



A LOOK AT THE ONLINE GIVING EXPERIENCE  
OF 203 NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

# The State of Nonprofit Donation Pages

Published by



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**Special Note:** This report was updated in August 2020 with a letter from RaiseDonors and a correction to the average scoring.





# Executive Summary

There are only three ways to grow online revenue:

1. Get more visitors (traffic)
2. Get more visitors to say yes (conversion rate)
3. Get those who say yes to say 'heck yes' (average gift).

Your donation page plays an instrumental role in the last two by communicating value to the visitor – based on who they are and where they are coming from – and reducing the perceived cost of completing a donation.

Your donation page is something that every online donor to every organization interacts with. Small donors. Monthly donors. Large donors. First time donors. Loyal donors. Young donors. Old donors. Desktop donors. Mobile donors. All donors.

But what should that donation page look like? What should it say? What should the giving experience feel like? We've done a lot of experiments, over 400 actually, on donation pages to see how donors interact and have a pretty good sense of what works or doesn't. But when we look into the market, we see all kinds of strategies and tactics being employed by nonprofits.

So, for this study, we wanted to capture that information to get a snapshot of what nonprofits are doing with their donation pages. And not just capture information, but become a donor ourselves and see the experience, as best we can, through their eyes. Because that's who we should be creating great donation pages for, the donor.

Throughout this study, you'll not only find stats and findings from our experience giving to 203 nonprofits but you'll see lots of examples – good and bad – and numerous real experiments from the NextAfter research library that can hopefully show you not just what organizations are doing but what you can do to optimize and improve your donation page.

So with that, here are 7 key findings from the study and a summary infographic on what we saw and captured.

# 7 Key Findings from Giving to 203 Nonprofits

## 1. Everyone has room to improve their donation page.

On a grading scale of 0 to 100%, the average donation page score was just 59%. The best scoring vertical, Human Services, had an average score of 68%, the best scoring organization size grouping, \$50 Million to \$100 Million had an average score of 62%, and 56% of the nonprofits in the study scored 60% or lower.

## 2. Nonprofits aren't giving donors a great reason to give on their donation page.

Just 1 out of 3 organizations have a 'strong' value proposition which is related to the fact that 61% of organizations used less than 4 sentences of copy on their donation page – something our research and experience suggests is needed to communicate why someone should give. Without this valuable text, organizations are relying heavily on the donor's internal motivation as well as their knowledge of the organization and the impact their donation will have before they arrive to the website and donation page.

## 3. Generally speaking, there is too much friction – steps in the process, distracting links, fields required, etc. – for donors to deal with when making a donation.

40% of nonprofits required non-essential information to process a gift, 55% had distracting



links on their page, and 30% had 3 or more steps to complete a donation. These are all contributing factors to donors abandoning their gift.

#### **4. Online recurring giving remains a big opportunity for nonprofits to improve and optimize.**

Almost 3 out of 4 nonprofits didn't communicate anything around why someone should make a recurring gift during the one-time donation flow. Even accounting for the 11% who defaulted to a recurring gift, the 14% who used a pop-up to suggest a monthly donation, and the 6% who attempted to immediately upgrade one-time donors to recurring, by and large nonprofits were hoping for recurring donors more than actively trying to suggest or recruit recurring donors.

#### **5. The mobile giving experience is improving, but can still be optimized and further improved.**

Only 6% of nonprofits didn't have a functional mobile giving experience which is good although 14% removed the reason to give – the value proposition – from their mobile giving page signifying there is still work to do to optimize the mobile giving experience.

#### **6. Many donation selection and gift array strategies are quite similar.**

More than 8 in 10 nonprofits are using a gift array for donation selection – compared to 17% who use an 'open field' or 'choose your amount' strategy – and almost 2 out of 3 of them have 4 or 5 options and 1 in 4 start with \$50.

#### **7. The thank you/confirmation page remains an underutilized asset in the donor journey and online giving experience.**

While almost every organization had a thank you/confirmation page and said thanks, only 46% did so in a way that continued the value proposition. 27% of nonprofits had nothing for donors to after making a gift, and just 12% were encouraging a 2nd gift – either one-time or recurring.

THE STATE OF NONPROFIT DONATION PAGES

# General Donation Page

Starting from the home page, we made a \$20 donation to 203 nonprofit organizations and captured the entire experience. Here's some of what we found.

**55%** **HEADER**

of nonprofits had **distracting menu or navigational elements present** on their donation page

**26%** **HEADLINE**

of nonprofits had their **headline in a banner or image**

**23%**

of nonprofits had **"Donate" language in their headline** on their donation page

**29%** **BODY COPY**

of nonprofits had **less than 1 sentence of copy** on their donation page

**61%**

of nonprofits had **less than 4 sentences of copy** on their donation page

**14%** **CALL TO ACTION COPY**

of nonprofits had an **"impact" metric tied to the giving amount** on their donation page

**40%** **FORM FIELDS**

of nonprofits **required non-essential information** to complete a donation

| **25%** of nonprofits required a **phone number** to complete a donation

| **8%** of nonprofits required a **title** to complete a donation

| **8%** of nonprofits required a **CAPTCHA** to complete a donation

Logo

**[General donation request with broad reasoning headline]**  
When you donate to [organization name]

This is copy that helps the person understand the effect of their donation. You want to help them understand what that means, but don't go into too much detail:

- Bullets are ok on this page type
- Reasons or evidentials should be OK here – this is a reassurance page
- People that arrive to this page have intention, as it NOT something that has interrupted them
- So the easier we make it to process, the easier it is for them to accomplish their mission to donate

**Yes! I want to [support word] [benefit others experience from organization]**

**1. Enter Your Donation Amount**

This is a one-time gift of [\$xx above]

This is a monthly recurring gift of [\$xx above]

**2. Enter Your Information (It's Secure)**

First Name  Last Name

Address 1

Address 2

City  State  Zip Code

Email (for receipt)  Preferred Phone (optional)

Credit Card  ACH Bank Account

Credit Card Number  Verification Code

Expire Month  / Expire Year

**Make My One-Time \$50 Gift**

Your gift is going to help impact [this specific change] that we already talked about. This is just a small reinforcement.

**GIFT ARRAY** **25%**

of nonprofits **ordered their gift array from largest to smallest** on their donation page

**61%**

of nonprofits using a gift array had **4 or 5 options**

| **25%** of nonprofits who had a gift array started with \$50

**46%**

of nonprofits had the **amount option pre-selected**

| **32%** of nonprofits who had the amount option pre-selected defaulted to \$100

**26%**

of nonprofits used **"radio" style buttons**

**GIFT TYPE** **11%**

of nonprofits defaulted to a **recurring donation**

**10%**

of nonprofits used a **prompt/pop-up for recurring giving** in the one-time donation flow

**74%**

of nonprofits used a **"simple" strategy to encourage recurring donations**, most often just a button or box to click and nothing else.

**CTA BUTTON AREA** **42%**

of nonprofits had a **third-party endorsement of some kind present** on their donation page

**VERIFICATION** **47%**

of nonprofits had a **1 step donation process**

[www.stateofdonationpages.com](http://www.stateofdonationpages.com)

RAISE DONORS NextAfter INSTITUTE

# Introduction

## A NOTE FROM RAISEDONORS

**“All organizations are perfectly designed to get the results they are now getting. If we want different results, we must change the way we do things.”** – Tom Northup

*Change?* Who’s got time for change?

Most nonprofits struggle to keep up with everything they’re already doing—let alone making time to try something new.

But, on the flip side...

Most nonprofits also want to grow. To do more good. To increase their impact.

But that’s the thing about growth. If you want different results, it requires taking steps in a new direction.

Everything we do at RaiseDonors revolves around optimizing the online giving experience—and your donation page is the gateway that welcomes (or shuns) your donors.

So we’re energized to be a part of research that takes a deep dive into the current state of online donation pages. This study presents an opportunity to explore digital fundraising—and to learn and grow from what you find.



But also remember, this study isn't a book of magic spells. You aren't going to find a three-step plan guaranteed to help you raise more money. No such thing exists.

What this study reveals, though, is your areas of greatest opportunity. There are findings in this study that you can apply and learn from immediately.

So please don't just read this and wonder what it would be like to do something different. This is an opportunity to take that next step forward—and to take the next one after that.

Keep learning. Keep growing. Keep optimizing.

The work you do matters—do it well.

**Stephen Boudreau & Chris Mechsner**

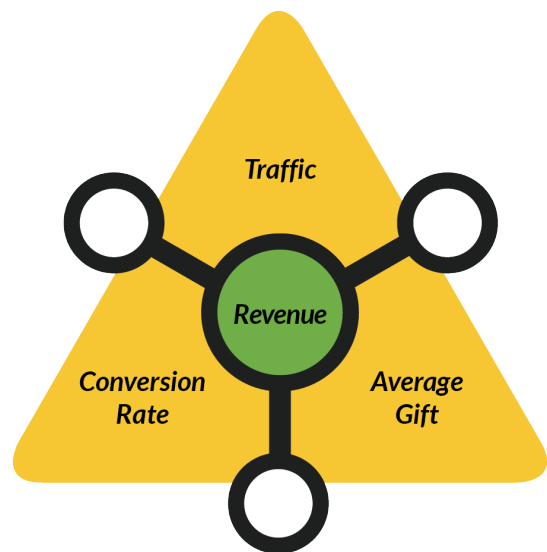
Co-Founders of RaiseDonors

raisedonors.com | info@raisedonors.com | (833) 542-0217

## WHY DO THIS STUDY?

### To Unleash Generosity.

That's the main reason for this research, and all our research for that matter, as this is our mission and vision at NextAfter. And when it comes to online fundraising there are three metrics and strategies that influence generosity and your online revenue. First, you can increase the amount of traffic or visitors to your website. Second, you can increase your conversion rate by getting more people who come to your website to donate. Third, you can inspire those who do give to be more generous and thereby increase your **average gift**. When you multiply those three metrics — traffic, conversion rate, and average gift — together, you get revenue. Your donation page plays a critical role in two of these metrics — conversion rate and average gift — so if you're looking to maximize and unleash generosity online, the donation page is a great starting place.



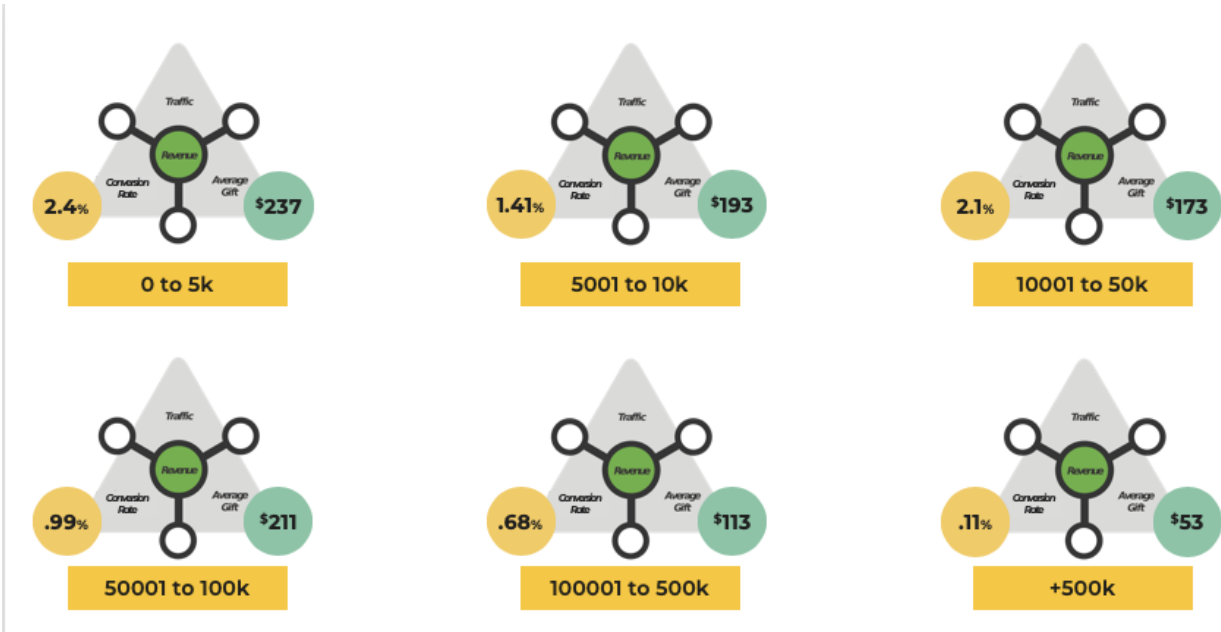
Because even small improvements can lead to big gains. Taking our benchmark findings with 155 nonprofits for example, if you could just increase the average conversion rate from 0.37% to 0.74%, that would double the amount of revenue those organizations brought in from \$144M to \$290M! But what if we could also improve the average gift by even just 10%? That would mean a 121% increase in revenue and an additional \$174M in giving to those 155 nonprofits.

And that’s just with our benchmark of 155 organizations. Think about what that could mean across the entire nonprofit space, to every single organization and their bottom line, and to our world. That’s the kind of generosity we want to unleash for you and for all organizations and your donation page can play a critical role in that for each organization and in aggregate.

## To See How You Compare and Where You Can Improve.

“How do I compare?” and “How do I get better?” These are the two questions we get asked most often. And without some baseline or sense of where others, and you, currently are it can be hard to know how you’re doing and where you should go. That’s what makes fundraising benchmarks so valuable.

Early in 2019, we looked at the global conversion rate for total website visitors who went on to become donors, and saw rates between 2.4% to 0.11%.



In the M + R Benchmark study, they looked specifically at the main donation page conversion rates. These are from people who click to donate, visit the main donation page, and go on to complete a donation. They found that on average 17% of people made a donation from visiting the main donation page.

If you look at this from a global perspective, that means that **98.6% to 99.9% of website visitors do not make a donation**. Even more stark, **83% of people who click to donate for some reason, or who end up on a main donation page, do not end up making a donation**. So the vast majority of people are visiting websites, or even donation pages, and are not completing their donations. This means we have ample room to improve and optimize.

But those benchmark stats are outputs. They tell you what has happened. They don't tell you anything about the inputs or what led to it, let alone what you can or should do because of it. So, in this report you'll find insights and stats on the inputs like:

- How much copy are organizations using?
- What is the most common pre-selected gift amount?
- How many organizations are defaulting to a monthly donation?

Remember, just because they're doing it doesn't necessarily mean it's succeeding, but hopefully you'll get new ideas and inspiration for your own testing.

You'll also find tips and advice on how to improve your page based on real experiments with real organizations. This advice is based on over 1600 documented experiments, 400 of which are related to donation pages, trying to decode why donors give.

## To Better Understand Giving from the Donor's Perspective. Empathy.

We often say that fundraisers are from Mars and donors are from Venus. You, fundraisers and marketers, look at giving from very different perspectives. You look at a donation page and think, "Give us money," because it's a way to collect donations. It's a processing tool. And while it's true that your donation page is an ultra efficient means to collect money and information, when donors see a donation page they don't think the same way. They think of your donation page as a way for them to live out their values and to make an impact.



And the challenge is that, intentional or not, you can carry our different views into the development and use of our donation pages. If you see a donation page as a transaction, collection method to get more donors and dollars, that will come through in how you design and use it. If, however, you can see things from the donor's perspective – where the focus is on the difference that they can make – then that shapes how you should design the donation page. *Your donation page, just like your fundraising, is for them, not for you.*

That's why we actually make donations to each and every nonprofit in this study, and not just look at the pages, because this process helps us step into the shoes of the donor and see it from their perspective. And that's who, ultimately, you should be creating our donation pages for.

## HOW DID WE DO THIS STUDY?

Because we're trying to develop a sense of empathy, **we actually became donors ourselves and tracked the giving experience along the way.** We identified 240 potential organizations but, unfortunately, we couldn't complete donations for all of them because of broken pages, links, or forms. We were able to donate successfully to 203 organizations across 12 specific verticals, and we collected key information like their website URL, revenue and fundraising expense from their 990's. We created a name and email persona for each organization and organized it all in a spreadsheet to track it.

From February 27 through March 4, 2019, we visited the homepage of each of the 203 nonprofit organizations, found the easiest path to the donation page – again, putting ourselves in the shoes of the donor– which was often the donate button and went on to complete a one-time \$20 donation using the unique name and email we had created for each organization on laptop and desktop computers (not mobile).

During that process, we screen-captured the mobile page and the desktop page – as well as anything else really good, bad, or interesting – and copied the headline and supporting copy text for easier analysis. We also answered 27 different questions related to the giving process, and five questions related to the thank you and confirmation page.

For the scoring, we used the same scoring system used in the 2018 Canadian Online Fundraising Scorecard and the 2014 Online Fundraising Scorecard. This scoring system is based over 1600 experiments in our experiment library and what we've observed helps

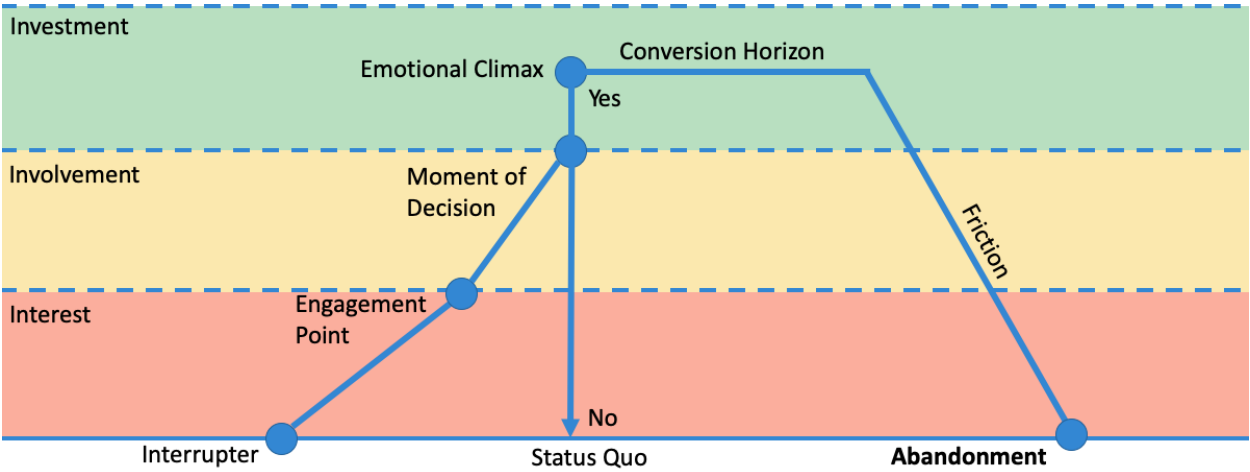
or hinders the online giving experience. For example, every time you add a required form field, you run the risk of decreasing conversion rate. We've found this to be true in real experiments. Therefore, when it comes to scoring, we penalize organizations that have additional required fields. In the cases where the evidence isn't entirely conclusive – gift arrays for example – we simply captured the information but didn't reward or penalize organizations on if they had an array, what it started at, etc.

Finally, we then sorted and looked at the scores and findings by organization size and industry vertical.

**WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW  
TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE STUDY?**

The hope is that this study isn't just a bunch of stats and information that we collected but also a tool you can use to come up with ideas to test and even changes to make, today, to optimize and improve your online giving experience. We will provide those suggestions along the way, but there are a couple concepts that are key for you to put those suggestions in context and understand how to put them into action.

## There Is a Difference Between Giving and Buying.



This might seem intuitive, but it's critical to understand. This visual shows what the online giving sequence is like. We call it the sparkline of a donation and you'll see one key difference

between giving and buying. The emotional climax happens before the transaction takes place. This is the big difference between giving and buying. In giving, we often receive the benefit first — it could be out of a response of feeling fortunate or blessed, giving back to an organization that has helped us, or just a great story — and from this emotional climax we choose to give. Whereas with buying, the emotional climax happens after you receive whatever it is you purchased. That's the key difference but to make the most of the report, here's how the sparkline and the donation journey goes.

**Everyone starts their day at the status quo.** People aren't waking up in the morning with the internal motivation to get up and make a donation. The goal as fundraising marketers is to move people from interest to involvement to investment. Down at the status quo level, there's usually an interrupter — an ad, email, billboard, or phone call, etc. — that piques their interest and makes them consider making a donation to a particular organization. This interrupter moves them into an engagement point and normally they'll go to the website or to the donation point.

It's on the donation page or landing page that they'll engage a bit more and learn why they should give. This leads to a moment of decision, and they have to start choosing to give a donation or to not give their information. As mentioned earlier, 83% of people on the general donation page, according to M+R Benchmark, reach this moment of decision and decide not to move forward. They return back to the status quo.

For the 17% that continue at this point — they say yes to making a donation and giving their information — now they reach an emotional climax. This is why the emotional aspect of the donation process is so important. The stronger the emotional climax, the longer our conversion horizon is. The conversion horizon is a function of how much time, effort, or energy we're going to expel to complete the donation. There is friction in any transaction that takes place. In this process, you have to enter your information, part with your money, answer questions, and deal with the page security. At some point, if that friction in the giving process is just too much, it doesn't matter how emotionally interested a person was — in other words, how long that conversion horizon was — it will lead to abandonment.

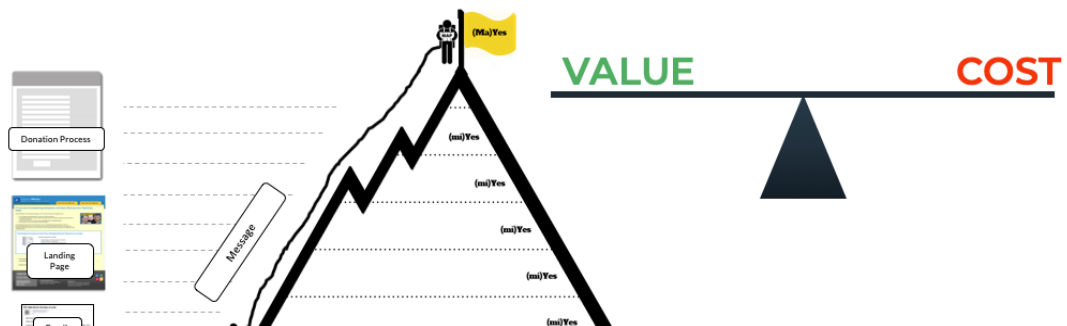
The sparkline of a donation demonstrates the difference between buying and giving. In giving, the emotional climax occurs before experiencing friction. In buying, we experience the pain of friction and then a few days later when we get our package in the mail, we experience the emotional climax.



Now you may be familiar with the 'marketing funnel' where you throw traffic to the top and people, in this case donors, fall out the bottom after going through some steps but when you look at this picture, the sparkline of a donation, you can see that it's not really a funnel at all. No one is being guided down. Rather, it's going up, and it looks a lot more like a mountain. This is the second key point.

## It's Not a Donor Funnel. It's a Donor Mountain.

### The Donor Mountain



At the top of the mountain is a macro-yes decision, and in this case the decision is to make a donation. At the bottom, what we call base camp or status quo, is our donor. Our unique role as fundraisers and marketers is to sit at the top of the mountain and help guide donors up each step of the mountain. Giving is a process; it's not as easy as making the decision and then completing information. There is a series of little micro-decisions all the way through the giving process, and it's our job to help donors through those.

For example, a series of micro-decisions a person makes looks like this. "Do I open this email? Do I want to read this email? Should I click this email?" If the donor ends up on the landing page, then they ask, "Do I like what I see? Is this consistent with the email I saw earlier?" If they get to the donation process, then they consider, "How much do I want to give? Is my information secure? How do I complete a donation? What happens next?" There are so many micro decisions like these throughout the whole giving process. Subconsciously, donors constantly are evaluating the value of what they're about to do versus the cost of it. This cost doesn't just involve the money they're choosing to part with, but it involves friction or other mental costs too.

While potential donors are doing this subconscious evaluation of value and cost, we need to make sure they keep coming up the mountain. We do this by communicating value through our message. This is our rope; we can throw it down and pull donors up the mountain with our message to make sure they understand the value of what they're going to do, and ensure that it outweighs the cost of all the little decisions along the way. If at any point the donor feels like there's too much cost involved and not enough value, they're going to say no and abandon, returning to the status quo. If we can communicate the value well and limit friction throughout the process, we can get a series of micro-yesses that ultimately leads to the macro-yes of a donation. That's pretty conceptual so to make things a bit more clear, we need a framework to use to analyze and assess why someone may move up the mountain.

