

The Current State of Donor Retention and What Fundraisers Can Do About It



About Presenter »

Steven Shattuck

Chief Engagement Officer, Bloomerang

Author: Robots Make Bad Fundraisers

Contributor: Fundraising Principles and Practice: Second Edition

Member: Fundraising Effectiveness Project (FEP) Project Work Group, AFP Center for Fundraising Innovation (CFI), Study Fundraising Steering Group at the Hartsook Centre for Sustainable Philanthropy at Plymouth University

Fun facts:

- 1st job: producing fundraising videos
- prefers tea to coffee
- allergic to rhubarb
- won the David Letterman scholarship



A study of donor retention »

⇒ FUNDRAISING EFFECTIVENESS project

GIVING
TUESDAY



Datalake
Nonprofit Research



176 million transactions from more than 20,000 organizations and \$80 billion in donations since 2005.

<http://afpfep.org>

Donor retention »

AVERAGE
43.6%



FIRST-TIME
19.3%

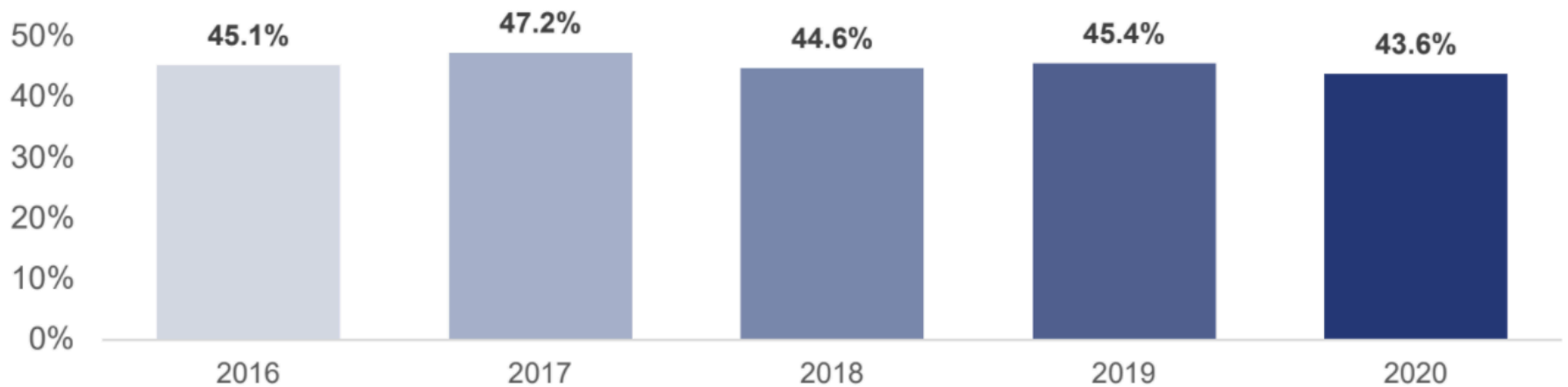


REPEAT
59.6%



Source: Fundraising Effectiveness Project <http://afpfep.org>

Donor retention over the years »



Source: Fundraising Effectiveness Project <http://afpfe.org>

There was some good news »



Donors

(Year-to-date) **107.3%**

↑ **+7.3%**
YTD Change



Donations

(Year-to-date) **110.6%**

↑ **+10.6%**
YTD Change



New
Donors
(YTD) **118.5%**

↑ **+18.5%**
YTD Change



Recaptured
Donors
(YTD) **113.7%**

↑ **+13.7%**
YTD Change

Overall giving increased by 10.6% in 2020 as compared to 2019, spurred by an increase in new and reactivated donors.

Source: Fundraising Effectiveness Project <http://afpfep.org>

Donors by giving level »



General Donor
(Under \$250)
(YTD) **8.0%**

↑ **+15.3%**
YTD Change



Mid-Level Donor
(\$250–\$999)
(YTD) **6.8%**

↑ **+8.0%**
YTD Change



Major Donor
(\$1,000+)
(YTD) **85.1%**

↑ **+10.4%**
YTD Change

Source: Fundraising Effectiveness Project <http://afpfep.org>

Why do donors leave?

Why nonprofit donors leave »

- 2001 study by Adrian Sargeant
- Survey to lapsed donors of 10 major U.S.-based nonprofits
- Respondents were asked to check each reason for stopping their contributions



http://www.campbellrinker.com/Managing_donor_defection.pdf

Why nonprofit donors leave »

- 5% - thought charity did not need them
- 8% - no info on how monies were used
- 9% - no memory of supporting
- 13% - never got thanked for donating
- 16% - death
- 18% - poor service or communication
- 36% - others more deserving
- 54% - could no longer afford

http://www.campbellrinker.com/Managing_donor_defection.pdf

Why do donors stay?

