2025 Donor Experience Scorecard

An examination of how organizations welcome and communicate with new donors following their first online gift to lay a foundation for long-term support.

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Overview

In the wake of COVID-19, nonprofits have had to navigate an ever-shifting landscape—adapting to economic uncertainty, political changes, and technological advancements while responding to crises in their communities and around the world. Through it all, one thing remains clear: a strong foundation of individual donor support is essential for long-term stability and growth.

Three years ago, we launched the **Donor Experience Scorecard** to explore how innovative nonprofits are building meaningful connections with their donors. Year after year, our research has revealed a simple truth: every organization, no matter its size or longevity, has opportunities to improve. In an environment that continues to evolve at breakneck speed, learning from each other and refining our approach to donor engagement has never been more important.

This study focuses on a critical period in the donor journey—the first days, weeks, and months after someone gives a donation for the first time. It's

a time when these new donors are still getting to know an organization, weighing its impact, and deciding whether to stay involved. Thoughtful, timely communication during this time doesn't just express gratitude; it deepens trust, reinforces mission alignment, and lays the groundwork for a lasting partnership.
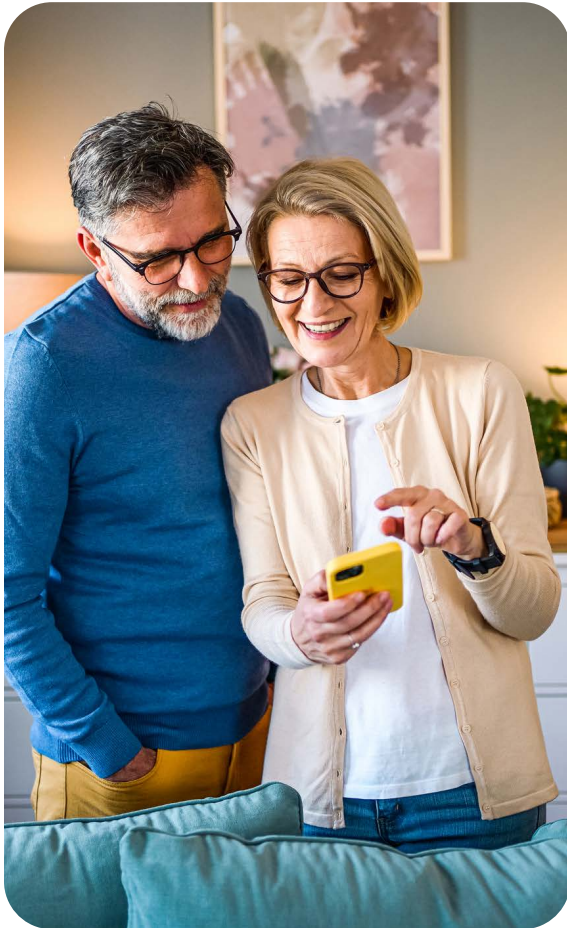
Retaining donors is far more cost-effective than acquiring new ones, yet many organizations miss key opportunities in nurturing these early relationships. As we analyzed how more than 100 nonprofits engage with new online donors—examining the content, frequency, and strategies behind their post-gift communications, we identified trends, strengths, and areas for growth. We present the **2025 Donor Experience Scorecard** to provide insights that can help organizations strengthen donor relationships and build sustainable support for the future.

About the Study

As we look ahead, one thing is clear: donor communication preferences are constantly evolving. While some donors still appreciate traditional touchpoints like direct response mail or phone calls, many now prefer digital channels—email, social media, or even direct engagement through your nonprofit's website. To effectively connect with donors, organizations must embrace an omnichannel approach—one that seamlessly integrates multiple platforms to create a cohesive and engaging donor experience.

Done well, omnichannel fundraising isn't just about being present on multiple channels; it's about reaching the right donors at the right time with the right message. Whether through email, social media, direct mail, phone calls, or text messages, the goal is to ensure donors feel valued, informed, and connected at every step of their journey.

On the technical side, omnichannel fundraising involves integrating systems, fine-tuning messaging, and optimizing timing to create a streamlined experience. But beyond the mechanics, the heart of this approach is about deepening relationships. When donors feel genuinely supported and engaged, they don't just give—they become long-term advocates for your mission.

With the ongoing emergence of new communication channels, nonprofits must remain agile, refining their strategies to meet donors where they are. That's why Douglas Shaw & Associates launched the **Donor Experience Scorecard**, a research study designed to assess how nonprofits are adapting to these shifts in donor engagement.

