

WHY AMERICA GIVES

How current events, technology, and seasonality impact donor plans

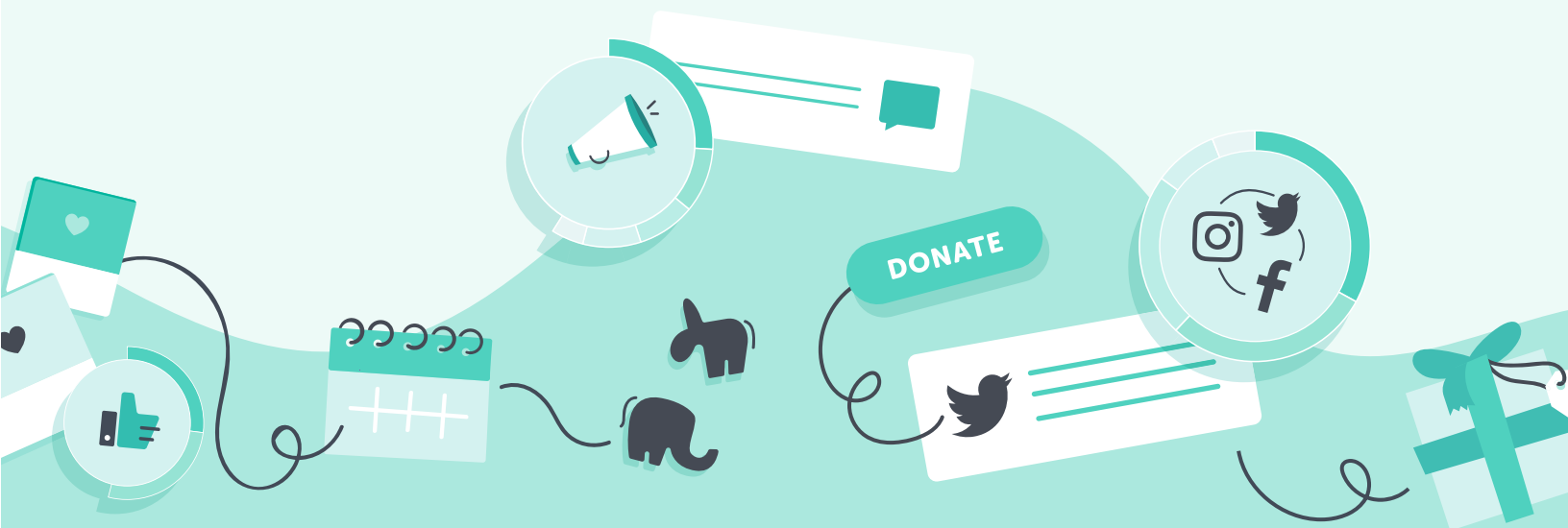


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Why We Performed This Survey

In order to activate supporters around the world and make a global impact, nonprofit organizations must know more than just where and who their donors are. To truly connect with them and form meaningful relationships, nonprofits should know what motivates donors to give, what would prevent them from giving, and most importantly, how to effectively weave the donation process into supporters' everyday lives.

As a leading online and mobile fundraising platform that only serves nonprofits, Classy is always invested in uncovering donor insights to help make our customers more successful through data-driven strategies, bringing us closer to achieving our mission: to mobilize and empower the world for good.

Classy's in-house data science team works closely with our product development team to help create products that enable nonprofits of all sizes to fundraise more successfully. But ahead of Giving Tuesday and the year-end spike in donations, we also wanted hear directly from consumers about their giving plans, as well as the general factors that impact their decision-making processes when it comes to supporting nonprofits.

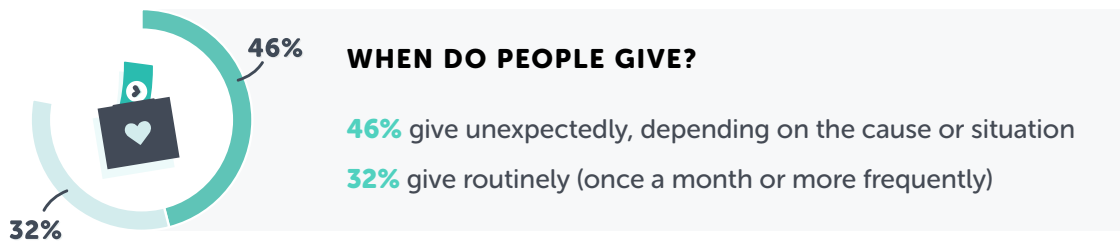
In addition to the findings, this report also reveals how these consumer giving trends can impact every step of your nonprofit's strategy this giving season and beyond.