Key drivers of donor commitment »



- 2011 study
- Survey of 1,200 recent (last 12 months), frequent (more than 2 gifts to cause based charities) donors from over 250 nonprofit organizations
- Donors were given a list of 32 reasons why they might continue giving
- Asked to rank them by order of importance

<http://www.thedonorvoice.com/national-donor-commitment-study-and-proof-of-link-between-donor-attitudes-and-behavior/>

Key drivers of donor commitment »

1. Donor perceives organization to be effective
2. Donor knows what to expect with each interaction
3. Donor receives a timely thank you
4. Donor receives opportunities to make views known
5. Donor feels like they're part of an important cause
6. Donor feels his or her involvement is appreciated
7. Donor receives info showing who is being helped

<http://www.thedonorvoice.com/national-donor-commitment-study-and-proof-of-link-between-donor-attitudes-and-behavior/>

How to increase retention »

- Focus on first-time and above-average donors
- Thank quickly + personally
- Go overboard with appreciation
- Donor-centric tone (more “you” than “we”)
- Illustrate that you know who the donor is
- Tell them how gifts are used / will be used
- Tell them what comes next
- Solicit feedback
- Keep lines of communication open
- Prioritize monthly giving



Data Segmentation Powers Retention



| | Given Above Average Gift Size | LYBUNT* | SYBUNT* | Never Given |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Current Parents | Segment 1 (9/35) | Segment 2 (37) | Segment 4 (54) | Segment 6 (675) |
| Non-Parents | Segment 1 (26/35) | Segment 3 (64) | Segment 5 (150) | Segment 7 (150 staff + 340 send/870) |
| | (\$500+) | (7/1/14-6/30/15) | (Before 7/1/14) | |

Heather Carroll
 Executive Director at
 Skaneateles Education
 Foundation

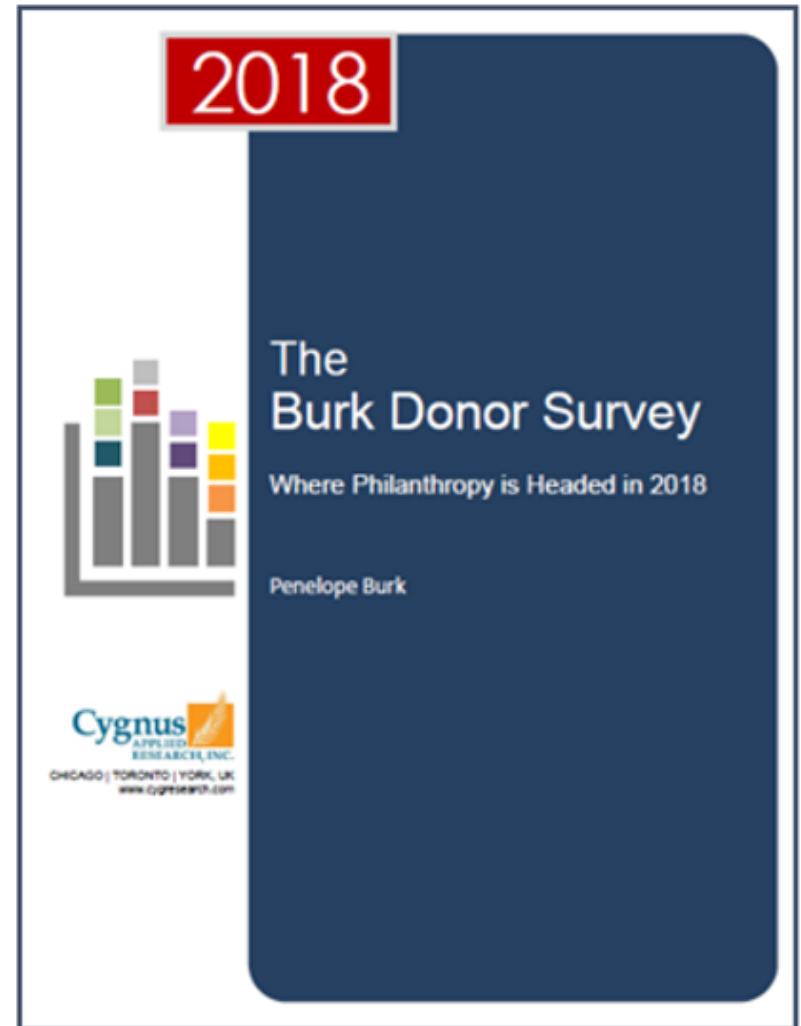


| | Never Given | Given Once (Over a Year Ago) | Given Once (Last Year) | Given Multiple Times |
|-------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Above Average Gift Size | Segment 1 | Segment 2 | Segment 4 | Segment 6 |
| At or Below Average Gift Size | Segment 1 | Segment 3 | Segment 5 | Segment 7 |

| | Never Given | Has Given |
|----------------|-------------|-----------|
| Current Parent | Segment 1 | Segment 3 |
| Non-Parent | Segment 2 | Segment 4 |

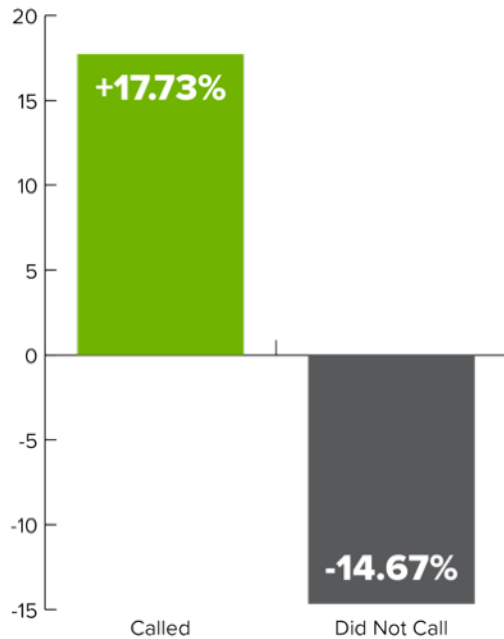
The power of the personal touch »

“There were two instances this year where I made gifts over and above what I had intended and they both involved personal contact from someone in the development office (director or gifts officer). Being thanked for my previous gift was much more persuasive than receiving multiple emails and direct mail letters.”