For this study, we tracked the communication strategies of over 100 nonprofit organizations—including rescue missions, food banks, international outreaches, and more—during November and December 2024. After making first-time donations at the end of October, we analyzed every touchpoint that followed—evaluating the channels used, the timing of outreach, the messaging itself, and how well these communication methods aligned with best practices. We compared our findings with insights from our previous studies—along with industry standards[1]—and our own client experiences to highlight what's working and where organizations can improve.

The **Donor Experience Scorecard** offers valuable insights into how nonprofits connect with new donors after their first gift. These findings can help your organization refine your communication strategies, enhance donor engagement, and ultimately secure that second gift to strengthen fundraising outcomes in the year ahead.

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[1]M+R Benchmark Report

Donor Journey: The Beginning

For an online donor, the journey begins the moment they arrive on your nonprofit's website. In today's digital world, your website is more than a source of information—it's the hub of your donor acquisition and marketing efforts. Whether a potential donor finds you through social media, an email, or an internet search, their experience on your site can determine if they follow through with a donation or walk away.

Yet, too many nonprofit websites unintentionally make giving difficult. Confusing layouts, slow loading times, and unclear messaging create barriers that turn potential donors away. Fixing these issues isn't just about improving design—it's about making sure people who want to support your cause can do so without frustration.

There are several key questions that your website needs to answer clearly and quickly to help reduce friction—things that cause a donor to hesitate or decide not to give. These questions can include:

1

Why should I give?

People want to know what your organization stands for and how their money will make an impact. Your website should clearly and concisely explain your mission with real-world examples of the differences donations make.

2

How will my donation make a difference?

Donors want transparency. Will their gift help provide meals, fund medical research, or support educational programs? Clearly showing where donations go builds trust and confidence.

3

Is my donation secure?

With online scams on the rise, people are cautious about sharing financial information. Your website should reassure donors by explaining how their transactions are protected—whether through encryption, secure payment processors, or other safety measures.

4

How easy is it to donate?

If giving is complicated, many people won't follow through. Your donation page should be simple and quick to use, requiring only the necessary fields for the donor to fill in, including name and pertinent contact information for future communications. Providing multiple payment options—like credit cards, PayPal, and Apple Pay—also makes the process more convenient.

Our report examines several key metrics to assess how well organizations are performing. This analysis helps determine if their websites and donation forms are effectively meeting donors' needs and encouraging them to contribute.

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FUNDRAISING COUNSEL

Website Speed

When someone clicks on your website, they form an opinion about your organization within seconds. If your site takes too long to load, visitors may assume it's outdated or unprofessional. Slow page load speeds can give the impression that your nonprofit is not tech-savvy or organized, hurting your credibility and trustworthiness. These are key factors in the decision-making process for a potential donor.

Studies show that most online users expect a website to load within 3 seconds. After that, the likelihood of them leaving the site increases exponentially. If your donation page takes too long to load, you risk losing a potential donor before they even have the chance to engage. For every second of delay, conversion rates (i.e., donations) drop, and abandoned donation forms increase.

A growing number of donors are engaging with websites via mobile devices— on average, 52% of nonprofit website traffic[2] came from mobile devices in 2024. Mobile users are particularly sensitive to slow load times when Wi-Fi is not available, as data usage on mobile networks tends to be less reliable. A slow mobile experience can be a deal-breaker for a potential donor, especially if your donation form is difficult to navigate or takes too long to load.

Search engines such as Google and Bing also consider website speed as part of their ranking algorithms. If your website loads slowly, it may not rank as well in search results. Search engine visibility is crucial for new donor acquisition. Therefore, optimizing your website speed can improve both user experience and visibility and drive more traffic to your donation page.

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[2] M+R Benchmark Report

For the **Donor Experience Scorecard**, we used a metric called "Largest Contentful Paint" (LCP) to measure site speed. LCP starts tracking page load speed as soon as the user begins loading the page and stops when the largest visible element on the screen has fully loaded. We chose this metric because donors often perceive a page as fully loaded once a major section of content appears on their screen. **Google recommends an LCP of 2.5 seconds or less, as studies show that for every additional second of load time, conversion rates can drop by up to 55%![3]**

For the 100 organizations surveyed in 2024, the average desktop page load speed was 3.5 seconds. This is down a whole second from last year's speed of 4.5 seconds. Although this is still slower than the goal of 2.5 seconds, as long as the page load speed is below 5 seconds, it still is considered good.

