



More than Clicks and Likes:

**Strategies for Engaging Millennials Online and
Fostering the Impulse to Give**

July 2012

INTRODUCTION

Even in these uncertain economic times, online giving continues to be an important channel for fundraising. In the *Chronicle of Philanthropy's* 2010 survey on online giving, 140 of the country's biggest charities reported raising \$1.35 billion online. The 52% percent increase over 2009 reflected in part the considerable support donors directed to relief efforts following the Haiti earthquake. However, more recent studies suggest that the interest in online giving has not abated and that these trends are not limited solely to the largest charities. For example, the 2011 Blackbaud Index of Online Giving reported that the nearly 1,900 nonprofits that it tracks raised approximately \$423 million online over a 12-month period ending January 2012. In the 2011 Cygnus Donor Survey, 65% of respondents indicated that they planned to make at least one gift online and this marked the first point in the survey's history that the majority of donors in each age category planned to give online.

While online giving continues to grow at a rapid pace and has been adopted as a critical tool for organizations both large and small, more than ever being online is simply not enough. Recent studies suggest that current and prospective donors are looking for more robust user experiences that go beyond clicks and likes on social media platforms or simple online donor forms and give now buttons on organizational websites. In particular, a new generation of donor—Millennials—is emerging who is looking for online giving experiences that are more than just transactional, but are also tools for sharing, connecting, and having direct impact on causes.

UNDERSERVED AND UNTAPPED: WHY MILLIENIALS MATTER

Key findings from recent studies and reports underscore the important synergy between young donors and platforms for online giving and impulse interactions:

- ***Millennials are prime online and mobile donors:*** In the *Millennial Impact Report 2012*, the survey found that three out of four people between the ages of 20 and 35 made at least one gift in the last year and 70% had made their gift online. Over three-quarters of respondents owned smartphones and are actively using them to connect with organizations, providing a range of touch points with nonprofits through websites, social media, and smartphone applications. In a market research survey conducted by givkwik inc. in November 2012, respondents ages 18-29 indicated that they would be apt to make gifts to organizations utilizing their mobile phone. This propensity for making gifts utilizing online or mobile

technologies shows no signs of slowing—the number one preferred method for giving among respondents to the *Millennium Impact Report* was online versus giving in person or via direct mail. As mobile phones continue to present a replacement to traditional landlines, young donors are also less likely to receive telemarketing calls (*The Cygnus Donor Survey*, 2012).

- **Millennials are underserved:** For many fundraising professionals, Millennials present a conundrum. Millennials are largely participatory donors who make small gifts of \$100 or less (*The Next Generation of American Giving*, 2010). Traditional analysis might suggest that a fundraiser's time may be better spent elsewhere. However, organizations looking to steward and grow with their donors can hardly afford to ignore this segment of the population, whose philanthropic practices and preferences that will guide their future giving is being shaped now. Despite uncertain economic times, donors under the age of 35 were also more likely than older generations to make plans to give more in 2012 than they did last year (*The Cygnus Donor Survey*, 2012).
- **Online giving is not just for Millennials:** Online channels for giving are not the province of young donors alone. A recent study has documented that while older donors are less likely than younger givers to make a gift online, once donors who are 60+ give online, they continue to give through these channels and more than younger donors (Dunham+Company). More importantly, donors regardless of age are increasingly connecting with nonprofit organizations across a spectrum of communication platforms. As a result, donors are less consistent in using the same channel (e.g., direct mail) repeatedly to make their philanthropic gifts, and are instead taking advantage of the full range of options currently offered by organizations (*The Next Generation of American Giving*, 2010).

CREATING IMMEDIATE AND IMPACTFUL EXPERIENCES THAT MATTER

The pace of technology has made “immediate and impulsive interactions” with organizations an expectation among many young donors (*Millennial Impact Report 2012*). However, this is not simply about immediate gratification, but a desire among Millennials to have impact on charitable organizations, quickly absorbing and understanding a nonprofit's mission and translating that knowledge into action—whether encouraging friends and family to give or exploring opportunities to serve as volunteers and advocates. Given the high utilization of smartphones and social media sites

among younger donors, creating high quality and informative experiences online and specifically on mobile devices are more important than ever.

Mobile-friendly organizational websites are particularly important. Overwhelmingly, young donors turn to an organization's website for information about organizational missions (*Millennial Impact Report 2012*). Increasingly, mobile applications and social media are helping to drive traffic to websites. Websites that are optimized for mobile browsing and part of an integrated strategy that seeks to communicate organizational mission and outcomes across a range of online platforms—whether on an organization's website, mobile applications, or on social media including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and more—is crucial.

More than 70% of young donors surveyed in the *Millennial Impact Report* indicated that they raised money on behalf of nonprofit organizations by encouraging friends and family to support causes. The lynchpin of such active involvement was an understanding of an organization's vision for change. Receiving clear and consistent communications about an organization's impact and with access to powerful images or information that represented clear calls for immediate action were consistent entry points for building stronger relationships between younger donors and organizations. To fully maximize these introductions, nonprofits must have platforms that facilitate a spectrum of engagement activities, from one-off events to longer term opportunities for volunteerism and advocacy.

Engagement and calls to action can and should also be fun. Being careful not to sacrifice the clarity of one's mission and impact, nonprofits are increasingly adopting some of the feel and look of game experiences as a means of bringing missions to life and moving beyond static online donation forms. For example, My Conservation Park is a socially conscious Facebook game that challenges players to create and manage a wildlife reserve, while providing a share of in-game purchase revenue with participating nonprofit partners engaged in conservation efforts in the real world. This synergy between donor education and giving is just one example of many emerging platforms for engaging donors beyond static online donor forms and passive forms of donor cultivation and engagement.

ABOUT GIVKWIK, INC.

The purpose of this white paper is to capture some of the latest trends in online and mobile giving and how these technologies can inspire and motivate a new generation of donors to get involved and give. Ultimately, the aim is to stimulate a dialogue and support thought leadership on best practices

that can help nonprofit organizations leverage online and mobile technologies to their full potential and in the service of their missions.

givkwik inc. is a for-profit venture, incorporated in the State of New York in 2010 and headquartered in San Francisco, CA. Its mission is to make charitable giving easy, fun and social. As the global economy continues to challenge our collective generosity, givkwik fills a critical need for increasing generosity to more good causes. Consumer donors want a better user experience for online giving. Nonprofit organizations need a solution to capture smaller donations from larger amounts of donors, with minimal expense. givkwik helps both parties raise spare change.™

Mobile devices accelerate research and decision-making and make it quicker and easier anytime, anywhere. Game mechanics enable competition, repetitive behavior and active engagement. Social networks support peer-to-peer interactions and raise awareness with increased velocity. Nonprofit missions rely on large audiences to raise awareness for their causes. Consumers prefer brands that support social causes. givkwik combines all of these trends effectively to create an exciting new opportunity for commerce and philanthropy.