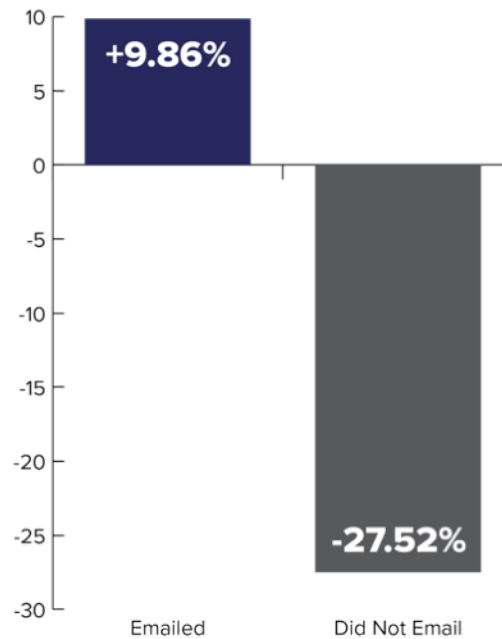
% change in revenue YoY »

Phone Calls



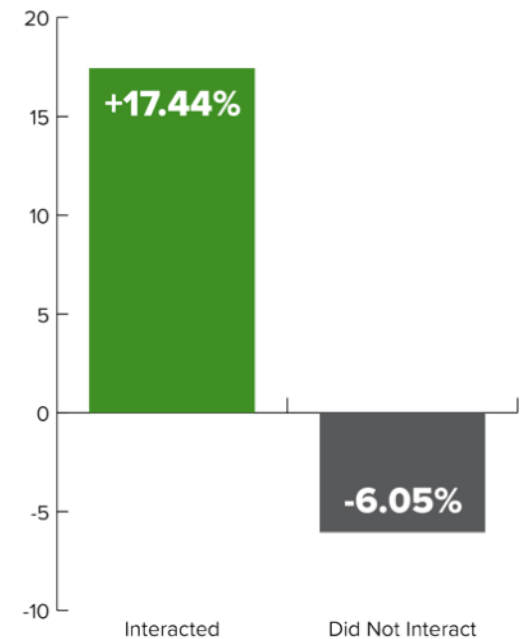
| Phone Calls | Customers | % |
|--------------|-----------|-----|
| Called | 1,085 | 26% |
| Did Not Call | 3,015 | 74% |

Personal Emails




| Personal Emails | Customers | % |
|-----------------|-----------|-----|
| Emailed | 2,360 | 58% |
| Did Not Email | 1,740 | 42% |

In-Person Interactions



| In-Person | Customers | % |
|------------------|-----------|-----|
| Interacted | 729 | 18% |
| Did Not Interact | 3,371 | 82% |

Thank you! 



Mike Elliott <melliott@outreachindiana.org>

Nov 2 (5 days ago) ☆



to me, Eric 

Hi Steven,

Thank you so much for becoming a monthly donor! You and your family give Outreach the ability to bring hope to homeless youth. I have made a quick 2min video for you to share what your monthly gift does for the mission of Outreach – [click here to view](#)

Thank you again, Eric, and I are truly humbled to have your support in the mission of Outreach.

Mike Elliott | Director of Development
[2416 E. New York St Indianapolis, IN 46201](#)
Direct: [317-653-1545](#) Mobile: [317-600-9561](#)



<https://share.vidyard.com/watch/rh6mDE1mrwLKqZChs2bPfs>

Thank you Steven!



<https://share.vidyard.com/watch/rh6mDE1mrwLKqZChs2bPfs>

Donor retention »

AVERAGE
43.6%



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REPEAT
59.6%



Source: Fundraising Effectiveness Project <http://afpfe.org>

New Donor **Cultivation Timeline** (First 90 Days)