Scot Chisholm, Classy CEO and Co-Founder

What Motivates People to Give?

As far as motivators to donate, personal or family connections to a cause, recommendations from social media influencers, and ease of donating are all top contributors. In this section we'll dig into these and other factors that impact motivations to give.



Gender also impacts giving frequency.

53% of women say they give unexpectedly versus only 40% of men.

Men seem to be greater routine givers with over a quarter (27%) saying they donate monthly and 15% weekly.

Of female respondents, 19% say they donate monthly and only 5% say they donate weekly.

Nonprofit professionals know there's a big difference between unexpected donations and recurring giving. Scalable impact is made possible through sustainable giving, so let's dive into the factors that people say impact their motivation to give regularly.

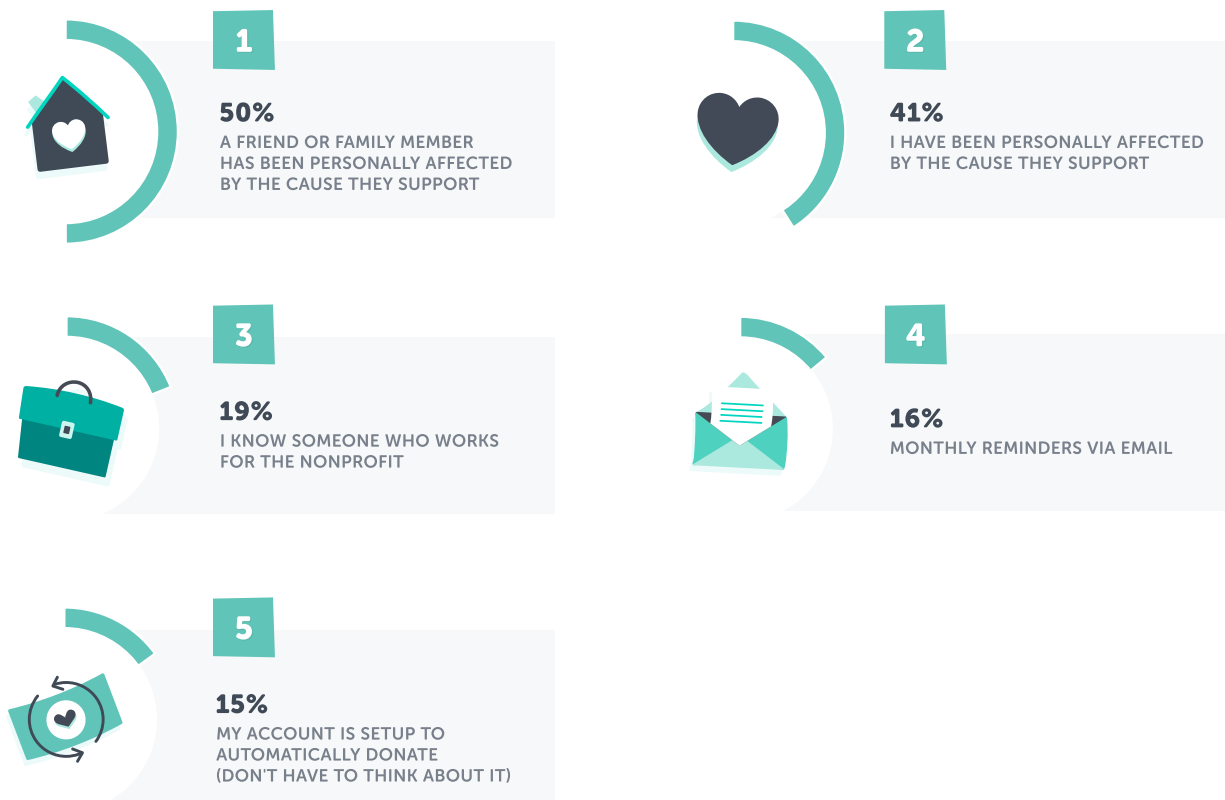


The #1 Motivator for Routine Giving: A Personal Connection

People are most likely to subscribe to a cause that affects their loved ones, with 50% of respondents stating that a friend or family member being personally affected by a cause would motivate them to **routinely** give, while 41% said they would routinely give to a cause that they were personally affected by.