## A Framework for How Conversions Happen.

A useful tool when looking at and evaluating the value and cost factors at each step in the mountain is MECLAB's Conversion Sequence Heuristic. This formula/guide helps explain the complex process of a conversion or donation decision so we can break it down, step by step

### The MECLABS Conversion Sequence Heuristic ©

$$C = 4m + 3v + 2(i-f) - 2a$$

On the left side of the equation are value factors. This includes someone's internal motivation to give, how clearly they understand the value proposition or the messaging, and incentives. These all add value for the donors throughout the giving experience. On the right side of the equation is friction and anxiety. These are cost elements. As long as the equation is more heavily tilted towards the left (value) than towards the right (cost), then you should be able to increase the donation conversion rate and the average gift size. This was our framework as we analysed the research we collected for this study, and in some examples you'll see throughout. We focused this study on value proposition, incentive, friction, and anxiety.

# You Need Multiple Donation Pages to Adequately Serve Multiple Donors.

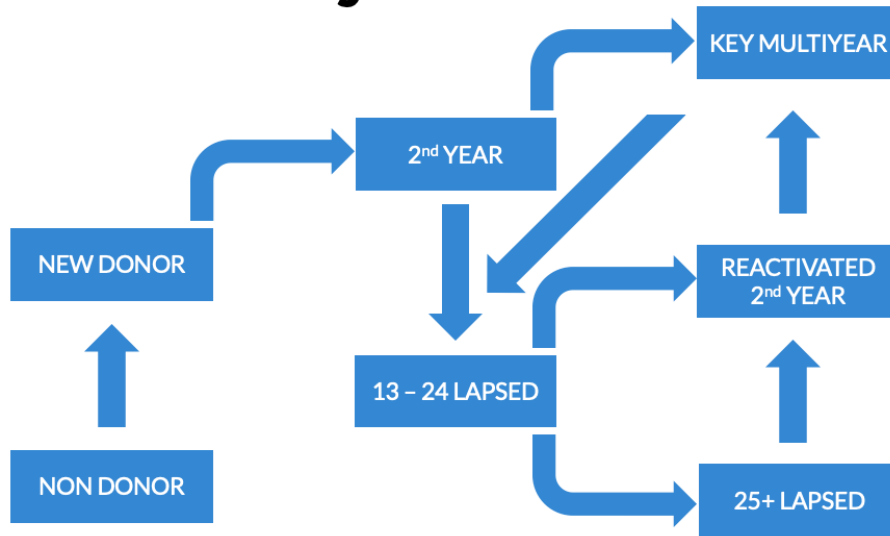
Motivation is difficult to identify, but it's the most important reason why someone chooses to give. This is why it's shown in the heuristic as a factor of four. Differing motivation is the reason why your general donation pages and your campaign donation pages should be different. In all of our research and through all our marketing and fundraising campaigns, we've identified two main donation pages that every organization needs to use: a general page and a campaign page. (There is a third page, an instant donation page, which is a special version of a campaign page, but we won't focus on that in this study.)

In a general donation page, you don't know who's visiting your site, where they're coming from, or what their motivation is. They could've heard about you on the news or clicked through a blog post. This means you do know that they're more likely seeking you out of their own volition. They proactively clicked donate to end up on your general donation page. They have some reason or expectation in mind to donate. You want to be sure that what they have in mind doesn't conflict with what is on the page. You want to give them enough of what they're interested in and then get out of their way because they're coming to your page already with some motivation.

A campaign donation page is used for a different situation. In a campaign scenario, you're probably using ads to drive specific people with a specific message to this specific page. These visitors most likely have been interrupted, and because of this they don't necessarily have the internal motivation of their own to donate. They liked or were interested in what your ad, email, or post said. This makes continuing that message really important. These visitors will feel some pressure to continue on with what they were doing before they were interrupted, so campaigns have to fight harder to win those donations. This means using different tactics.

It's also important to consider where the donor is in their lifecycle.

# Donor Lifecycle



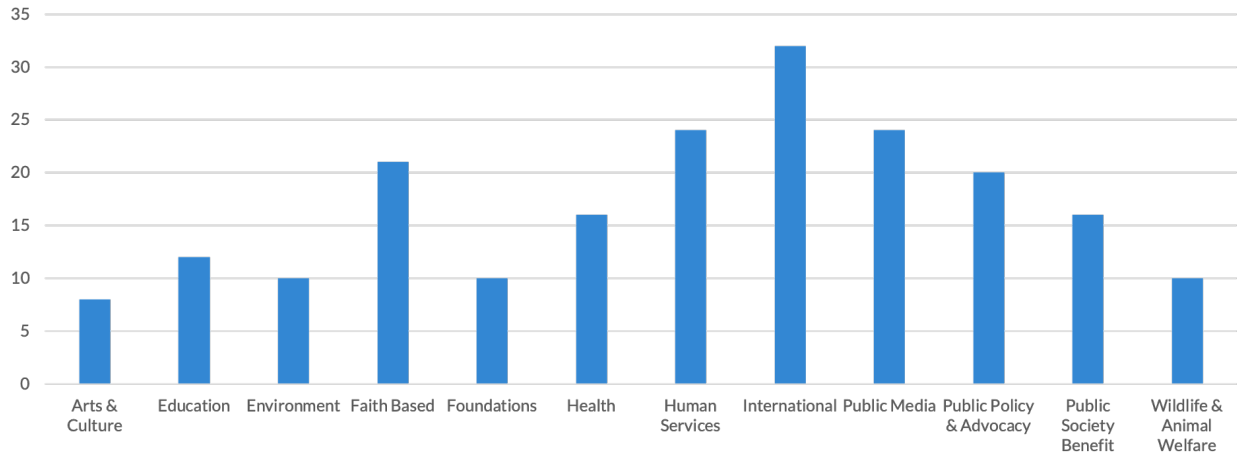
There are different messages and different campaign donation pages needed at different stages of a donor lifecycle. Someone starts as a non-donor, and once they give they become a donor. Hopefully they become a repeat donor and give in their second year or give multiple gifts in a year. After they give for two years, they hopefully become a key multi-year donor or a recurring donor. This means giving multiple gifts for multiple years in a row.

However, we know this doesn't always happen. Sometimes people drop off and become lapsed donors, or long lapsed donors. That's why we fight to reactivate these specific donors. We want to reactivate them and move them back up to a key multi-year donor because that's where lifetime value is the greatest, and lifetime value is the main metric that we care about when it comes to online fundraising.

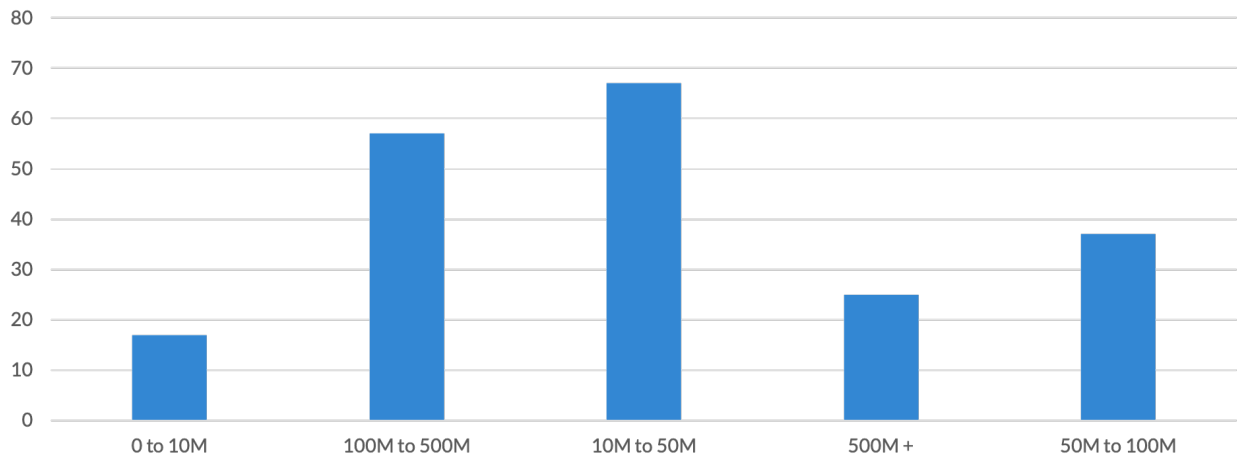
**For the purpose of this study, we focus on the general donation page and the non-donor to donor part of the journey.**

## WHO'S IN THE STUDY?

### Organizations by Vertical



### Organizations by Size



We studied 203 organizations spread across 12 different verticals. We tried to have at least ten organizations in each vertical, and we were able to do this for all but Arts and Culture. This is because we weren't able to complete a donation to every organization that we wanted to include.

The size of organizations also varied. Most organizations we studied are in the \$10 - \$500 Million range, but we had a group of smaller organizations at \$0 - \$10 Million as well as some mega organizations at over \$500 million.

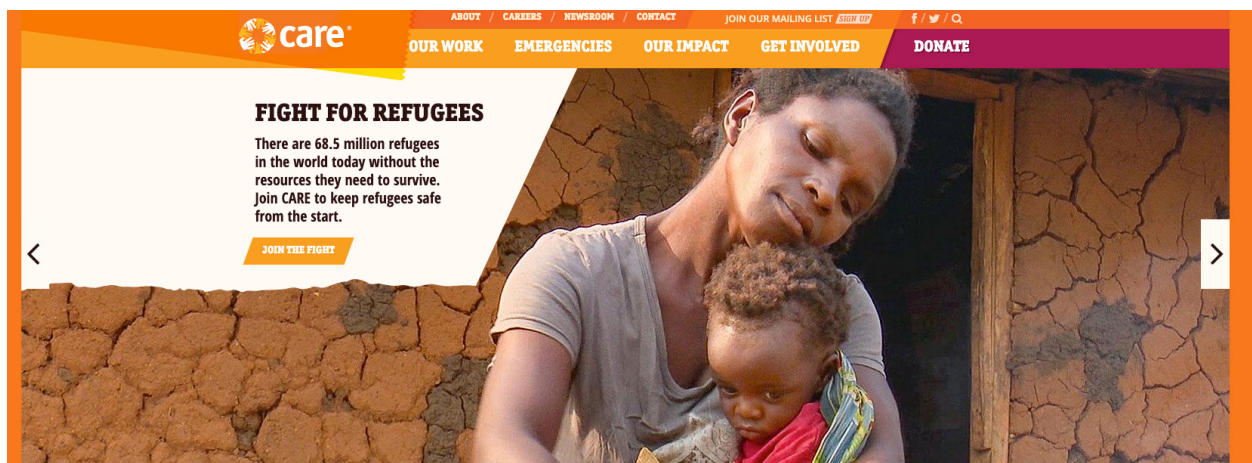
# Addressing Visitor Motivation

## CAN THEY (EASILY) FIND WHERE TO GIVE?

The first question we wanted to answer is, “Where do I give?” The goal here is to address the visitor’s or potential donor’s motivation. If someone is visiting a homepage, for example, and they’re interested in giving, they need to find out where to give, and they need to be able to find it quickly.

We studied the donate button language on each website and found that **78% of nonprofits use “donate” language for their button**, as opposed to “give” or “support” language. This could make it easier for donors to understand where to give.

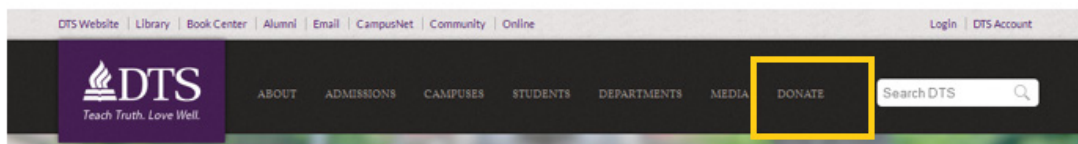
Here’s an example of this from Care.



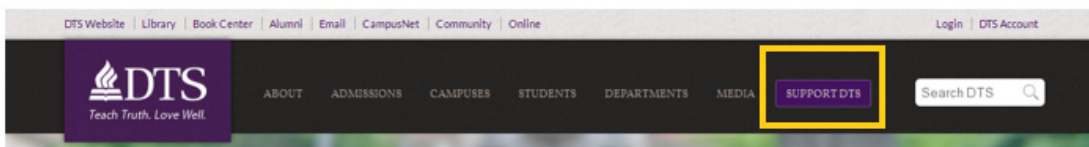
As you can see, their donate button in the navigation is a different color and says “donate”. If you’re interested in making a donation and you’re looking on the homepage, it’s very clear where you need to go to make a donation. This might be obvious, but not everyone uses donate language, uses a different color button, puts the button in the navigation, or does anything else to make it this obvious. For some organizations in this study, we had to hunt for the donate button.

The language you use in setting apart the donate button is really important. In this experiment, they compared how emphasizing the donate button would affect traffic.

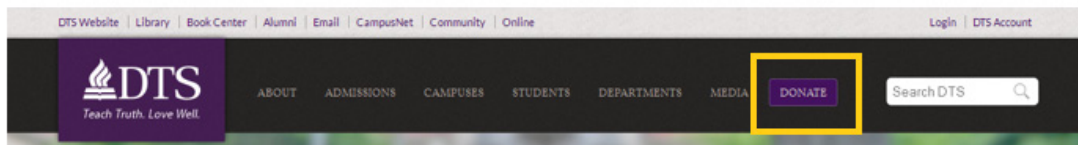
## CONTROL



## TREATMENT #1



## TREATMENT #2



In treatment one, the button says “Support DTS,” and treatment two just says “Donate”. In each of the treatments, the button is purple and stands out on the page. It’s more clearly delineated where you can go to make a donation. In the control, the donate button looks just like any other tab in the navigation.

For treatment one, they saw a 160% increase in donations – although not statistically significant – and in treatment two, there was a 190% increase in donations.

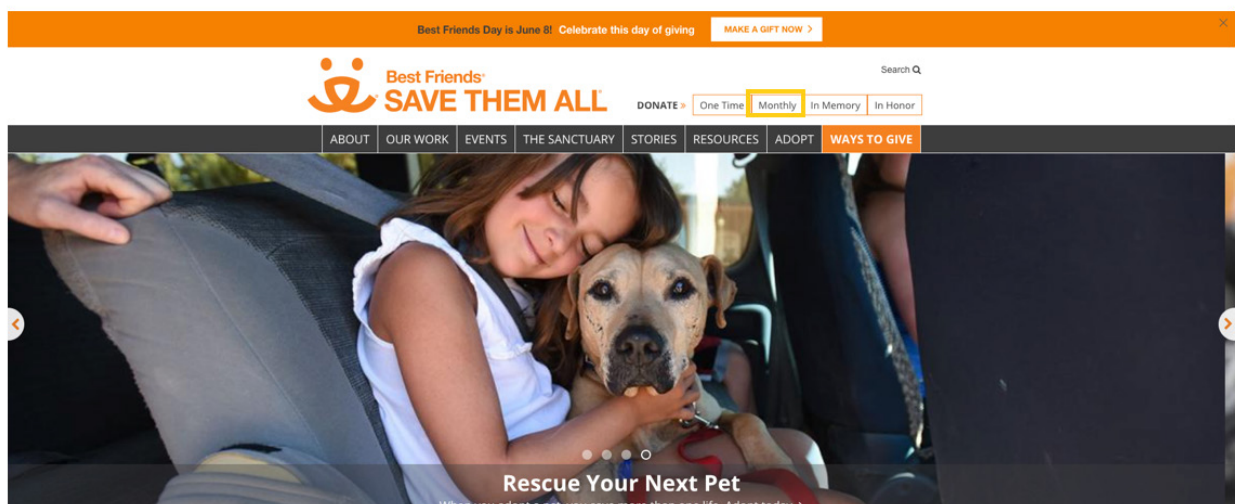
This is a traffic-focused strategy. People are looking to make a donation. Just by making it easier to find and to access, this organization raised 190% more in donations.

## Make sure your donation button is clearly marked within the navigation.

This is a simple way to generate more traffic and more donations to your page.

When we looked at the homepage, only **17% of organizations had a different button or call to action on the homepage for recurring giving**. There's a special look at recurring later on in this study but recurring giving is a great way to move donors into a key multi-year donor because they give more in a year and in a lifetime. They're more likely to be retained. Increasingly, we're seeing more people becoming first-time recurring donors because we're used to subscription Ecommerce services. More people are choosing recurring giving.

When it comes to generating more traffic, you can apply the same strategy to your homepage and make recurring giving easier to find and to click. Here's one example





In their navigation, they have a monthly donation option designated on the page. So if someone was interested in making a donation, they could immediately click through to make a recurring donation instead of going through a longer process. In this case, there's no real value proposition to help the donor make this decision, but it's an option for people to self-select immediately from the homepage if they already have the motivation to make that monthly gift.

***If you're focused on recurring giving, try adding a button or a call to action about recurring giving in order to increase recurring giving.***

# Communicating Value

## WHY GIVE TO YOU RATHER THAN ANOTHER ORGANIZATION OR NOT AT ALL?

On another side of the equation, next to motivation, is the value proposition. Do people understand why they should give to you? This is an important factor, and it's one that you have the most control over with our message.

If you think back to the sparkline of a donation, you need to persuade people who are at the moment of decision that they should continue to make that decision. You're also trying to create a strong emotional climax because the longer the emotional climax is, the longer the conversion horizon becomes. This means there's a higher chance that they'll complete a donation or potentially give more if they're inspired or really motivated. For this to happen, they need to understand what their donation will do, and the main tool you have at our disposal to pull donors up the donor mountain and communicate value is our message.

When it comes to communicating value, you need to answer a question in the mind of the donor: **If I am your ideal donor, why should I give to you rather than some other organization or not at all?** This is the value proposition question that all donors have in their mind, and that you need to be answering throughout your giving process. There are four main ways you can answer this question.

## Do they want what you're offering? Desire.

This deals with how much they want it, or the appeal. How appealing is the mission to this person? How appealing is the impact they're going to make through their donation?

## Can they get it anywhere else? Exclusivity.

Can they get this offer anywhere else? Is there another organization doing this type of work? What makes your organization unique? For example, do you work from a different perspective or a specific reason? Have you been doing it longer or in a new way?

## Do they understand what you do? Clarity.

This is a function of clarity. Do they truly and simply understand what it is that you do and what their donation will do?

## Do they believe you? Credibility and Believability.

Just because you say you're doing good work doesn't necessarily make someone feel like they should believe you. Third-party testimonials, trustmakers, or statistics build credibility so that donors feel good about giving you their money.

These are the four main ways you can answer the value proposition question, and when we scored the strength of the value proposition, these were the areas that we were looking at.

### HOW ARE ORGANIZATIONS DOING AT

### COMMUNICATING THEIR REASON TO GIVE?

Well, not great. We found that only **33% of nonprofits had a strong value proposition**. This can be a bit subjective so let's look at a few examples.

Here's one from Defenders of Wildlife:



**AMERICA'S WILD ANIMALS ARE COUNTING ON YOU**

Now more than ever, wildlife is counting on us. We're ready to go toe-to-toe with the Trump administration over its harmful policies, but we need you to help us do it.

It is essential that we work together to be the voice for the animals that cannot speak for themselves.

Help Defenders of Wildlife save endangered and imperiled species and the habitat they need to survive with a tax-deductible donation!

To make your gift go even further, become a [Wildlife Guardian](#) for just **\$9/month** and help save critically endangered animals every day. [Sign up today!](#)

PLEASE CHOOSE A CONTRIBUTION LEVEL FOR YOUR TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION

\$50  \$100  \$250  \$500  \$1000  My gift for wildlife:

On this page, you can clearly see who you're helping by giving a donation. It's written for you, and it includes some urgency by saying, "We're counting on you." This is a good headline because it reinforces who your donation will help. In the page copy, it taps into a hero's journey style where there's an obstacle to overcome or a person to battle. It talks about how essential the work is and how you specifically can help Defenders of Wildlife save endangered and imperiled species with a donation. Then, they talk about making a recurring gift to prime you to consider that level of gift.

We felt this page had a strong value proposition because it's clear what your donation will do, and there's some urgency involved that addresses why you should give today. Their work is somewhat unique because they're helping endangered animals. They also have some trustmarks on the donation page so it feels more credible and believable.

Another good example is from Family Life, a Cru ministry. They also have a strong headline, and it's immediately clear that it's written for me (the donor), and tells me what I can do through my donation. They also build credibility by focusing on their size and number of people's lives they've impact. Numbers can build trust, which is good, but be careful about being too big. Sometimes it can be overwhelming to donors – particularly smaller gift donors – so a balance of clear impact and emotional connection is needed along with numbers.

**FAMILYLIFE**  
Help for today. Hope for tomorrow.  
[ A Cru Ministry ]

**You can help build godly marriages and families!**

For more than 41 years, FamilyLife has provided people with biblically-based, practical help to strengthen their marriage and family...

- Our radio broadcasts provide biblical wisdom to millions of people every week, helping to encourage and challenge new and old believers in their walk with Christ.
- Every day, 21,000 people visit our website, finding help and hope in the countless articles, books, online courses, radio programs and other practical and biblical resources to strengthen their marriage and family.
- More than 57,000 people attended a Weekend to Remember® in the past year alone where couples were able to build, grow and restore their marriage by improving communication and reigniting the spark they once had.
- More than 100,000 people have accepted Christ as their Savior at a FamilyLife event since this ministry was founded. We know that this kind of decision is foundational to any marriage or family issue.

But we also know that there are still so many more families that need help.

In a culture that is increasingly hostile towards Christian values, we must increase our efforts to provide practical and biblical help to people.

Can we count on you to help us build and strengthen marriages and families?

Your gift today to FamilyLife will provide practical, transferrable and transformational help in life's most important relationships: God, spouse, and kids.

Please make your gift using the secure form below.

**SELECT AN AMOUNT**

**\$25**   **\$50**   **\$100**

Along with communicating credibility, this organization also includes a pull towards a cause or fight for a particular value. They communicate what my gift today would provide to transform families, and then they provide an opportunity to make a donation. Overall, we scored this as a strong value proposition.

Some fun with math: If 33% of organizations had a strong value proposition, how many nonprofits did not have a strong value proposition? **You got it, 67% of nonprofits had an average or weak value proposition.**

Here's one example. Nothing on this page tells me what my donation would actually do. The image and call to "Be the difference" could be for any organization in the world. There's nothing that's very appealing or exclusive, and it actually talks about making donations in other ways here and on their donation page. We scored this value proposition as weak.

Home  
/ Donate



Did you know you can create your own fundraiser to help the Ripken Foundation? With Facebook fundraising, you can make an incredible impact on at-risk youth across the country in just a few clicks. Start here: [facebook.com/CalRipkenSrFdn/fundraisers](https://facebook.com/CalRipkenSrFdn/fundraisers)

Support us by using Amazon Smile while you shop! It's easy, and you can help make a difference. Follow these simple steps:

1. Visit [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)

Support us by using Amazon Smile while you shop! It's easy, and you can help make a difference. Follow these simple steps:

1. Visit [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)
2. Select Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation
3. Start shopping!

Ripken Foundation Giving Options

Giving Options\*

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We also saw a lot of pages like this.



**DONATION AMOUNT**

\$500  \$100  \$50

\$29  Other

One time only  Monthly

**BILLING AND CONTACT INFORMATION**

First Name: \* Middle Initial: Last Name: \*

Email: \*

**ACROSS THE US**  
Nearly 11,000 dead in 2017 due to drunk driving.  
madd NO MORE VICTIMS

GUIDESTAR PLATINUM PARTICIPANT

BBB ACCREDITED CHARITY

How does this answer the question, “Why should I give to you rather than some other organization or not at all?” based on this page? It doesn’t. At all. There’s nothing on the page to answer this question. There’s a logo and some trustmarks, which might give this page some credibility, but there’s nothing else here that helps me feel like I’m making a great decision and that my donation is extremely needed.

## SUPPORTING COPY ANALYSIS

To answer the value proposition question, you have to use words. We’ve seen this time and again in our research. For example, in this experiment, this page started with only one sentence on the page with some social media icons.

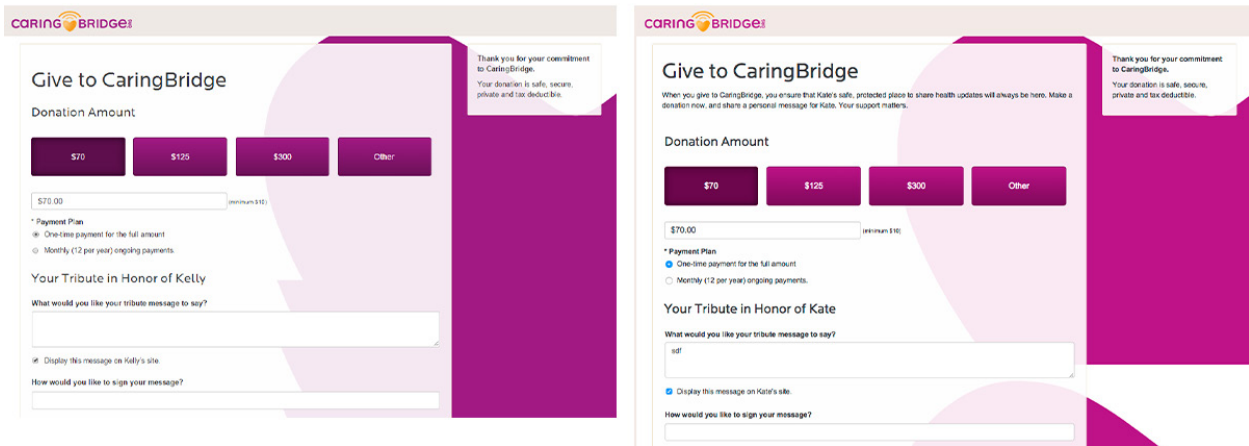
# CONTROL

# TREATMENT

On the treatment page, they added multiple paragraphs that try to communicate the value proposition of why you should give to them as opposed to some other organization or not at all. Just by adding that copy, it helped increase donations by 150%.