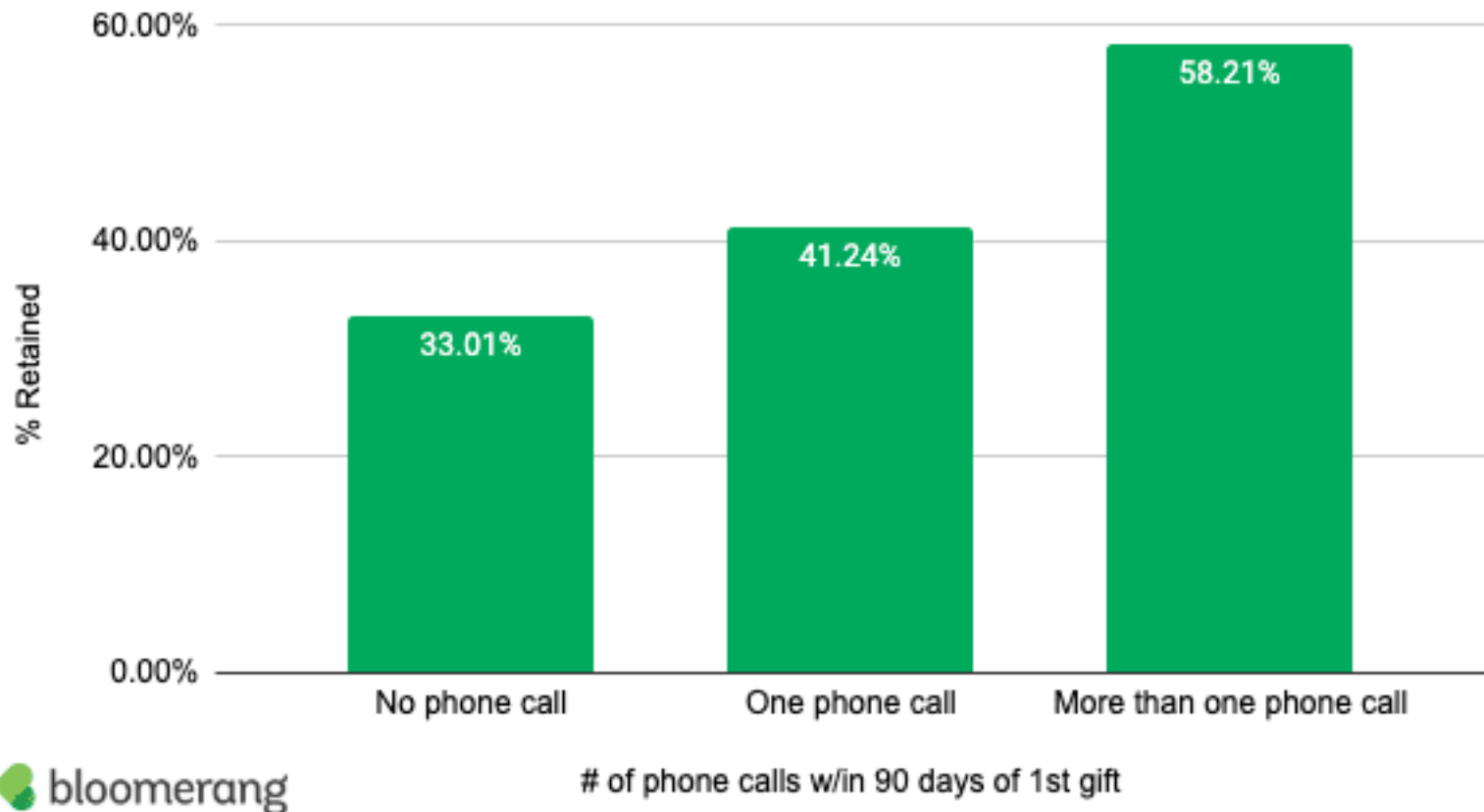
The fast, personal touch »

- first-time donors who get a personal thank you within 48 hours are 4x more likely to give a second gift.
(McConkey-Johnston International UK)
- a thank-you call from a board member to a newly acquired donor within 24 hours of receiving the gifts will increase their next gift by 39%.
(Penelope Burk)

<http://www.guidestar.org/rxa/news/articles/2010/how-to-increase-donations-by-39-percent.aspx>

Bloomerang research »

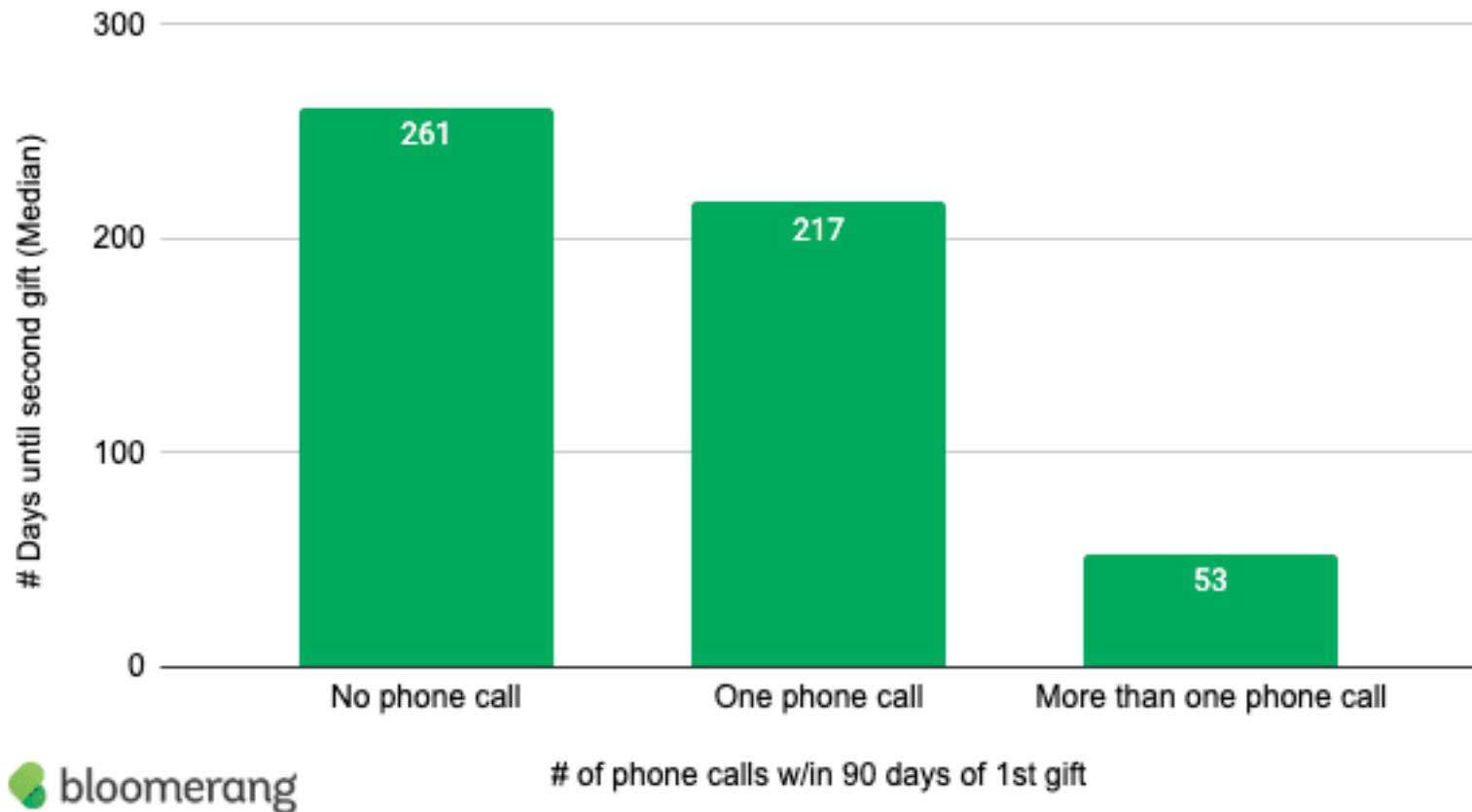
Impact of phone calls on 1st-time donor retention