Mobile devices were drastically different. Most organizations saw an increase in page load speed on mobile devices, with an average score of 17.02 seconds. This is up more than a second from last year's page load speed of 15.91 seconds. This rise underscores the vigilance required to stay on top of page load speed for mobile devices. It doesn't take a lot to disrupt a mobile page load speed since the signal isn't quite as fast for most mobile users.

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[3]**Conversion rate** is the rate of completion of a financial transaction on a website.

As we saw last year, this is still an area that could use optimization. If you're looking to improve your page load speed, the first step is to test. We recommend starting with a tool like Google Pagespeed Insights or Pingdom. If you do need to make improvements, step one for most organizations is optimizing images. A site built on a good foundation often slows down as organizations add images that are not optimized, dramatically affecting the overall page load speeds of the website.

If your site is significantly off on site speed then it may be time to consider a website rebuild project. Typically, organizations need a new website every 3-7 years depending on their technology requirements. Technology continues to change rapidly, and after a few years your site is likely running on old technology that cannot move as fast as more modern solutions.

Mobile and Desktop Loading Speeds among Organizations

	Rescue Missions	Food Banks	Other	Optimal
Mobile <2.5 seconds	4%	0%	0%	
Mobile >2.5 seconds	96%	100%	100%	2.5 seconds or less
Desktop <2.5 seconds	51%	54%	76%	
Desktop >2.5 seconds	49%	39%	24%	

Domain Consistency

Hosting your donation page on the same domain as your website generally leads to a more trustworthy, seamless, and branded experience. It enhances user confidence, improves tracking and search engine optimization (SEO), and ensures that your nonprofit's online presence remains unified and professional. If you do choose an external service to host your donation page, make sure that it integrates well with your site and maintains a consistent look and feel.

Differences in the types of domains

Same domain ➡ www.orgname.org ✓
Subdomain ➡ donate.orgname.org ✓
Different domain ➡ secure2.convio.net ✗

Domain Consistency Among Organizations

	Rescue Missions	Food Banks	Other	Optimal
Same Domain	88%	93%	96%	Same domain
Different Domain	12%	7%	4%	

Consistency is key!

Donors want to know you are who you say you are and that their money is going to the right organization. You can reassure them with consistency across your domains.

Payment Options

Today's donors expect fast, seamless, and secure transactions. Traditional credit card forms, with their multiple fields and manual entry, can be a hurdle—especially for donors giving on mobile devices. Digital wallets—like Apple Pay and Google Wallet—allow supporters to donate in just a few taps, removing friction and making spontaneous giving easier. Here's why they're important:

1
Convenience and Speed

Apple Pay, Google Wallet, and other digital payment methods eliminate extra steps in the donation process. Instead of manually entering card details, donors can complete their gift using biometric authentication (such as Face ID or a fingerprint) or a simple tap. This makes giving easier, saves time, and increases the likelihood that donors will follow through with their gift rather than abandoning the form.

2
Appealing to Younger Donors

Mobile payment methods are particularly popular among younger generations, such as Millennials and Gen Z, who are accustomed to digital wallets and expect quick, hassle-free transactions. While these donors may currently make up a smaller portion of most nonprofit donor bases, their influence is growing. Ensuring that your nonprofit is ready to meet their preferences can make it easier to engage them now and in the future.

3

Enhanced Security

One of the biggest concerns donors have when giving online is security. Apple Pay and Google Wallet offer built-in protections through **tokenization**, a process that replaces credit card numbers with unique, encrypted tokens for each transaction. Because the actual card number is never shared with the merchant, this significantly reduces the risk of fraud. Highlighting these security measures can help reassure donors and build trust.

4

Mobile-First Donations

With mobile traffic making up an increasing share of nonprofit website visits, optimizing for mobile donations is no longer optional. Apple Pay and Google Wallet are designed for a smooth mobile experience, allowing donors to give from their smartphones without the frustration of typing in payment details on a small screen. Nonprofits that don't offer these options risk losing donors who prefer mobile-first transactions.
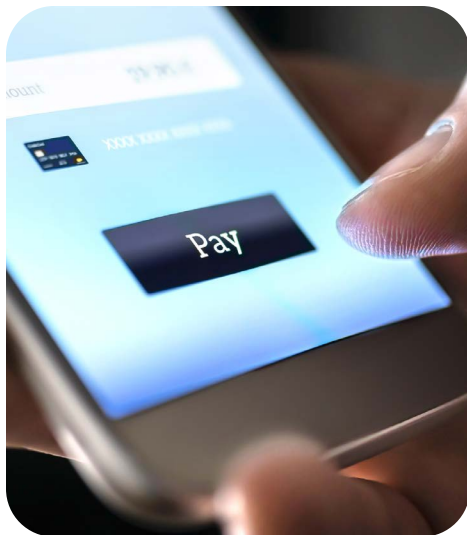
Because these payment methods are so simple and fast, they encourage spontaneous giving. Donors can contribute during a moment of inspiration without needing to dig out their credit card information or log in to a payment portal. **The less effort required to donate, the higher the likelihood that people will give, especially when they feel emotionally moved by your message.**