In this experiment, there was a 28% increase in donations just by adding a few sentences below the headline that talked more about what your donation would do and how it would be used.



You, your board member, or your boss might be thinking that people don't like to read, and so this can't be effective anymore. That's why experimentation is so critical, you don't have to rely on your or your boss' bias. You can let donors tell you what works and what they want.

In this experiment, they went from a more visual page to a really long-form page. There was a 146% increase in conversion rate with a long-form, copy-heavy page.

**NOT THIS**

**BUT THIS**





And be careful about trying to have your cake and eat it too. This organization tested a shortcut button so people who wanted to give could click donate and 'skip' the text. In the end, this caused a 28% decrease in donations. People who clicked the button and skipped the value proposition didn't understand how important their donation would be or why it was needed. You can't shortcut value proposition.

## From This



## To This



What if you use video instead of text? Because people don't read and they love videos right? Well, you might be harming your donation conversion rate. In this experiment, this organization took the words from the video they were originally using on the page, and put it into text on the page instead.

**A**



**B**



This increased donations by 560%. Videos can be very slow and require someone to sit, wait, and watch. Comparatively, especially on your donation page, you want people to be able to read or scan quickly to pull out the value. It's hard to scan or pull value from a video without

investing what feels like a significant amount of time. We don't recommend using video for your donation page, and it's why copy is so important.

As part of this study, we looked at how organizations are using copy and we found that **29% of nonprofits had less than one sentence on their donation page**. This means that almost three out of ten looked like this page.



How do you, a potential donor, know what your donation is doing if you reach this page? You'd need to have an incredibly high motivation and understanding of this organization and their work to consider moving forward with a donation on this page.

Pages like this exist because donors and fundraisers have very different perspectives. If you think of your donation page as a transaction method or a collection place, a page like this makes sense. In that case, we could just give them a form, help them figure out amounts they want to give, and then just take their money. However, looking at this through the lens of a donor – someone who wants to make a difference and who is trying to live out their values – this doesn't cut it. You need to affirm, reaffirm, and confirm those values. A page like this doesn't do that.

61% of organizations had less than four sentences on their donation page. These organizations used a little more copy, like this example.



It's not the most appealing, clear, credible, or exclusive — that's really hard to do in one or two sentences — but it's one step closer to communicating what someone's donation will actually do.



One step even further, we found that 39% of nonprofits had four or more sentences on their donation page. Here's an example of what this can look like. You can see the headline image, some copy, and some bullets. Bullets are helpful on a general donation page. On this page, they talk about the organization itself to build trust and credibility.

In this example, they use short sentences to communicate who they are, what they value, and why they need support.

moz://a

We are proudly non-profit, non-corporate and non-compromised. Thousands of people like you help us stand up for a healthy internet for all. We rely on donations to carry out our mission to keep the Web open and free. Will you give today?

Donate now

USD \$

ONE TIME MONTHLY

\$50 \$25 \$10

\$3 \$ Other amount

Choose Payment

SECURE

DONATE

DONATE

PayPal

Your payment details will be processed by Stripe (for credit/debit cards) or PayPal, and a record of your donation will be stored by Mozilla. We are able to provide refunds up to one year after a donation is processed. Other ways to give: Wire Transfer or SEPA | Check

Problems donating? Visit our FAQ for answers to most common questions. Still have problems? Send us an email. Contributions go to the Mozilla Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization based in Mountain View, California, to be used in its discretion for its charitable purposes. They are tax-deductible in the U.S. to the fullest extent permitted by law.

They communicate their mission, and then ask for a gift.

And this organization uses a headline and a few short sentences before asking for a gift, and then add another sentence to nudge you towards monthly giving.



We must act now. While there's still time.

Give birds a fighting chance in a changing world

Birds and their habitats are under attack. With your help, we can fight back. We can protect birds and the places they need — as long as we have people like you who will help.

Select giving frequency:

Monthly One-Time

Your steady support prepares us for every challenge and lets us plan for the future!

\$250 \$100 \$75

\$50 \$30 \$0.00

Most people are giving \$75. Please give what you can.

DONATE NOW »



Bald Eagle

Power our best protection with your generous gift today.



Audubon is a top-rated charity and your donation will be securely processed

All of these examples are using more than four sentences on their organization's donation page.

A word of caution: **longer isn't always better**. You could have a lot of copy and text on a page, but if it's written poorly, not written for your donor, doesn't communicate value, or is just all about you (the organization), then longer actually can be worse. Take this experiment on a main donation page.

**A**




**Your gift helps reach the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ**

When you donate to Harvest, you join a team committed to knowing God and making him known. Harvest reaches millions of people each year who are hungry for the gospel. Your gift supports:

- Greg Laurie's radio program, broadcast on more than 650 stations daily
- Harvest America and crusade events, which bring together hundreds of thousands to hear the gospel
- Know God, an initiative to answer questions about faith
- Online broadcasts that reach more than a million people each year

Your gift using the form below is a fast, secure way to help reach the lost with the gospel. Thank you for supporting Harvest. To God be the glory!

**B**



**Tell Others About Jesus**

Just as Paul was called to take the message of Christ to a Christ-less culture, so we too have been given this command. While shifts in culture may have changed, a person's basic needs have not. People need a Savior and Jesus Christ is still the only way.

Since the age of 19, when he formed a small Bible study that would eventually become one of the largest churches and evangelistic ministries in the United States, Pastor Greg Laurie has been passionate about evangelism and committed to helping people come to know Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Through his preaching, radio programs, television broadcasts, books, and crusades, Pastor Greg reaches millions of people each year who are hungry for the gospel.

Your gift to Harvest Ministries will help Pastor Greg continue to effectively communicate biblical truth in a culture that needs it most.

Tell others about Jesus. Make your gift to Harvest Ministries today.

On the left, there's a headline, paragraph, some bullets, and a call to action. This also happens to be our starting point for copy length and format on a general donation page as well. And on the right, they take a different approach and use a more narrative format that is longer and has more of a story arc. In this case, the longer format decreased donations by about 30%.

Look at it again through the lens of a donor who has visited the homepage, looking to donate, and then you click donate.

The headline on the page on the left talks about the donor's gift, whereas the page on the right talks about telling others. Which do you think speaks to the donor and their motivations better and quicker? One headline is about what their gift does and the other is telling them to take action. They didn't come to this page to take action; they came to make a donation.

The page on the left continues to focus on what a gift does in the supporting copy, whereas the page on the right goes into a longer narrative about Paul in a story format. As the donor, you just want to know why your gift is needed. In comparison, the page on the left uses bullets to communicate impact, adds trust and credibility, and then reconfirms the donation.

This is one example of how just adding more copy to a page doesn't necessarily make it better. The page on the left is a great example of how to add more copy in a valuable way to your donation page.

So that's how you can format your copy but what should your copy say? Of all the ways to answer the value proposition question, the most important and most in your control is **clarity**. Do they understand what you do? Figuring out your exclusivity, credibility, or appeal can be tough. But clarity is relatively easy to tap into and can lead to a big difference on your donation page.

If you look back at the examples that used four or more sentences, you can see how those organizations are adding clarity around why someone should give to them as opposed to another organization or not at all. This additional copy helps a donor know what their donation will be doing. More copy allows the opportunity to add emotion onto the page and develop some empathy. In this example, you can see how through their copy and text, they're adding clarity.

**Miami Rescue Mission**  
Broward Outreach Centers  
Serving the Homeless and Needy

Your support changes lives

**Provide a meal and hope for hungry, homeless people**



To someone who is hungry and homeless, one meal can bring hope and mark the first step toward true life change. Please give today and provide:

- Hot Meals
- Safe Shelter
- Life-changing Programs and Services

**Miami Rescue Mission**

During this **Easter and Passover season**, we expect to serve over **250,000 life-transforming meals** to hungry, homeless people here in the Miami-Dade area. Please help today. Every **\$2.10** you give provides a hot meal that can be the first step toward lasting change for someone who is lost and alone.

**Donation Amount**

[Click here for Broward Outreach Centers donation page »](#)

\$35 to help 17 people

\$50 to help 24 people

\$100 to help 48 people

\$250 to help 119 people

Other Amount

I would like to make this a monthly recurring donation

**Payment Information**

Card Number

Expiration Month  Year

**Your Information**

Name First  Last

Email

I would like to receive occasional email updates from Miami Rescue



On this page from the Audubon, they clarify how a gift today will help birds.

In this example, the text hopefully helps someone understand the organization's mission and the role that they can play in it. While these may not have the best value propositions, they're using their copy to add clarity to what someone's donation will do.

moz://a

It's key to remember that it's their donation (the donor), not yours (the fundraiser). The donation page is for them, so you need to communicate in ways that makes sense for them.

## Try adding more copy or text on your donation pages that clearly explains why their donation is needed and what their donation will do.

The key there is not just clarity but that it's about **them**. In this experiment, there's a lot of different copy on the control page but note how often they use “we”, “us”, and “our” language.

### FROM THIS

How do you break the stranglehold of the Washington, DC establishment that taxes, borrows, and spends our grandchildren's future while killing freedom with over-regulation? How do you stop amnesty? How do you end the nightmare of Obamacare?

The Heritage Foundation is America's most influential conservative policy organization. Our mission is to formulate and promote conservative public policies based on the principle of **free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense**. Every day, our more than 300 experts, marketers, and communications specialists make the case for conservative policies. That's not enough though. We need you with us.

#### How your year-end gift will help make the difference

Your support ensures that Heritage is able to communicate rigorous conservative policy research effectively to the incoming members of Congress and the American people in order to achieve conservative victories in 2015 and beyond.

Truth is power. Facts are power. Information is power.

The policy experts at The Heritage Foundation communicate truth, facts, and information—power—from the halls of Congress to the grassroots of local American communities.

- ★ In 2015 The Heritage Foundation will funnel the facts that grassroots conservative activists need in order to demolish big government arguments from the Washington establishment.
- ★ The Heritage Foundation will also educate newly elected and veteran members of Congress to ensure that they keep their campaign promises.
- ★ Utilizing The Heritage Foundation's conservative policy solutions, Heritage Action for America will then ensure lawmakers are held accountable through a unique combination of political muscle and a vast grassroots army.

#### WHY I'M A HERITAGE MEMBER

"I am honored to be a member of a team that does not talk but rather acts. You give me hope that we will get our country back. Keep up the good work."

Larry W.  
California

"Being a member of The Heritage Foundation has been a wonderful experience for me. I greatly appreciate the work that is done at Heritage on behalf of the conservative principles and values we share."

Scott E.  
California

### TO THIS

You can help break the stranglehold of the Washington, DC establishment that taxes, borrows, and spends our grandchildren's future while killing freedom with over-regulation. You can help stop amnesty. You can play a major role in ending the nightmare of Obamacare. You can win lasting conservative victories.

#### Your year-end gift will help make the difference

Thanks to you, The Heritage Foundation has risen to be America's most influential conservative policy organization.

Your financial support helps sustain The Heritage Foundation's mission to formulate and promote conservative public policies based on the principle of **free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense**.

And now, your year-end gift will ensure that Heritage is able to communicate rigorous conservative policy research effectively to the incoming members of Congress and the American people in order to achieve conservative victories in 2015 and beyond.

Because of your donations, the Heritage Foundation has nearly 300 policy experts and communicators at the ready to bring truth, facts, and information—power—from the halls of Congress to the grassroots of local American communities.

- Your trailblazing support has enabled the Heritage Foundation to continue blocking and pushing back the plans of the Washington DC establishment—as it has since helping pioneer the Reagan Revolution and other conservative responses to the Left.
- Today you enable the Heritage Foundation to funnel the facts that grassroots conservative activists need in order to demolish big government arguments from the Washington establishment.
- And your donations are also helping Heritage educate newly elected and veteran members of Congress to ensure that they keep their campaign promises.

#### WHY I'M A HERITAGE MEMBER

"I am honored to be a member of a team that does not talk but rather acts. You give me hope that we will get our country back. Keep up the good work."

Larry W.  
California

"Being a member of The Heritage Foundation has been a wonderful experience for me. I greatly appreciate the work that is done at Heritage on behalf of the conservative principles and values we share."

Scott E.  
California

It's very apparent that the organization is the focus of the copy. It communicates, “Look how awesome we are. Give us your money and we'll do good work with it.” At the end, they add a few sentences about what someone's support means. In comparison, the page on the right uses much more “you” language. It's all about you, the donor, and what your donation will do. This is much more powerful for donors. This change in focus from the organization to the donor increased donations by almost 23%.

Even in the good examples we found, organizations can't help putting themselves into the equation. In this example, they use “we” and “us” language instead of “you” language. Some of this collective “we” language might be acceptable, but it shouldn't diminish the role of the donor.



We must act now. While there's still time.

Give birds a fighting chance in a changing world

Birds and their habitats are under attack. With your help, we can fight back. We can protect birds and the places they need — as long as we have people like you who will help.

Select giving frequency:

Monthly  One-Time

Your steady support prepares us for every challenge and lets us plan for the future!



Bald Eagle.

Power our best protection with

For example, “We’re on a mission and you can give.” A much better phrasing is, “You are on a mission. Here’s how you can live it out.”

Here’s a slightly better example. They use a mix of “you” and “we” language, but it’s still not quite there yet.

moz://a

What if instead of, “We rely on donations to carry out our mission,” it said, “Your donation today can keep the web open and free. Please give generously today.” Can you feel the difference? Positioning it differently — even using the same words but speaking more directly to the donor and what their impact can be — can make a big difference.

We’re all guilty of this. This is one advantage of doing a study like this. We make hundreds of donations and analyze hundreds of pages, so we see just how common this is. Almost every organization is guilty of this in some way.

## Try turning “we” or “us” language to be “you” or “your” language.

Another way to add clarity is to reiterate what someone’s donation does and what happens next. In this experiment, they added a paragraph after their introduction and bullet points that reconfirms what a donation will do.

### From This

The [redacted], America’s most broadly-supported policy organization, effectively communicates rigorous [redacted] policy research to Congress and the American people.

- More than 500,000 Americans donate to support [redacted]’s work
- Our more than 100 policy experts and researchers are invited to testify before Congress nearly 40 times a year
- [redacted] experts appear daily in America’s top news outlets—Fox News, CNN, and the Wall Street Journal, as well as new media like Facebook and the [redacted]
- Located steps from the Capitol, [redacted] has promoted principled solutions for more than 40 years

### To This

The [redacted], America’s most broadly-supported policy organization, effectively communicates rigorous [redacted] policy research to Congress and the American people.

- More than 500,000 Americans donate to support [redacted]; work
- Our more than 100 policy experts and researchers are invited to testify before Congress nearly 40 times a year
- [redacted] experts appear daily in America’s top news outlets—Fox News, CNN, and the Wall Street Journal, as well as new media like Facebook and the [redacted]
- Located steps from the Capitol, [redacted] has promoted principled solutions for more than 40 years

Your donation will advance your principles—free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense—at a time when our nation needs these principles most.

This increased donations by over 49%! In some experiments we looked at previously, just adding a sentence that says “Please complete the form below” to guide people through the page helped increase conversion rate too.

## Try adding a second call to action headline that says what their donation will do right before the form. Maybe even tell them what to do by saying, “Complete the form.”

This makes it easy for donors to understand what they should be doing.

# Adding Incentive

We've looked at the reasons why someone should give to you, but there's another question you need to address: why should I give more or right now? For example, if your mission is helping birds, they might need help two weeks from now. So why should I give today? This is when you can use incentives to increase urgency, and potentially increase the average gift size.

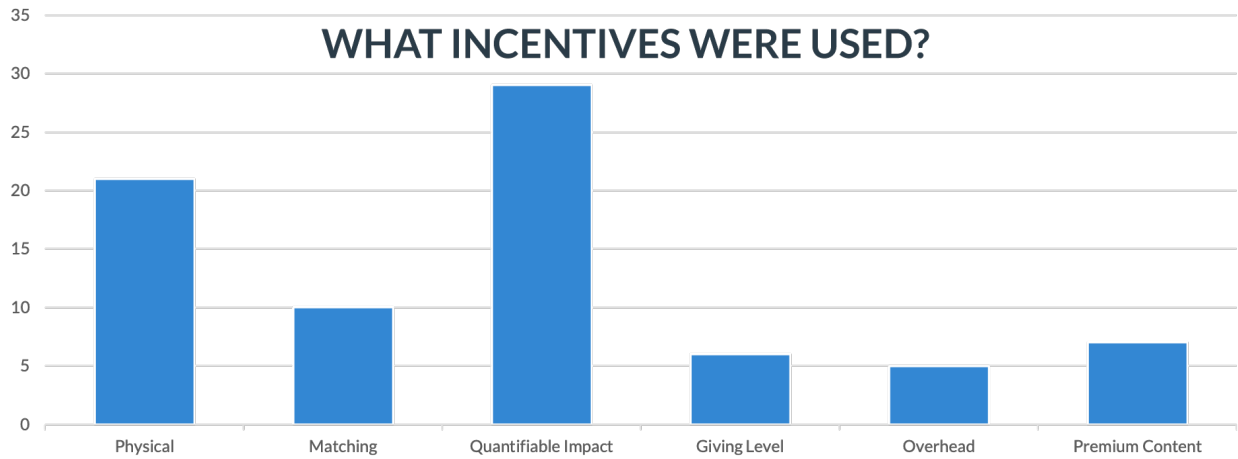
To clarify, incentives are not your value proposition or the reason to give. Incentives are additional encouragement to persuade someone to give today or to give more. They could be:

- Tangible or physical, like gifts – *“If you give \$50 today, we’ll send you a tote bag.”*
- Matching gifts – *“If you give today, your gift will be doubled.”*
- Quantifiable impact – *“A gift of \$30 does ...”*
- Giving level – *“\$100 for a Bronze membership, \$500 for a Silver membership, \$1000 for a Gold membership”*
- Overhead – *“100% of your donation will go to program ...”*
- Premium content – *“As a donor, you’ll have access to this special content ...”*

These are forms of incentives. They help you make the case to give today or to give more.

Through our research in this study, we found that **36% of nonprofits used an incentive**. Most organizations used quantifiable impact, and the second most used was physical items

like books or tote bags. The least used was overhead covering.



Let's focus on matching for a minute. This organization used matching to incentivize monthly gifts; we saw this a few times while researching for this study. But does matching work? That was the question experiment #9546 in our library was looking to answer. Over the course of three emails in a fundraising campaign, they sent the control group the messages with no matching language. The treatment group received the same messaging but with the addition of matching language: "If you give today, your donation will be matched." At the end of the campaign, those that received the matching offer and language gave were almost 88% more likely to give. Matching, on average, in general, and most of the time helps increase giving.

**EDF ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND**  
Finding the ways that work

100 days of environmental action  
\$1-for-\$1 match for new members and monthly donors

A new Congress is in session. These first 100 days are our best chance to make the environment a top political priority for the next 2 years.

The Robert W. Wilson Charitable is sponsoring a 100-day membership drive to help grow our environmental majority and defeat the anti-science, polluter-friendly policies that threaten our planet and our future.

Your first-time or new monthly gift today will be matched \$1-for-\$1, doubling your power to fight back.

Your gift:  
 Monthly  One-Time  
 \$10  \$15 monthly  \$25  \$50

Your best gift (\$10 min.):

Billing Address  
 First name:   
 Last name:   
 Address:   
 City:   
 State:   
 Zip code:   
 Email:

Payment Information  
 Credit Card  Checking Account  PayPal  
 This gift is monthly  
 Add \$0.75 to cover our processing fees.  
 Donate \$15 monthly

EDF is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Your gift today is tax deductible.  
 See our policies on corporate and foreign donations.  
 Need help?  
 Email us or call (800) 684-3322

More ways to give  
 • Honor or memorial gift  
 • Donate stocks or bonds  
 • Start a personal fundraising campaign  
 • Donate by mail (PDF)  
 More ways to support EDF

**Try using a matching incentive to inspire giving and monthly giving.**

Of the different 'incentives' we looked for, organizations were most likely to use quantifiable impact. This is simply when an organization has a very direct, clear, and tangible statement like "\$30 does X". This is a way to add extra clarity, particularly with making a decision on

how much you should give. This experiment demonstrates how increasing the clarity of the value proposition affects donor conversion rate. The control states the tribute donations are vital. The first treatment starts with a question, “Do you appreciate staying connected?” Then it goes on to say what a donation does. In treatment two, they ask, “Do you appreciate staying connected?” and then they talk about the organization and how it’s run. There was a small increase in conversion rate for both of these treatments, but they weren’t statistically significant.

Compare these to treatments three and four. They add language about how a \$30 donation would power a site like Kelly’s and their updates for one month. They ask if they would support the organization to make sure it stays online, and in treatment four they specifically ask for support to help the organization stay online for the next year. In this case, by focusing specifically on what a \$30 does, they saw a 64% increase in conversion rate for treatment three and a 78% increase in treatment four.

For many people who give between \$30-\$150, it’s hard for them to feel like their donation will make a real difference in the face of the complex problems nonprofits are trying to solve. It feels futile. By adding in this quantifiable impact, it helps donors understand the difference that even \$30 can make. This can have a big impact on the conversion rate.

***Try being more tangible and specific with the impact of someone’s donation.***

It might be that the specific kind of impact is important. This experiment showed us how communicating the specific kind of impact of a person’s gift can affect donor conversion. Quick context for this experiment. First, this was a donation page showed immediately after someone signed up to take a free online course on marriage (we call this an Instant Donation page). They’d also already tested that a ‘\$50 does X’ statement outperformed not having a statement like this.

## CONTROL

Before you start your free online course (which will arrive in your inbox shortly), there's a few things we'd like you to know...

- **This online course is made possible and free because of the generous support of people who believe in our mission. Isn't that incredible?**
- **FamilyLife is completely donor-funded.** This means that we rely on the support of people like you to make resources like this online course, free, and to equip couples as they strengthen their marriages and families.
- Before this course, people had to go to an event to hear the message of hope and healing that is only found in Christ for their marriage. **Now, millions of people can access this invaluable content to restore their marriage and seek oneness with their spouse for years to come.**
- In order to reach those people with this message of hope, they have to hear about the course first. **Will you help us get this course into the hands of more people?**

Your gift of \$50 will help us alert 7000 more people about this course.

Don't hesitate, make your gift today using the secure form below.

## TREATMENT

Before you start your free online course (which will arrive in your inbox shortly), there's a few things we'd like you to know...

- **This online course is made possible and free because of the generous support of people who believe in our mission. Isn't that incredible?**
- **FamilyLife is completely donor-funded.** This means that we rely on the support of people like you to make resources like this online course, free, and to equip couples as they strengthen their marriages and families.
- Before this course, people had to go to an event to hear the message of hope and healing that is only found in Christ for their marriage. **Now, millions of people can access this invaluable content to restore their marriage and seek oneness with their spouse for years to come.**
- In order to reach those people with this message of hope, they have to hear about the course first. **Will you help us get this course into the hands of more people?**

Your gift of \$50 will allow 36 more couples to sign up for this online course.

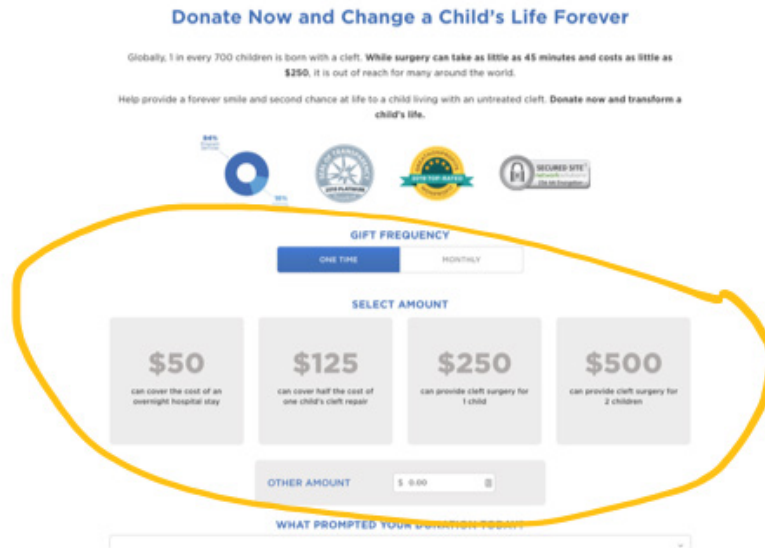
Don't hesitate, make your gift today using the secure form below.

