

MISSION RETAINABLE

Data-Backed Strategies to
Keep Donors Coming Back
Year After Year

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Today's *focus*

We surveyed 1,000 donors and 380 fundraisers to understand what keeps donors coming back.

Excited to share what these mean for your organization!



AGEND

Month Day, Year
A



- 1 Retention Landscape
- 2 Why This Matters
- 3 Calculating Your Retention Rate
- 4 Why Donors Give & Why They Stop
- 5 How To Retain Your Donors
- 6 Q&A

Retention Landscape



DONORS

-3.6% YoY (2025)
-4.5% YoY (2024)
-3.4% YoY (2023)
-10% YoY (2022)



NEW DONORS

-7% YoY (2024)
+2.3% YoY (2023)
-18.1% YoY (2022)



RECAPTURED DONORS

-0.2% YoY (2025)
-4.4% YoY (2024)
-5.5% YoY (2023)
-3.5% YoY (2022)



DONATIONS (DOLLARS)

+5.0% (2025)
+3.5% (2024)
-2.8% YoY (2023)
-1.7% YoY (2022)

Donor Mix

Donors by Size



MICRO

(\$1 – \$100)

-7.9%

YOY Change

49.3%

% of total donors



SMALL

(\$101 – \$500)

-2.8%

YOY Change

30.8%

% of total donors



MIDSIZE

(\$501 – \$5K)

-1.5%

YOY Change

16.5%

% of total donors



MAJOR

(\$5K – \$50K)

+1.0%

YOY Change

3.0%

% of total donors



SUPERSIZE

(\$50K+)

