E-book

Data-driven storytelling

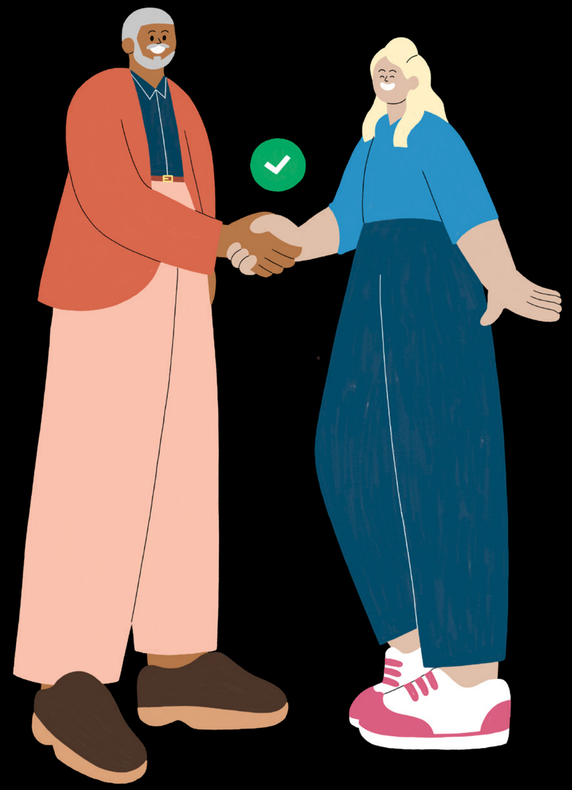
How to inspire nonprofit stakeholders



Sage

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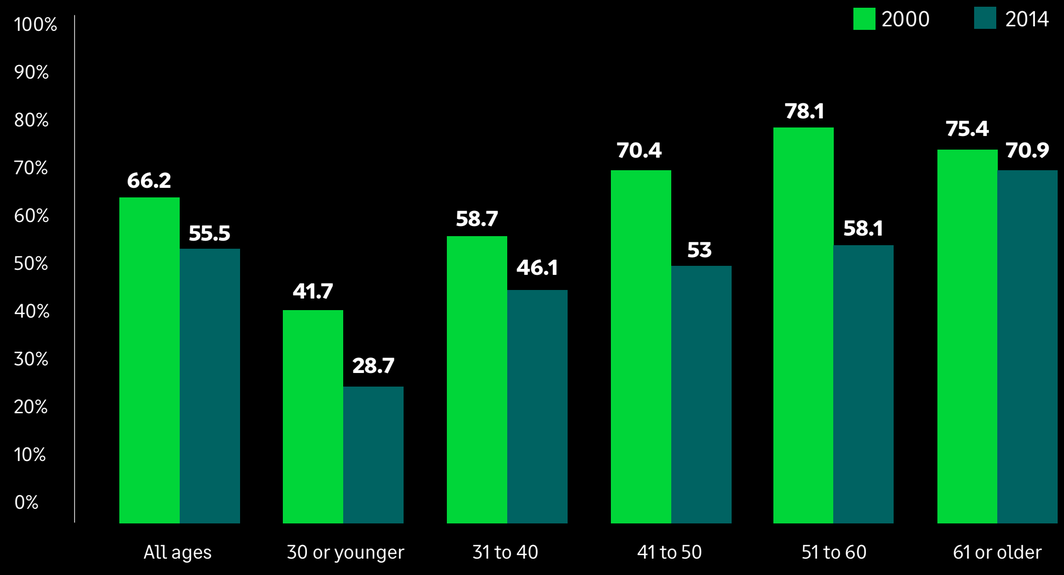


Strengthening donor relationships for greater mission impact

Nurturing strong donor relationships is more important than ever. With fewer individuals donating, nonprofits must deepen their connections with existing donors to remain a top philanthropic priority. By sharing real-time insights into your organization's impact, you can keep your cause front and center in your donors mind when it comes to giving.

Instead of focusing solely on financials, demonstrate how donor contributions directly support mission growth. Use technology to show how every dollar fuels programs and initiatives that make a difference, ensuring your donors feel more engaged and connected to the mission they are supporting.