So for this experiment, in the control version, they said “Your gift of \$50 will help us alert 7000 more people about this course”. But in the treatment version, they said “Your \$50 gift will allow 36 more couples to sign up for this online course.” The result? A 98.4% increase!

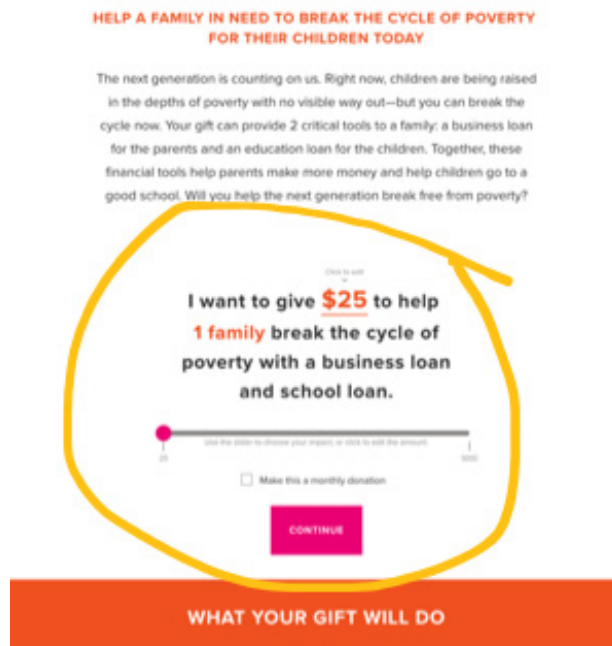
Again, think of this through the eyes of the donor. They just signed up for a marriage course. Do you think they care about helping 7000 other random people? Or do they care about helping 36 other couples, like them? This also taps into something called construal theory where narrowing the gap between who I am and who I am helping can help increase donations.

***Try being more tangible and specific with the impact of someone's donation in more human, relevant terms.***

And if you're looking for a few other examples of how to use quantifiable impact, here's how one organization did it.



As you can see, they list what each donation amount specifically does. They also have some trustmarks on the page. This organization did it differently. On this page, they have a slider that can move the bar up or down to increase the dollar amount.



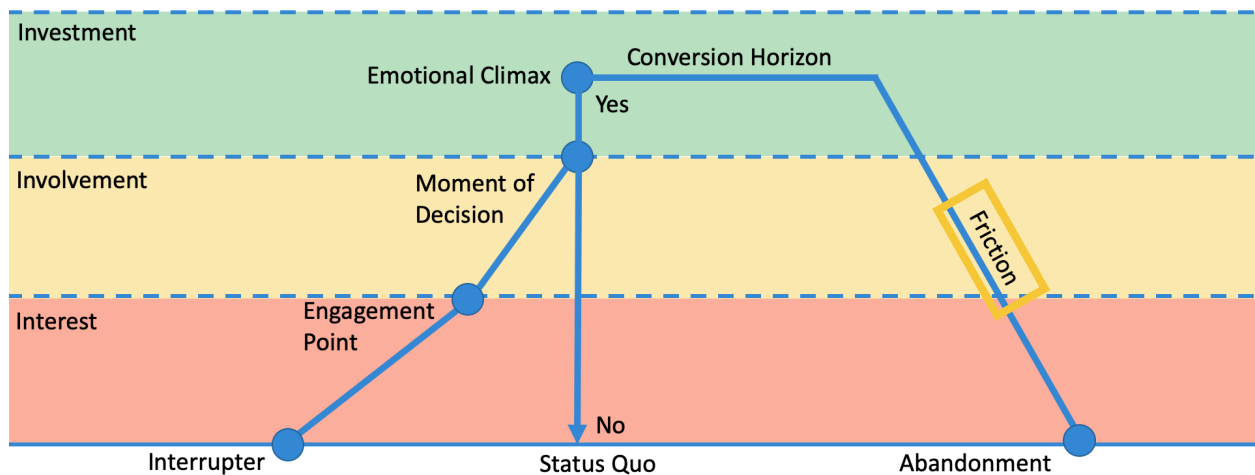
Based on what's chosen it calculates how many families the donor would help break the cycle of poverty for through microfinance or microloans. Trying modeling these examples and experiment for yourself to see what works for you.



# Removing Friction

## SEVEN TYPES OF FRICTION

What do I need to do to give? As we work through the sparkline of a donation and the conversion equation, we're not at the point of decision or emotional climax. We're ready to make a gift. This is the point where we experience the pain, or the friction, of the process. And where we can improve the likelihood of a donation by simply removing friction.



When it comes to donation page friction, there are seven types.

## #1. Field Number Friction – Requiring Extra Information

The more fields you require, or the more friction you put in front of a donor, the less likely

they are to complete the task.

In this experiment, the only difference between these two forms is that the cell phone field is required in the treatment page. This caused a 50% decrease in donations.

**FROM THIS**

City:  State:

Zip Code:

**Gift Information**

Credit Card Number:

**TO THIS**

City:  State:

Zip Code:

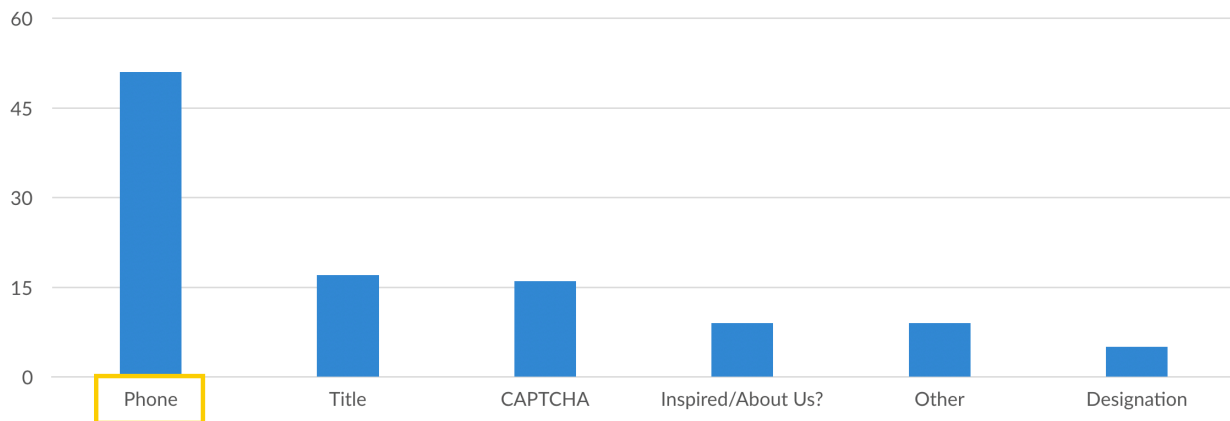
**Cell Phone**:

**Gift Information**

Credit Card Number:

We've seen that if a cell phone field is optional, there's been no difference to the conversion rate, but by requiring it there tends to be a decrease in conversion.

We found that **40% of organizations required non-essential information to complete a donation.**



This means they required information other than what was really needed to process the gift. This could be a phone number, a title, CAPTCHA, or a question about how you found out about them.

**The most required non-essential information was a phone number (25%).** If you're going to require a phone number, you have to make sure you make up the value somewhere else in the process in terms of upgrades or thank yous. This creates a lot of friction and anxiety in the process because people don't know what you're going to do with their personal phone number.

Some organizations required a title (8%). Do you really need to know if they're a Mr. or Mrs? Do you really want to identify them that way? Do they want to be identified that way?

A number of organizations required CAPTCHA (8%) as a security measure where you have to play the “are you a robot” game and choose which pictures are street signs to pass the test. You really don't need those security methods on our forms anymore. They no longer have a place and they add a lot of extra friction.

Some organizations required the question, “What inspired you today?” or “How did you hear about us?” to try to collect some marketing information (4%). It's not necessarily a bad question, but hopefully you have data analytics to show you where they came from instead. This question in particular makes people stop in the donation flow process because it's a tough question to answer. It's hard to pinpoint exactly what motivates us, particularly when it comes to giving. Instead of asking it in this donation process, you could ask it after the donation, in the welcome series on a survey, or on the confirmation page. In the middle of a donation flow is the wrong location.

Another required field was designation (2%). If your organization has different funds, this field requires people to choose a fund that they might not know much about before they can actually complete a donation. You're forcing them to designate funds without context.

This is an example we found in our research. You can see in the pending details that there's a CAPTCHA here to prove you're not a robot before you can enter your information. On the personal details section, they require you to put in your data first. This is probably so they can say happy birthday or encourage you to do a birthday fundraiser, but they don't make it clear why they're asking your birthday. Some people might be sensitive to giving out their age. This page also requires a “how did you hear about us” answer before you can complete the donation. The layout isn't very friendly

The screenshot shows a donation form titled "GIVE ONCE" with a "One time donation amount: \$20.00". The form is divided into several sections: "Payment Details", "Personal Details", and "Address Details". The "Payment Details" section includes fields for "Card Number", "Name on Card", "Expiration Date", and "CCV". The "Personal Details" section includes fields for "First Name", "Last Name", "Contact Number", and "Date of Birth". The "Address Details" section includes a field for "Address". There is a CAPTCHA section with the text "I'm not a robot" and a "DONATE NOW" button at the bottom. The form also includes a "Sign up to receive updates on ADI activities, initiatives and support" checkbox and a "How did you hear about us?" field.

either. The payment details are formatted up and down. Once you've completed that section, then you need to go over to personal details and go up and down again, and then to address details and go up and down again. It isn't pleasing to the eye.

Compare this example to this page. The layout is more pleasing, and the information that's required is only the bare minimum that's needed. It's not filled with friction. If I want to complete my donation, this page allows me to do so in a streamlined manner.

**Limit the amount of required fields and information to process a gift.**

If you have to collect certain information, can you make it optional, or provide some context as to why you need it?

## #2. Field Layout friction

The layout of the field plays a role visually, and we've seen it make a big difference. In this experiment, the form fields are exactly the same but are laid out differently. On the right, they use a horizontal space which makes the form look shorter,

### FROM THIS

### TO THIS

and you complete information in groups. Just laying out the form differently caused a 39% increase in donations. This layout takes up less digital footprint, it looks easier to complete, it involves less mental friction, and it's easier to fill out.

Here's an example from the research study where every form field is on a separate line, and they're not taking advantage of any horizontal space.

## NOT THIS

Donation

Join Frequent Flyers - The Museum's Recurring Gift Program

MAKE THIS A RECURRING GIFT

Designation

DESIGNATION:  
Museum's Greatest Need

Tribute Gift

THIS GIFT IS IN HONOR OR MEMORY OF SOMEONE

Billing Address

MAKE THIS GIFT ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

NAME:  
First name:  Last name:

EMAIL:

PHONE:  
optional:

COUNTRY:  
United States

ADDRESS:

CITY:

STATE & ZIP:  
State:  ZIP:

I WOULD LIKE THIS GIFT TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS

LEAVE A COMMENT (OPTIONAL):  
optional:

Payment details

Payment Processed by Blackbaud

CARDHOLDER NAME:

CARD NUMBER:

VISA  Mastercard  American Express  Discover

EXPIRATION:  
month:  year:

CVC:

## BUT THIS

YOUR DONATION

Make this a monthly recurring gift.  
All gifts of \$500 or more will receive a personalized, engraved brick on Hilldale's Liberty Walk. See an example.

PAYMENT DETAILS

SECURE CONNECTIONS

Card Number \*

Expiration \*  
Month:  Year:

Security Code \*

YOUR INFORMATION

Name \*  
First Name:  Last Name:

Email \*

Country \*  
United States

I have a military address

Address \*

City \*

State \*  
State / Territory:

Zip Code \*

Comments  
Other gift designation or comment:

AMOUNT: 2150

Compare this to the example on the right. Can you feel the difference? The first page has so much wasted space, it's narrow, and it's cramped. It looks much longer. The more horizontal form has a leaner flow and feels easier to complete. Donors can feel that difference. By laying out form fields in a nicer way, you can increase conversion rate.

**Use horizontal space on your forms for better spacing and less of a digital footprint.**

### #3. Confusion/Distraction Friction

Here's an example of simple confusion friction. This page has a full navigation bar at the top of the donation page.

#### FROM THIS



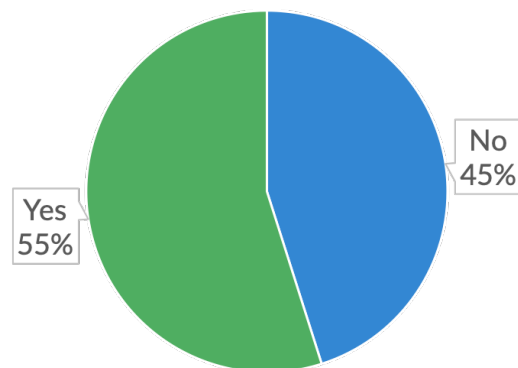
#### TO THIS



If someone's trying to donate and all of a sudden they see events and policies that could impact them, they might find those more interesting, choose to go there instead, and abandon the donation form. For the treatment page in this experiment, they removed all the distracting navigation links. In this case, it helped increase donations by 195%.

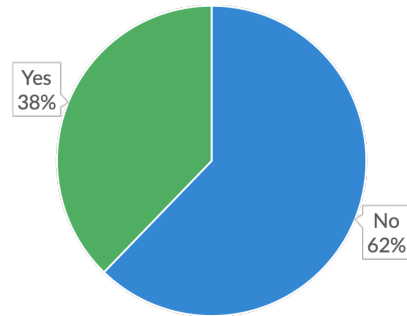
While conducting this study, we looked for unnecessary links and distractions on the donation pages tied to the menu and navigation. These take people away from donation pages because they are distracting or confusing. **The majority (55%) of donation pages had menu and navigation distractions.**

#### DID THEY HAVE DISTRACTING LINKS?



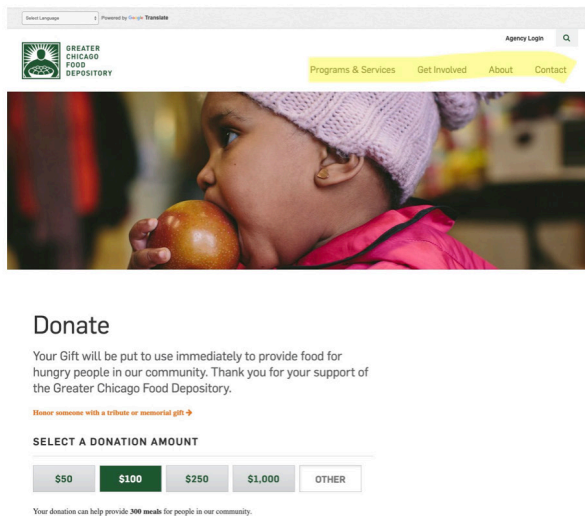
We also looked for multiple calls to action. We found that **38% of organizations had multiple calls to action on the donation page.** These might be asking someone to sign up for a newsletter or to give in a different way. This means they actually had different actions for someone to take on the donation page other than completing a donation. To be honest, this is confusing. Someone has clicked to donate, they want to give, and then they see multiple different actions they can take other than giving a donation.

## DID THEY HAVE MULTIPLE CALLS TO ACTION?

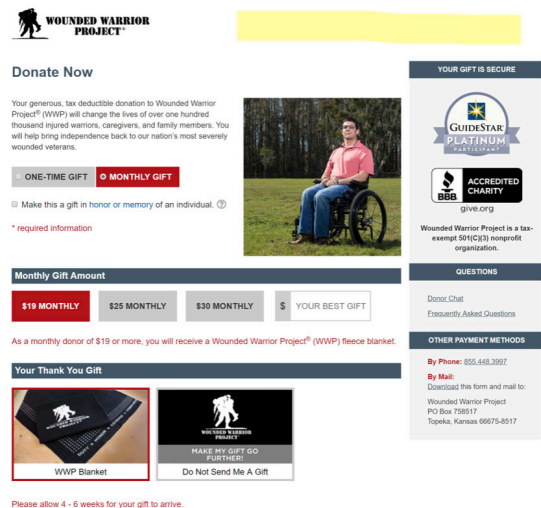


In this example, there are some distractions. It's not a terrible example, but you can see how it poses a problem. Compare that to this page. It has very few, if any, distractions. There's no log-in, and there's no call to get involved.

## NOT THIS



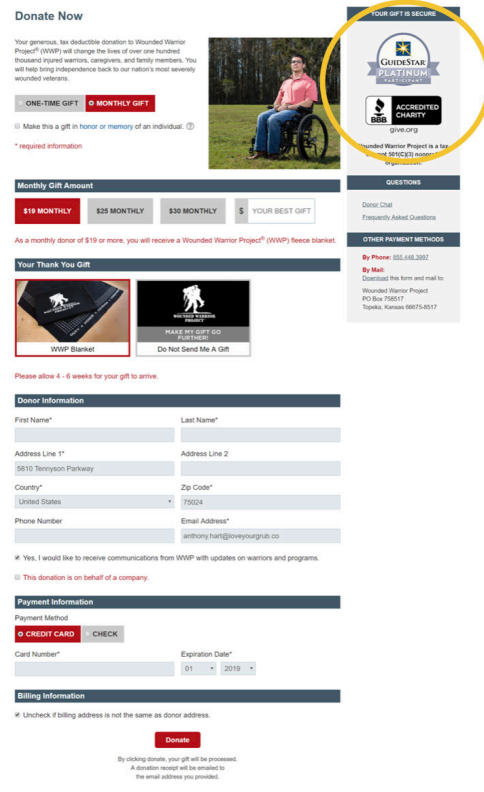
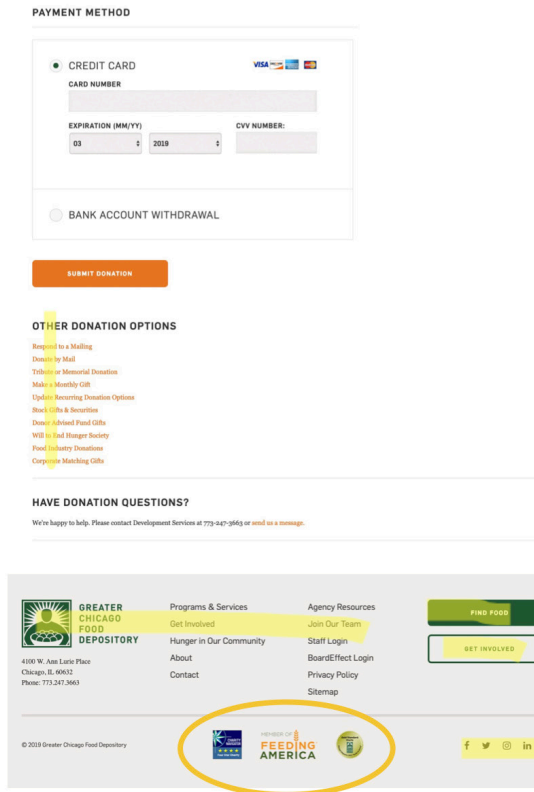
## BUT THIS



There's nothing else to do on the page other than complete this donation. They also include some trustmarks.



At the bottom of both of these pages, we see that the first page lists different possible donation options.



There's lots of other actions for someone to take. There are some donation questions, then more navigation items, social media, fine food, and more in the footer. The second page has no additional calls to action or any confusing links in the footer.

**Remove any/all distracting links and conflicting calls to action.**

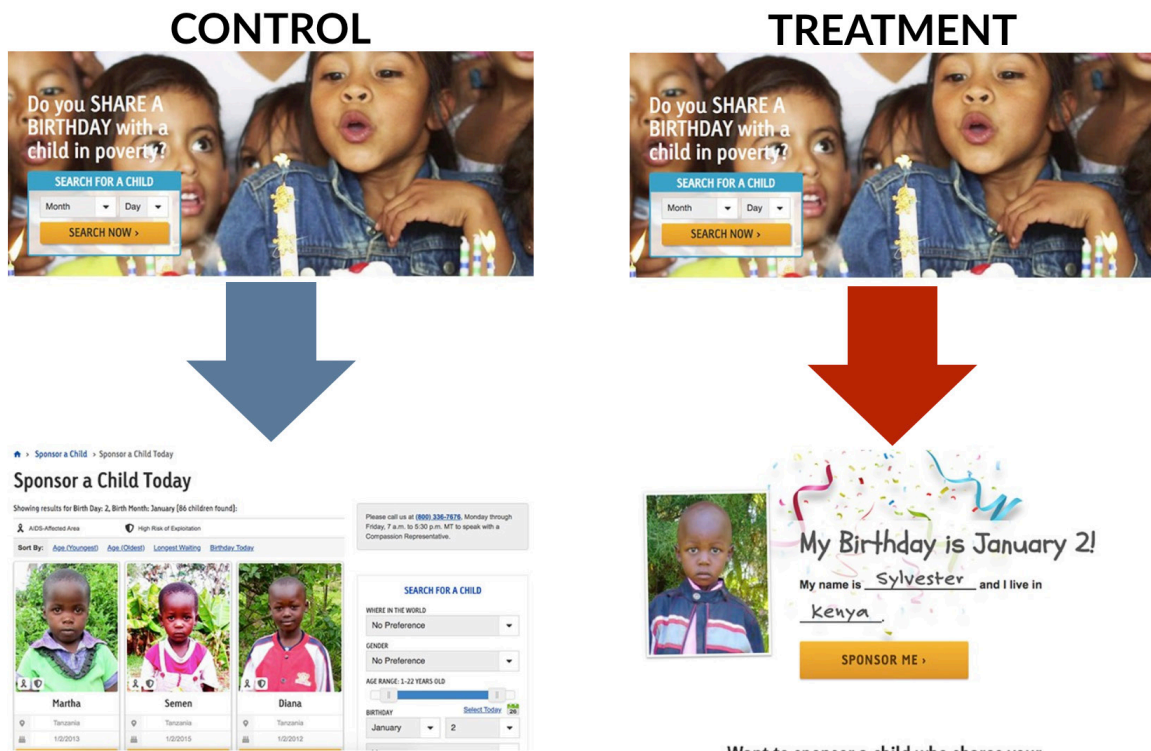


You could have a "Ways to Give" page on which you can list all the options to give, like by stock, PayPal, contact us, or more, but this is different than a donation page. Your donation page is about communicating value and limiting the friction and confusion so that the donor can continue in completing their donation.

## #4. Decision Friction

There are certain decisions that donors are required to make. Do I want to give? What type of gift to I want to make? How much do I want to give? Those are three basic decisions that you ask donors to make, but sometimes we add additional decisions into the process. This can be frustrating and can increase the cognitive load on the donor, and decrease the chances of giving.

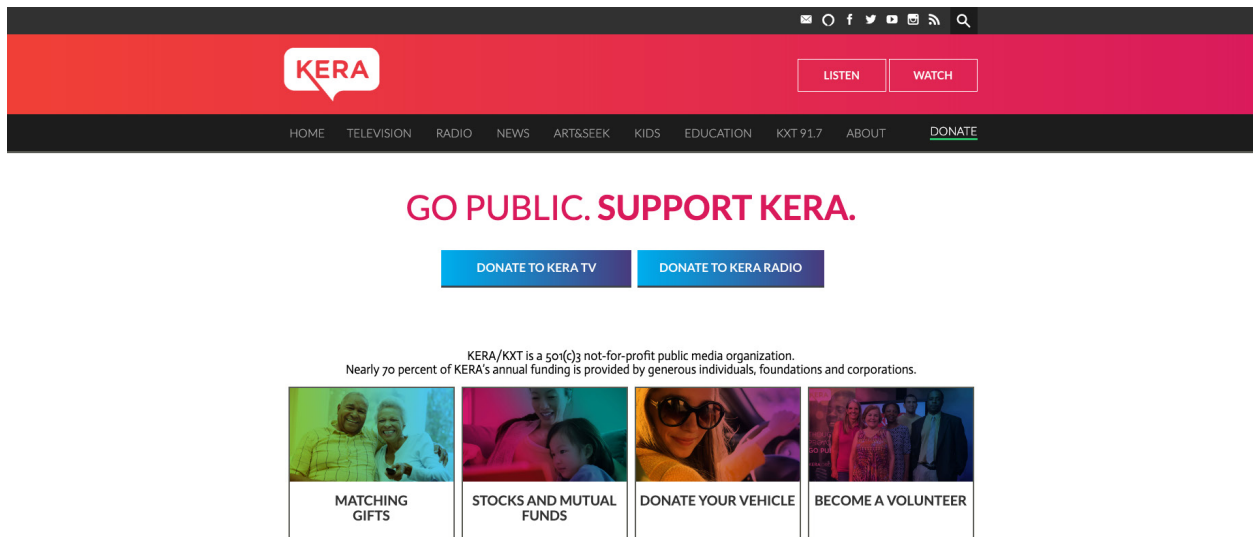
In this experiment, this large sponsorship organization has you enter your birthdate on the homepage. Based on that date, they show you children that you could sponsor that share your birthday or who have one very close to your birthday.