Payment Processing Options

	Rescue Missions	Food Banks	Other	Total 2022	Total 2023	Total 2024	Optimal
Venmo	39%	46%	32%	11%	31%	39%	In our experience, donors mostly use PayPal and Apple Pay when all options are offered on a form, so focus on adding those two options first.
Paypal	57%	71%	68%	44%	60%	64%	
Apple Pay/Google Wallet	24%	29%	36%	16%	15%	29%	
Crypto	2%	0%	0%	4%	3%	1%	

2024 was the first year we started to see a significant uptick in the number of organizations using Apple Pay or Google Wallet. The only payment method showing declining support is Crypto, which is increasingly becoming obsolete among nonprofits.

Value Proposition

A strong value proposition is essential for nonprofits—it's a clear, compelling statement that communicates the unique impact of their work, the specific problem they address, and why potential donors should get involved. The most effective value propositions highlight both the emotional and tangible benefits of giving, whether that's changing lives, advancing a mission, or creating measurable change in a community.

In the context of online giving, a good value proposition combines persuasive copy with compelling visuals to answer a fundamental question: *Why should I give—and why should I give now?* In this study, we evaluated organizations based on the strength of their donation page messaging, ranking them from those with no value proposition at all—where the page consists of just a donation form with no explanation—to those that clearly communicate the need and the impact a donor's gift will have.

Some nonprofit sectors perform better than others in this area. Food banks, in particular, ranked the lowest, with only 46% of participating organizations providing a strong value proposition on their donation forms. This isn't a reflection of the quality of their mission, but rather how effectively they communicate both the need and the donor's role at the critical moment of giving.

Minimal value proposition

Example → **Your Gift Will Transform Lives.**

This example provides a reason to give, but it's generic. Donors are left with more questions than answers: *Why should I give today instead of giving on another day? What specifically will my gift do to transform lives? Why should I give to your organization versus another one?*

Good value proposition

Example → Sleeping outside in the winter can be dangerous. As temperatures hit dangerous lows—without socks, gloves, and warm clothing—hands and feet go numb, and your entire body shakes as hypothermia sets in. Your gift of $27 today can help provide resources to keep people warm and ensure no one has to sleep on the street in this freezing weather.

This example provides donors with far more comprehensive information. With this text, donors know what they're being asked to give, what their gifts will do, and why they need to give now.

Donation Pages Including a Value Proposition

|	None	Minimal	High Quality	Optimal
Rescue Missions	10%	29%	61%	High quality value proposition that explains to a donor why they should give, and give now.
Food Banks	32%	21%	46%	
Other	16%	0%	84%	

Donor Journey: Initial Follow-Up

At this stage in the donor journey, you've cleared a major hurdle—the donor has made their first gift. But now is not the time to pause. What happens in the first 90 days is one of the strongest indicators of whether a donor will continue giving. In the digital space, where attention spans are even shorter, it's critical to start engaging with your donor immediately. A prompt acknowledgment of their gift—letting them know their receipt is coming shortly—followed by intentional and strategic welcome communications reassures donors that their gift was received, is being used as intended, and is making a real impact.

Many organizations assume that because the donation occurred online, follow-up communications should remain strictly digital. Often, this decision is made as a cost-saving measure, with the best intentions—ensuring donor funds are used efficiently. However, this approach requires caution. As of this writing, multi-channel communication remains the most effective way to engage donors. While a donor may prefer to give online, traditional channels still play a vital role in reminding and inspiring future gifts. Engaging a donor across multiple touchpoints can significantly increase their long-term value *(more on this in the findings section)*.

In the next section, we'll explore how organizations are using these critical first touchpoints to build relationships and inspire future giving—turning one-time donors into long-term champions of your mission.