+2.4%

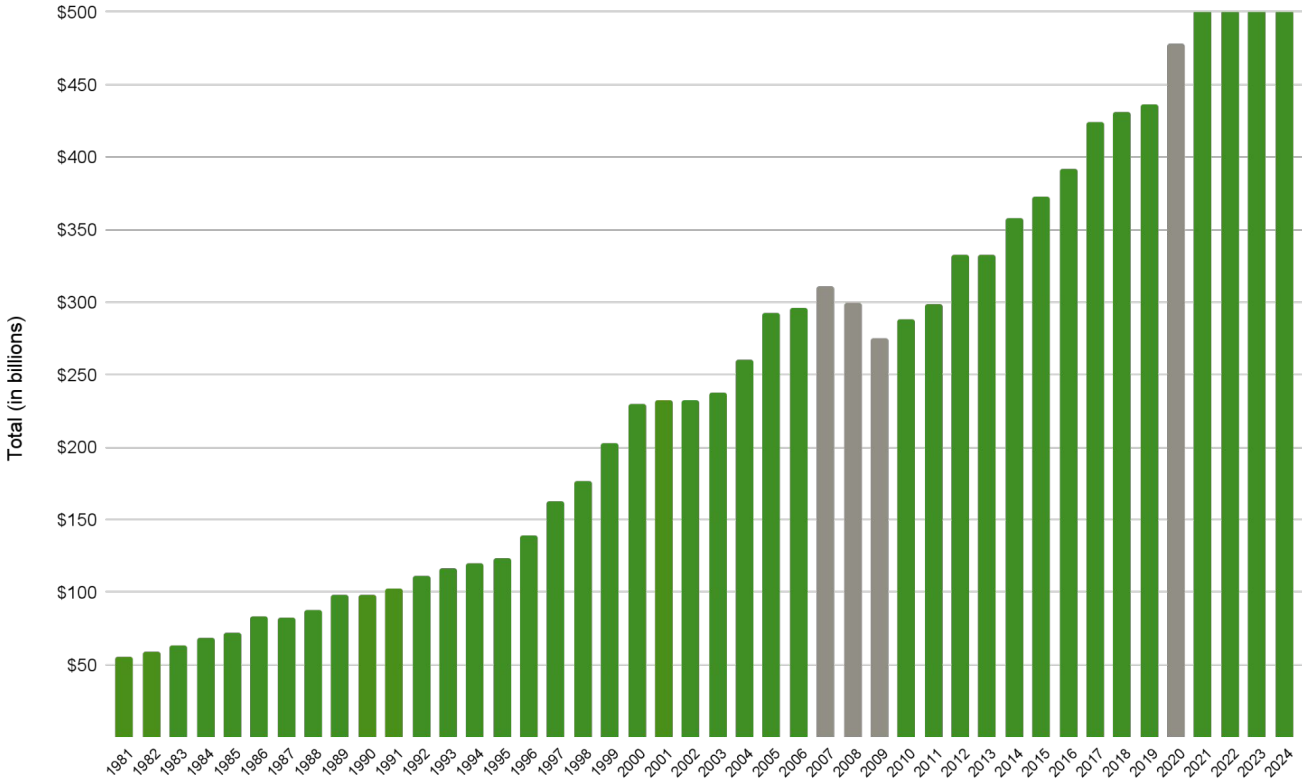
YOY Change

0.4%

% of total donors

<https://fepreports.org/>

Total Giving 1981 - 2024



Why this matters

Average Donor **RETENTION RATES**

2025 Data

18.9%

First Time Donors

43.3%

Average Donors

59.3%

Repeat Donors

The emotional case

Donors give because they feel a connection.

Losing a donor often signals a breakdown in that connection—poor communication, lack of transparency, not feeling valued.

30% of fundraisers surveyed identified donor fatigue as a challenge.

Good news: show donors the tangible impact of their contributions, and they're far more likely to stay engaged.



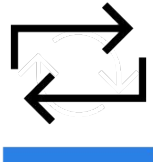
The financial case

A 10% increase in donor retention can increase donor lifetime value by 200%.

It's also cost-effective—retaining a donor is five times cheaper than acquiring a new one.

Retention is a matter of sustainability.

By the numbers



Cost Per Acquisition

5X
Cost per renewal



Cost Per Acquisition

2-3X
Initial donation amount



Renewal Response
Rates

20-30X
Higher than acquisition
response rates

More than cost-effective

Retention goes beyond financial and emotional benefits—it provides the stability nonprofits need to grow and adapt.

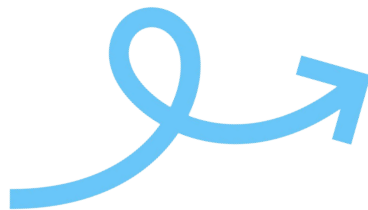
High retention strengthens your nonprofit's ability to plan for the future, invest in new initiatives, and maintain trust with your community.



Do you know
your donor
retention rate?



Most nonprofits
have the tools, but
not the **VISIBILITY**



94% have a CRM.

Only 38% track first-time
donor retention rate.

**Return Donors
in Year #2**



**All Donors
in Year #1**



**Donor
Retention
Rate**

Looking at **YOUR NUMBERS**



Take a moment to try it out.

How many donors gave to your organization last year?

How many of those donors gave again this year?

Divide that 2nd number by the 1st, and you've got your retention rate.

To give,
or not to give

We asked donors why they
GIVE MORE THAN ONCE
to an organization.



Here's what they had to say

63% - The mission or the nonprofit is important to me.

50% - I believe my donation is making a significant impact.

27% - It's easier to break up a large donation into smaller ones throughout the year.

8% - I received a personal thank you.

7% - I received a personal phone call.

5% - I received a tax acknowledgement for previous gifts.

5% - I was asked after donating.

