook automatically when they clicked through from an email, and then presented with a donation opportunity right away.

In Version B, they sent donors an email that went to a landing page to download the eBook. After filling out the download form, they were presented with a donation opportunity.

## Key Takeaway

Version B saw a **70% increase in donations** when donors had to fill out a form in order to get the eBook.

From this experiment – and many others like it – we can see that **offering something of value for free can lead to reciprocal generosity**. In this case, that meant a major increase in Giving Tuesday donations.



#5

STRATEGIES

# Show Donors The Progress of Your Campaign.

In this experiment, the original donation page included a progress bar showing how close the organization was to reaching its campaign goal.

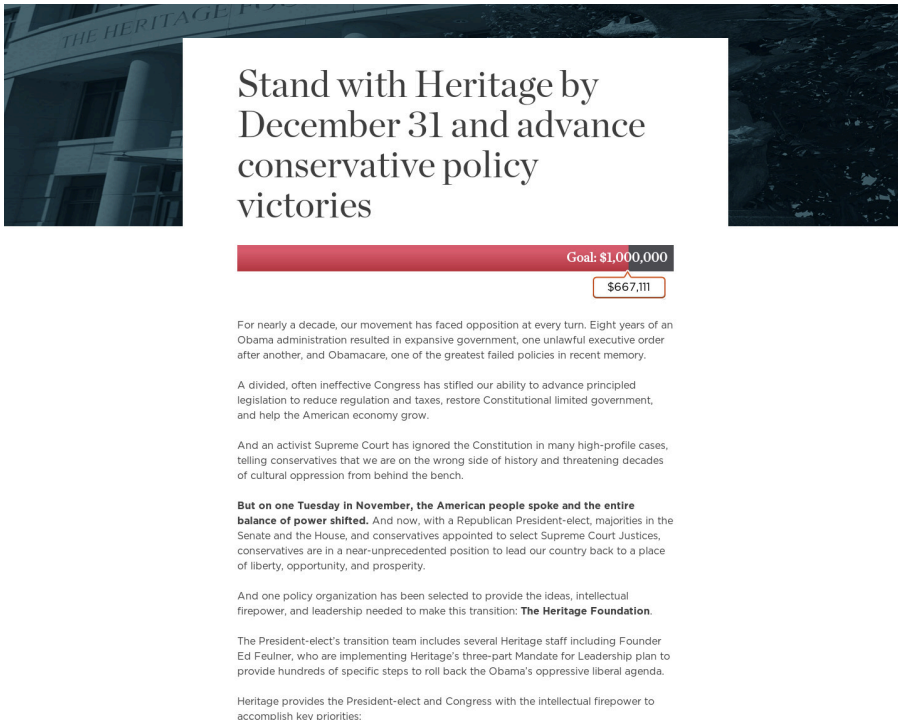
They wanted to know if the progress bar was actually making a difference or not. Progress bars are often a best practice, but **not all “best practices” are the best performing.**

## Key Takeaway

When they removed the progress bar, they saw a 6.5% decrease in conversion rate. The progress bar was indeed helping donors to see the **urgency**, as well as create the **bandwagon effect**.

If you're not using a progress bar already, be sure to test one on your year-end campaign donation page.

## Control



Stand with Heritage by December 31 and advance conservative policy victories

Goal: \$1,000,000  
\$667,111

For nearly a decade, our movement has faced opposition at every turn. Eight years of an Obama administration resulted in expansive government, one unlawful executive order after another, and Obamacare, one of the greatest failed policies in recent memory.

A divided, often ineffective Congress has stifled our ability to advance principled legislation to reduce regulation and taxes, restore Constitutional limited government, and help the American economy grow.

And an activist Supreme Court has ignored the Constitution in many high-profile cases, telling conservatives that we are on the wrong side of history and threatening decades of cultural oppression from behind the bench.


**But on one Tuesday in November, the American people spoke and the entire balance of power shifted.** And now, with a Republican President-elect, majorities in the Senate and the House, and conservatives appointed to select Supreme Court Justices, conservatives are in a near-unprecedented position to lead our country back to a place of liberty, opportunity, and prosperity.

And one policy organization has been selected to provide the ideas, intellectual firepower, and leadership needed to make this transition: **The Heritage Foundation.**

The President-elect's transition team includes several Heritage staff including Founder Ed Feulner, who are implementing Heritage's three-part Mandate for Leadership plan to provide hundreds of specific steps to roll back the Obama's oppressive liberal agenda.