19% of people say that knowing someone who works for a nonprofit would encourage them to donate to that organization on a regular basis. This is the third most popular stated option chosen by all generations except for the Silent Generation, who say that a monthly email reminder would motivate them to donate on a regular basis.

TOP 5 MOTIVATORS FOR ROUTINE GIVING

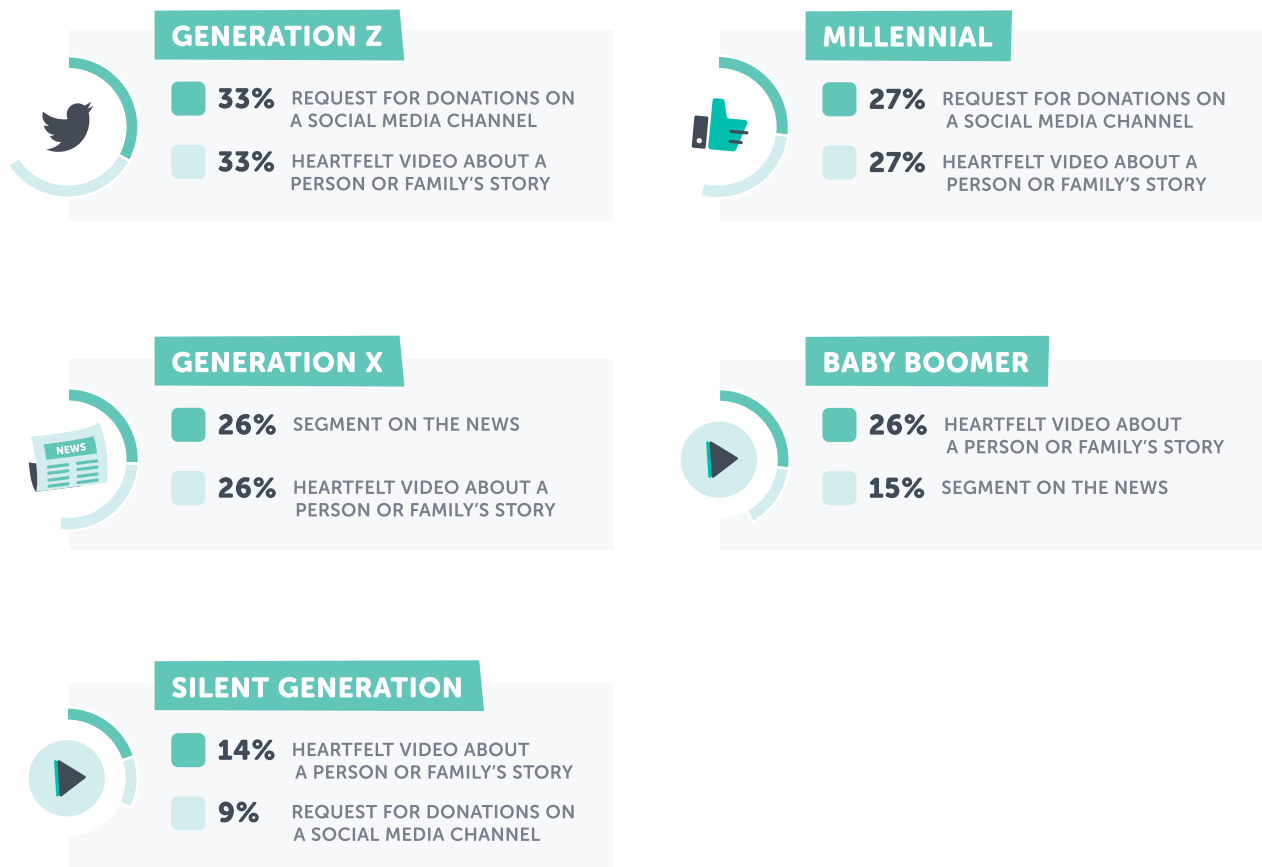


The #1 Motivator for Unexpected Giving: A Personal Connection or Crisis

Almost half of respondents (46%) are prompted to give **unexpectedly** if a family member or friend asks them to do so, or if there is an unexpected natural disaster or crisis (46%).