Receipting

The very first communication a new donor likely receives is their giving receipt. While it can be overlooked, this piece is critical. It builds trust by confirming that the donation was received, the amount is correct, and the gift is being put to good use. More than just a transaction, a well-crafted receipt can set the tone for future communications. The best receipts express genuine gratitude, reflect the organization's voice, and arrive promptly.
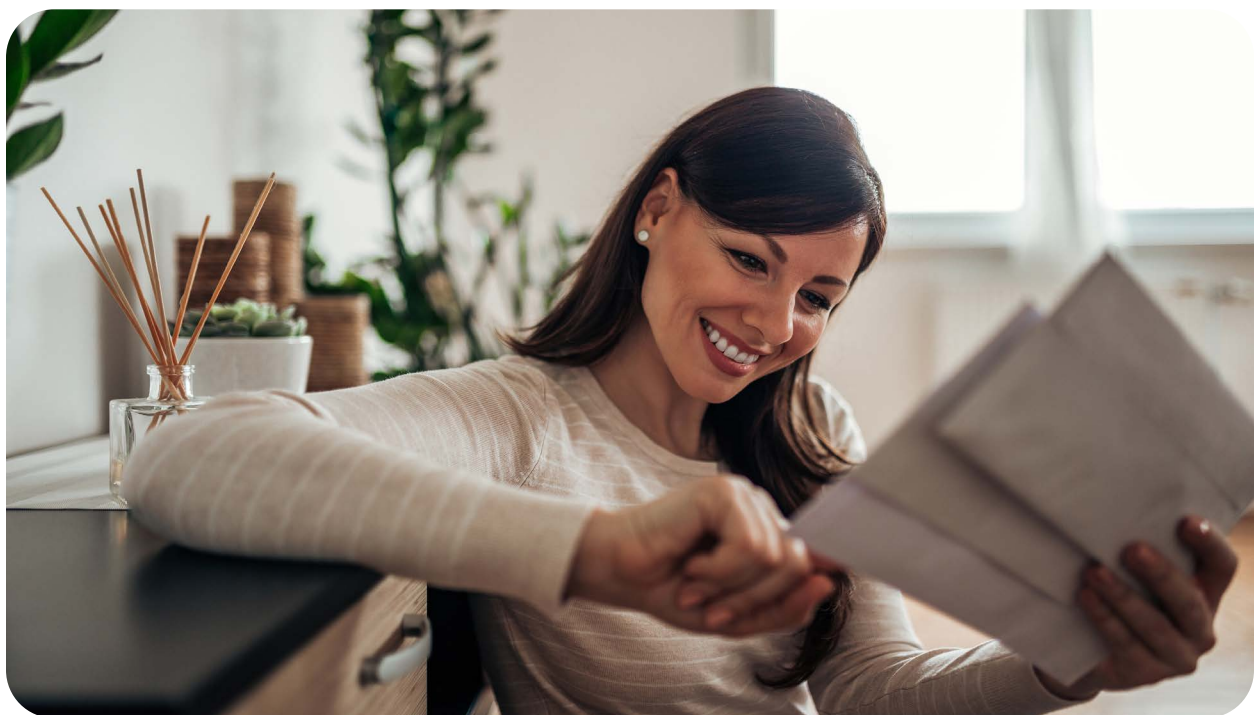
Beyond email or even a thank-you phone call, a printed receipt is essential. And while the language may mirror your digital communication, a printed receipt reinforces appreciation and strengthens donor relationships. Our expertise shows these efforts more than pay for themselves—especially when a response device is included in the mailed receipt. For phone calls, even if staff or volunteer capacity is limited, reaching out to select donors can leave a lasting impression and show that their gift was truly valued.

It's also important to distinguish between a gift acknowledgment and a gift receipt. An acknowledgment recognizes and thanks the donor for their gift, while a receipt does both and includes the necessary legal details for tax purposes. **Since your organization is only allowed to send one official receipt, we recommend mailing it while also providing an immediate digital acknowledgment.** This approach ensures donors receive quick confirmation while maintaining a multichannel touchpoint—one that can drive additional engagement and future giving.

Gift Acknowledgment: recognizes and thanks the donor for their gift

Gift Receipt: accomplishes the goal of an acknowledgement while also including the necessary legal details for tax purposes

Organizations Providing a Digital Receipt to Online Donors

	Rescue Missions	Food Banks	Other	Optimal
Received an electronic receipt	90%	100%	84%	**All organizations should provide a digital gift acknowledgement sent immediately after a gift.**

Organizations Providing a Printed Receipt to Online Donors Year Over Year

	2022	2023	2024	Optimal
Rescue Missions	67%	59%	59%	**Organizations should send a printed receipt within 24 to 48 hours after a gift.**
Food Banks	42%	15%	18%	
Other	88%	50%	48%	

It is concerning to see how many organizations forgo the printed receipt for that initial gift. This is often a missed opportunity to build a stronger, more loyal donor relationship from the outset. The small additional cost of a printed piece can yield significant returns in long-term donor value and retention.