Heritage provides the President-elect and Congress with the intellectual firepower to accomplish key priorities:

## Treatment



Stand with Heritage by December 31 and advance conservative policy victories

For nearly a decade, our movement has faced opposition at every turn. Eight years of an Obama administration resulted in expansive government, one unlawful executive order after another, and Obamacare, one of the greatest failed policies in recent memory.

A divided, often ineffective Congress has stifled our ability to advance principled legislation to reduce regulation and taxes, restore Constitutional limited government, and help the American economy grow.

And an activist Supreme Court has ignored the Constitution in many high-profile cases, telling conservatives that we are on the wrong side of history and threatening decades of cultural oppression from behind the bench.

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And one policy organization has been selected to provide the ideas, intellectual firepower, and leadership needed to make this transition: **The Heritage Foundation.**

The President-elect's transition team includes several Heritage staff including Founder Ed Feulner, who are implementing Heritage's three-part Mandate for Leadership plan to provide hundreds of specific steps to roll back the Obama's oppressive liberal agenda.

Heritage provides the President-elect and Congress with the intellectual firepower to accomplish key priorities:

- **Repeal Obamacare immediately.** Heritage has a full detailed plan to repeal and replace Obamacare. The Establishment is already fighting to protect this, so we must act immediately.
- **Appoint a Supreme Court Justice.** The Trump team has relied on Heritage's published recommendation of potential justices that will properly uphold the

**6.5%**  
Decrease in Donation Conversion



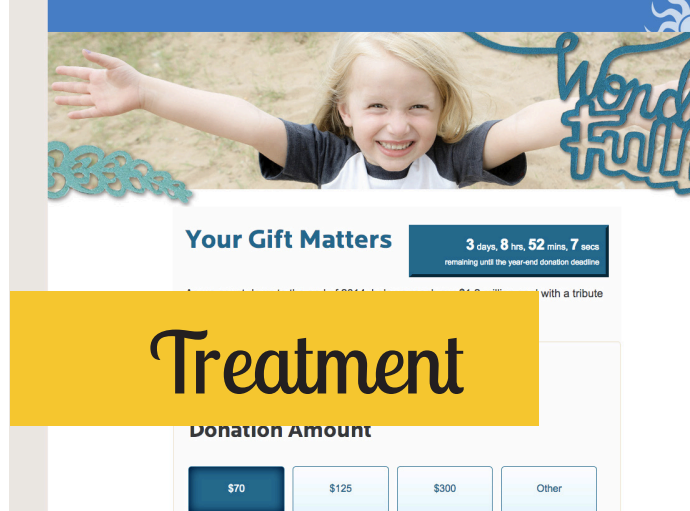
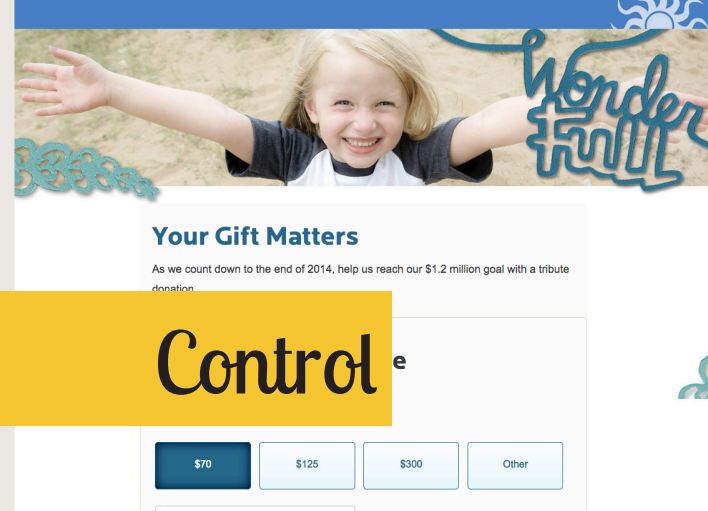
# #6

## STRATEGIES

Use a Countdown Clock to  
Create a Sense of Urgency.







**61.8%** Increase in Donation Conversion

Dear << Test Salutation >>,

I wanted to send you a quick reminder to make your online gift to Dallas Theological Seminary today. Your gift is an investment that will produce a return greater than any worldly investment you could make.