Following these two factors, the third and fourth motivators for unexpected donations vary slightly by generation. All generations say that a heartfelt video would move them to donate, but Gen Z and millennials say they would respond after seeing a donation request on social media, while Gen X and baby boomers say a news segment would inspire them to give.

THIRD AND FOURTH MOTIVATORS FOR UNEXPECTED DONATIONS



The #2 Motivator for All Giving: Social Media Influencers, Celebrities, Politicians

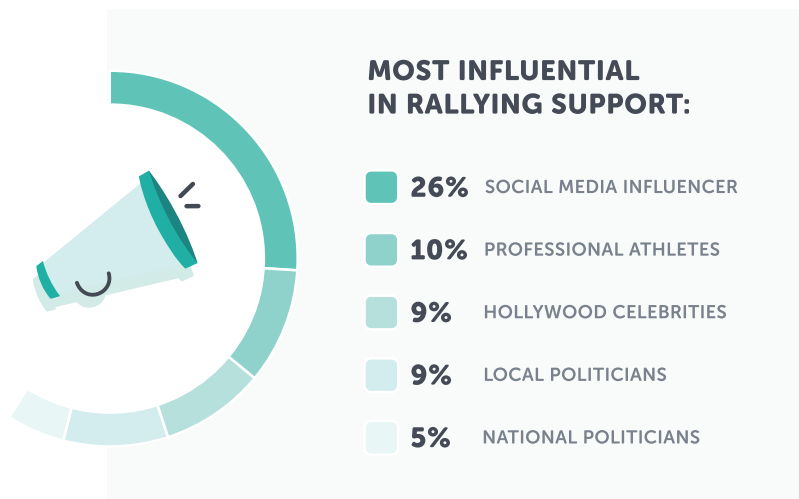
Organizations reported growth in social media followers in 2017, with Instagram audiences growing by 44%, Twitter lists growing by 15%, and Facebook fans growing by 13%.¹ This not only reflects a continued interest in social media, but also the growing opportunity to connect it back to online giving.

GROWTH IN SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS:



DONATE

While one might assume that the best way to reach social media audiences is through the endorsement of a major celebrity, our survey data shows that organizations are better off focusing on more relatable champions of their causes—like social media influencers.



¹ M+R Benchmarks, "2018 Benchmarks." <https://mrbenchmarks.com/#!/social-media>

POLITICS AND CURRENT EVENTS

Despite politics dominating headlines, political news doesn't always translate to donations.

Only about 2 in 5 (or 39%) respondents state their political beliefs probably or definitely dictate what causes they donate to. However, higher-earning households demonstrate giving behavior that is far more politically-motivated. Nearly half of households with an annual income of \$150,000 or greater say their political beliefs definitely dictate who or what organizations they donate their money to.

Respondents say they are most likely to support nonprofits (45%) above political causes (political parties, or political action committees or individuals—33% combined).

13% of men are most likely to donate to support government-related causes (political parties campaigns) compared to only 4% of women.



BELOW ARE THE TOP THREE CAUSES RESPONDENTS SAY THEY ARE MOST LIKELY TO DONATE TO, BROKEN DOWN BY RESPONDENTS' POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS:



DEMOCRATIC PARTY

- 1** DISASTER RELIEF
- 2** ENVIRONMENT / ANIMALS
- 3** HEALTH



REPUBLICAN PARTY

- 1** DISASTER RELIEF
- 2** RELIGION
- 3** HEALTH



LIBERTARIAN PARTY

- 1** TO INDIVIDUALS RAISING MONEY ON BEHALF OF NONPROFITS
- 2** ENVIRONMENT / ANIMAL
- 3** TO INDIVIDUALS' PERSONAL CAUSES