Welcoming Your Donor

A welcome series—both online and offline—is an opportunity to go beyond the giving receipt and show donors the real impact of their gift. These touchpoints can take many forms, including newsletters, postcards, a video message from nonprofit leadership, a thank-you call from a volunteer, or a quick text with a video update on how their support is making a difference.

In this year's study, we saw welcome series that ranged from a single message to multi-week campaigns following the initial gift. There's no universal formula for the right number of touchpoints—what matters most is ensuring that donors receive a warm, meaningful connection that reinforces the impact of their generosity and strengthens their trust in your organization.

An example of a simple online welcome series in the study looked like this:
Gift → Online receipt → Welcome video email

One that was more complex looked more like this:
**Gift → Online receipt → Welcome video email → Impact story →
Survey / donor questionnaire → Evergreen appeal, a campaign with a timeless offer**

In both cases these messages were clearly labeled with a 'welcome' message or logo, answered common donor questions, or communicated about missional impact.

As a friendly reminder, make sure your organization looks at the content of your online and offline welcome series at least once a year. With how rapidly things can change in the fundraising environment and in your organization,

chances are content will need updating. It can be easy to forget this critical first impression you are making with your new donors.

Organizations That Utilize a Digital Welcome Series

	Rescue Missions	Food Banks	Other	Optimal
Digital	24%	43%	60%	Organizations should provide both digital and print welcome materials to donors.
Print	22%	7%	4%	

Organizations That Utilize a Print Welcome Series Year Over Year

	2022	2023	2024
Rescue Missions	42%	12%	22%
Food Banks	19%	0%	7%
Other	38%	0%	4%

Days Between Asking for a Second Donation

	Rescue Missions	Food Banks	Other	% Did not ask	Optimal
Digital	32.57	33.33	33.16	34%	Digitally, a second ask should arrive in the first two to three weeks after the initial gift.
Print	43	56.75	50.33	68%	Donors are most likely to give a second gift within the first 30 days. Do not be afraid to ask!

Days Before Receiving a Printed Appeal Year Over Year

	2022	2023	2024	Optimal
Rescue Missions	24.7	19.5	32.57	Ideally, you would place a new donor into the very next appeal mailing, remembering that donors are most likely to give a second gift within the first 30 days.
Food Banks	21.2	21	33.33	
Other	34.4	24	33.16	

Across all sectors, the time before organizations requested a second donation increased in 2024, with many waiting over a month before sending a digital or printed appeal. **However, we recommend reaching out for a second gift within 14 – 21 days of the initial donation**. This window is when donors still feel most connected to your organization, especially after just experiencing a welcome series that reaffirms the impact of their gift. It's an ideal time to make another ask. On the print side, we typically recommend sending an appeal within **30 days** to maintain engagement and reinforce their decision to give.

Takeaway: Many organizations have moved away from print welcome series for online donors—likely as a cost-saving measure. But **don't eliminate print communication entirely. The cost of these communications will be made up in increased donor retention**. Consider optimizing your welcome communications for both impact and cost-effectiveness. A phone call instead of a full mailing? A postcard instead of a lengthy newsletter? Thoughtful, multichannel touches help reinforce donor connection and lay the groundwork for continued support.

Donor Journey:
Additional Communications Strategies

Phone Communication

Phone and text communication can give a nonprofit a more personal and engaging approach, helping donors feel a deeper connection to the mission. A phone call or a simple text message shows that someone took the time to connect, creating an opportunity to offer a behind-the-scenes look at your organization's work.

Text messages are especially effective for quick updates, whether it's an emergency response, a critical campaign milestone, a prayer request, or another timely message. Even with limited information, a short note keeps donors informed and engaged in what's happening.

Both phone and text outreach also provide a valuable opportunity for real-time feedback. This can be a good time to ask some questions. Why did the donor give? What

Text Message Examples

Happy Thanksgiving from [organization]-we are thankful for YOU today and every day! Your support keeps pushing us all toward the day when we find a cure for childhood cancer. Wishing you a happy and healthy holiday season!
Reply STOP to Opt Out [URL]

Happy New Year from [organization]! Before the clock strikes midnight, please take a moment to give one last gift in 2024. Help provide meals and hope in the new year for neighbors facing hunger. Thank you! [URL]

inspires them most about the mission? Do they have any lingering questions? Understanding their perspective not only strengthens relationships but also helps refine your communications, ensuring a smoother donor journey from the very first interaction.