Generous donors have already helped DTS meet the Challenge Gift of \$450,000, but it's not too late to make your gift! *Every penny counts* to help DTS equip servant-leaders to boldly proclaim the Good News of Jesus.

Before you help ring in the new year, help lay the groundwork to advance God's

**Control**

Mark L. Bailey, PhD  
President  
Dallas Theological Seminary

**62.7%** Increase in Donation Conversion

Dear << Test Salutation >>,

**DEADLINE: MIDNIGHT 12/31/2014**

**0423 2833**  
DAYS HOURS MINS SECS

I wanted to send you a quick reminder to make your online gift to Dallas Theological Seminary today. Your gift is an investment that will produce a return greater than any worldly investment you could make.

Generous donors have already helped DTS meet the Challenge Gift of \$450,000, but it's not too late to make your gift! *Every penny counts* to help DTS equip servant-leaders to boldly proclaim the Good News of Jesus.

**Treatment**

Sincerely,  
Mark L. Bailey, PhD  
President

In these experiments, countdown clocks were added to attempt to increase urgency. In the experiment on top, the countdown clock was added to a donation page. In the experiment on the bottom, it was added to an email.

**Key Takeaway**  
Countdown clocks can help **create a sense of urgency** and help your donor to see that their gift is needed now.

Test using a countdown clock on your **donation page** and in an **email appeal** to increase urgency.


**Quick Tip**  
We've found that countdown clocks only make a meaningful impact when used **during the final week** of a campaign.



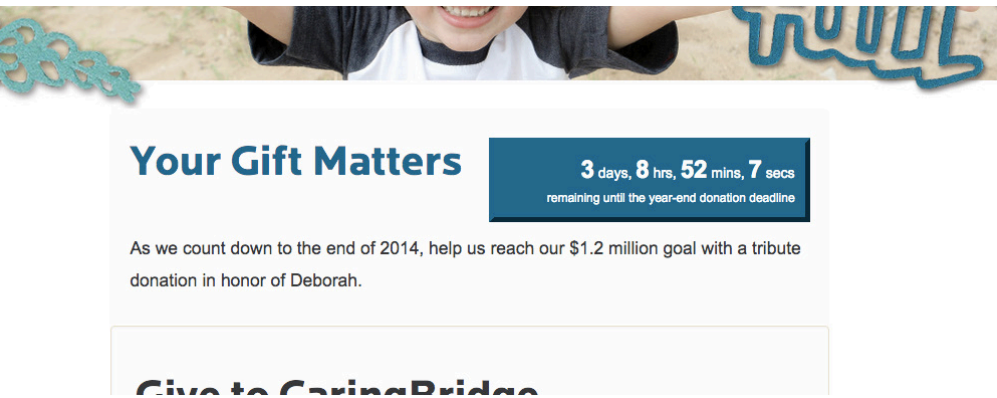
# #7

## STRATEGIES

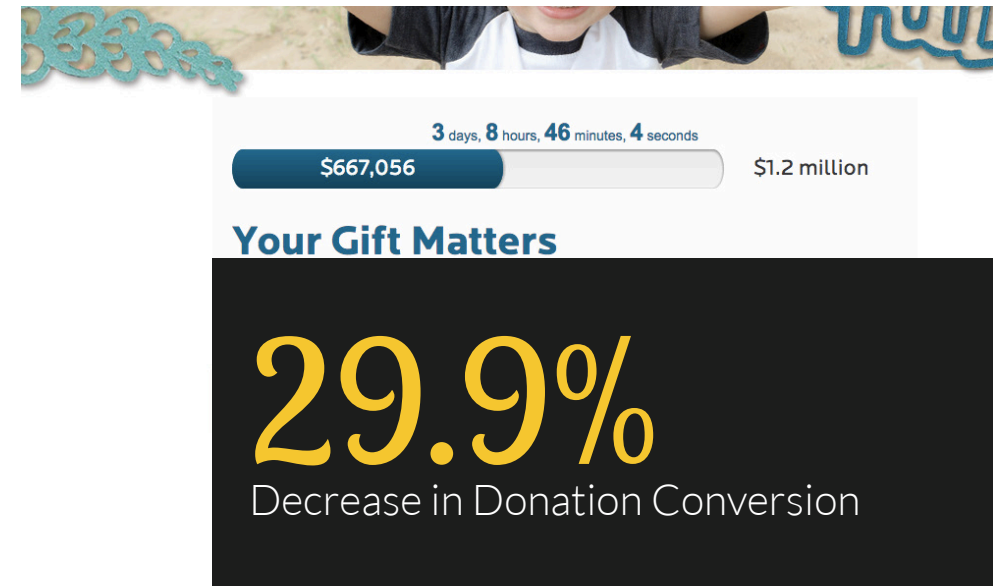
Be Careful of Combining  
Countdown Clocks and  
Progress Bars.