INDEPENDENT PARTY

- 1** DISASTER RELIEF
- 2** HEALTH
- 3** ENVIRONMENT / ANIMALS



GREEN PARTY

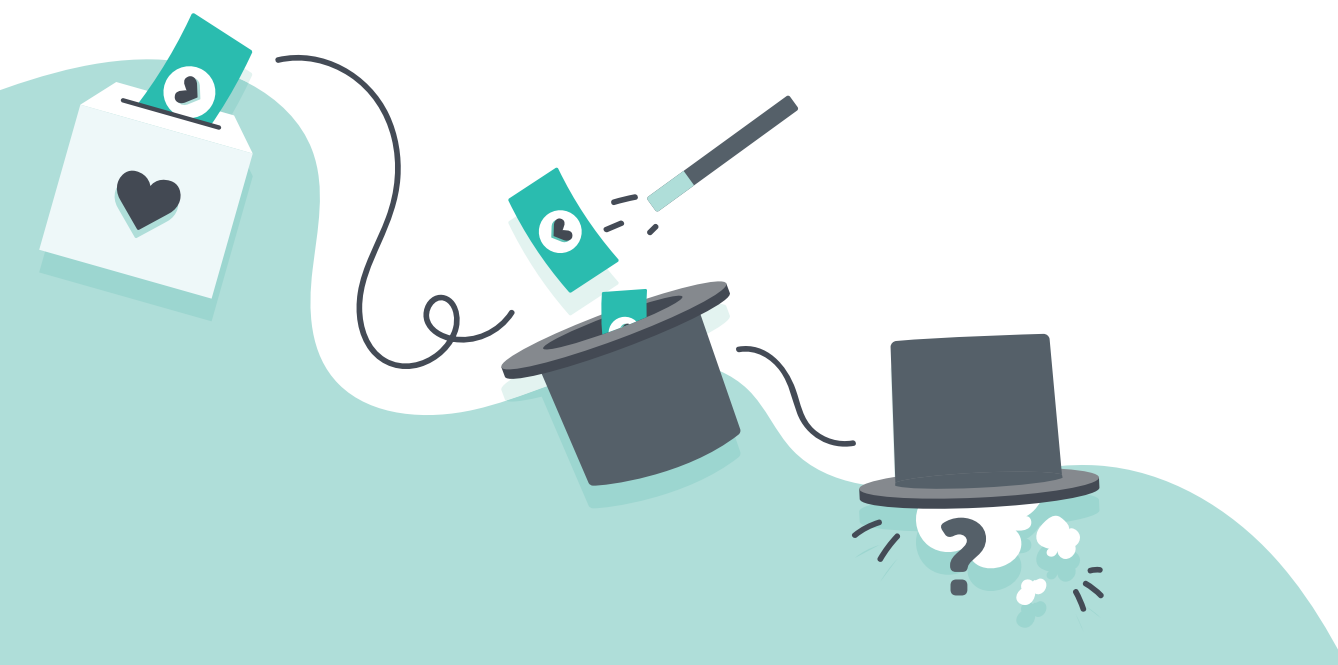
- 1** HEALTH
- 2** ARTS, CULTURE, AND HUMANITIES
- 3** GOVERNMENT

What Prevents People From Giving?

Across all generations, a donor's level of trust in an organization plays a significant role in their likelihood to give. When respondents were asked to rank factors that would deter them from donating to a nonprofit, the top ranked deterrent was whether that nonprofit received negative press coverage.

Following negative press, the next factor that would deter people from donating is if a nonprofit doesn't provide regular updates on how donations are used.

In addition to keeping your organization free of public crises and demonstrating donation impact to donors, there are a few other ways you can prompt supporters to give.



How to Encourage People to Give

1. Make It Convenient

52% of people find it easiest to make donations digitally, whether on a computer or smartphone. Additionally, about half of all people (49%) state that if it were easier or more convenient to donate to their favorite nonprofit, then they would definitely or probably give more often.



2. Empower Mobile Users

When Classy launched in 2011, only 11% of traffic to all campaigns came from mobile devices. Today, it's over 50% and mobile gifts make up one-third of all donations across the platform.

28% of Gen Z and 26% of millennial respondents find it easiest to make donations through an app or mobile site on a smartphone or tablet.