Text messages, with high open and response rates, enable nonprofits to reach donors right where they are, delivering concise and impactful messages that cut through the digital noise.

Phone calls provide a highly personal touch, allowing nonprofits to establish a direct and authentic connection with donors.

Using both text messages and phone calls creates a near instant multichannel approach because of how rarely we are without our phones. Some appreciate the quick, direct nature of a text, while others value the personal connection of a phone call. By combining both methods, nonprofits can engage donors in ways that align with their preferences, strengthening relationships and increasing effectiveness. **This thoughtful approach not only enhances the donor experience but also reinforces the organization's commitment to transparent, meaningful communication.**

Organizations Communicating with Donors by Phone

	2022	2023	2024	Optimal
Rescue Missions	27%	12%	14%	Communicate with your donors utilizing phone (either voice or text) as part of your welcome series and on an ongoing basis at key times of year.
Food Banks	46%	4%	4%	
Other	40%	0%	0%	

Organizations Using the Phone for Voice-Based Calls (Whether a Pre-Recorded or Live Call)

	2022	2023	2024	Optimal
Rescue Missions	14%	9%	12%	Use voice-based calls for thank you messages in the first few weeks after a donor's first gift.
Food Banks	4%	0%	0%	
Other	13%	0%	0%	

Organizations Using the Phone for Texting

	2024	Optimal
Rescue Missions	2%	Use texting for donors during key times of the year as well as part of your welcome process.
Food Banks	7%	
Other	0%	

In our research, phone outreach remains seriously underutilized by nonprofits, presenting a significant growth opportunity in the coming year. While setting up a phone communication strategy requires time and resources, it offers a uniquely personal way to engage donors and create a lasting emotional connection.

Text messages, in particular, have an astonishing 98% open rate—higher than any other communication channel.

Based on our experience, leveraging phone and text outreach can be a powerful driver of donor engagement and revenue growth.

Reporting Impact

Newsletters, annual reports, and impact reports play a crucial role in transforming new donors into long-term supporters. These communications go beyond a single letter or email, offering more in-depth stories of the real impact made possible by donor generosity. They also introduce donors to different facets of your organization that they might not otherwise see.

This is your opportunity to highlight events, share information about planned giving, volunteer spotlights, or mission-critical initiatives—like job training—that may not perform well in traditional direct response appeals. The best impact communications—no surprise—happen across multiple channels. This doesn't mean every donor receives every piece, but it does mean having a strategy to ensure donors have ample opportunities to see the results of their generosity. Done well, these communications strengthen emotional connections and keep your organization top of mind when donors are making future giving decisions.

This year, we've seen organizations actively testing different types, frequencies, and formats of impact reporting. Some find success with a newsletter email featuring three to five program updates, while others see better engagement through a series of emails, each focused on a single story. Online, video-based content performs especially well—if you can feature a recipient sharing their story firsthand, it's a powerful way to connect. On the print side, some organizations thrive with four-page newsletters, while others find six- or eight-page versions drive the best response. Finding the right approach for your organization requires testing, but ongoing optimization will help you maximize impact while managing costs.

Organizations Sending a Newsletter, Annual Report, or Impact Report Message Online

	2022	2023	2024	Optimal
Rescue Missions	22%	32%	27%	Organizations should send a newsletter or impact report within the first 2-3 weeks after an online donation.
Food Banks	46%	30%	32%	
Other	40%	43%	44%	

Organizations Sending a Newsletter, Annual Report, or Impact Report Message Through Print

	2024	Optimal
Rescue Missions	20%	Every organization should be sending newsletters, annual reports, or impact reports as a regular part of your communications.
Food Banks	7%	
Other	0%	

Days Before Sending a Newsletter, Annual Report, or Impact Report

	Rescue Missions	Food Banks	Other	% Did not send	Optimal
Digital	35	30	32	68%	Digitally, the first story of impact should go to a donor in the first week after their donation. After that, newsletters or impact reports are great to send out on a monthly basis.
Print	39	47	46	87%	It is important to send an impact report within 90 days after a donor's first gift. This could be a part of a welcome series or a stand-alone mailing.

Findings

This year, after a comprehensive analysis of the donor journey—encompassing messaging, methods, and frequency across multiple channels—we prepared this report. Our hope is that this will illuminate clear opportunities your organization can implement that refine your approach, strengthen donor connections, and enhance engagement.