## Control



## Treatment



In this experiment, the original donation page used a countdown clock placed near the headline on the page. It showed how close they were getting to the campaign deadline.

In the treatment, they wondered if combining a countdown clock with a progress bar could multiply the sense of urgency, and lead to greater donations.

## Key Takeaway

Although both the countdown clock and the progress bar have individually been shown to increase donations, ***the combination of the two elements led to a 29% decrease*** in donations.

It's possible that these elements together decreased clarity around the goal. It's also possible that the progress bar early in the campaign ***made donors feel like the goal was insurmountable*** within the time that was left.



# #8

## STRATEGIES

Transcribe Your Fancy Video,  
and Use the Text Instead.



## A Special Story of Hope this Christmas

For most people, this season is a time for family and celebration. Unfortunately, that is not always the case for many children that live each day with an abusive family or an uncaring foster system. However, there can be hope for many of these children.

Please take 2 minutes to see one particular child that found hope and love at Christmas.



# Control

is to bringing hope and stability in the midst of turbulence to people like you, people that want to care for these children that need a trajectory to living full, healthy, happy lives—in Jesus' name.

Please give a generous year-end gift. When you do, your donation will be doubled due to a matching gift from a generous donor that shares your heart for children.

Your gift must be received by December 31 to be doubled, and to qualify for a tax deduction for 2016.

**Please make a gift using the secure form below**

### Donation Information

Amount:

\$ 25

\$ 50

\$ 100

100% of your gift will go directly to support ministry programs

## A Special Story of Hope this Christmas

### A Message from Buckner President Albert L. Reyes

# Treatment

adopted. After years in the foster system, she

as the picture was over she jumped out of her moment or so after that you could hear her

"Why are you crying? What's wrong?" She said, "Well, Mom, it's just that all of my life, foster families that I was with would ask me to sit over to the side so they could take their family picture at Christmas." She said, "Today is the first time that I've been allowed to be in the Christmas photo with the family."

As I read that story, I just had to take a break. It just knocked me off my feet. I couldn't help but think of just included. I remember all the times that my own family would take Christmas photos and there was never a the picture.

This is what Buckner does.

We provide families for children so they can be in the family and, naturally, be in the picture. For 137 years, we provided a Christmas experience for thousands of children that otherwise would have gone without. We people like you, generous donors who make contributions to make family possible for children that are vulnerable.

There are Christmases that can be created, but we can't do it without your help. I'm going to invite you to join gift, perhaps your best gift in a while, this Christmas so that we can shine hope into the lives of children who

This Christmas, when you do make a gift to Buckner, your donation will be doubled due to a matching gift from shares your heart for children.

But, your gift must be received by December 31 to be doubled, and to qualify for a tax deduction for 2016.

**Please make a gift using the secure form below**

### Donation Information

Amount:

\$ 25

\$ 50

\$ 100

100% of directly program

In this experiment, this organization wondered if copy could do a better job than a video of helping the donor understand the value of donating. The original page had a video. The treatment page took a transcription of the video it and put it as text on the page instead.

## Key Takeaway

Communicating the value proposition through text increased donation conversion by 560%. That means that **text was much more effective than the video at showing why someone should give.**

If you have a fancy year-end video, test using the transcript to create more value proposition copy on your page. You can save your video for nurturing content like blog posts, articles, and social media.

# 560%

Increase in Donation Conversion





#9

STRATEGIES

# Visually Emphasize Your Desired Gift Amount.

In this experiment, the original donation page used a standard gift array offering 3 recommended gift amounts, as well as an open “other” field.

For the treatment, they added a “Most Popular” indicator to the defaulted gift amount to see if this would lead to an increase in average gift size.

## Key Takeaway

Adding this “Most Popular” indicator to the gift array reduced friction in the decision making process and **increased revenue per visitor by 23.8%**. Additionally, it increased mobile revenue by 44%.

Add a “Most Popular” indicator to **clarify expectations for donors and reduce friction**.