This is a way to increase resonance or relevance to promote a sponsor child. This is a great idea, but all the children were equally rated and weighted in rows of three, as you can see on the original page.

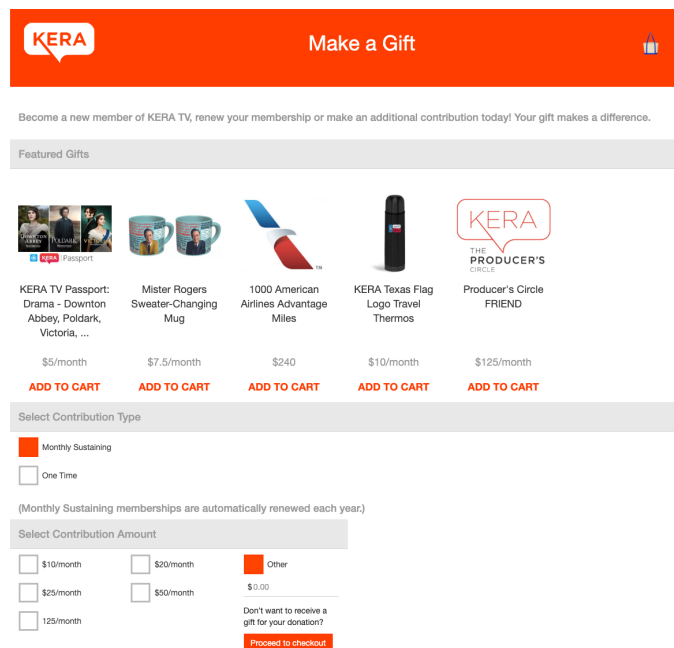
In the treatment, they decided to prioritize one child first and then added some design to continue the birthday theme. Below that, they could still have the three rows of children. By prioritizing one child and limiting the decision friction, they saw a 14% increase in child sponsor donations. This is huge for a large organization like this.

With that in mind, look at this example of a very decision-filled donation process from a public media organization. When you click to donate, you're taken to this page.



Do you want to go to TV or Radio? Then you have to decide between matching gifts, stock and mutual, passport, member benefits, major gifts, additional information, and more. It's overwhelming, and they're all equally weighted so it's not clear what you should click.

In this case, we wanted to give to the TV. We clicked to donate to TV, and we're taken to the next step. This page is loaded with premiums and incentives that you have to choose from.



They have preselected a few options to make it slightly easier for you, but it's still very overwhelming how many choices you have to make. It's quite cumbersome.

The more decisions you ask donors to make, especially without context or understanding, the more likely they are to abandon the donation process.

*Try reducing the decisions donors need to make and/or clearly prioritize one for them.*

## #5. Error/Form Friction

Form error friction happens when you're completing a donation and enter invalid information into the form, like an invalid email address, or you miss a required field.

The form should be set up to notify you while you're still on the form that you've made a mistake or missed a field. This way you can correct it right away before clicking next or clicking to complete the donation. It's very frustrating to get all the way through a form, click to complete the process, and then receive an error that you have to go back and correct. It's even more frustrating when it means entering in all the form information again.

*Show donors a missed field or error before they get to the end/bottom and try to click on.*

You can use an asterisk or some other way to show that a field is required before you have them complete the page.

## #6. Device Friction – Mobile

Device friction is the difference between the desktop experience and the mobile experience. We looked at this because mobile is increasingly crucial. Blackbaud's charitable giving report showed that in 2014 just 9% of gifts were made on mobile but in 2018, 24% of gifts were made on mobile. In M+R's Benchmark report, mobile accounted for 30% of transactions and 21% of revenue in 2018 which was a 23% and 20% increase. **Mobile is important and only increasing in importance.**

We found that **6% of nonprofit organizations' donation pages were not optimized for mobile**. This means the vast majority of organizations were. We considered a page optimized for mobile as long as we didn't need to pinch, scroll, or zoom the page, but there's a big range between truly mobile-optimized pages and functional mobile pages. The good news is that most organizations were at least functional on mobile.

We saw some device friction like this. On the left is the desktop version, and on the right is the mobile version.



The mobile version is just a very small version of the same page, and you have to pinch and zoom to interact with the page. This makes it a terrible mobile experience. It should look more like the example on the right. The mobile version of the donation page resizes and rezooms so that you can scroll and fill out the form easily. This should play a large part in how you design donation pages.

This experiment shows how important it is. This page went through a radical redesign of changing the donation template. There are lots of changes between the original and the treatment pages.

## FROM THIS



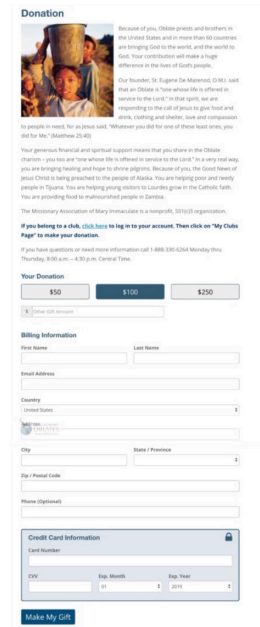
## TO THIS



Because of you, Oblate priests and brothers in the United States and in more than 60 countries are bringing God to the world, and the world to God. Your contribution will make a huge difference in the lives of God's people.

Our founder, St. Eugene De Mazenod, O.M.I. said that an Oblate is "one whose life is offered in service to the Lord." In that spirit, we are responding to the call of Jesus to give food and drink, clothing and shelter, love and compassion to people in need, for as Jesus said, "Whatever you did for one of these least ones, you did for Me." (Matthew 25:40)

Your generous financial and spiritual support means that you share in the Oblate charism – you too are "one whose life is offered in service to the Lord." In a very real way, you are bringing healing and hope to shrine pilgrims. Because of you, the Good News of Jesus Christ is being preached to the people of Alaska. You are helping poor and needy people in



The biggest changes involved streamlining the page, removing distractions, focusing on vertical fields, and pre-selecting donations. They've optimized this page based on a lot of principles we've covered in this study. When they tested these against each other, they found an 18% increase in donations, and they found that the mobile version accounted for a 64% increase on mobile devices. That's 64% of the traffic to this page.

The major reason for the increase of donations in this experiment was the better mobile page. Optimizing for mobile, specifically for pages and organizations in general that receive a lot of mobile traffic, makes a big difference.

One mistake we've seen organizations make in this process is cutting out the value proposition text to optimize for mobile. Don't do this. We found that **14% of nonprofits in this study removed their value proposition from mobile**. Here's an example of what one organization did.



## DESKTOP

The desktop version of the Open Doors donation page features a dark blue background with a subtle pattern. At the top left is the Open Doors logo with the tagline "Serving persecuted Christians worldwide". The main heading is "SUPPORT PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS TODAY". Below this is a small photo of a young girl and a paragraph explaining that gifts help strengthen and equip believers. This is followed by three bullet points detailing the impact of donations: Bible & Gospel Development, Women & Children Advancement, and Christian Community Restoration. A testimonial quote from Dr. David Platt is included, along with a "Gift Amount" section containing four buttons for \$300, \$120, \$60, and \$30, and a text input field for a custom amount. A checkbox option for recurring monthly gifts is also present.

## MOBILE

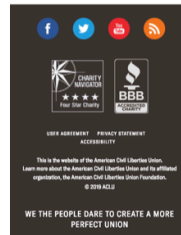
The mobile version of the Open Doors donation page is a simplified, vertical layout. It starts with the Open Doors logo and the same main heading, "SUPPORT PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS TODAY". The "Gift Amount" section is the primary focus, featuring four large, prominent buttons for \$300, \$120, \$60, and \$30. Below these is a text input field with a dollar sign and the placeholder "Enter a gift amount". At the bottom, there is a checkbox for "I want to automatically repeat this gift every month." The detailed text and testimonials from the desktop version are omitted.

The headlines are the same, but all the copy they provided on the desktop page, including bullet points, quotes, and testimonials, all which help bring clarity, credibility, and impact into the donation process, are cut from the mobile experience. That copy specifically is what a donor needs to know and understand to trust their donation is going to make a difference. You might think people just want a quick mobile experience, and so it makes sense to limit the information provided on the mobile page, but the value proposition — the reason to give — is essential.



The idea to simplify for mobile is good. We found an interesting example of this from the ACLU. This is their mobile donation landing page. It looks short and simple, and then once you start clicking on your mobile device, the form fields expand. They don't use this approach for desktop, so this is their way to optimize for mobile. This might be worth testing on your own donation pages. Experiment with laying out form fields differently on your mobile pages where you know people are busy and are just looking to complete a donation.

## STARTS LIKE THIS



## GOES TO THIS

**Test your giving process on mobile and ensure you can still see the value proposition.**

Are you mobile functional or mobile optimized? Can you still see the value proposition?

## #7. Registration/Steps Friction – How Many Steps?

The more steps you have in the giving process, the more friction you're adding. In this

experiment, they used what we call an “Are you sure you want to give?” page.

**FROM THIS**

**TO THIS**

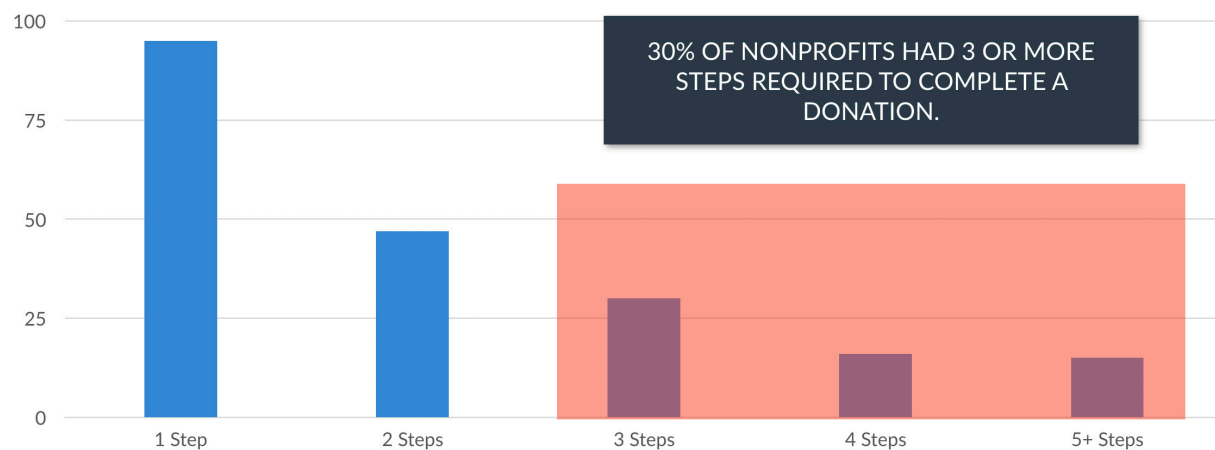
The screenshot shows a donation form titled "DONATE ONLINE" with a progress indicator showing three steps: 1. Enter Info, 2. Verify (active), and 3. Confirmation. Below the progress bar, there is a message: "Please verify that your information is correct, or [click here](#) to make changes." and a "Process Donation" button. The form is divided into several sections: Personal Information (First Name: Harvest, Last Name: Test), Contact Information (E-mail: Test@harvest.org, Phone Number: (951) 687-6902, Street Address: 6115 Arlington Ave, City: Riverside, State: CA, Zip Code: 92504, Country: USA), Donation Information (Gift Amount: \$5.00 (USD), Designation: Where Most Needed, Recurrence: None (Single Gift), Payment Type: Credit Card, Thank You Gift: A Lifetime of Wisdom), and Billing Information (Card Type: Visa, Card Number: XXXX-XXXX-XXXX-1111, Verification Number: 123, Expiration Date: 01/2017). At the bottom, there is another "Process Donation" button and a message: "Please verify that your information is correct, or [click here](#) to make changes."

# Straight to Thank You Page

This asks the donor to verify their information before they click to process the donation at the bottom of the page. They tested this against directing the donor straight to a thank you page. This change led to a 176% increase in donations.

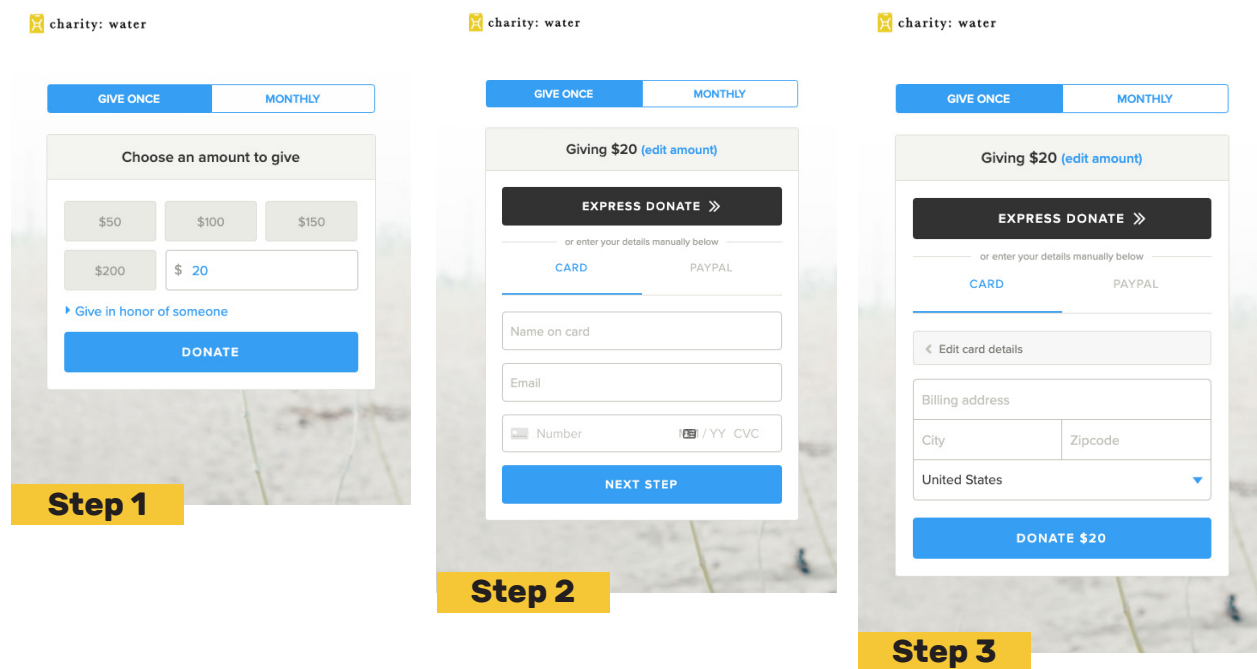
This example also has some confusion friction on the page too; it looks like the donation is already complete when it isn't. There also might be some decision friction about where to click to finalize the donation. All of this friction can be removed by just sending the donor right to the donation thank you/confirmation page. Removing that extra step for verification will help lead to a huge increase in donations.

We looked at how many steps besides the homepage were involved in the donating process. The vast majority of organizations had a one-step donation process.



Some had a two-step process, and **30% had three or more steps**. Once you start adding this many steps into the process, you're potentially adding more friction and unnecessary steps into the giving process, and losing donations because of it.

Now there is some nuance to the steps. For example, this charity:water donation page has multiple steps.



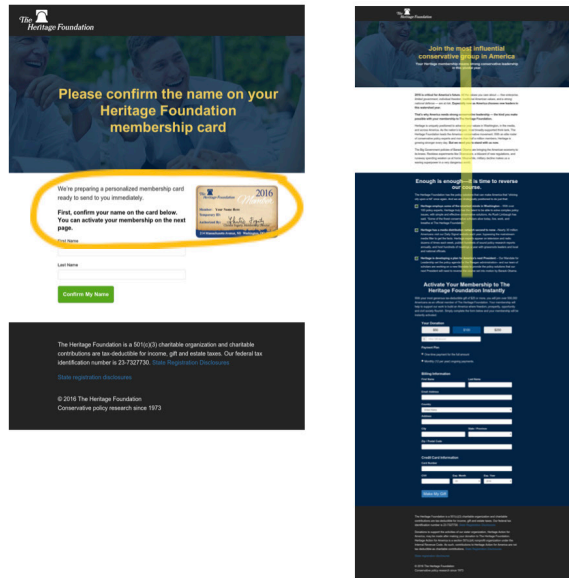
You choose your donation amount and then the form flips so you can enter your name, email, phone number, etc. It's technically a three step process — home, donation amount, click to donate — but it feels very slick. It's a small amount of information and flows nicely. It doesn't feel like three steps.

We've seen some experiments where a multi-step approach could be beneficial. This page started as a really long donation page. It's communicating a value proposition and has a membership-type appeal with a perk or premium.

## ONE STEP



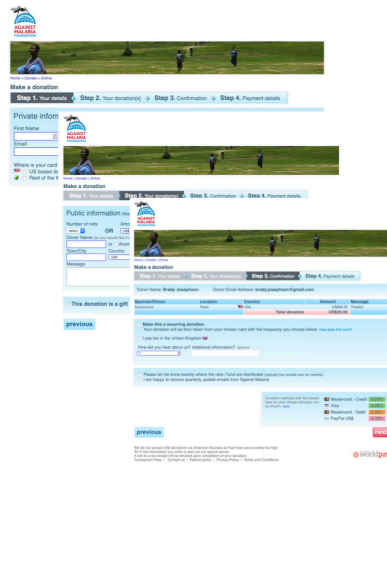
## TWO STEP



This is communicated in the middle section of the page, and below is the donation form. They decided to test a different process. They asked people to start the process by just giving their name and email to claim the premium first, and then directed them to a donation page where they could fill in the rest of their information to give. In this case, a two-step approach increased conversion rates by 80%. The key in this case was that they included a lot of value proposition on the second step. They still needed to communicate the value and impact of the gift to make this two-step approach work.

There may be an opportunity for testing here. If you can collect email in the first step, even if a person doesn't complete a donation in the second step, you still have the ability to retarget them with an ad or send them a trigger email. This is an opportunity worth looking into for your organization.

Those are two examples of a multi-step approach that works but here's what you shouldn't do. On this page, a person clicks to donate and immediately has to make a lot of decisions.



If they click to donate online, then they start filling out information in multiple steps with required forms. Once a person gets through all this, then they're sent to another page to enter all their payment information. In total, this organization had a six-step process. It's filled with decision friction, form friction, and lots of other issues. It's also linked to another website to complete the donation which can harm your organization's credibility or trustworthiness. Remember, the more steps you add, the more likely you are to create decision and confusion friction.

**Try to limit the number of steps in a giving sequence and remove any "are you sure" pages.**

**INTERESTING**

Through our research for this study we came across a few interesting options in terms of friction. One was speedy-donate options. charity:water had an express donate option that pulled in saved credit card information saved through Google Chrome to streamline the giving process. This cuts down on steps and automatically pulls in information you've already given.

Another interesting option we saw was the use of QuickDonate. After you completed your donation, you'd receive a pop-up before reaching the confirmation page that gave you the option to save your information. This way, if you wanted to give again to that particular organization in the future, all your financial and donation information would be saved and it would be a one-click process. What I like about this is that it asked after you already completed the donation form. This makes it really easy to agree to saving all your information to make future donations much easier. These are a few ways organizations and tools are looking to cut down on the number of steps in the donation process. We saw more of these speedy donation options in this study, and we'll continue to see more in the future.

---

**Thank you! Your donation to has been processed.**



---

**Now, save your information with QuickDonate ⓘ**

You won't have to enter it more than once for or any other organization participating in QuickDonate.

Remember this device. If this is not a personal device, you should uncheck this box.



Maybe next time.

# Reducing Anxiety

Why should a donor trust you? This has to do with anxiety, and donors want to know the answers to two main questions.

## FIRST, IS MY INFORMATION SECURE?

We analyzed the donation pages to see if someone would perceive the website to be secure and that payment information that's shared will be sent securely. We found that **6% of organizations' websites didn't appear secure, and 94% felt secure**. To determine this, we looked anything that shows it might be secure: HTTPS, a lock box, a security seal, or anything else that indicated security.

There are some treatments you can use to communicate security that can make a big difference.

In this experiment, they took the same form fields and added a darker colored box and a small lock box image surrounding the credit card information section of the form. This simply re-emphasizes that this information will be secure. In this case, there was a 9.5% increase in donations. We've seen this help in other experiments as well. It not only visually reinforces that the donor's personal information is secure, but that their credit card information is secure too.



## FROM THIS

## TO THIS

We found some good examples of what you can do to help a donation form feel more secure.

## LIKE THIS

## OR MAYBE THIS

On the left, they have a lock symbol next to “Submit Donation” that reemphasizes at the last moment that, yes, this is secure. On the right, they use the sentence, “All transactions are secure and encrypted,” before you enter payment information. They also have a lock box in the credit card information fields.

**Try showing donors their credit card information is secure when it matters most.**

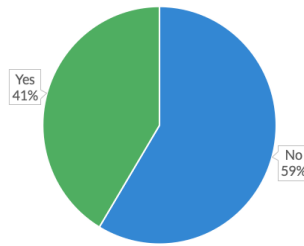
## AM I MAKING A GOOD DECISION?

At this point, hopefully they feel inspired, emotionally connected, they understand the value

of a donation, and they feel like their information is secure in the giving process. This is when they might still have some lingering doubts. Is this really a good decision? There are a few ways you can alleviate these doubts and communicate trust and credibility, and reinforce your message, at this late stage in the donation sequence.

One of these options is a third-party endorsement. **We found that 42% of organizations were using third-party endorsements like seals, quotes, or anything else that indicated it was a good organization.**

### Did They Use Third-party Endorsements?



from organization]

1. Enter Your Donation Amount

This is a one-time gift of [\$x above]  
 This is a monthly recurring gift of [\$x above]

2. Enter Your Information (It's Secure)

First Name  Last Name   
Pre-filled if possible Pre-filled if possible

Address 1   
 Address 2

City  State  Zip Code

Email (for receipt)  Preferred Phone (optional)   
Pre-filled if possible Pre-filled if possible

Credit Card  ACH Bank Account

Credit Card Number  Verification Code   
Expires Month / Expires Year

**Make My One-Time \$50 Gift**

Your gift is going to help impact [this specific change] that we already talked about. This is just a small reinforcement.

We don't see a lot of experiments

testing the use of endorsements because our default is to use them to help build trust, but the folks at DonorVoice conducted a study on this with the DMA Nonprofit Federation in their learning lab. Through their research they found that some trust marks are better than no trust marks, and that some trust marks are better than other trust marks. In this case, the Charity Navigator seal will create a much stronger sense of credibility than others. The DMA Certified seal actually was just created for this experiment. It's not real, but it demonstrates the power of perception of third party credibility. The perception of third party credibility is better than no trust attribute at all, and in this case it's better than using just a quote from a supporter.

The Wilderness Society

## Fight for Wilderness

Donate now to protect public lands

Give Monthly  Give Once

By becoming a monthly donor, you provide the ongoing resources to protect and defend our wildest places against the Trump administration's attacks.

Your Gift Amount  
**\$25.00**

First Name  Last Name   
 Email   
 Street Address

I live outside of USA / Canada

City  State  Zip Code

Credit Card Number  Expiration Date  CVV Number   
MMYY

**DONATE NOW**

Your gift is tax-deductible

Keep in mind that context matters. This is one of my favorite design examples from this study. It has a

beautiful layout, and at the very bottom, right in the eye path of when you click to donate, there are trustmarks. This reemphasizes that you're making a good decision and you can trust this organization.

This organization included an “endorsed by” right under the donate button.

## LIKE THIS

Honor Someone with Your Contribution (optional)

If you would like to make your gift in honor or in memory of someone, please fill out the form below. To send a notification of your thoughtful gift, please provide the recipient's email address.

This Contribution Is  
-- please choose --

Recurring Contribution  
Become a recurring donor to make an automatic contribution to NMCRS every month.

This Is A Monthly Contribution

**DONATE**

Endorsed by  
GREENSTAR  
TOP RATED

© 2019 NAVY-MARINE CORPS RELIEF SOCIETY

## OR LIKE THIS

The Nature Conservancy

You Can Trust The Conservancy

Donate Now to Protect Nature

Stand up for our natural world with The Nature Conservancy. Every acre we protect, every river mile restored, every species brought back from the brink, begins with you. Your support will help take action on the ground in all 50 states and 72 countries.