<https://bloomerang.co/blog/actually-calling-donors-to-thank-them-does-make-them-more-likely-to-give-again-and-give-more/>

Bloomerang research »

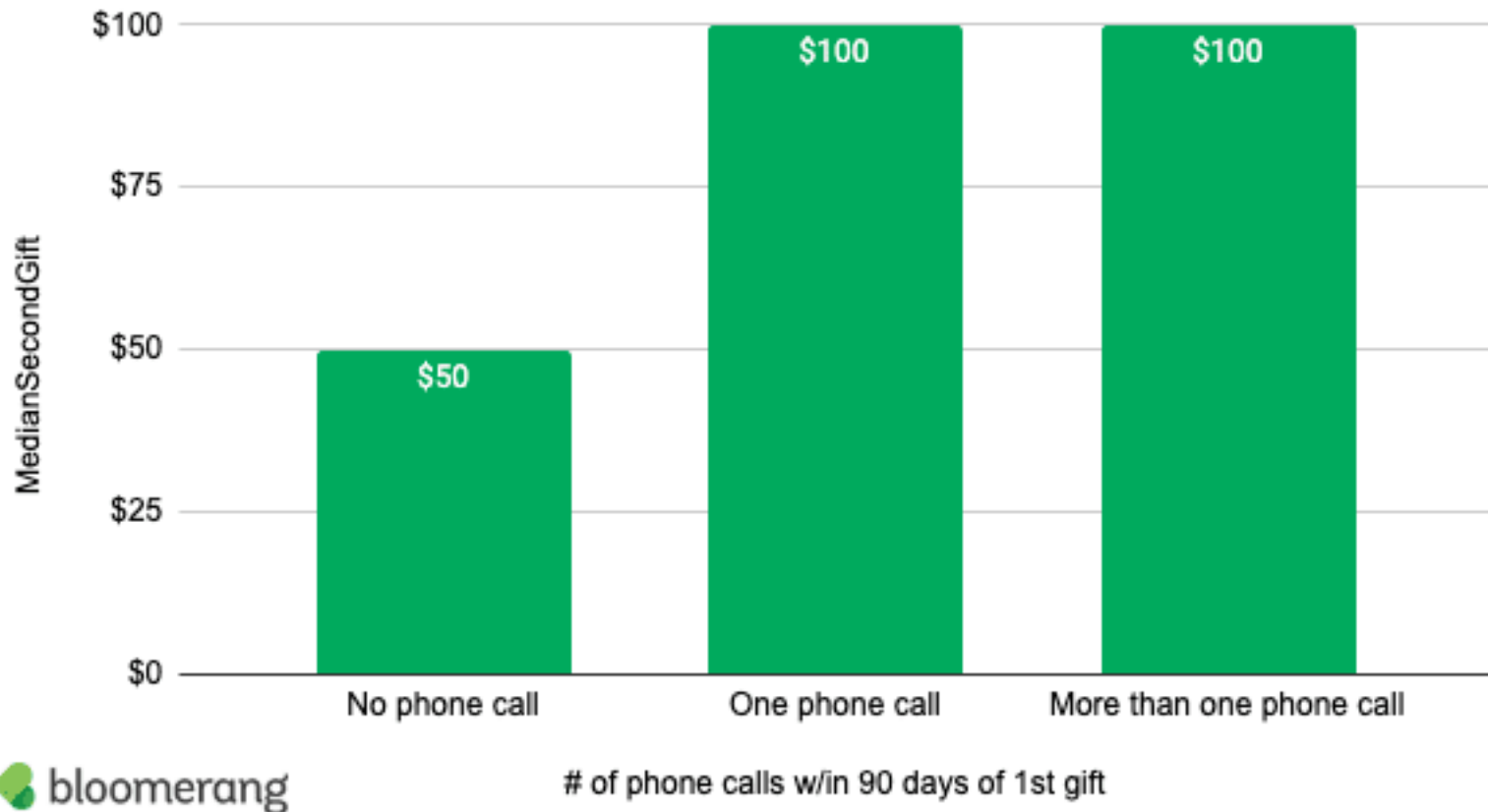
Impact of phone calls on speed of second gift



<https://bloomerang.co/blog/actually-calling-donors-to-thank-them-does-make-them-more-likely-to-give-again-and-give-more/>

Bloomerang research »

Impact of phone calls on second gift size



<https://bloomerang.co/blog/actually-calling-donors-to-thank-them-does-make-them-more-likely-to-give-again-and-give-more/>

THANK YOU
for your *first* gift!