Connection is key

Activities that help donors feel connected:

65% - Receiving regular updates about impact

41% - Volunteer opportunities

30% - Personal recognition or thanks yous

26% - Attending events

23% - Opportunities to provide feedback

When asked why they
STOPPED GIVING giving
to an organization

Here's what donors shared

87% - Financial limitations

12% - Lack of trust

12% - Lack of transparency about impact of contributions

11% - Insufficient information

BY GENERATION —why donors stop giving

	Baby Boomers	Gen X	Millennials	Gen Z / Zoomers
I no longer felt connected to the nonprofit	44%	44%	31%	40%
I did not trust that my donation was used wisely	33%	52%	49%	47%
I could no longer afford to donate	29%	22%	35%	33%
The nonprofit asked me for a donation too frequently	26%	30%	16%	13%
I had a negative experience with the nonprofit	21%	32%	28%	13%
Other	9%	10%	11%	7%
The nonprofit never asked for my support	5%	10%	9%	0%

How to retain donors

Fundraisers' top strategies

- 87%** - Personalized communication
- 68%** - Building personal relationships
- 59%** - Demonstrating the impact of donations
- 28%** - Offering convenient payment methods
- 23%** - Regular engagement via events
- 19%** - Providing tax receipts
- 17%** - Recognition in publications or at events

Consider **THIS**



→ 87% of fundraisers say **personalized communication** is their most effective retention strategy.

→ Donors agree — they're **15% more likely to stay engaged** when updates are personalized.

Gap: Segmentation

- **94%** of fundraisers use a CRM. Only **47%** take full advantage of the tools and donor insights available.
- Just **50%** of fundraisers segment donors at all—by giving history, interests, or demographics.

Taking **ACTION**

To start—build at least 3 donor segments:

- **First time**
- **Recurring**
- **Lapsed**

Craft a distinct communication plan for each.



It works: Ask Eye Thrive

Eye Thrive provides free vision care to kids in St. Louis.

For their year-end campaign, they split donors into **specific groups** and sent each group its own tailored letter.

THE RESULT:

\$101,049 raised on a \$10,000 budget



Consider this

"When I see how my gift is making a difference, I feel more connected—and I want to keep giving."

"Seeing the faces of those I've helped makes me want to continue giving."

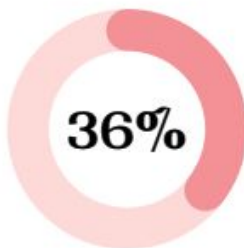


Gap: Impact Reporting

Donors value regular updates, yet fundraisers struggle to share regular impact reports.



Survey data reveals that 65% of donors value regular updates about their impact.



Gaps in communication further erode trust, as only 36% of nonprofits in our survey share regular impact reports.

Taking **ACTION**

Make sharing a priority, and don't just tell—show.

Give your impact reports more *impact* with:

- **Photos**
- **Videos**
- **Infographics**





Recurring giving: **CONSIDER THIS**



Recurring donors aren't just steady income—they're your future major donors.

63% of recurring donors feel like they're part of an important cause.

27% say it's easier to break up a large donation into smaller ones throughout the year.

The second gift

And once a donor gives a second time, **their retention rate more than triples.**

It's one of the biggest factors in donor retention.

Taking **ACTION**

Show donors how their monthly gift supports sustained impact.

- **Communicate** the importance of recurring giving
- Encourage donors to give at a **financial pace that works for them**



It works: Ask **MARA ELEPHANT PROJECT**



Mara Elephant Project USA funds elephant conservation work in Kenya's Greater Mara ecosystem.

They made a deliberate push **encouraging monthly giving**, and sent donors **consistent updates** on how their contributions were protecting elephant habitats—no matter their giving level.

THE RESULT:

- **30% growth** in recurring gifts
- **15% increase** in overall donor retention

Gap: In Payment Options

83% - of fundraisers believe offering multiple payment options improves retention