Household percentage of giving has decreased in each age group



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Becoming a data-driven mission leader

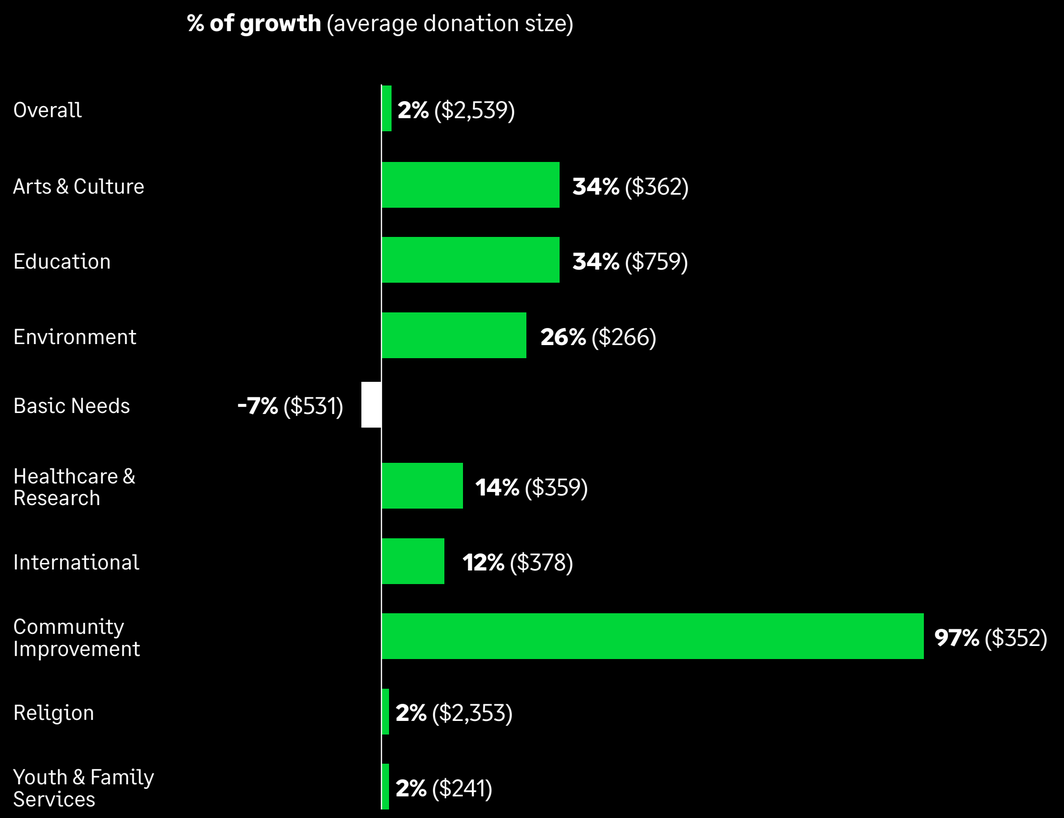
While the number of donors may be shrinking, their giving has increased, which makes it critical to focus on key relationships.

To achieve mission growth, financial leaders must become data-driven mission leaders.

Charities should create specific, measurable objectives around key donor engagement to ensure they remain in the top three philanthropic priorities of their donors.[1]

With the right tools to deliver real-time insights and automate routine tasks, nonprofit finance leaders can move beyond operational details and focus on strategic decisions that fuel mission impact. By freeing up time previously spent on manual reporting and complex financial tasks, you can make smarter decisions that drive long-term organizational success and amplify their mission.

Those donating are giving more, as average donation size has increased since 2002[2]



