

The Secret to Getting People to Give: 15 Reasons Why People Donate

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News flash: People have things to do other than care about your cause. You're not always competing with another nonprofit whose mission is similar to yours; you're also duking it out with soccer practice, a burgeoning Netflix queue and that all-inviting couch beckoning your supporters to take a load off.

We want to get back to basics and remind you why people convert from supporter (or even skeptic) to donor:

1. Someone I know asked me to give, and I wanted to help them
2. I felt emotionally moved by someone's story
3. I want to feel I'm not powerless in the face of need and can help (this is especially true during disasters)
4. I want to feel I'm changing someone's life
5. I feel a sense of closeness to a community or group
6. I need a tax deduction
7. I want to memorialize someone (who is struggling or died of a disease, for example)
8. I was raised to give to charity—it's tradition in my family
9. I want to be "hip," and supporting this charity (i.e., wearing a yellow wrist band) is in style
10. It makes me feel connected to other people and builds my social network
11. I want to have a good image for myself/my company
12. I want to leave a legacy that perpetuates me, my ideals or my cause
13. I feel fortunate (or guilty) and want to give something back to others
14. I give for religious reasons—God wants me to share my affluence
15. I want to be seen as a leader/role model

Remember:

- **People act from the heart, not the head.** Yes, your nonprofit has to show that it's a good steward of donor money and you need to impart where all that generosity is going, but your appeal must contain more than numbers and pie charts.
- **Giving is a personal act.** Notice any common thread in the list of 15? They all contain the pronoun "I." The people you serve are important, but make sure to put the "you" and "your" (i.e. the donor and why s/he should care) front and center. Learn more about crafting your call-to-action and writing personal emails.
- **The act of giving is immediate.** Give your donors the opportunity to act here and now. Your relationship with them will be long-term, but their willingness to give is now—let them act on it.