A prevalent theme we've heard from nonprofit leaders is the imperative to manage costs while optimizing communications, particularly in print. Many are understandably asking whether it's feasible and effective to engage online donors exclusively through digital channels, thereby avoiding print expenditures.

If your organization is grappling with this question, you are in good company—and it's a prudent inquiry as you strive to steward donor funds with utmost care. However, **when we meticulously examine donor performance across the organizations we serve, one insight remains consistently clear: long-term donor value is significantly higher among those engaged across multiple channels. In fact, for our clients, omnichannel donors demonstrate a remarkable 52.1% greater value than those reached through a single channel.**

Measuring the Impact of Omnichannel on Donor Value

Channel	Revenue per Donor
Online	$208.81
Offline	$320.78
Both	$805.38

That said, strategic optimization is key. Our data team is actively analyzing donor behavior to determine with greater precision **which donors benefit most from print messages to drive a response and which donors are genuinely digital-first and should primarily be engaged online**. While this advanced modeling is complex, its value lies in striking an effective balance—reducing costs while ensuring the right donors receive the right message at the right time through the most impactful channel.

As you refine your strategy, we strongly encourage you to maintain a diverse communication portfolio. Donors are individuals, and their preferences are nuanced. Some engage more readily with print, while others prefer digital interactions, and many respond to a blend of touchpoints. The pathway to success involves consistent testing, iteration, and measurement—continuously optimizing to drive deeper engagement and foster stronger giving behavior.

Looking at this year's data:

42% of organizations sent no mail whatsoever to their online donors.	Only **14%** implemented a **printed welcome series**.	Just **22%** sent a **mailed appeal**.

While these figures represent an increase from 2023, they still underscore that a significant number of organizations are potentially missing vital opportunities to connect with donors across multiple channels.

Only **11% of organizations leveraged the power of phone or text**. This is the untapped goldmine of fundraising. Text messaging, in particular, delivers email-like results *without* cannibalizing other channels. It doesn't steal from your existing efforts; it amplifies them, lifting your entire program.

With economic shifts and funding uncertainty, now is not the time to scale back your direct response fundraising communication! The investments you make today to grow and engage a broad donor base can fortify your financial foundation for years to come.

Ultimately, the power of omnichannel fundraising isn't just about sending more messages—it's about **building donor connections, demonstrating impact, and inspiring deeper donor involvement**. Each channel offers a unique way to tell your story:

Email allows for frequent storytelling, program highlights, and behind-the-scenes content.

Print delivers deeper engagement, longer-form storytelling, and tangible impact.

Phone and text create highly personal touchpoints that make donors feel valued.

When used strategically, these touchpoints don't compete with one another—they **reinforce and amplify engagement, driving stronger donor response and higher fundraising revenue**.

Conclusion

At Douglas Shaw & Associates, we know that donors give because they genuinely want to make a difference. Their ongoing generosity—despite rising costs—demonstrates their deep commitment to creating change alongside organizations like yours.

Your work is essential, meeting critical needs both locally and globally. By engaging donors through multiple channels and meaningful communication, you have the opportunity to build lasting relationships, demonstrate real impact, and invite donors to be an active part of life-changing transformation.

To make the most of these opportunities, it's important to craft a message that reflects your organization's unique voice. Use powerful imagery, share inspiring stories of lives changed, and stay adaptable as the fundraising landscape evolves.

We hope these insights help as you connect with donors who are passionate about your mission. And as you explore new ways to engage and grow, **Douglas Shaw & Associates is here to help.** If you're looking for a fundraising partner who listens, collaborates, and delivers real results, we'd love to connect. Let's talk: douglasshaw.com/contact.

If you would like to have your organization included in future research projects, please email us at: **info@douglasshaw.com**

About Us

Douglas Shaw & Associates is a team of dedicated direct response fundraising professionals who want to help organizations like yours be a part of what's right with the world.

Serving nonprofits for 30 years with robust data and analytics, compelling creative, disciplined execution, and an innovative team—we help identify, attract, and retain donors to support the important work you do, allowing you to fulfill your mission.

Through collaborative consulting, we craft a comprehensive strategic fundraising communication plan that focuses on inspiring donors to be a part of the good your organization is doing. Our omnichannel fundraising strategies are created and executed just for you, utilizing a custom mix of print, online, and media channels for donor acquisition, retention, and reactivation of your individual donors.

If you are looking for a fundraising partner who listens, walks with you, and delivers results, contact us today.

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