Here at The Oaks, relationships come first.
We welcome you into our family of donors,
partners, volunteers and supporters.

Every day is a great day to visit The Oaks Academy.
To see your gift at work through a personal visit or tour,
please contact:

advancement@theoaksacademy.org | 317.931.3687



Girls Inc. Girls' Bill of Rights

INSPIRING ALL GIRLS TO GROW UP STRONG, SMART, & BOLD

You are inspiring girls to be strong, smart, and bold.

GIRLS HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE THEMSELVES AND TO RESIST GENDER STEREOTYPES.

Young Women in Leadership (YWIL) has become more than just an extracurricular to me. It has become a part of my chosen family. Through this program, I have learned how to appropriately plan for my future, become the best leader I can be in my community, and how to manage my time. The program has offered more opportunities than I can list. The program directors' constant guidance in scholarship application, resume building, finding possible jobs that are available, etc. has instilled a gratitude towards them that I show through my constant involvement with not only this program, but Girls Inc. in general. What makes YWIL so special is that the program directors do all these things to help us, and they do them with creative concepts, open discussion, and a smile.

-Aeriana W.

I seek to challenge myself and find ways to better myself as a person. Girls Inc. is a place to really be yourself and take risks without fear of being looked down upon. This is my first year at Girls Inc. and so far it's great! I love that they encourage you to be yourself and to not just be a follower. For example, recently we had a speaker come in and tell us to be limitless and go beyond what others expect. I've been looking for a program like Girls Inc. that could give me advice and a little guidance in this crazy world, and I'm glad I found it!

-Joleena M.

I enjoyed going to one of the IUPUI campuses and learning how to create and work with graphic designing. I decided to continue working with Girls Inc. because the program shows you different opportunities that are available to you and the program helps you explore careers. You dive deep into yourself wondering what your interests are and what your future looks like. I like how the organization motivates education and who you are personally not just the outside of your skin. Girls Inc. gives many lessons but the main one that I will remember is focusing on my happiness. I can't base all of my decisions on what I think other people will be happy about, sometimes I have to think about myself.

-Cyncera

GIRLS HAVE THE RIGHT TO HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THEMSELVES AND TO BE IN THE WORLD.

Overwhelmingly girls are the targets perpetrators of violence. Many form girls' lives, including domestic violence, neglect, bullying, sexual abuse, date crimes. We work to see that girls' developing skills to recognize any situations, mediate conflicts, and face of violence. We oppose my and trivializes girls and women early intervention programs that violence.



Inspiring all girls to be strong, smart, and bold

Girls Inc. of Greater Indianapolis
3935 N. Meridian Street
Indianapolis, IN 46208
(317) 283-0388
girlsincindy.org

Board of Directors

Ellen Humphrey
Chair

Andi Metzler
1st Vice Chair

Charlotte Hawthorne
2nd Vice Chair

Courtney Brown
Governance

Vicki Bohlsen
Development

Melissa Cotterill
Secretary

Alison F. Loughran
Treasurer

Lori A. Ball
Veronica Chase
Kimberly Davis
Andrea Farmer
James Keough
Joan Lonnemann
Chad Pittman
Jim Schacht

Elyssa Campodonico-Barr
President & CEO



Dear Steven,

On behalf of Girls Inc. of Greater Indianapolis, I want to thank you again for your support of girls in the Greater Indianapolis community. You are now part of our Girls Inc. family that equips girls with the skills needed to face the challenges of today and prepare for a bright tomorrow.

We know you chose to give your gift because you share our understanding of the obstacles that girls face in today's world.

- Over 70% of girls ages 15 to 17 avoid normal daily activities like attending school when they feel negatively about their looks.
- Indiana ranks 46th of 50 states with regard to the wage gap between men and women, with women earning only 74 cents for every dollar men earn.
- Children in homes where domestic violence is present are 1500% more likely to become victims themselves.

The collective financial support from donors like you provides developmentally-appropriate, hands-on programming that prepares girls to overcome these and other obstacles.

- *Redefining Beauty: Redefining Beauty builds self-esteem and self-confidence in girls by confronting body image stereotypes and identifying healthy lifestyle habits.*
- *Young Women in Leadership (YWIL): A year-long program for emerging leaders in high school, YWIL helps them focus on leadership development and college and career preparedness.*
- *Project BOLD: Project Bold helps girls identify resources and people to increase their personal safety, while providing basic self-defense techniques. This violence-prevention program provides a safe environment for girls to ask questions, get answers, and feel supported.*

Our work extends far beyond these three programs. You are supporting over 4,000 girls annually through hundreds of programs happening all around Indianapolis. You can be confident that we are using your gift wisely as we continuously reassess our curriculum, train engaged volunteers, and strive for more positive outcomes. We want you to know that our mission of inspiring all girls to be strong, smart, and bold is one we are happy to share with you. We look forward to continuously striving to better prepare girls for a life of creativity, empowerment, and growth with you.

Sincerely,

Madeleine

Madeleine Smith, CFRE
Vice President of Development & Public Relations

We are grateful for you

Stay connected to Girls Inc. Indy by following us on social media and signing up for our newsletter at www.girlsincindy.org under "Connect With Us."