FREE! Get 1 year of Nature Conservancy Magazine with membership

Enter Your Gift Amount

\$50 \$100 \$250 \$500  
\$5,000 \$10,000 Other  
\$15 minimum

I choose to help cover costs and processing fees to make my donation go further. Please charge my total gift of: **\$100.00**

Yes, I would like this to be a monthly gift.

Your Billing Information

\* First Name:

\* Last Name:

\* Address Line 1:

Address Line 2:

\* City:

\* State/Province:

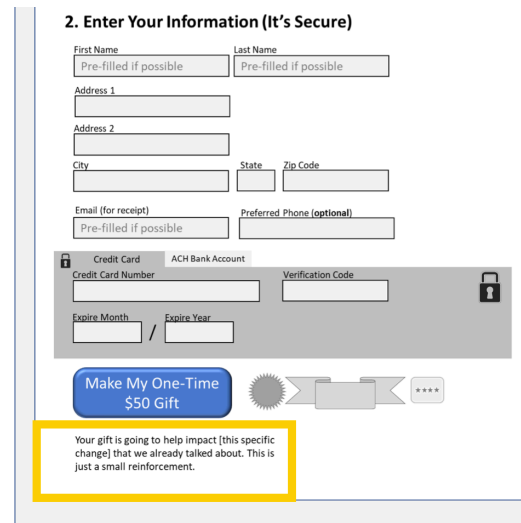
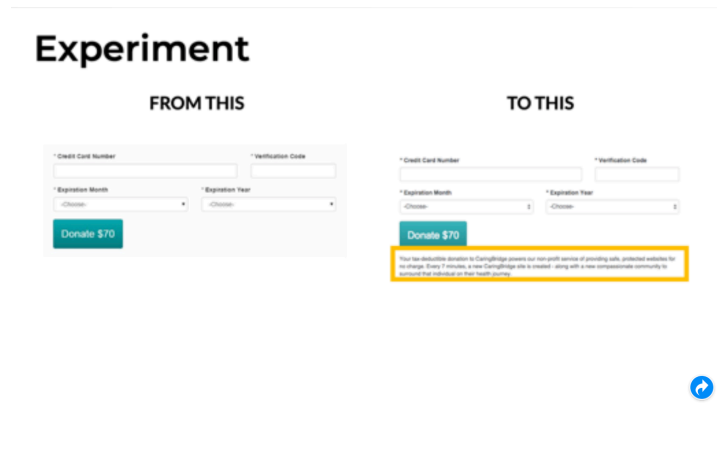
Your gift helps...

- Advance Science.**  
From regrowing coral reefs to finding climate change solutions, your donation helps push conservation science to new limits.
- Foster Collaboration.**  
Together with communities, governments, businesses and nonprofits, we work to grow conservation funding and establish environmentally conscious practices.
- Make a Global Impact.**  
With scientists on the ground in more than 72 countries around the world, your gift helps to effectively conserve the most ecologically important lands, oceans, lakes and rivers.
- Shape Practical Policies.**  
By leveraging our scientific results, we help shape policies that limit pollution, prevent habitat loss and promote biodiversity on a global scale.
- Safeguard Nature.**  
With your support, we work tirelessly to defend natural resources, protect endangered species, keep our drinking water clean and preserve nature.

The Nature Conservancy added the phrase, “You can trust the Nature Conservancy,” at the top of the page right above two trust marks. If you scroll down to the bottom of the page and start entering payment information, you’ll see “Top Rated” and more trust marks. This helps you feel more confident and secure that your donation is a good decision from the beginning to the end of the donation form.

**Try adding trust marks within the eyesight of the donor.**

Don't bury them deep in the footer where no one will see them. Make sure they are at least within eyesight of the donor while they're making the donation.



This stage in the process is also a good time to reemphasize your message. One of the most underused spaces is under the donate button. We learned through this experiment that just adding a few sentences talking about the value or impact of the donation right below the donate button can make a difference. In this case, it increased donations by 31%.

**Try reinforcing your message at the time of final decision.**

Whether it's security, impact, or a combination of both, can you reinforce it at the final moment of decision under the donate button?

How can you reduce anxiety and build trust? Here's a checklist.

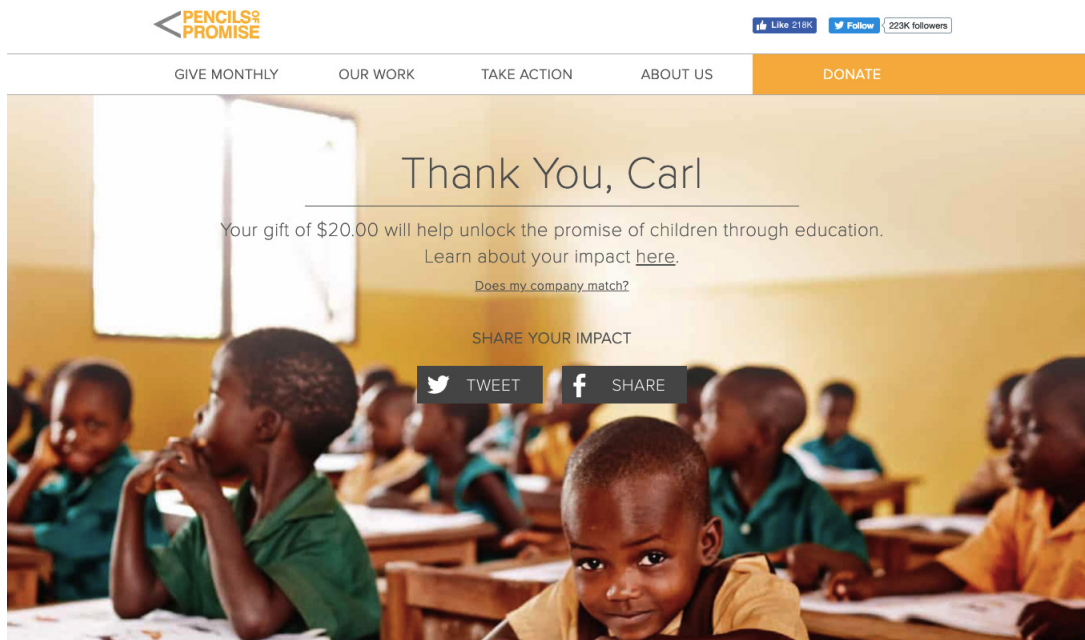
- Make sure your page is secure! Display that security somehow.
- Can you keep your donation page on your URL or a subdomain (as opposed to linking out to another domain)?
- Can you make sure your donors know your page is secure where it matters: the credit card area?
- Do you have a link to your privacy policy?
- Can you use third-party "evidentials" or "trust marks" in the eye sight of your donor?
- Can you reinforce your message below the donate button?

# Thank You Page

The donor journey and giving experience doesn't end just because they made a donation. In fact, for a lot of donors their journey with you is just beginning. So we wanted to look specifically at what happens after you give and analyze the thank you or confirmation page. The donor journey doesn't end the minute they complete a transaction.

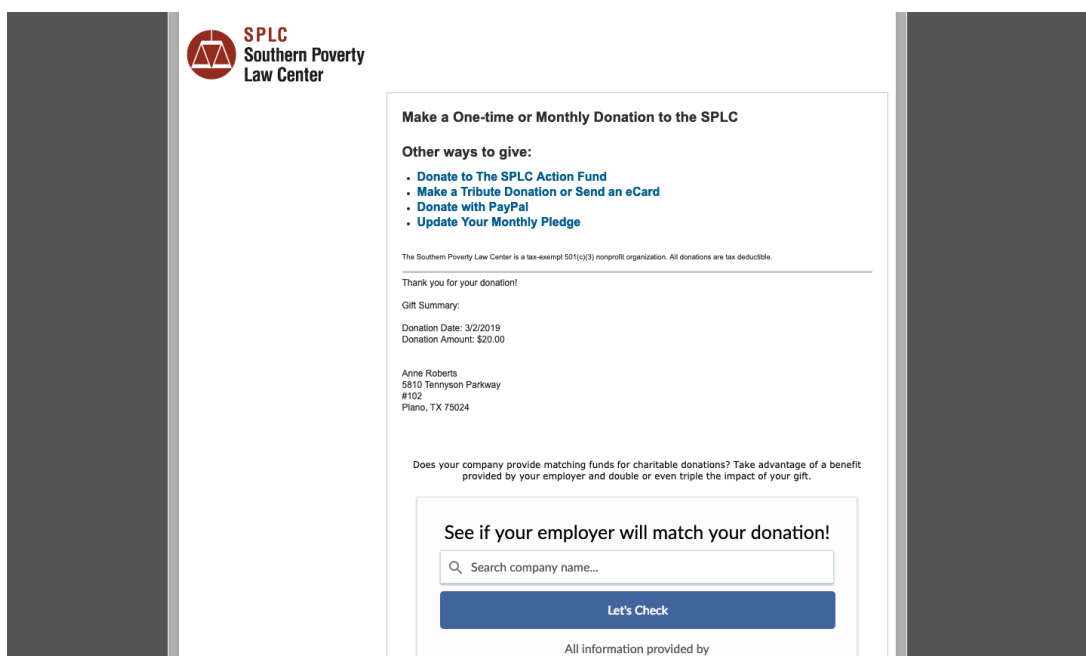
## THANKS ISN'T ENOUGH

We found that almost every organization had a thank you page that said thanks. **95% of nonprofits had a confirmation page**, and **97% of nonprofits thanked the donor**. But some didn't say very much or lead us forward after the donation. They said something like, "Thank you for giving with us," or "You are a partner in our work." That's it. **36% didn't note the gift amount, and 46% didn't have any value or impact-oriented language.**



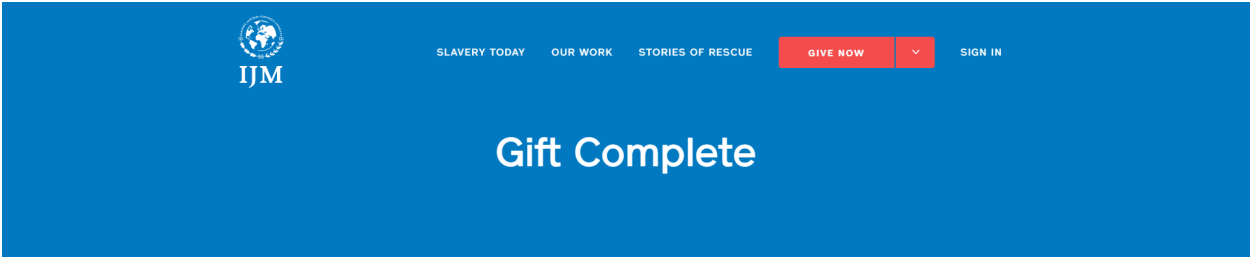
A thank you or confirmation page is an opportunity to say thank you and to reiterate what just took place. For example, “Thank you so much for your \$20 donation.” You can tell them what to expect next from you or what their donation will do; “We’ll be sure to send you updates on the difference your gift is having on protecting birds,” or whatever the mission is, and reemphasize it. Then you could lead into a next action.

Even of the organizations that included a next action, some of the design and language felt very cold and transactional.



In this case, they asked to see if their employer would match the gift and included some additional links to give before they even said thank you for the donation. The actual thank you is very small and receipt-like, and from a design and layout standpoint is much less important than asking if their employer would match the gift. The thank you doesn't feel like it's part of the conversation.

Good donation pages should facilitate a good conversation. Compare that to this example.



**Thank you for your generosity and partnership with International Justice Mission.** Your commitment will truly make a difference in the lives of children, women and men around the world, providing rescue and renewed hope for their lives.

**What happens next?**

You will receive a receipt via e-mail.

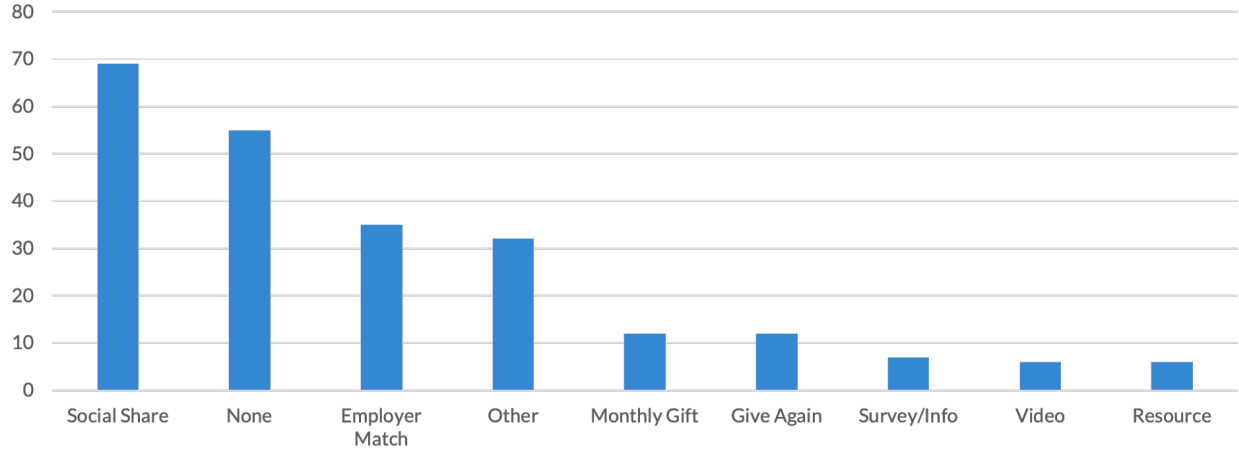
**Multiply the impact of your gift:**

Use our [easy tool](#) to learn if you or your spouse's company will match your gift.

**How was your giving experience?**

There's a "Gift Complete" headline; this could be warmer, but they reemphasize their mission and tell the donor what to expect next in terms of a tax receipt. They also include some more actions they can take now: check to see if your employer will match the donation, give feedback on the giving experience, share and inspire others to give, contact us, and they include a transaction summary. This is a much warmer and functional page, and the actions made sense in context of the donor journey.

When we analyzed what organizations offered as a next step, we found that the most popular offer was a social share; 70 organizations offered this.





We found that a large group of 55 organizations offered no next action. This is a lost opportunity.

We also saw that **18% of nonprofits asked about an employer match**. That's over three times more than we saw in the 2018 Nonprofit Recurring Giving Benchmark study so more organizations are using this option, and it can be as simple as these examples.

## LIKE THIS

Thank You For Your Gift!

Thank you for your lifesaving gift!

Doctors Without Borders

Share your support for Doctors Without Borders

Increase your impact

Employee Matching

Please Select Your Employer

Employer not listed?

Employee Email

Submit

My Information:

Mr. Sebastian Harris  
3810 Thompson Parkway, Suite 102  
Plano, Texas 75024  
USA  
4694315470  
sebastian.harris@doctorswithoutborders.org

My Donation:

Your one-time gift made on 02/27/2019 \$20.00

Your total donation today: \$20.00

## OR THIS

UNION RESCUE MISSION

Give End Homelessness Get Involved How We Help About HELP TODAY

Thank you for your donation

Thank you so much for your gift to Union Rescue Mission today!

Your kindness and generosity come from a heart of compassion. When you have a home and enough to eat, it's hard to imagine experiencing homelessness and hunger. Yet many of our unemployed and underemployed neighbors struggle every day just to get enough food to survive and find a safe place to sleep.

Without friends like you, many men, women, and children who desperately need food, shelter, and real long-term help are still being hungry and hurting. That's why we're so grateful for your gift to help our guests get off the streets for good.

Find out if your employer will match your gift to help twice as many hurting souls. May God bless you for helping those experiencing homelessness.

Rev. Andy Bales, CEO

No goods or services were provided in exchange for this contribution.

YOU ARE THE MISSION

Join Our Community

Sign up to receive heartwarming stories, updates, and more delivered to your inbox.

First Name

Last Name

Email

Get Updates

Union Rescue Mission is a 501 (c)(3). 78% of all gifts are put back into life-changing programs. Donor Privacy Policy

You can use a dropdown option they can select, or you can have them click a button to engage with the tool. In each example here, the employer match is one of the key actions on the thank you or confirmation page. This seems to be a good, balanced way to offer an additional action that's not too cumbersome and could potentially double their gift.

We looked at how many organizations asked for a second gift or a monthly gift on the confirmation page, and found that **only 12% of organizations asked for a 2nd gift of any kind**. This may seem counterintuitive because they just made a donation, but we've seen this be successful. In this experiment, they tested a recurring upgrade ask compared to an additional one-time ask.

In experiment #262 in our research library, the organization asked for gift immediately on the confirmation page which led to a 5.4% increase in conversion rate. This means 5% of people who donated instantly became recurring donors, a key multi-year, high lifetime value donor.

Then they tested this against asking if they would make a second gift to a different fund in the organization on the confirmation page, and they saw a a 29% increase in conversion rate. It did lead to a much lower average gift size (73.6% decrease in average gift), but this makes sense because a recurring gift over 12 months is much larger than a one time gift. There were so many more donations that the one time ask actually led to a 42.4% increase in revenue.

What I like about this experiment is that it shows both the value and the potential impact of asking for a monthly gift and asking for a one time gift. Each option led to revenue. This is an opportunity for you to figure out which is more valuable to you: asking for a recurring gift first, or asking for a one time gift first?

There's a way to ask for a second gift well, and it's because of the concept of cognitive momentum. Once we're in a decision-making mode, we're more likely to keep making decisions. In this case, someone has signified that they like the organization, they believe in what you're doing, and they've made a donation. They're in motion. Can you thank, honor, and respect the donor, and then also suggest another action that makes sense based on what they just did (donate), and who they are?

Here's what The Wilderness Society did.



**Dear Vanessa,**

Thank you for making a gift to The Wilderness Society. Your gift couldn't come at a more critical time.

We will be fighting every day to ensure that our wild places remain free from drilling, logging, mining and unregulated profiteering. Will you join us in that fight by becoming a monthly donor?

These are truly unprecedented times for our public lands. With an empowered wave of anti-conservationists in Congress and an administration ready to green light their pro-drilling legislation, we face a dangerous era of serious threats to our public lands ... and to our wild.

With all the additional threats to our public lands, we are having to add more and more to our National Wilderness Defense Team. We need monthly donors to provide dependable, regular support, so we can budget for the increased resources we are adding to defend our lands. Will you become one of those special monthly donors? Join as a Friend of the Wilderness today.

[Become a Monthly Donor Today](#)

**Gift Receipt**

	<b>Your Gift Amount</b> <b>\$20.00</b>	<b>Tax ID</b> <b>53-0167933</b>
	<b>Organization Name</b> <b>The Wilderness Society</b>	<b>Date of Gift</b> <b>03/03/2019</b>

They start by calling us by our name, which in this case was Vanessa, and then say a big thank you. Then they move into the value proposition about why we should consider becoming a monthly supporter, and end with a clear call to action: “Become a monthly donor today.” This feels natural in the conversation we’re already having in this donation process.

They still talk a little too much about “we” and “us” as the organization as opposed to what your monthly gift does. Ideally the form itself would be on this page so there’s no additional step or link out too. However, the progression is clear: thank you, your gift will be put to work right way, would you consider joining us and fighting every month? Framing it in this context actually works. It makes sense and people will do it.

This organization said, “Donate now with one click,” and this one said “Make this gift monthly.”

## OR THIS



Thank You For Your Donation  
Your Gift Is Making A Difference!

Your donation has been charged to your credit card and a copy of your receipt is being emailed to you.

### Become a Sustaining Supporter

Your ongoing monthly donation of \$19 per month will help LLS continue to advance the most promising cancer research of our time.

As a Sustaining Supporter, you'll receive regular updates on our research progress as well as news of cancer survivors.

Donate now with 1-click

Your LLS monthly donations are secured utilizing the highest level of encryption through PCI DSS compliant technology. The first payment will start next month and is charged on the same date each month. For assistance, call 1-888-557-7177.

## OR THIS



GROW YOUR FAITH TV & RADIO WHAT WE DO NEWS ABOUT GIVE

### CHECKOUT

#### Thank you for your generous online gift.

We are grateful for your financial support. Your transaction will be processed shortly and will appear on your next credit card statement. An acknowledgment will be mailed to your billing address.

The confirmation number for your donation is 14418604.

#### Keep Giving Hope: Make This a Monthly Gift

Will you consider partnering with BGEA all year long by turning your gift into a recurring monthly donation? Most importantly, you can be a crucial part of what God is doing throughout the world as BGEA continues to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ through every effective means available. You can call or write us anytime to pause or stop your monthly donation.

Make this gift monthly

If you have any questions, call us at 1-877-247-2426. Please have your confirmation number ready and indicate that you are contacting us about a credit card donation made through the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association website.

Because of the tools and technologies available, you can tell the donor they don’t need to give us all their information again, and they can just signify with one click that they want to become a recurring donor. This makes it easy and frictionless. Remember, there still needs to be value proposition on the page. There has to be a reason why someone should become a recurring donor.

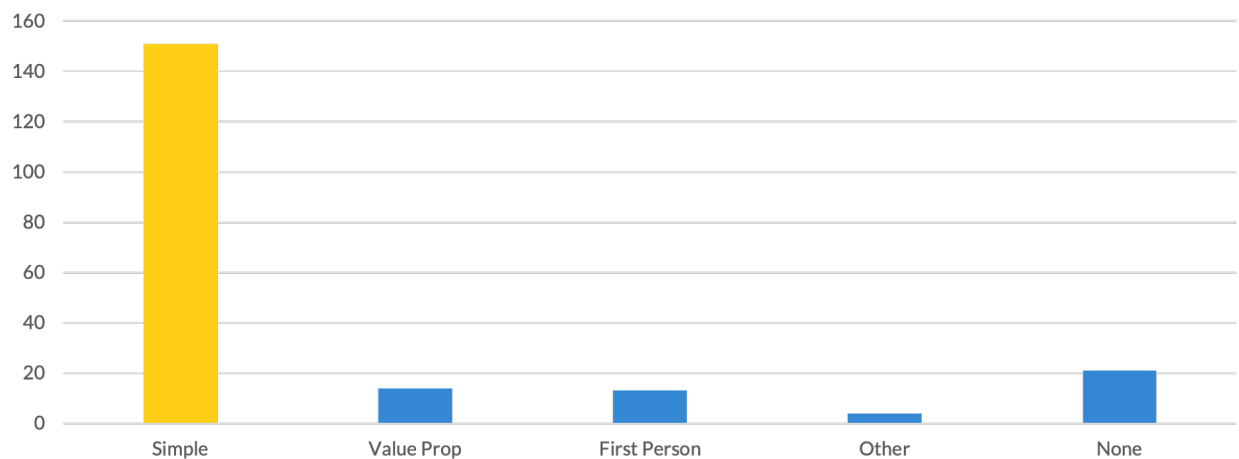
Here’s a simple checklist of things to do for a great thank you/confirmation page:

- Thank the donor
- Reinforce the impact of their gift and your value proposition
- In context and after they’ve been thanked, suggest a next action that makes sense, and ideally, relates to the donation they just made.

# Special Look at Recurring

In 2018, we did a study with Salesforce.org on the recurring giving experience with 115 nonprofits, and we wanted to compare the results of this year's study to last year's study. When we looked at how organizations are communicating the recurring giving option, we saw a very similar approach to last year's study. The majority of organizations, **74%**, used a **simple approach to communicate recurring in the one-time flow**.

## HOW ARE THEY COMMUNICATING THE RECURRING OPTION?



## GIVE HOPE


Make a tax-deductible donation to provide help WHERE MOST NEEDED through the Feed the World Fund.

Make this a recurring monthly gift

 GIVE BY CREDIT CARD

Give by  PayPal, check, or stock

Pay now 

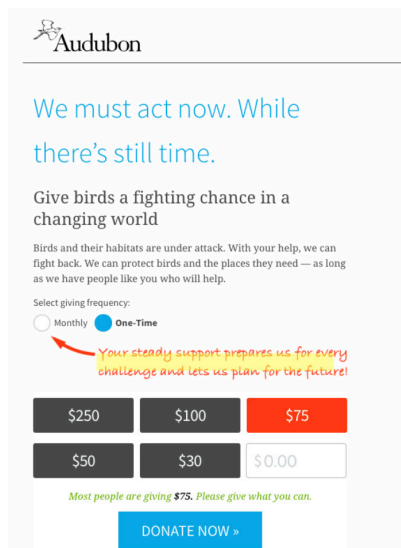
  
 Donate with Amazon

It looked something like this. There's a little button or box that says, "Make this a recurring monthly gift."

**Only 7% of nonprofits had a value proposition for why you should become a recurring donor.** Here are a few examples of what we saw.

This organization used an arrow to point to the recurring giving option with a sustainer-type approach. This is a more subtle approach.

## LIKE THIS



Audubon

We must act now. While there's still time.

Give birds a fighting chance in a changing world

Birds and their habitats are under attack. With your help, we can fight back. We can protect birds and the places they need — as long as we have people like you who will help.