According to Classy's report, *The State of Modern Philanthropy*, peer-to-peer campaigns garner twice as much mobile transaction volume than donation pages do. Plus, 76% of all donations to a peer-to-peer campaign are made to individuals' fundraising pages, not to the organization's campaign page, suggesting that peers are engaging with their friends as much as—if not more than—the organization itself.² This consumer survey data confirms what Classy's

² Classy, "The State of Modern Philanthropy: Examining Online Fundraising Trends." <https://go.classy.org/reports/the-state-of-modern-philanthropy>

platform data suggests—that people do indeed want to support causes that are meaningful to their friends and family.

3. Leverage Technology

The lack of an online donation page or a clunky online giving experience costs your donors' trust. More than half of millennial and Gen Z respondents (54% for each) said if they can't easily donate to a nonprofit online or via a mobile device, then they will have less trust in how that nonprofit uses their funds. This compares to only 20% of baby boomers who felt the same.

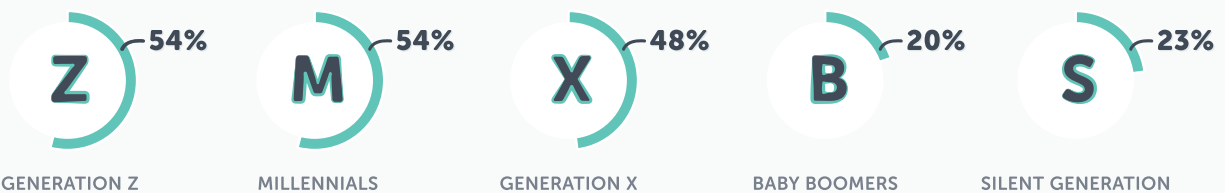
This holds true across all generations: 41% of total respondents said that if they can't easily donate to a nonprofit online or via a mobile device, then they will have less trust in how an organization uses donated funds.

To get a glimpse of how nonprofits are performing in this area, we asked if people think nonprofits use technology effectively. The results show that 52% of people say nonprofits are extremely or very effective in their use of technology, but there is still room to improve.

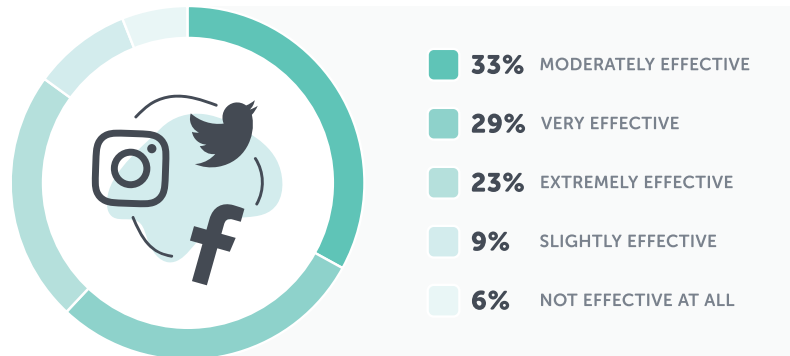


WHAT PERCENTAGE OF EACH GENERATION...

Has less trust in how an organization uses donated funds if they can't easily donate online or via mobile?



HOW EFFECTIVE DO YOU THINK NONPROFITS AND CHARITIES ARE AT USING TECHNOLOGY (SOCIAL MEDIA, WEBSITES, ETC.) TO MOTIVATE YOU TO DONATE TO THEIR CAUSE?



But when we look at this by generation, we find that the demographics that are more comfortable with technology (younger generations), also perceive nonprofits to use technology more effectively.

WHEN BROKEN DOWN BY GENERATION:

Gen Z: **62%** say extremely effective or very effective

Millennial: **63%** say extremely effective or very effective

Gen X: **63%** say extremely effective or very effective

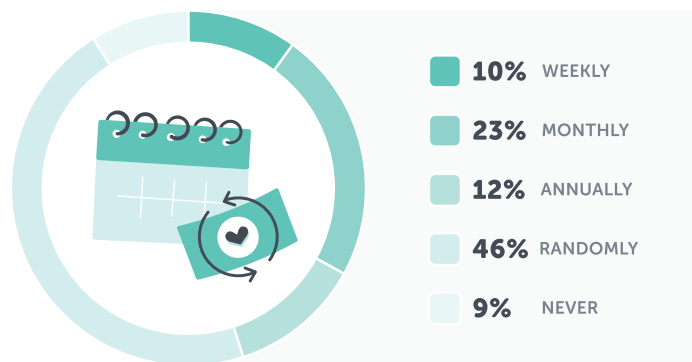
Baby Boomers: **31%** say extremely effective or very effective

Silent Generation: **30%** say extremely effective or very effective

What Do These Results Mean for Recurring Giving Programs?