@StevenShattuck



Survey »

- Send a donor info survey to 1st-time donors
- Send a donor satisfaction survey to repeat donors
- Boosts retention even if they don't respond
 - Respondents signify high-engagement
- Email receipt is a great place to include
 - Google Forms / SurveyMonkey / Formstack

<https://bloomerang.co/blog/23-questions-to-ask-donors-and-prospects/>

Key drivers of donor commitment »

1. Donor perceives organization produces outcomes
2. Donor knows what to expect with each interaction
3. Donor receives a timely thank you
4. Donor receives opportunities to make views known
5. Donor feels like they're part of an important cause
6. Donor feels his or her involvement is appreciated
7. Donor receives info showing who is being helped

<http://www.thedonorvoice.com/national-donor-commitment-study-and-proof-of-link-between-donor-attitudes-and-behavior/>

We can't do this without you!

Dear ,

Your support for our mission means so much more than we can convey with just, "Thank you". Without you, [fill in outcome] would not be possible.

There's something else you can give that's equally important - your opinion. Your real, honest opinion. Would you mind taking 2 minutes of your time to tell us how we can make you feel more connected to [fill in organization name]? It would mean so much!

Sincerely,
Executive Director

[Begin Survey](#)

Our Contact Information

Blossom's Orangutan Rescue
5724 Birtz Road
Indianapolis, IN 46216
8663322999
www.bloomerang.co

<https://bloomerang.co/blog/category/donor-surveys/>

3. I trust Blossom's Orangutan Rescue to deliver the outcomes it promises for its beneficiaries

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

4. I was thanked appropriately for my gift to Blossom's Orangutan Rescue

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

5. Overall I am very satisfied with how Blossom's Orangutan Rescue has treated me as a new donor

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

0 of 10 answered

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Previous

Next

Donor retention by age/channel »



Donors across all age groups give online, offline, and through both channels. It's a myth that older donors will not give online. In fact, the data shows that older online donors are the most loyal.

FIRST YEAR DONOR RETENTION BY AGE

| AGE | ONLINE ONLY | OFFLINE ONLY | MULTICHANNEL |
|---------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| 18 – 24 | 19% | 24% | 50% |
| 25 – 34 | 22% | 25% | 55% |
| 35 – 44 | 21% | 24% | 54% |
| 45 – 54 | 21% | 24% | 52% |
| 55 – 64 | 22% | 26% | 58% |
| 65 – 74 | 24% | 29% | 62% |
| 75+ | 26% | 26% | 59% |

Source: Blackbaud Target Analytics





[redacted]s.org via clickandpledge.cc

5/21/15 ☆



to me ▾

Receipt

Important!

This payment will appear as [redacted] bank statement. We recommend that you print a copy of this receipt for comparison with your bank statement, as well as for your personal records.

Thursday, May 21, 2015 [1:33:31 PM]

[redacted]

3048 W. Wilton Ave
Chicago, Illinois 60657
United States of America

Email : [redacted]

Phone : [773-296-7560](tel:773-296-7560)



Successful Donation noreply@mobilecause.com via mail134
to me ▾

May 21 ☆



**Thank you for your contribution to
Compass to Care!**

Name: Steven Shattuck
Amount: \$5.00
Date: 05/21/2015
Credit Card: ending in 1717

This charge will appear on your credit card statement as
'Donation'.



**COLLEGE
MENTORS
FOR KIDS**


**Thank you for investing in College
Mentors for Kids!**



Your gift will help provide a caring college student mentor to a child in need. Through structured activities that take place on the college campus, kids learn about possibilities for their future and are encouraged to pursue their goals, no matter what their circumstances! You are helping kids unlock their potential, so they can have a brighter tomorrow. A tax letter with details of your gift will be sent to the address you provided next month. Thank you!

To keep up with what's happening at College Mentors and to see success stories YOU make possible, follow us on social media:



 **The OneJustice Team** development@one-justice.org via bloomerang-mail.co
to me ▾

5:18 AM (1 minute ago) ☆ ↶ ▾



You brought Justice where it's needed!

Dear Steven,

You are making all the difference for those in need! Thank you!

We are so grateful for your gift of \$100.00 on 4/12/2016 to OneJustice. In fact, we think that makes you a justice hero!

This email serves to confirm we received your kind gift, and we will also mail you a hard copy thank you letter shortly. If for some reason you don't receive your acknowledgment by mail, or if you have any questions about our work or programs, please feel free to reach out to us at any time.

We look forward to keeping you informed about the vital legal services your investment brings to those facing pressing legal problems. We will keep you posted in 2016 about the legal help that your wonderful donation makes possible - and the people who are served because of your generosity.

2 common “one and dones” »