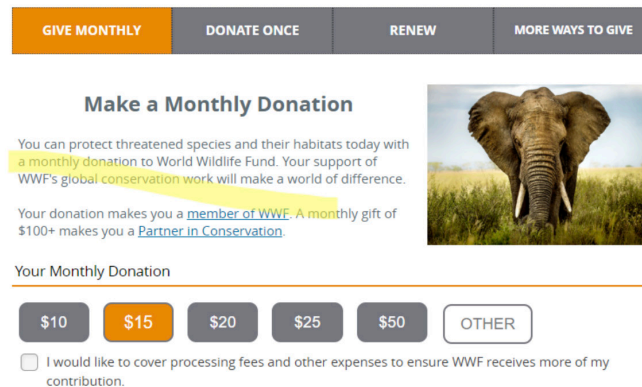
Select giving frequency:

Monthly  One-Time

*Your steady support prepares us for every challenge and lets us plan for the future!*

*Most people are giving \$75. Please give what you can.*


## OR THIS



### Make a Monthly Donation

You can protect threatened species and their habitats today with a monthly donation to World Wildlife Fund. Your support of WWF's global conservation work will make a world of difference.

Your donation makes you a member of WWF. A monthly gift of \$100+ makes you a Partner in Conservation.



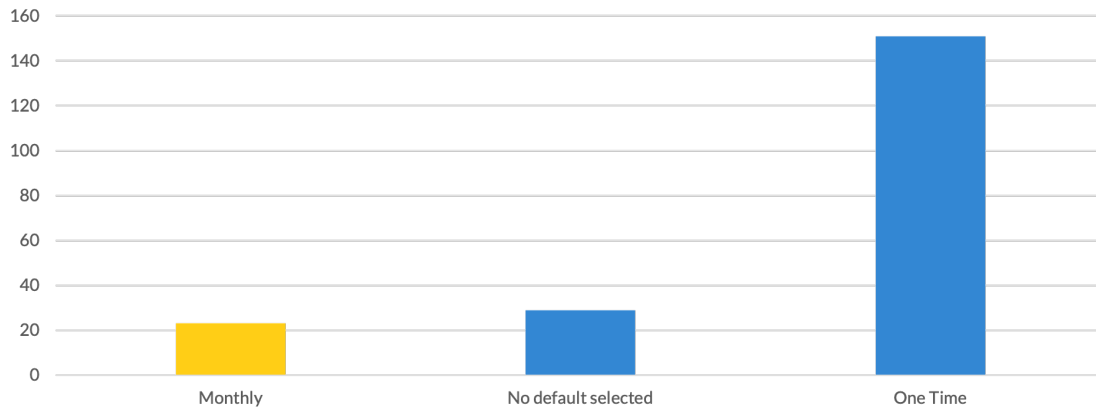
Your Monthly Donation

I would like to cover processing fees and other expenses to ensure WWF receives more of my contribution.

This organization defaulted the monthly giving option on the donation form along with talking specifically about the value of a monthly gift. They're also using some anchoring with a \$100 amount to becoming a partner, but they're really pushing monthly giving. This is a more aggressive approach to communicate recurring.

We found that **11% of organizations defaulted to a monthly gift.**

### WHAT WAS THE DEFAULT GIVING OPTION?



We've seen this be helpful and harmful. In this experiment, the control page defaulted to a monthly gift and the treatment page defaulted to a one-time gift along with a few other small changes.

#### CONTROL

**Your donation**

(minimum \$2.00)

**Payment Plan**

Monthly (12 per year) ongoing payments. \$10.00 per payment, until you contact us to cancel.

One-time payment for the full amount

#### TREATMENT

**Your donation**

(minimum \$2.00)

**Payment Plan**

One-time payment for the full amount

Monthly (12 per year) ongoing payments.

They saw a 56% increase in overall revenue from the treatment page, and they saw an increase in monthly donors. We've seen a similar trend with reverse gift arrays. When you make the decision for the donor, sometimes it can have an adverse impact; people don't like you making decisions for them, and they'll choose your preselection less often.

In this case, preselecting the one-time gift and letting donors opt into monthly giving is better. But I've also seen research that shows defaulting to a monthly giving option will get more recurring donors. It might lose some one-time donors, but the value of a monthly donor is so much greater that it's worth the trade off. This is worth exploring if you're trying to focus on recurring giving. Can you default to monthly giving? As this experiment shows, do so carefully because it could cost you one-time donors or possibly even recurring donors.

We found that **10% of nonprofits had a prompt to become a monthly donor during the**

**one-time giving process.** A prompt is similar to a pop-up; it comes up on the page and communicates the value of a recurring gift before you complete a one-time gift. After we saw these prompts or pop-ups appearing last year, some organizations wanted to test them to see if they work. Here's one experiment we from our library.

## CONTROL

### My Gift to Support Family Ministry

Your gift will go to work immediately - transforming lives through the power of the Gospel.

Giving is quick, easy and secure. Simply complete the form below.

If you choose to make your donation recurring, your gift should ship between 1-2 business days and your donation will be debited from your account at that time.

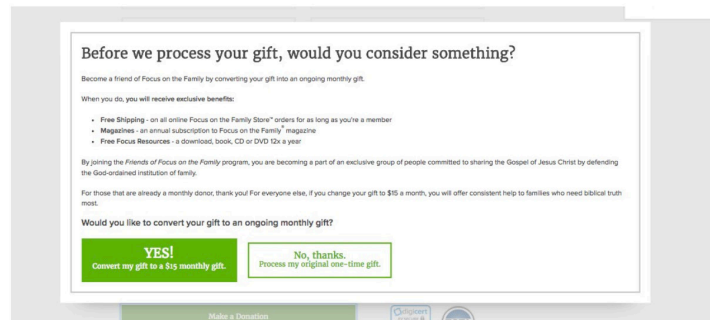
\$50.00	\$100.00	\$250.00
\$500.00	\$1,000.00	

Other

Free gift when making your donation recurring.

Make my donation recurring

## TREATMENT

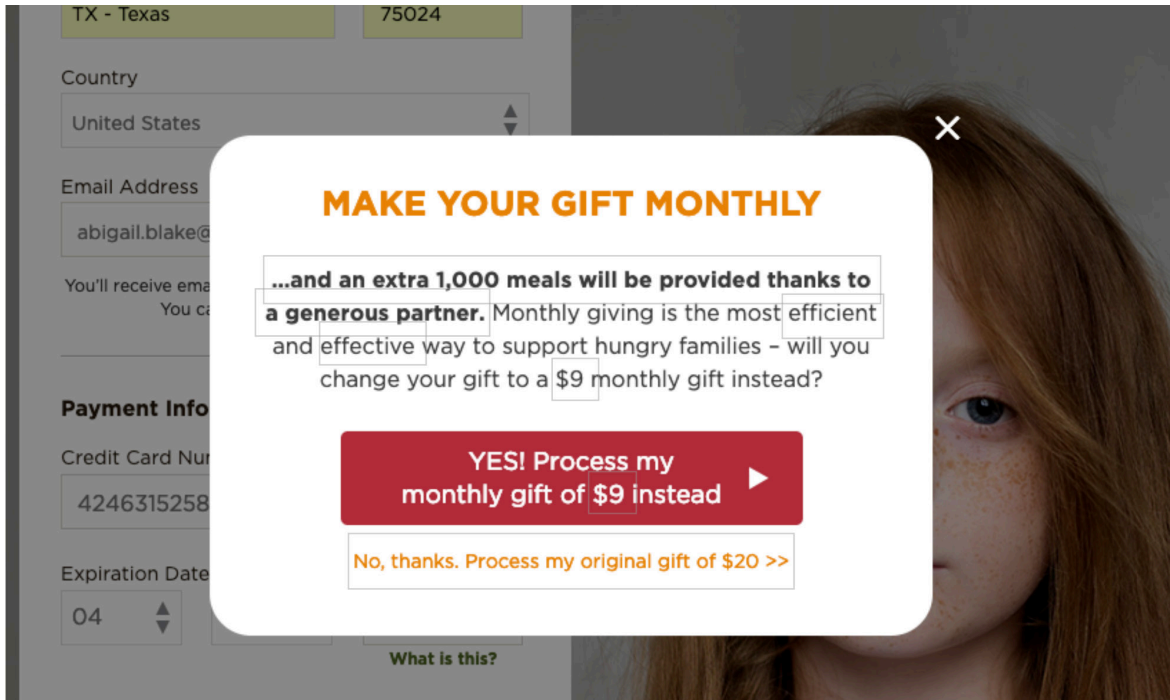


On the left is a simple “Make my donation recurring,” and on the right, when you clicked to donate this prompt would appear and say, “Before we process your gift, would you consider something?” Then it goes into the value proposition. You can give less today, make a bigger impact overall, and be more valuable to the organization and the impact. Then they asked if they’d consider converting their gift to an ongoing monthly gift. In this case, the prompt defaulted their giving amount down to 60% of the single gift they had chosen, with the exception of not going lower than \$15 and not showing the prompt at all for large one-time gifts like \$5,000. They wanted to limit the decision friction so the amount is pre-selected and the donor can just say yes or no.

At this point in the process there’s *cognitive momentum*. They’ve said they’re interested, they started the process, maybe they wouldn’t have selected recurring giving initially, but right before they’re about to complete the process and are very invested, now they are presented with the option and might be more inclined to choose it. After testing these two options, they saw a 64% increase in recurring gifts, and very importantly, the pop-up didn’t significantly impact the likelihood of a person giving a one-time gift. If someone really wasn’t interested in recurring, they could just keep moving forward with no negative impact. This is cognitive momentum at work.



Here's an example from this study.



We were about to make a one-time gift and then we saw this pop-up. They were using a type of matching incentive by quantifying the gift with a number of meals for the social service agency. You can see how they call out how 'efficient' and 'effective' this is and tie it to the reason for the gift: to support hungry families. A donor who may not have considered a \$20 a month donation immediately at this stage – after putting in their personal information and Credit Card details – is clearly interested and committed, so a strong ask, like this, asking for a \$9 a month donation seems a lot more doable. And if they don't want to, they can just say no and make their \$20 donation.

# Special Look at Gift Arrays

We get asked all the time about what gift arrays should look like, so we wanted to look specifically at gift arrays in this study. This is what we found:

- The median first suggested amount was \$50.
- 45% organizations had a preselected amount, and the most common selected amount was \$100.
- 36% of organizations had four suggested options, and 61% used four or five options.

We saw an interesting tactic with gift arrays that a few organization's used in this study. These organizations used social proof to nudge donors to give more.

## LIKE THIS

Select giving frequency:

Monthly  One-Time

*Your steady support prepares us for every challenge and lets us plan for the future!*

\$250 \$100 **\$75**

\$50 \$30 \$0.00

*Most people are giving \$75. Please give what you can.*

[DONATE NOW »](#)

## OR THIS

Gift Type:

Monthly  One-Time

Gift Amount (\$5 Min.)

\$500 **\$100** \$50 \$25

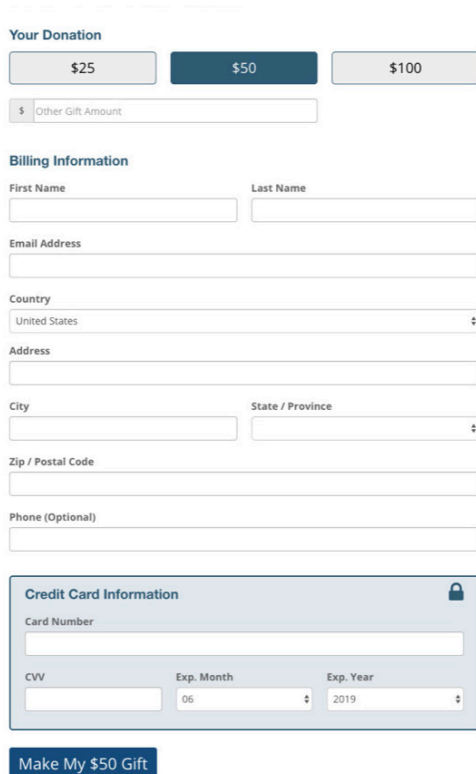
\$0.00

*Most people are giving \$100 right now. Please, give what you can.*

Notice that it says, “Most people are giving \$75. Please give what you can.” In each case, the preselected default amount lines up with the copy that’s trying to leverage some kind of social proof. This was interesting, and so one organization put it to the test.

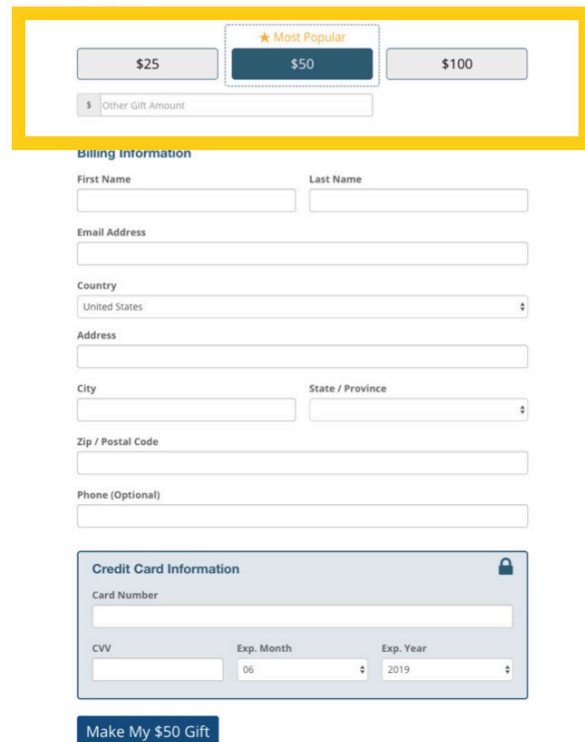
These two pages are identical except for one line under the gift array on the right that says most people are giving \$50, and they preselected the \$50.

## CONTROL



The control form shows a 'Your Donation' section with three buttons: '\$25', '\$50', and '\$100'. The '\$50' button is preselected. Below it is a text input field for 'Other Gift Amount'. The 'Billing Information' section includes fields for First Name, Last Name, Email Address, Country (United States), Address, City, State / Province, Zip / Postal Code, and Phone (Optional). The 'Credit Card Information' section includes fields for Card Number, CVV, Exp. Month (06), and Exp. Year (2019). A blue button at the bottom says 'Make My \$50 Gift'.

## TREATMENT



The treatment form is identical to the control, but the '\$50' button in the 'Your Donation' section is highlighted with a yellow border and labeled '★ Most Popular'. The 'Make My \$50 Gift' button is also highlighted with a blue border.

This amount was actually higher than their average gift. Just by adding this line, they saw a 7.8% increase in conversion rate, an almost 15% increase in average gift, and because of those increases they had almost a 24% increase in revenue. This is worth testing. Try adding in messaging or social proof to a preselected giving amount, and remember to make it higher than your average gift. In this case, they also saw a 44% increase for people on mobile devices. This might mean having a preselected option with social proof made the process easier by limiting the decision friction.

So, should everyone have a gift array? Well **83% of organizations use a gift array and 61% of them had between four or five options.** In this case, however, having no gift array actually increased donations by 126%.

## CONTROL

CARING BRIDGE

### What Does CaringBridge Mean To You?

Love. Hope. Connection. CaringBridge means something special to you, that's why you use it. And you mean something special to us. Each donation means that we can continue to power CaringBridge to connect you with your loved ones. Can you support CaringBridge today? Your support really makes a difference!

#### 1. Choose Your Donation Amount

\$25 \$50 \$75

\$100 \$250 \$500

\$100.00 (minimum \$10.00)

\* Payment Plan

One-time payment for the full amount

Monthly (12 per year) ongoing payments.

#### 2. Enter Your Information

\* First Name \* Last Name

## TREATMENT

CARING BRIDGE

### What Does CaringBridge Mean To You?

Love. Hope. Connection. CaringBridge means something special to you, that's why you use it. And you mean something special to us. Each donation means that we can continue to power CaringBridge to connect you with your loved ones. Can you support CaringBridge today? Your support really makes a difference!

#### 1. Choose Your Donation Amount

\$100.00 (minimum \$10.00)

\* Payment Plan

One-time payment for the full amount

Monthly (12 per year) ongoing payments.

#### 2. Enter Your Information

\* First Name \* Last Name

\* Country

United States

\* Street Address

Street Address 2

Instead of using a gift array, they just had a minimum amount and people could enter their own number. Sometimes people are very motivated and a gift array can slow them down. They know how much they want to give. Gift arrays might even decrease generosity because people might choose an amount much higher than whatever is preselected. Test to see whether a gift array or an open field works better on your pages.

An open field might work better for those donors who have been giving for a few years and know your organization. They understand your value proposition, otherwise they wouldn't keep giving to you. They may be more likely to respond to an open field than someone closer to the beginning of the donor cycle. It gives them the chance to be more generous. An open field might be less effective for the non-donor or the new donor, unless you have a really high average gift. This is where we see arrays being more useful; it's kind of like a suggested tip when you're in a foreign country. It eases the mind of the person in regards to how much they should be giving.

We also saw that **25% of organizations used a reverse array** — where they start with the biggest number on the left and go to the smallest on the right compared to the other way around more commonly seen. Considering that people read left to right in the United States, it might make sense that people would consider giving more just from seeing a higher amount first or be more likely to default to the first thing they see.

This concept was tested here and actually saw a decrease in donations and in average gift size.

### ORIGINAL

**This Website Helps Laura Stay Connected to Family and Friends**  
Kelly, you make this website possible  
When you give to CaringBridge, you ensure that Laura's private, protected place to share health updates and connect with a community of support will always be here.  
Make a secure donation, using the form below.

1. Choose Your Donation Amount

\$50 \$100 \$250

\$100.00 (minimum \$10.00)

### TREATMENT

**This Website Helps Laura Stay Connected to Family and Friends**  
Kelly, you make this website possible  
When you give to CaringBridge, you ensure that Laura's private, protected place to share health updates and connect with a community of support will always be here.  
Make a secure donation, using the form below.

1. Choose Your Donation Amount

\$250 \$100 \$50

\$100.00 (minimum \$10.00)

This comes down to the lack of donor empowerment. If people feel like you're making the decision for them, like you're trying to manipulate them, they see through it and don't like it. Make sure you test using a reverse gift array before blindly adopting it as a key strategy. You may be losing donors and average gifts.

Only **26% of organizations using array buttons had a radio-style** which is good because these ugly buttons are hard to push, particularly on mobile.

Compare those to another style. In this experiment, by making the buttons bigger, easier to see, and easier to select specifically on mobile, there was an almost 23% increase in donations.

### NOT THIS

1. Gift Information 2. Gift Confirmation

Select Donation Amount \*

\$25  
 \$50  
 \$100  
 \$250  
 \$500  
 Other  
\$

Monthly gift?  Make my gift repeat every month  
 I have a special request or comment

### BUT THIS

1. Gift Information 2. Gift Confirmation

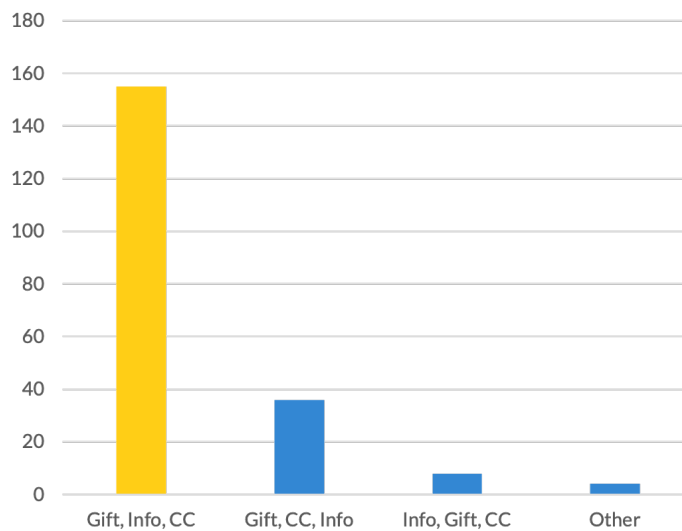
Select Donation Amount \*

\$25 \$50 \$100  
\$250 \$500  
\$

Monthly gift?  Make my gift repeat every month  
 I have a special request or comment

If you're going to use gift arrays and buttons, make sure they're not radio-style. Use buttons that are big and clickable.

## IN WHAT ORDERS ARE ORGANIZATIONS COLLECTING INFORMATION?



We also looked at where the gift array – or ability to choose their amount – was in the sequence of the key information needed (gift amount, personal information, and Credit Card information).

We found that **76% of nonprofits ask for the donation amount first, then personal information, then credit card information.** Some organizations collected credit card information first, and others collected personal information first. There could be specific reasons for this, like getting someone’s email address so you can follow up with them regardless of them giving a gift. This is an area worth experimenting.

## CONTROL

CARING BRIDGE!

This website helps Kate stay connected to family and friends.

You make this website possible.

When you give to CaringBridge, you ensure that Kate's private, protected place to share health updates and connect with a community of support will always be here.

Make Your Donation

\$50 \$100 \$250

\$100.00 (minimum \$10.00)

\* Payment Plan

One-time payment for the full amount

Monthly (12 per year) ongoing payments.

Write a Message of Support

What would you like your tribute message to say (optional)?

Display this message on Kate's site.

How would you like to sign your message?

Jeff Giddens

Make this an anonymous tribute donation.

Your Information

\* First Name: Jeff

\* Last Name: Giddens

## TREATMENT

CARING BRIDGE!

This website helps Kate stay connected to family and friends.

You make this website possible.

When you give to CaringBridge, you ensure that Kate's private, protected place to share health updates and connect with a community of support will always be here.

1. Choose Your Donation Amount

\$50 \$100 \$250

\$100.00 (minimum \$10.00)

\* Payment Plan

One-time payment for the full amount

Monthly (12 per year) ongoing payments.

2. Write a Message of Support

What would you like your tribute message to say (optional)?

Display this message on Kate's site.

How would you like to sign your message?

Jeff Giddens

Make this an anonymous tribute donation.

3. Enter Your Information (It's Secure)

\* First Name: Jeff

\* Last Name: Giddens

We have seen that making the order very clear does have an impact. In this experiment, they use the same donation page and flow, but added numbers and more clear headlines to guide the donation process.

This increased donations. Giving clarity and understanding to donors that they're in a process helps them convert at a higher rate.

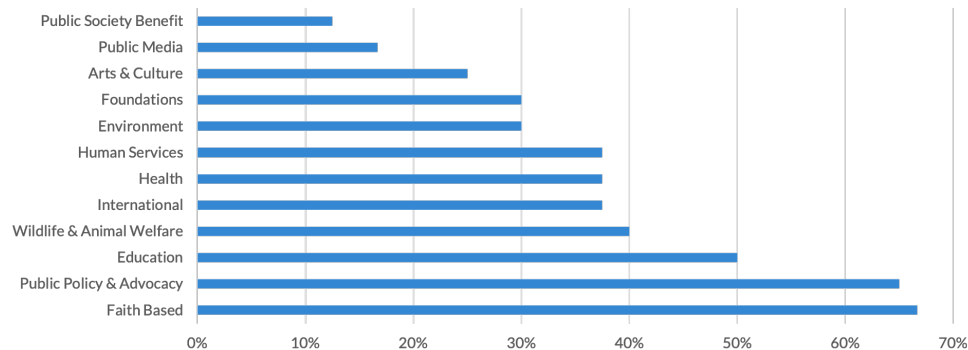


# Deeper Look by Vertical and Size

## DEEPER LOOK BY VERTICALS

We took a deeper look at verticals. First, we analyzed if they used more than four sentences on the donation page.

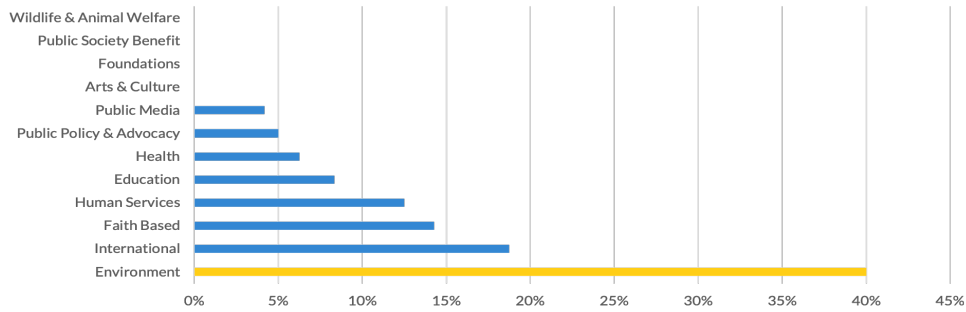
### DO THEY USE MORE THAN 4 SENTENCES ON THE DONATION PAGE?