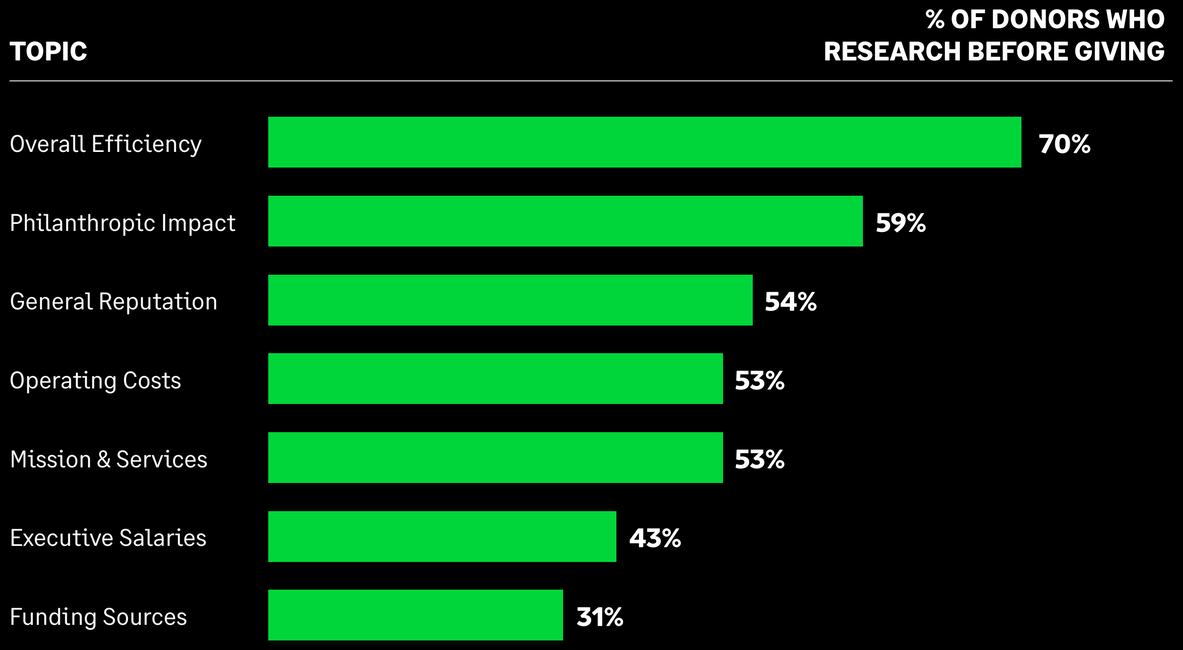
Campbell Group, "2020 Fundraising Trends: The Forecast from Our Executive Team," January 27, 2020.
A Guide to Philanthropy in the U.S. 8th Edition, 2019 CCS Fundraising.

Earn donor trust by demonstrating mission impact

It takes more transparency and better communication to earn a donor's trust.

In today's digital age, transparency is everything. Donors want to know exactly how their contributions drive meaningful change and that their support is being used effectively. To build that trust, nonprofit finance leaders must do more than just ensure financial stewardship—they need to tell a story of impact. By utilizing tools that provide real-time insights into how funds are allocated and the results they generate, nonprofits can create compelling narratives that illustrate their mission's operational efficiency, and the amazing results driven by their work and donations. When donors can see the tangible outcomes of their contributions, it builds stronger relationships and ensures ongoing support.

Prior to making contributions, donors consider the following factors:



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Personalize your mission story to the right audience

Two generations make roughly two-thirds of donations.

Each generation interacts with nonprofits differently, and understanding these differences is key to crafting effective outreach strategies. For example, Baby Boomers may prioritize financial transparency, while Millennials seek nonprofits with a strong digital presence and a values-driven mission.

With data insights, nonprofits can refine messaging to resonate with various donor groups. Tailoring communications based on real-time information allows organizations to align their storytelling to what matters most to each generation, increasing engagement and support.

	% that give	Number of donors	Average giving per person	Average number of charities	Total giving
Silent Generation	78%	23.5M	$1,235	6.3	$29.0B
Baby Boomers	75%	55.3M	$1,061	4.2	$58.6B
Generation X	55%	35.8M	$921	3.8	$32.9B
Millennials	51%	34.1M	$591	3.5	$20.1B
Generation Z	44%	9.3M	$341	4.6	$3.2B

Nearly 2 in 3 charitable dollars came from Baby Boomers and Generation X.

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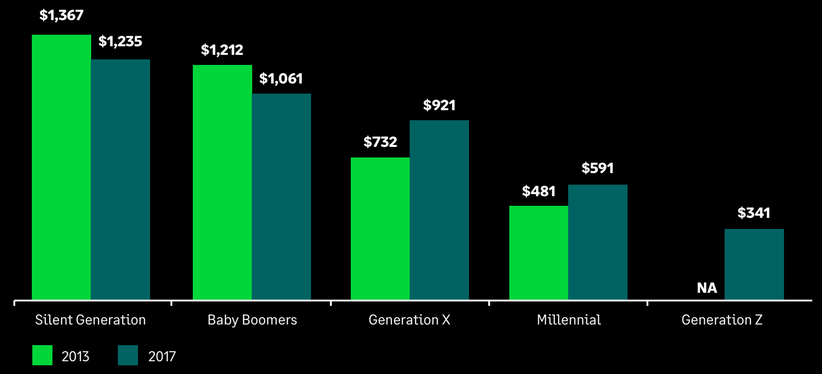
Activate your mission story on the appropriate platforms

Just as important as the story you tell, is where you tell it. The Silent Generation won't respond to the same messages or channels as Millennials or Generation Z, and failing to tailor your outreach means time and money that could have been invested in the mission is lost.