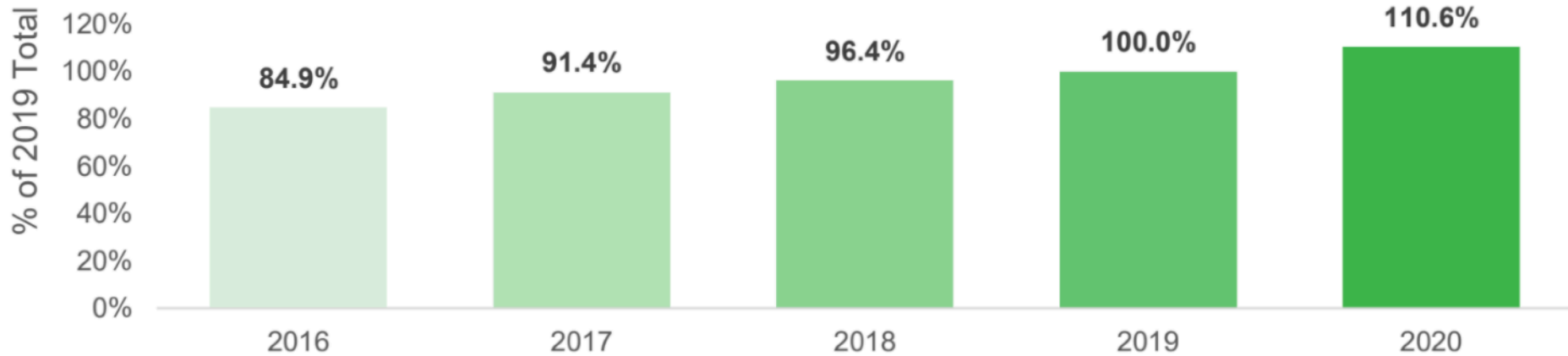
2 common “one and dones” »

- Memorial donors
 - Thank (if you can), then isolate
- Peer-to-peer donors
 - Have first gift acknowledgement come from fundraiser, not benefiting org
 - (Re)introduce the charity
 - Explain why fundraiser supports it
 - Ask for donor to continue support

<https://bloomerang.co/blog/3-tips-for-improving-p2p-donor-retention/>

Pay attention to Q4 »

Fourth Quarter Revenue (As % 2019 Total)



Source: Fundraising Effectiveness Project <http://afpfep.org>

Final thoughts »

- It's not about you. It's about the donor.
- Segment your donors.
- Create a written comms plan for each segment.
 - Concentrate on first-time donors.
- Get that second gift.
- Personalize!
- Steward, then solicit.

FREE ABSOLUTELY RESOURCES

All of our fundraising knowledge at your fingertips!

- Daily blog post
- Weekly webinars
- eBooks/guides
- Templates
- Case Studies
- Research

<https://bloomerang.co/resources>



Miranda and the team at Peace Community Center transformed an in-person event into a virtual experience via a multi-touch email campaign that raised over \$118k.

SEE HOW



Karen and the team at the Ada Jenkins Center created a special COVID-19 fundraising appeal campaign that resulted in nearly \$100k donated, despite an event cancellation.

SEE HOW



Katie and the team at Boys & Girls Club of Boone County pivoted their programs in light of the coronavirus outbreak, and generated the funding necessary to make it happen.

SEE HOW



Julia and the team from CommUnity shattered their pre-COVID-19 fundraising goals through individual donor support despite operating in one of the hardest-hit communities in their state.

SEE HOW



Amy and Wendy from the Naperville Education Foundation created a special COVID-19 fundraising appeal campaign that resulted in over \$100k donated, despite an event cancellation.

SEE HOW



Gracie from B.E.A.M. (Beaches Emergency Assistance Ministry) kept their constituents frequently updated and didn't shy away from fundraising, resulting in nearly six-figures raised.

SEE HOW



Laurel and the team from Maggie's Place maintained a steady stream of support while the COVID-19 crisis changed how they provide services and take donations.

SEE HOW



Not in human services? No problem. Sara and the team from the Willamette Humane Society generated a 227% increase in donor support compared to the same period last year.

SEE HOW

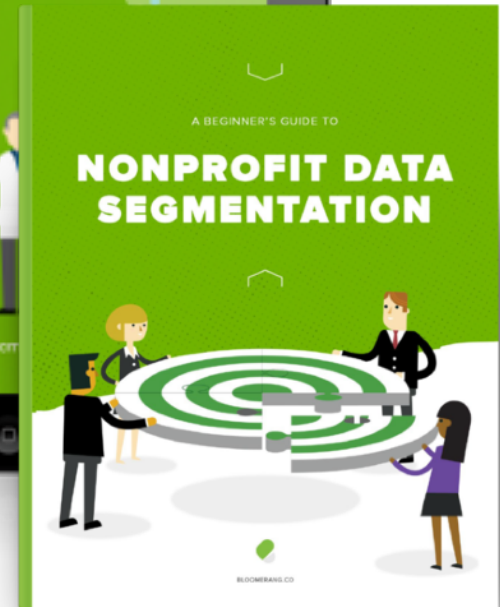
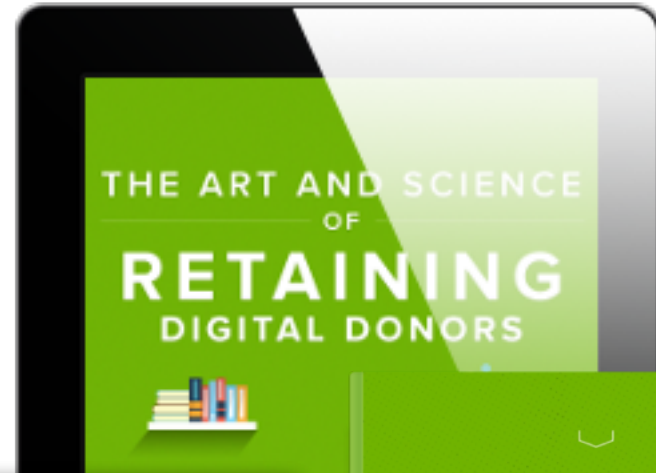
<https://bloomerang.co/covid19/success>

Questions?

steven.shattuck@bloomerang.co

@StevenShattuck

Free eBooks »



<https://bloomerang.co/resources/guides/>