## Control

If you have questions or need more information call 1-888-330-6264 Monday thru Thursday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Central Time.

### Your Donation

\$

### Billing Information

First Name  Last Name

Email Address

Country

## Treatment

If you have questions or need more information call 1-888-330-6264 Monday thru Thursday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Central Time.

### Your Donation

\$

### Billing Information

First Name

Email Address

Country

# 23.8%

Increase in Revenue per Visitor



#10

STRATEGIES

# Make Sure Your Donors Know Their Gift is Secure.

Simply Having a Secure Page Doesn't Cut it.



In this experiment, the original page was already a secure page. But they wondered if making it overtly clear that the page was secure would help decrease anxiety and increase donations.

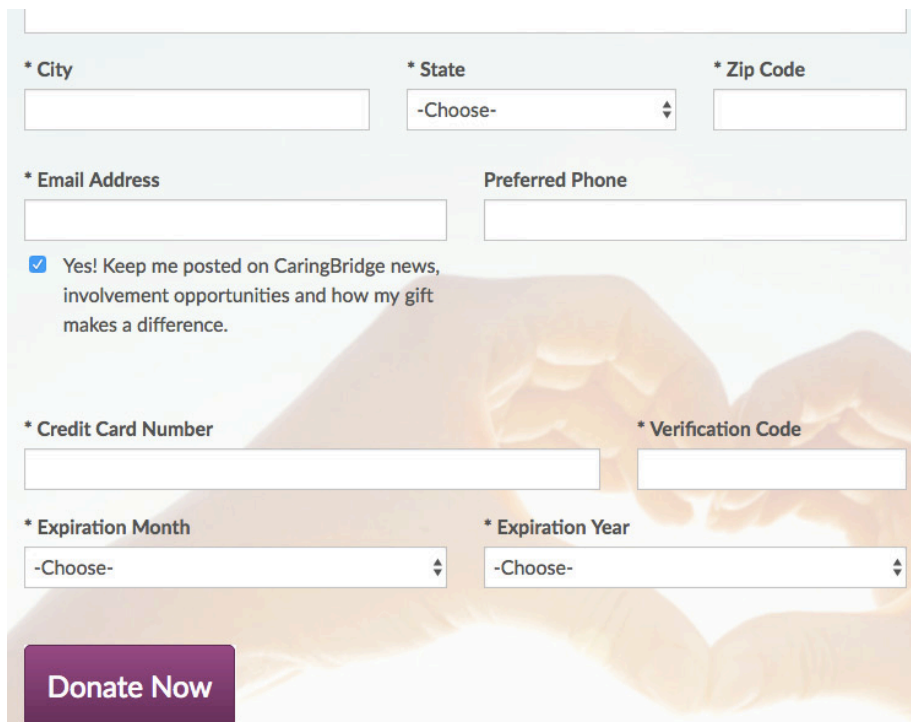
In particular, they wanted to **reinforce the security of the page** at the moment the donor would be most anxious: entering their credit card number.

## Key Takeaway

By setting the credit card fields apart from background of the page and **adding a simple padlock icon**, they saw a 14.4% increase in donation conversion. No additional security was added – they simply visually showed the donor that it was secure.

**Test adding these security indicators around your credit card field to reduce anxiety.** If you can't, consider adding copy to re-affirm that the gift is secure.

### Control



The control form is a donation page with a light blue background. It features a background image of two hands holding a heart. The form includes fields for City, State (dropdown), Zip Code, Email Address, Preferred Phone, Credit Card Number, Verification Code, Expiration Month (dropdown), and Expiration Year (dropdown). A checkbox is checked, indicating the user wants to be posted on CaringBridge news. A purple 'Donate Now' button is at the bottom.

\* City \* State \* Zip Code

\* Email Address Preferred Phone

☒ Yes! Keep me posted on CaringBridge news, involvement opportunities and how my gift makes a difference.