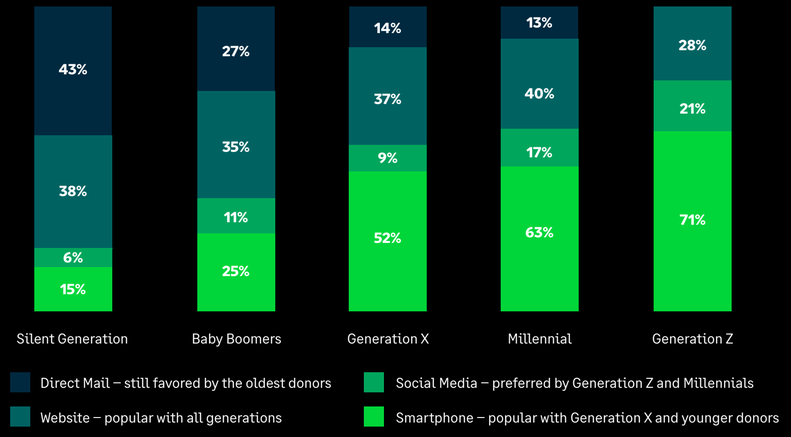
To maximize your impact, it's crucial to map your communication styles to each generation. The Silent Generation still appreciates direct mail, while Millennials and Generation Z are far more engaged through social media and mobile campaigns. Websites remain a key touchpoint across all age groups and should serve as a cornerstone of your strategy.

Investing in a thoughtful, targeted approach not only ensures you reach your audience effectively but also prevents wasted resources, allowing you to focus more on driving your mission forward.

Generation X is gaining on Baby Boomers in average annual donations



How they gave in 2017



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What donors want (and don’t want) from nonprofits

Two recent surveys of donors reveal exactly what they expect from nonprofits in terms of fundraising and donor care.

Donors want to know that their **hard-earned dollars** are used efficiently and effectively. This includes both financial accountability and clear communication about the charity’s mission and results.

Donors want nonprofit organizations to:

- ✔ Thank donors by email
- ✔ Accept credit card payments
- ✔ Make a compelling case of extraordinary need
- ✔ Reduce overhead costs
- ✔ Offer matching gifts
- ✔ Not send an excessive number of appeals

Stop sending small gifts

- x Donors want nonprofits to stop sending unwanted trinkets
- x Donors are NOT any more likely to give after receiving a gift
- x Donors view these trinket gifts as a waste of money

Nonprofit Tech for Good, “Global Trends in Giving Report,” 2018.
A Guide to Philanthropy in the U.S. 8th Edition, 2019 CCS Fundraising

Storytelling best practice #1

Connect emotionally and inspire donor connection by highlighting mission impact

In this dynamic giving environment, it's vital to build and share your organization's most powerful story. Share your vision, and make an impact within the first second of someone being exposed to your nonprofit brand.



The most powerful way to connect with donors is through storytelling that highlights the impact of your mission. By sharing compelling visuals and narratives that show how contributions directly support your cause, you create an emotional connection with your audience. Combining these stories with data-backed evidence of success strengthens your message, making it both inspiring and credible.

Whether it's through your website, social media, or other communication channels, your storytelling should draw donors into a deeper connection with your mission, ensuring they feel valued and motivated to continue their support.

Storytelling best practice #2

The mission is the message, make it unforgettable

Your website and donor communications should reflect your brand.

Your brand is more than just a name or logo—it's the heart of your nonprofit's story. When your brand resonates, donors don't just remember who you are—they understand why your mission matters. Every interaction, from your website to social media, should consistently reflect your values and reinforce your purpose, creating deeper connections with those who support you.

When your brand is shared effectively, it builds trust, fosters lasting relationships, and keeps donors engaged in a meaningful way.



Storytelling best practice #3

Invite donors to be part of your mission's growth

Donors need to connect with your story and understand your impact.

Your nonprofit's story isn't just something you tell—it's something you invite people to be part of. Every touchpoint, whether it's your website, email, or social media, should draw donors into a deeper connection with your mission, making them feel like they're contributing to something meaningful and urgent.

By combining compelling visuals, clear metrics, and an invitation to act, your story becomes not just an explanation but an inspiration for donors to invest in your mission.



Storytelling best practice #4

Reduce friction to accelerate donor growth



Your website, social media, and development campaigns should make it easy to give.

As you share your story with the community, make it effortless for your audience to join your movement. You've invested time in crafting a compelling narrative—don't let unnecessary barriers prevent people from taking action. To grow your donor base, it's crucial to make giving as easy and accessible as possible.

Most importantly, begin by ensuring your website and donation forms are mobile-friendly so prospective donors can quickly learn more and contribute.