Almost seven out of ten public policy, advocacy, and faith-based organizations used more than four sentences. They were more likely to use copy on their donation page, as opposed to public society benefit and public media.

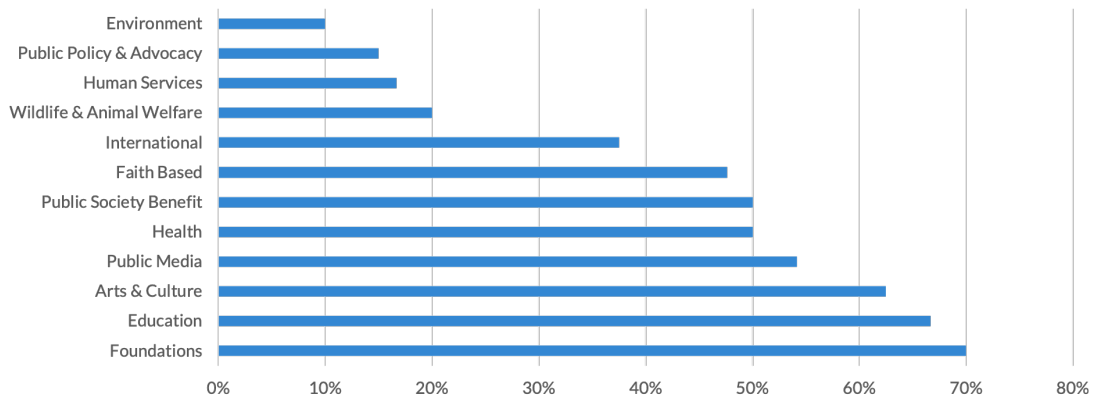
When it came to recurring gift prompts, environment was the most likely to use a recurring gift prompt compared to the next most frequent, international. Almost **40% of environment organizations in our study used a recurring prompt, as opposed to just over 20% for international. Some verticals didn't use prompts at all.**

### DO THEY USE A RECURRING GIVING PROMPT?



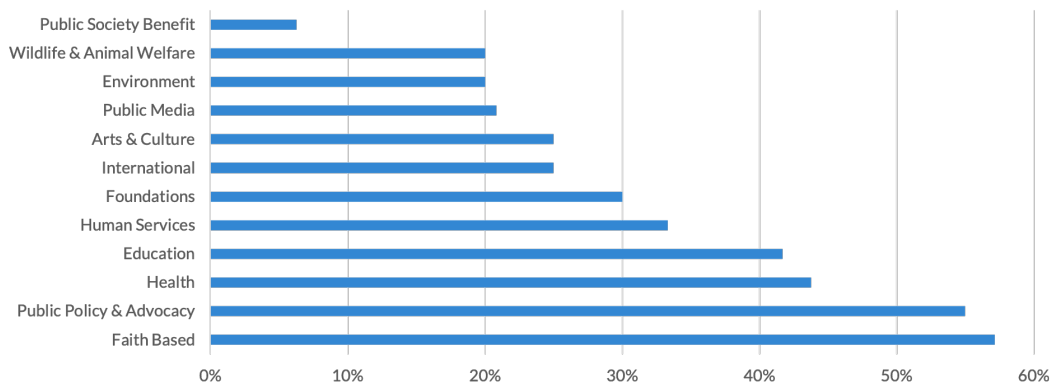
In terms of limiting friction and requiring information, half or more of public society benefit, health, public media, arts and culture, education, and foundations required non-essential information.

### DO THEY REQUIRE EXTRA INFORMATION?



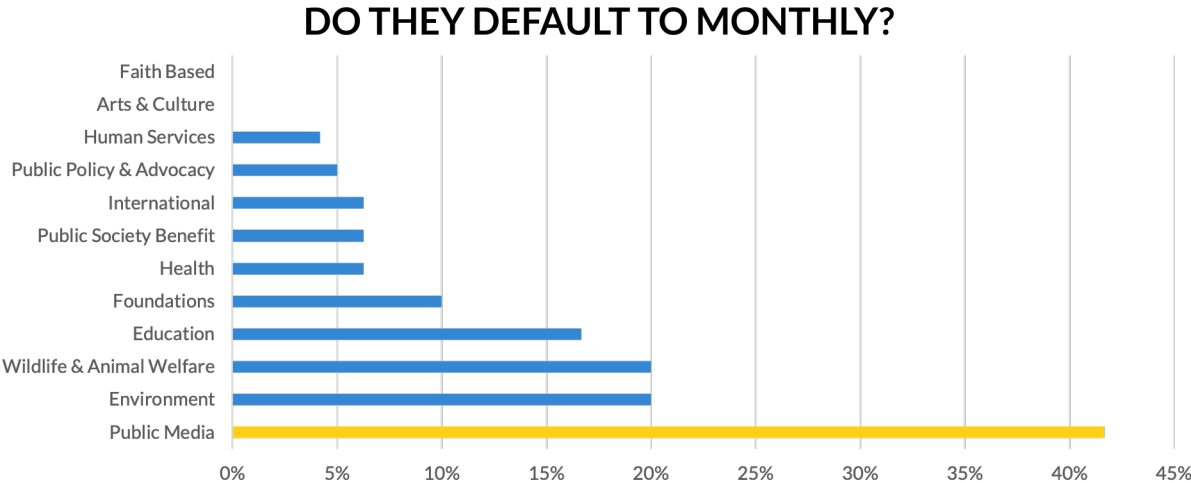
Then we looked at strong value proposition.

### DO THEY HAVE A STRONG VALUE PROPOSITION?



More than 80% of public society benefit, wildlife and animal welfare, and environment organizations had an average or weak value proposition. It's interesting that environment scored here because they are generally one of the best to follow. Faith-based and public policy scored the highest. This is partly because they used copy, and copy generally is linked to strong value proposition; but they were also heavy on values and fighting for or against something. These all contribute to a strong value proposition.

Do they default to monthly?

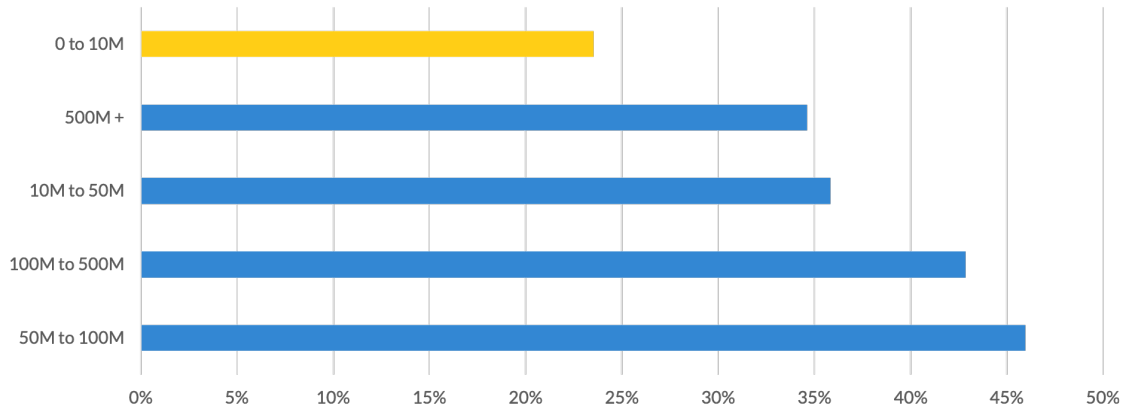


We found that public media is four times more likely to default to monthly compared to other organizations. It seems to be more accepted in that arena. Environment, animal, and education are also more likely than the median to default to monthly.

## DEEPER LOOK BY SIZE

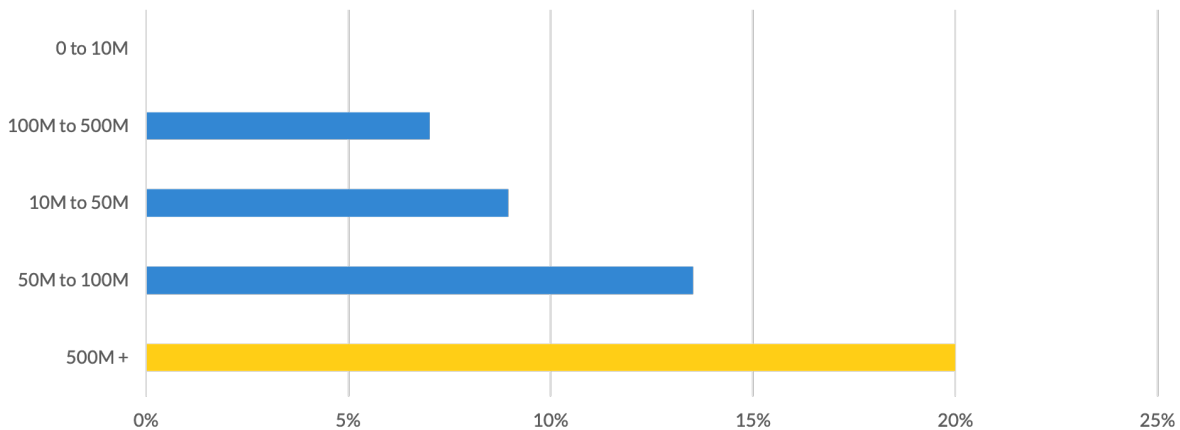
Only one in four smaller organizations used more than four sentences on their donation page.

### Do They Use More Than 4 Sentences on the Donation Page?



Maybe this is why they scored lower overall; they weren't using copy, and that impacts your value proposition. Comparatively, larger organizations were more likely to use more than four sentences. This might be because they are doing more testing and have discovered that having more copy on the page is useful in the donation process.

### Do They Use a Recurring Giving Prompt?

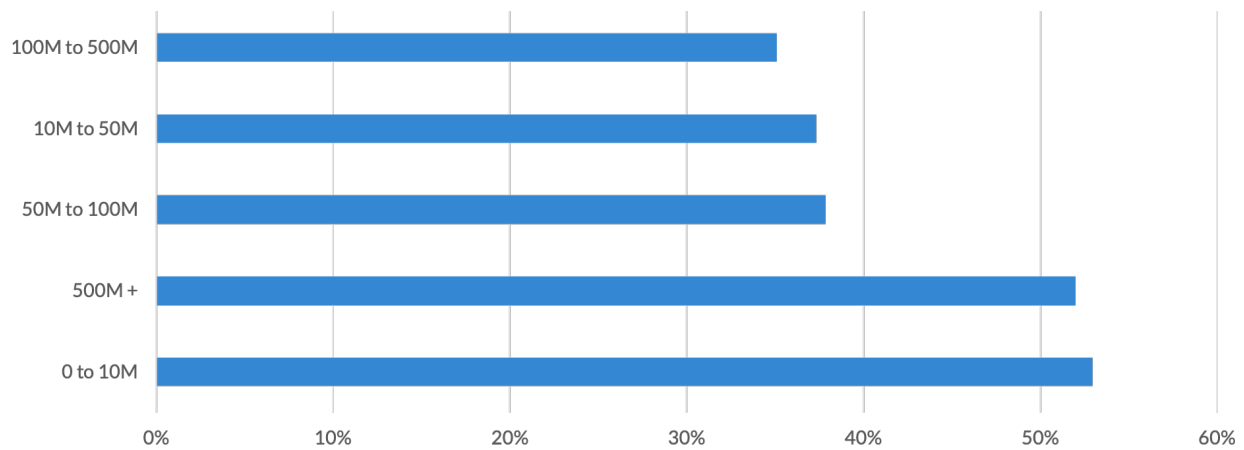


We found that really large organizations are 2.5 times more likely to use a recurring giving prompt compared to the average nonprofit. It seems that larger organizations have a greater

ability to use tools that allow for a recurring prompt.

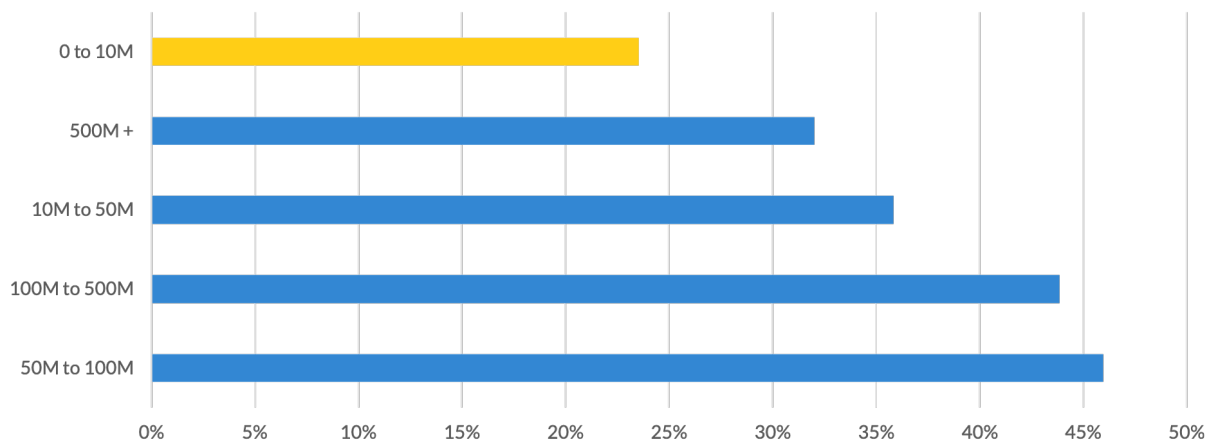
As far as requiring extra information, the smaller and the really large organizations were the two that required nonessential information the most.

## Do They Require Extra Information?



Either they don't know the impact of this or they feel like they can get away with asking for more information.

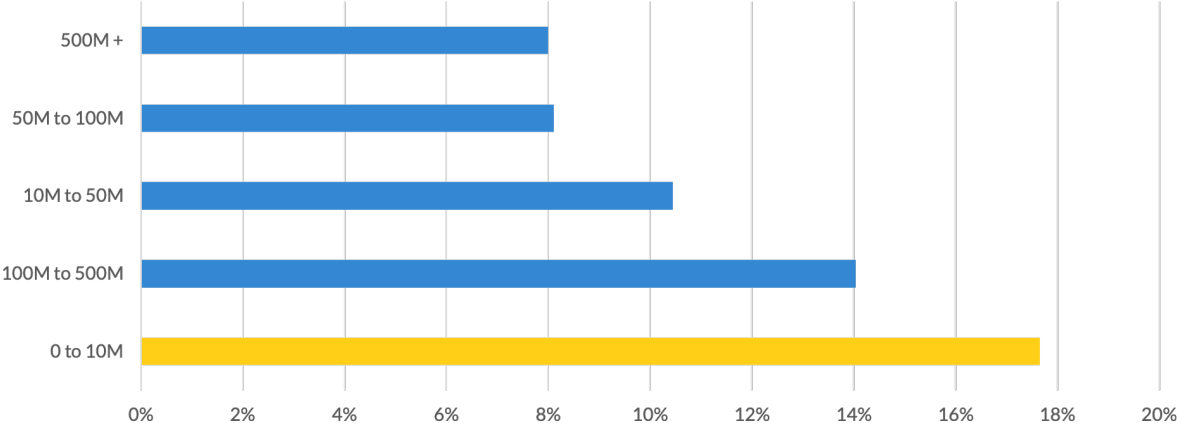
## Do They Have a Strong Value Proposition?



Smaller organizations are more likely to have an average or weak value proposition. The correlation to using copy is fairly high. The larger organizations did better than the median in this area.

Defaulting to monthly giving was a strategy that smaller organizations were almost twice as likely to do compared to the average nonprofit.

## Did They Default to Monthly?

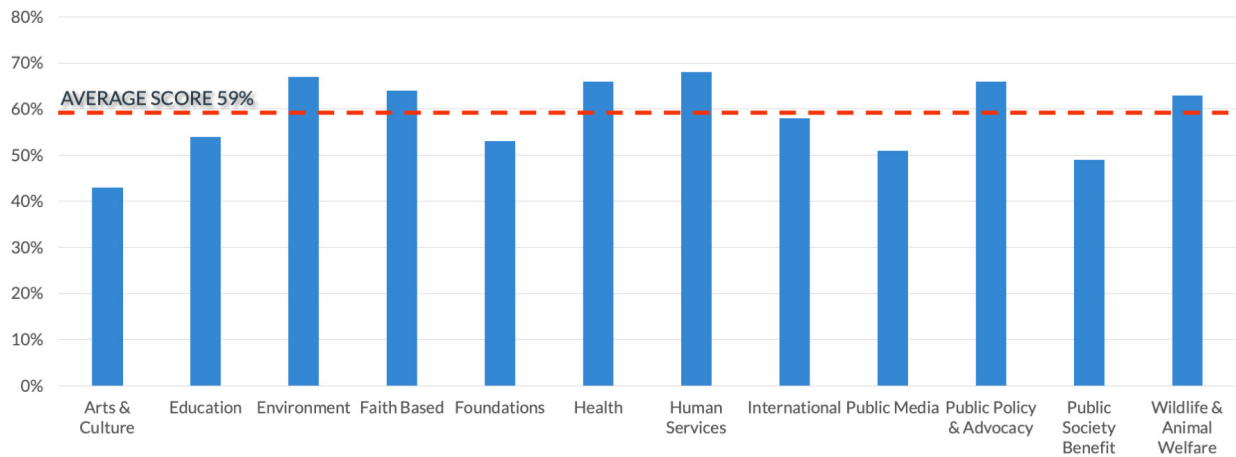


The recurring donor is more valuable to a smaller organization, so it makes sense for them to be willing to lose some one-time donors to gain a recurring donor because of their life-time value.

### WHO IS DOING IT WELL?

Having done a number of studies similar to this one, we tend to see that environmental organizations score high and are worth looking at. They use prompts, they have a good balance between value proposition and user experience, and they're doing more innovative and unique techniques. Environment would be a great vertical to look at and learn from. They generally score pretty high.

They're also growing. According to the M+R Benchmark study, the environment vertical grew both between 2017-18 and 2016-17.



Growing in back to back years is rare. They're growing overall, and specifically in online revenue. In the latest Giving U.S.A. report, environment and animals are growing 3.6%. A few environmental organizations you could look into for inspiration are:

- Sierra Club, Defenders of Wildlife
- Wilderness Society
- Nature Conservancy
- Audubon Society

A few other organizations that scored high outside the environment vertical are:

- Family Life
- Operation Smile
- CARE
- Americans for Prosperity
- Innocence Project.



# Other Resources

**Friction! It's What's Killing Your Online Donations**

Friction: /frɪkʃən/ Noun. Anything that causes psychological resistance to a given element in the online donation process.

Is there friction in your online giving process? Answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge to find out if friction may be slowing your donors down.

**Your Friction Self-Assessment**

1. Does your giving page include links to other content pages?  
 YES  NO
2. Does it take more than 1 click to complete your donation process?  
 YES  NO
3. Does it take longer than 5 seconds for your donation page to load?  
 YES  NO
4. Do you have gift designation options on your donation page?  
 YES  NO
5. Do you provide an option to make a gift in memory of someone else?  
 YES  NO

## FRICION SELF-ASSESSMENT

See how much friction your online giving experience has by giving and answering 20 questions to get your score.

[nextafter.com/friction](https://nextafter.com/friction)

**19 ELEMENTS OF A GENERAL DONATION PAGE**

**1. HEADER**  
Single with no navigation or donate button.  
Ex. #2932 - 197% increase in donations

**2. ELIMINATE HEADER**  
Ex. #992 - 25% increase in donations, 25% increase in average gift.  
View the experience

**3. DONATE SHORT-CUT BUTTON**  
Ex. #2207 - 28.2% decrease in donation increase in average gift.  
View the experience

**4. DONATE SHORT-CUT BUTTON**  
Ex. #1562 - 18% increase in average gift size.  
View the experience

**5. ELIMINATE HEADER**  
Ex. #2932 - 197% increase in donations

**6. DONATE SHORT-CUT BUTTON**  
Ex. #992 - 25% increase in donations, 25% increase in average gift.  
View the experience

**7. DONATE SHORT-CUT BUTTON**  
Ex. #2207 - 28.2% decrease in donation increase in average gift.  
View the experience

**8. DONATE SHORT-CUT BUTTON**  
Ex. #1562 - 18% increase in average gift size.  
View the experience

**9. ELIMINATE HEADER**  
Ex. #2932 - 197% increase in donations

**10. DONATE SHORT-CUT BUTTON**  
Ex. #992 - 25% increase in donations, 25% increase in average gift.  
View the experience

**11. DONATE SHORT-CUT BUTTON**  
Ex. #2207 - 28.2% decrease in donation increase in average gift.  
View the experience

**12. DONATE SHORT-CUT BUTTON**  
Ex. #1562 - 18% increase in average gift size.  
View the experience

**13. ELIMINATE HEADER**  
Ex. #2932 - 197% increase in donations

**14. DONATE SHORT-CUT BUTTON**  
Ex. #992 - 25% increase in donations, 25% increase in average gift.  
View the experience

**15. DONATE SHORT-CUT BUTTON**  
Ex. #2207 - 28.2% decrease in donation increase in average gift.  
View the experience

**16. DONATE SHORT-CUT BUTTON**  
Ex. #1562 - 18% increase in average gift size.  
View the experience

**17. ELIMINATE HEADER**  
Ex. #2932 - 197% increase in donations

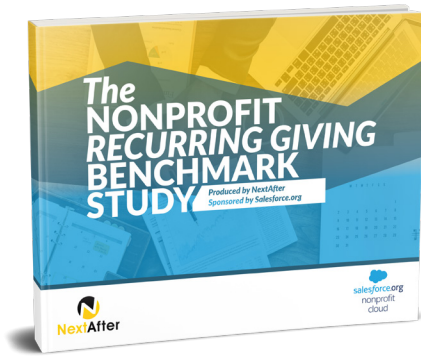
**18. DONATE SHORT-CUT BUTTON**  
Ex. #992 - 25% increase in donations, 25% increase in average gift.  
View the experience

**19. DONATE SHORT-CUT BUTTON**  
Ex. #2207 - 28.2% decrease in donation increase in average gift.  
View the experience

## INTERACTIVE DONATION AND GUIDE

See the 19 different elements of a general donation page and supporting research and ideas for each area. You can also download the guide.

[nextafter.com/interactive-donation](https://nextafter.com/interactive-donation)



## THE NONPROFIT RECURRING BENCHMARK STUDY

In this study, we analyzed the giving experience and communications for a one-time, one-time to recurring, and recurring donor for 115 nonprofit organizations. Get all the stats to benchmark yourself and insights to optimize your recurring giving program.

[recurringgiving.com](http://recurringgiving.com)

NextAfter More Courses

Already have a NextAfter Online Courses login? [Click here to login.](#)

### Donation & Landing Page Optimization

A free online course to help you acquire more donors and grow your revenue

When a visitor arrives on your site – whether from a Google search, an email you’ve sent, or an advertisement – you normally don’t want them to land on your homepage.

As a fundraiser, you want your visitors to do one of two things: give you their [email](#) or make a [donation](#). And if your site visitors are left on the homepage to find their way, they’re most often going to leave your site with taking an action.

**You need effective landing pages to help your visitors find their way.**

During this 8-session course, you’ll learn how to create and **implement effective landing pages and donation pages** in your marketing and fundraising in order to grow your revenue. We’ll use data from 400+ online fundraising experiments to understand:

- The fundamental principles that make for effective landing pages
- The **4 core types of landing pages** for online fundraising
- How to implement each page in your fundraising program
- Proven ideas to test on your existing pages to **improve performance**

#### What You Will Learn in This Course

Session 1

## COURSES

This 8 lesson on-demand course will share key underlying principles to create high converting donation and landing pages. It will also show you how you can optimize and improve your own pages based on over 400 real experiments.

[courses.nextafter.com](http://courses.nextafter.com)

RAISE DONORS TOUR PRICING BLOG LIVE DEMO LOGIN TRY RAISEDONORS

### Online fundraising and marketing blog.

Discover what really works (and what doesn't) in online fundraising.

**July 20, 2019**

**Is Your Payment Gateway Optimized for Online Fundraising?**

**September 2019**

**The No. 1 Mistake Nonprofits Make in Fundraising**

**September 2019**

**When to Listen to "the Experts"**

## RAISEDONORS BLOG

Discover new ideas as to what really works (and what doesn't) in online fundraising by following the blog from RaiseDonors.

[blog.raisedonors.com](http://blog.raisedonors.com)

# About RaiseDonors



RaiseDonors provides an intuitive experience for your donors, time-saving integrations with your systems, and actionable analytics that help you build increasingly better donor relationships.

[raisedonors.com](https://raisedonors.com)

# About NextAfter



The NextAfter Institute exists to equip nonprofit fundraisers and digital marketers with original research, evidence-backed resources, and data-driven training to better understand their donors and why they give to raise more money online and fund their life-changing work.

[nextafter.com/institute](https://nextafter.com/institute)