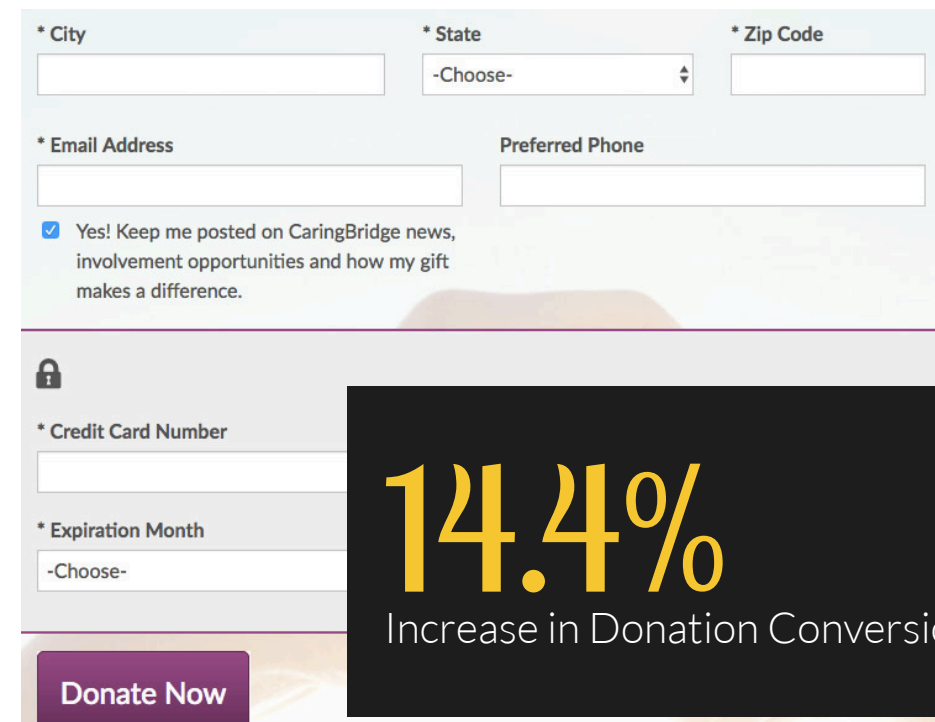
\* Credit Card Number \* Verification Code

\* Expiration Month \* Expiration Year

Donate Now

Your tax-deductible donation to CaringBridge powers our non-profit service of providing safe, protected websites for no charge. **Every 7 minutes, a new CaringBridge site is created** - along with a new compassionate community to surround that individual on their health journey.

### Treatment




The treatment form is identical to the control form but includes a padlock icon in the top left corner of the form area, indicating a secure connection. The 'Donate Now' button is purple.

\* City \* State \* Zip Code

\* Email Address Preferred Phone

☒ Yes! Keep me posted on CaringBridge news, involvement opportunities and how my gift makes a difference.

 \* Credit Card Number

\* Expiration Month

Donate Now

Your tax-deductible donation to CaringBridge powers our non-profit service of providing safe, protected websites for no charge. **Every 7 minutes, a new CaringBridge site is created** - along with a new compassionate community to surround that individual on their health journey.

**14.4%**  
Increase in Donation Conversion

# About NextAfter

## *NextAfter is Three Things...*

### **A Fundraising Research Lab**

Conducting marketplace research, A/B testing, and digital experimentation to discover what works to attract, acquire, and retain more donors and raise more money online.

### **A Digital Fundraising Consultancy**

Working side-by-side with nonprofit organizations to help them develop and execute research-backed digital fundraising strategies designed to generate sustainable online revenue growth.

### **An Institute for Online Fundraising**

Equipping nonprofit fundraisers and digital marketers with data-driven and evidence-based research, resources, and training.

These three things are unified in our mission to decode what works in fundraising and make it as accessible to as many nonprofits as possible. It is our belief that if we can truly deliver on our mission we can, together, unleash the most generous generation in the history of the world.

Learn more about the research lab at [nextafter.com/research](https://nextafter.com/research), our consulting at [nextafter.com](https://nextafter.com), and the institute at [nextafter.com/institute](https://nextafter.com/institute).





# Online Courses

NextAfter's online courses will equip you with the tools and knowledge you need to grow your online fundraising in essential areas including:

- Year-End Fundraising
- Donation & Landing Page Optimization
- Email Fundraising Optimization
- Copywriting for Online Fundraising
- and more

Grow your online fundraising skills through online certification courses at [courses.nextafter.com](https://courses.nextafter.com).

# Research Studies

The best way to optimize your fundraising is to see it how the donor sees it. Each one of our free research studies takes a look at a different aspect of online fundraising from the donor's perspective to help you generate new ideas to test and grow your online revenue.

Download and read any of our free online fundraising research studies at [nextafter.com/resources](https://nextafter.com/resources).