Streamline their journey from interest to action by removing any friction in the process.

Leverage social media to expand your reach. Plan and schedule posts with engaging visuals and relevant hashtags to increase visibility. Use interactive content like polls or requests for donors to share their own stories to foster engagement and drive traffic back to your website. When you remove friction and make it easy for donors to connect and give, your impact will grow.

Strengthening your story

Transparency: the key to building trust and accelerating impact



The top question on most donors' minds is simple: how much of my money will go directly to programs? If they can't see that their contributions are making the most impact, they may choose to give elsewhere. Donors today expect more than just transparency in spending—they want proof that their money is making a real difference. By tracking and reporting key metrics, such as the cost per meal served or the number of patients treated, you can show exactly how donor support translates into meaningful outcomes.

Sharing these insights isn't just about providing data—it's about building trust and creating lasting relationships. This level of transparency reassures donors that their generosity is driving tangible impact, encouraging them to stay involved. The more clearly you communicate your organization's effectiveness, the more support you'll attract, helping your mission grow and thrive.

Strengthening your story

Turn data into a compelling narrative to demonstrate measurable impact



No matter what your mission is, metrics are the key to showing impact and ensuring accountability. By identifying the data points that reflect your organization's effectiveness, you can weave them into your story to showcase the results. Metrics provide transparency, build trust with donors, and help demonstrate how resources are being used to drive mission success.

By making performance measurement part of your culture, you create a transparent organization where your communications team can continuously refine your story, proving its value and providing the accountability and impact donors expect.

Define your mission and link it to a meaningful metric. Some examples could be:

- **Meals served:** Cost per meal served
- **Patients seen:** Cost per patient seen per practice area
- **Reading levels achieved:** Cost per reading level achieved per child
- **Animals adopted:** Cost per animal per day

Demonstrating impact

How Sage Intacct catalyzed NATCO's success



Sage Intacct is dedicated to helping nonprofits like the North American Transplant Coordinators Organization (NATCO) achieve their mission through the power of data. But we don't stop at simply providing the tools—at Sage Intacct, we enable you to effectively show the impact of the amazing work your business is doing. When NATCO partnered with us, we helped them track key metrics, like the number of transplants coordinated and patient outcomes, and used that data to tell their story.

Through our own internal reporting and data visualization capabilities, we were able to illustrate how NATCO's use of Sage Intacct streamlined their financial processes, and more importantly, improved their ability to serve patients.

By turning those metrics into compelling visual stories—such as real-time dashboards and clear, impactful charts—we highlighted the full scope of NATCO's success. These visualizations didn't just communicate data; they told the story of how our platform made a tangible difference in advancing NATCO's mission.

Demonstrating impact

Using Sage Intacct to visualize success for Room to Read

Room to Read, a global nonprofit focused on literacy and gender equality, utilized Sage Intacct's cloud accounting software to turn data into a powerful narrative. By using the platform to track key performance metrics—such as the number of children reached and improvements in reading levels—they created visual stories that made their impact easy to understand and engaging for donors.



Demonstrating impact

Transform your mission's growth with real-time data

Sage Intacct helps nonprofits and faith-based organizations track all the data and metrics that matter most, from financial performance to outcomes and impact.

Role-based dashboards provide supporters throughout the organization with access to key performance indicators, outcome metrics, and scorecards that are relevant to their programs and responsibilities.

Metrics that matter

Having real-time data and metrics at your fingertips makes it easier to present a compelling story to your donors.

Conclusion

Your mission is the hero: storytelling drives impact

Your mission is at the heart of everything you do, but without sharing your success, donors may not see the full impact. Transparency, data, and storytelling are essential to connecting with supporters. By sharing clear, measurable outcomes, you prove the value of their contributions and inspire continued engagement.

Data-backed stories build trust and fuel growth—whether showing lives changed or communities strengthened. Visualizing your impact through transparent reporting helps donors feel connected to your mission and invested in its success.

Equip your organization with the tools—from donor management systems to cloud accounting solutions—to streamline financial tracking and clearly show efficiency, outcomes, and the value of your mission.



About
Sage Intacct

Sage delivers market-leading cloud financial management software that helps nonprofits knock down barriers and expand their impact. Trusted by thousands of nonprofits as the preferred financial application—Sage Intacct streamlines fund, grant, and project accounting while delivering real-time visibility into the metrics that matter.

Customers leverage our modern integration tools and visual insights to connect their systems, make better decisions, and automate routine tasks. At Sage, we understand the unique needs of nonprofits to help them grow—which is why we're #1 in customer satisfaction on G2.





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