

INDIANAPOLIS – Although we often associate people ages 20 to 40 with texting, Facebook and other high-tech communications, donors in that age group say that, when it comes to requests for their time or money, they put high value on face-to-face communication.

A new study conducted by Achieve and Johnson, Grossnickle and Associates (JGA) finds that Millennial Generation donors want to be engaged in a different way than Baby Boomers or Generation X donors.

The “2010 Millennial Donor Study” represents findings from more than 2,200 people between the ages of 20 and 40 across the U.S. about their giving habits and engagement preferences. 75% of survey participants represented the Millennial generation or Generation Y.

It found that when they do get involved with a nonprofit organization, Millennial donors not only want to give financially, they want to affect change and create direction, and they want access to the organization’s board leadership.

“Millennial donors want more than a transactional relationship. They want to be engaged,” said Derrick Feldmann, CEO of Achieve. “They need to feel a connection with an organization, and they want opportunities for deeper involvement, such as opportunities to work with leadership and to help craft direction for the organization. Plus, they want to know specifically how their gifts will benefit the organization’s constituents.”

Feldmann continued, “Organizations that respond to this will need to rethink the idea of return on investment and plan for a longer payoff for these efforts. Organizations that continue to do business as usual – offline and online – might continue to be successful in the short term, but probably not in the long term.”

Key findings include:

How they want to be asked

- 91% of Millennial donors are at least somewhat likely to respond to a face-to-face request for money from a nonprofit organization, with 27% being highly likely to respond to such a request. Only 8% are highly likely to respond to an e-mail request.
- 55.2% of Millennial donors are likely or highly likely to respond to a specific request or particular project. 55.7% are not likely to respond to a general, non-specific ask.

How they want to be involved

- 71.9% of Millennial donors don’t need to volunteer for an organization before they donate.
- Millennial donors want to know details about the organizations they support: 86.3% want updates on programs or services, and 54.6% want information about the organization and its financial condition. 68% want information about volunteer opportunities.
- 60.5% say they would like access to board and executive leadership, and 53.2% say they have it.
- 75% of Millennial donors are at least somewhat interested in working closely with the board or organization leadership to define the direction of the organization (strategic planning) or helping the board create solutions to challenges.

- Asked who could get them to donate to an organization, most Millennial donors say they would be likely or highly likely to give if asked by a family member (74.6%) or a friend (62.8 %). Only 37.8% would be likely or highly likely to give if asked by a coworker.
- 71.7% of Millennial donors said they'd be willing to communicate with friends and family about ways to be involved in an organization they support.

Communication preferences

- E-mail is Millennial donors' most preferred communication method, with 93% of respondents favoring it for receiving information from organizations. Facebook and print lag behind at 23.8% and 26.9%, respectively.
- When a Millennial donor uses technology to find out about a nonprofit organization, Google is the donor's first stop, with 86.4% of respondents citing the search engine. 71.5% rely on email, and 51.2% use Facebook to find information on organizations.

Ted Grossnickle, Senior Managing Consultant with JGA, said, "These responses suggest that if fundraisers want to attract Millennial donors, they're going to need to change their approach and become more relationship-based."

"This requires a shift in attitude among development officers," said Grossnickle. "The Millennials might not have the capacity to give large amounts now, but they have human capital and are willing to be evangelists to their friends and family. Plus, in 20 to 30 years, they're going to have plenty of giving capacity, and they'll use that capacity to support organizations that have engaged them."

In light of these findings, Achieve and JGA believe nonprofit organizations need to shape a strategy now for engaging Millennial donors. Concrete steps could include:

1. Realign development staffs to be more focused on face-to-face work and relationship building.
2. Work with donors who are willing to build networks with friend and family.
3. Create more specific requests for giving and volunteer opportunities rather than general requests.
4. Develop a multichannel approach to communication and solicitation methods, recognizing that technology is a tool not a solution.
5. Plan for a long-term return on investment for relationship-building efforts with Millennial donors rather than a quick result.
6. Align fundraising priorities for all donor audiences, but when it comes to Millennials, focus on engagement in ways traditionally reserved for donors with greater means.
7. Incorporate Millennial donors into strategic planning and organizational development. Make sure to provide opportunities to work with those in leadership.

To discuss the study, download it, and register to participate in a free Webinar on April 15, visit www.MillennialDonors.com.

About JGA

Johnson, Grossnickle and Associates (JGA) has been providing authentic, strategic philanthropic consulting services to non-profit clients since 1994. JGA's team of senior

consultants offers client-focused, highly customized philanthropic consulting services to private colleges, independent schools, and large cultural and community organizations. JGA specializes in capital campaign counsel, feasibility studies, philanthropic assessments, and development audits. www.jgacounsel.com.

About Achieve

Achieve is a consulting firm that provides expert guidance and delivers strategies to strengthen donor relationships and increase fundraising performance. Achieve works with nonprofit organizations that need to build the skills of its fundraising department, acquire resources for new and existing needs, and engage donors in meaningful ways. www.AchieveGuidance.com.

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