Although recurring donors are over five times more valuable than one-time donors, there is a discrepancy between donors' intentions and their actual behaviors. Though nearly 80% of respondents say it is extremely, very, or moderately important that they donate to nonprofits annually, only 45% currently donate annually or more often.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU DONATE TO NONPROFITS OR CAUSES YOU CARE ABOUT?



What does this discrepancy mean for nonprofit organizations? There's a huge opportunity to leverage trends in consumer behavior and build dedicated recurring programs to attract donors to become lifelong supporters. If people are aware of the need for recurring donations, but aren't following through with a commitment to give routinely, nonprofits have an opportunity to demonstrate the impact that sustainable gifts provide, dedicate resources to recurring giving programs, and continue to steward long-standing relationships with their donors.

Giving Tuesday Intentions

From October through December, the year-end season is the most concentrated and lucrative time of the year for charitable giving. Our own [platform data illustrates the massive opportunity](#) for nonprofits to acquire and retain new donors on Giving Tuesday, so we dug a bit deeper to find out how people are thinking about donating on the global giving day.

57% of respondents say they participated in Giving Tuesday 2017, but when asked how they plan to spend their money that week in 2018 (Black Friday, Cyber Monday, Small Business Saturday, and Giving Tuesday), Giving Tuesday donations came in last.

The number one response for all generations was Black Friday, followed by Cyber Monday, Small Business Saturday, and finally Giving Tuesday.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DO YOU PLAN TO PARTICIPATE IN OR SPEND MONEY ON THIS YEAR? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.



While there should be continued focus around increasing awareness of and participation in Giving Tuesday, we know that Giving Tuesday 2017 raised \$300 million in donations.³ So if only 18% of the population make a donation on Giving Tuesday 2018, that's still an enormous opportunity for nonprofits to tap into.

The top three causes people are most likely to support on Giving Tuesday 2018 are disaster relief efforts, health causes, and environment and animal efforts.

37% of Gen X respondents, 34% of millennials, and 24% of Gen Z respondents are familiar with Giving Tuesday.

61% of millennials and 59% of Gen Z will definitely or probably give more on Giving Tuesday versus any other day of the year.

More than 1 in 4 respondents with a household income of \$150,000 or greater plan to donate more than \$5,000 on Giving Tuesday 2018, but for many people, **Giving Tuesday gifts may be on the smaller side**. Of those who anticipate participating in Giving Tuesday 2018, 65% expect their donation to be \$100 or less.

Check out Classy's **Giving Tuesday Toolkit**
for templates and tips to engage donors year-round

Go Now

³ #GivingTuesday. "#GivingTuesday: A Global Giving Movement." <https://www.givingtuesday.org/>



Classy

For more data and insights on donor behavior and giving trends check out Classy's recent report

The State of Modern Philanthropy: Examining Online Fundraising Trends

[Download Now](#) →

About Classy

Classy is a social enterprise that creates world-class online fundraising software for nonprofits, modernizing the giving experience to accelerate social impact around the world. Based in San Diego, CA, Classy is trusted by organizations of all sizes, from the fastest-growing nonprofits like Team Rubicon and The Trevor Project, to some of the world's largest social organizations, such as The Salvation Army, Robin Hood Foundation, and Shriners Hospitals for Children. Classy also hosts the Collaborative conference and the Classy Awards to spotlight the innovative work nonprofits are implementing around the globe. For more information, visit www.classy.org or follow Classy on Twitter [@Classy](https://twitter.com/Classy).

Conducted in September 2018, this survey polled 1,002 individuals 18 years of age or older in the United States. The survey was fielded using the Qualtrics Insights Platform and the panel was sourced from Fulcrum by Lucid.

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