34% - higher engagement with mobile-friendly platforms

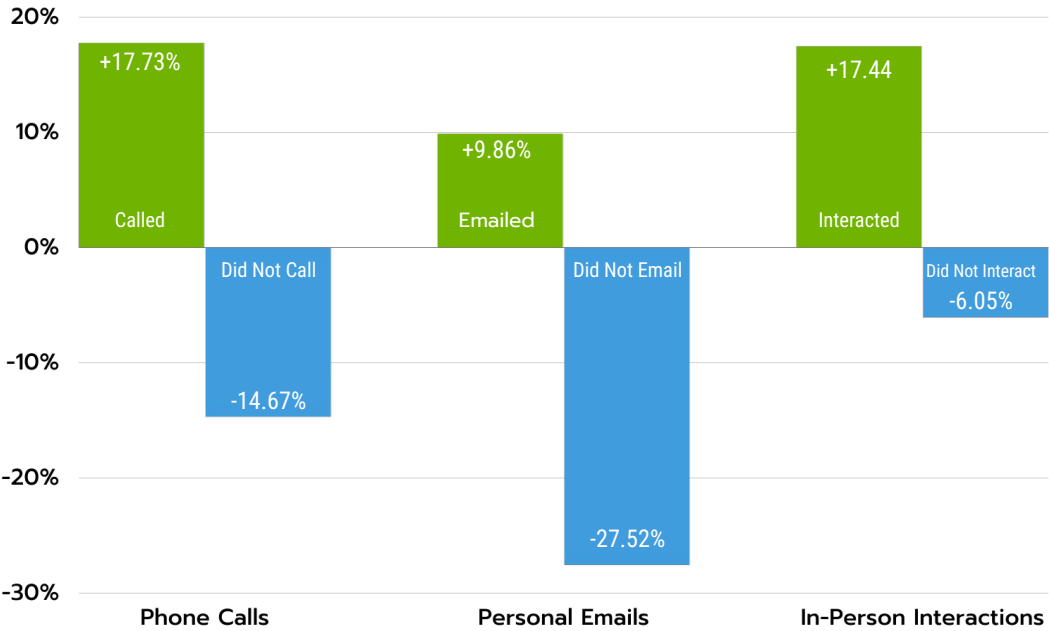
24% - of donors prefer digital wallets

3% - of fundraisers believe digital wallets are the preferred payment method of donors

Personal Touch Increases Growth

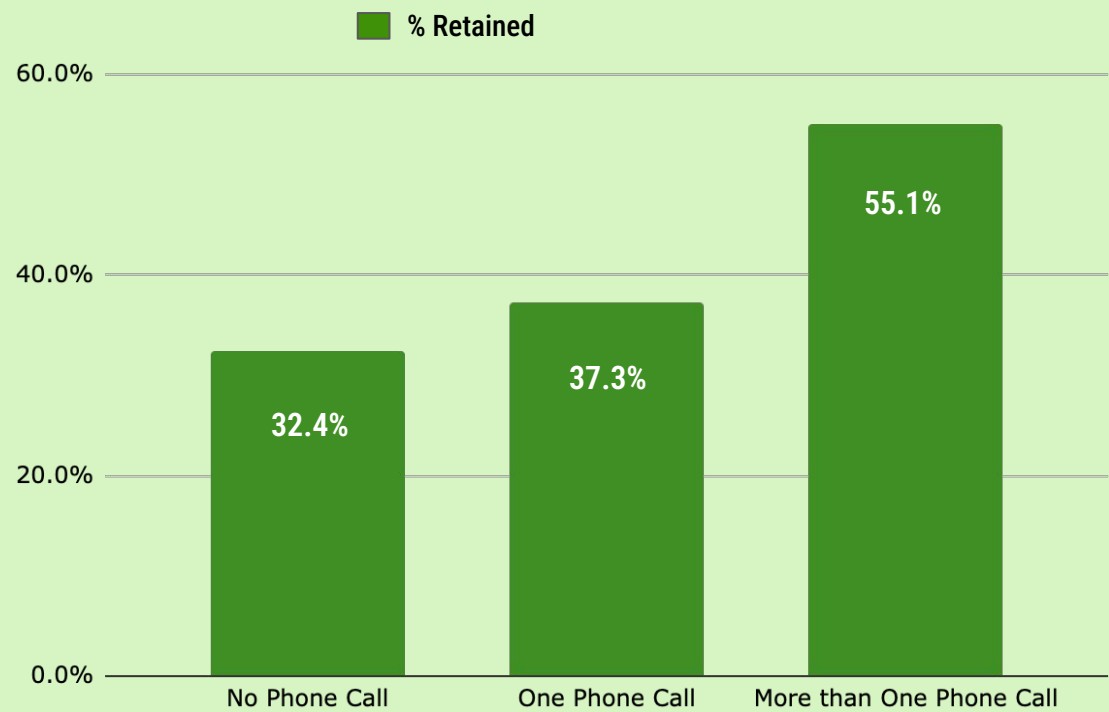
Stewardship buoyed customer growth in March & April 2020 compared to 2019

Phone Calls	Customers	%
Called	1,085	26%
Did Not Call	3,015	74%
Personal Emails	Customers	%
Emailed	2,360	58%
Did Not Email	1,740	42%
In-Person	Customers	%
Interacted	729	18%
Did Not Call	3,371	82%



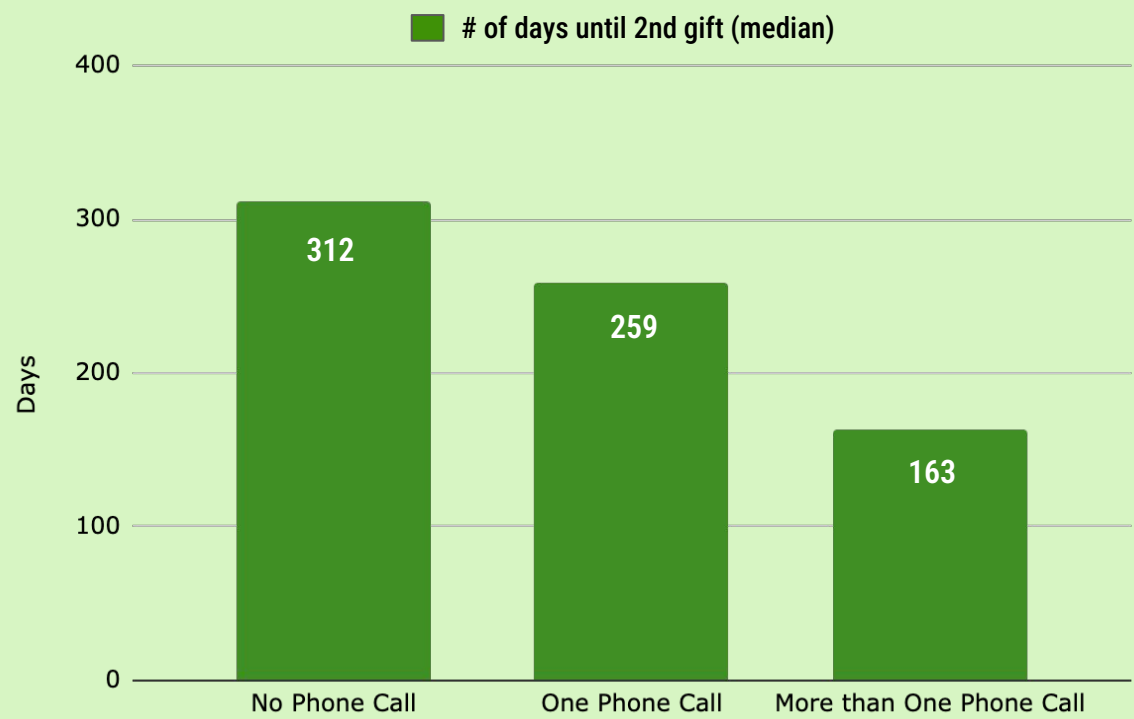
Phone Calls to First-time Donors

Increases retention



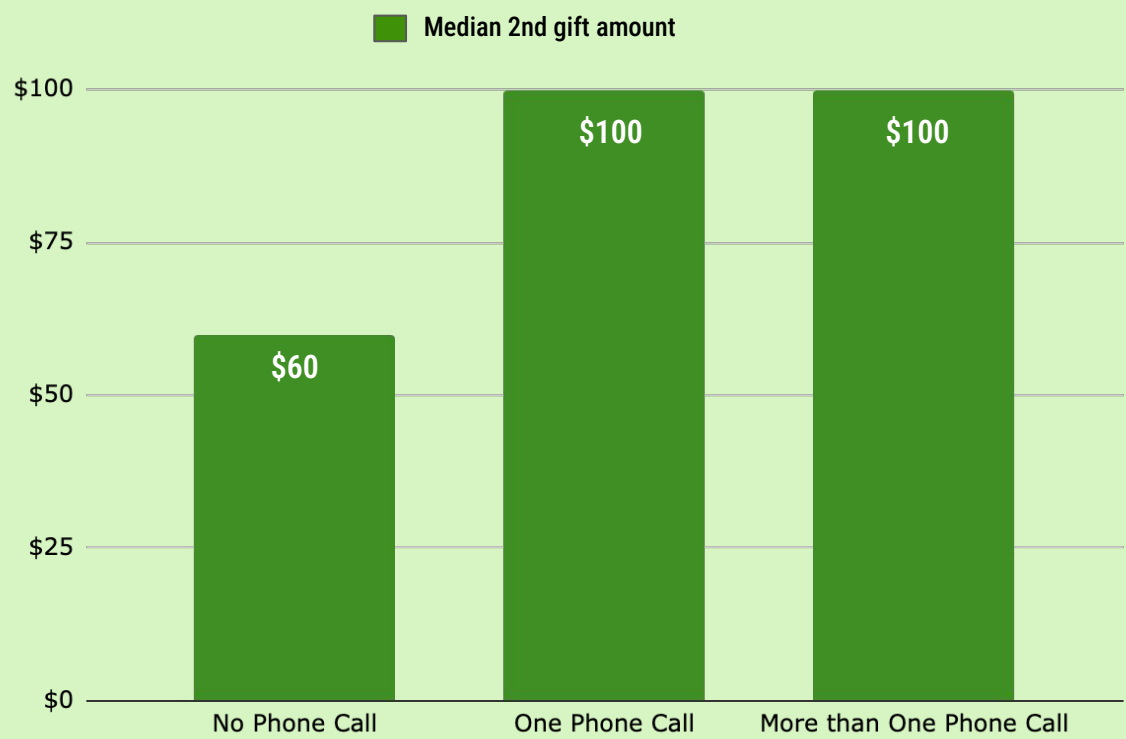
Phone Calls to First-time Donors

Increases speed-to-second-gift



Phone Calls to First-time Donors

Increases second gift amount



Key **TAKEAWAYS**



SEGMENTATION

Develop messaging segments, and personalize outreach.



IMPACT

Share consistent and compelling impact updates—show AND tell.



MONTHLY GIVING

Lean into promoting monthly giving programs.



THANK YOU

Prioritize the human connection—let your donors know how valued they are!

Q&A

GIVEcon

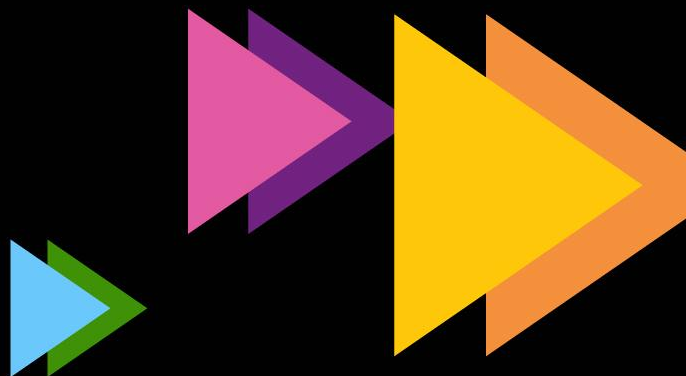
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