

RESEARCH STUDY

Closing the gap between planner and donor expectations for your next event



GiveSmart[®]
by communitybrands

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Overview: Why this study matters

Donors' relations to signature fundraising events and the missions they care about are important to recognize. Most importantly, these events take a lot of time to plan and often raise a hefty hunk of change. However, fundraising trends change with the times and new waves of donors and board members are making their appearance.

We conducted this study to find gaps in expectations of fundraising events between donors and event planners. What do donors care about when it comes to signature events? What do event planners prioritize? We want to better understand the expectations of donors so that event planners can meet them there with their events, therefore furthering their missions. Together, better aligned views of fundraising will shape the future of signature events.

We set out to answer the following questions (from both donor and event planner perspectives):

- What's the purpose of a signature fundraising event and are they still relevant?
- How are signature events promoted? What compels donors to attend?
- What are the preferred elements of fundraising events?
- How do organizations follow up with donors after events and what do donors want after an event?

The intention of this research is to help nonprofit organizations align their fundraising efforts with the desires of donors. Additionally, we want the generational break downs of this data to help lead the way you communicate with segmented donors.

Study results are based on survey responses from 600 donors and 791 planners across the United States in September 2019. Donors are individuals who have attended a signature event within the last three years or donated to a nonprofit organization within the last year. Planners are individuals who consider themselves event planners as a profession for charitable organizations.

Below is the generational breakdown (based on [Pew Research](#)) for the purpose of this study:

- **Millennials:** born 1981–1996
- **Generation X:** born 1965–1980
- **Boomers+:** born during 1964 or earlier

Here is
a detailed
look at **the**
findings.

Key findings:

1

Hold a variety of events that includes the interests of all donors.

Millennials and boomers+ have different interests and preferences. In order to expand and grow your donor base, hold events throughout the year that reach different segments of your donors.

2

Millennials are more event-inclined than other generations.

Millennials responded that they are more interested in attending events now than before, and they are more willing to donate at signature events. Paying attention to the interests of millennials will gear the future of fundraising and signature events.

3

Incorporate cause to capture fence-sitters.

On its own, the live appeal hardly appeals to a quarter of your donors in attendance. However, when they can connect with your mission and story, they are more likely to make a donation on the night of the event or afterward.

4

Donors love the silent auction.

Out of the fundraising elements at a signature event, donors preferred a silent auction over anything else. This is an indicator that silent auctions are still popular among donors.

5

Follow up with donors on how they made a difference.

When donors leave an event they want to feel appreciated. However, all donors agree that the most impactful follow-up communication explains how they contributed to the success of your organization's mission.

6

Create and evolve advertising to connect more in person and online.

Two methods of advertising and promoting events that attract donors most: in-person promotion through micro-events or networking and utilizing social media to promote to millennials and Generation X.

Section 1: Purpose of signature events

The signature fundraising event has evolved over the years. How donors and planners perceive these events has evolved as well.

Both donors and planners emphasized a fun and celebratory purpose to an event, but donors felt strongly that content that shows the impact the organization has achieved is also an important purpose of signature events. Donors and planners agreed that an interesting and educational element of an event is also very important.

PURPOSE OF A SIGNATURE EVENT (DONORS VS. PLANNERS)			
	<i>Donors</i>	<i>Planners</i>	<i>Planners minus Donors</i>
Be fun and celebratory	49%	83%	+34
Give me the opportunity to bring guests and introduce them to the organization	32%	69%	+37
Feature personal stories of those affected by the organization	40%	76%	+36
Keep me involved afterwards by sending me pictures, statements on the event's impact, or other news	27%	59%	+32
Give me the opportunity to socialize with other volunteers and donors	36%	60%	+24
Have content that shows me the results that the organization has achieved	55%	74%	+19
Keep me involved beforehand by sending me texts, emails, reminders, and interesting content related to the event	28%	44%	+16
Give me the opportunity to meet and interact with those impacted by the organization	36%	50%	+14
Should give me something tangible I can take home, like a gift or auction item	19%	23%	+4
Be interesting and teach me something	45%	45%	EVEN

Figure 1: With regards to the purpose of signature events, how important do you think each of the following would be? The event should...

According to donors, the purpose of an event should be celebratory, but different aged donors weigh the importance of this differently.

Three of five boomers+ believe having content that shows the organizations achievements is the most important purpose of a signature event. Millennials, on the other hand, were more focused on socializing and celebrating. Generation X donors are also preferential to achievement-related content for signature events.

PURPOSE OF A SIGNATURE EVENT (BY AGE AND GENDER)						
	<i>Donors</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Millennials</i>	<i>Gen X</i>	<i>Boomers+</i>
Have content that shows me the results that the organization has achieved	55%	52%	57%	46%	54%	61%
Be fun and celebratory	49%	44%	54%	51%	49%	49%
Be interesting and teach me something	45%	45%	46%	44%	49%	43%
Feature personal stories of those affected by the organization	40%	36%	44%	36%	43%	39%
Give me the opportunity to socialize with other volunteers and donors	36%	34%	37%	41%	37%	31%
Give me the opportunity to meet and interact with those impacted by the organization	36%	36%	37%	38%	37%	35%
Give me the opportunity to bring guests and introduce them to the organization	32%	27%	36%	35%	36%	26%
Keep me involved beforehand by sending me texts, emails, reminders, and interesting content related to the event	28%	25%	30%	33%	31%	22%
Keep me involved afterwards by sending me pictures, statements on the event's impact, or other news	27%	26%	27%	30%	31%	21%
Should give me something tangible I can take home, like a gift or auction item	19%	20%	18%	23%	21%	15%

Figure 2: Generational and Gender breakdowns of Figure 1.

When asked about the likelihood of attending events now versus five years ago, more than half of donors and planners agreed that they were more likely to attend events. Even more so, more than eight out of ten donors said they are likely to attend events. This speaks to the popularity of signature events today.

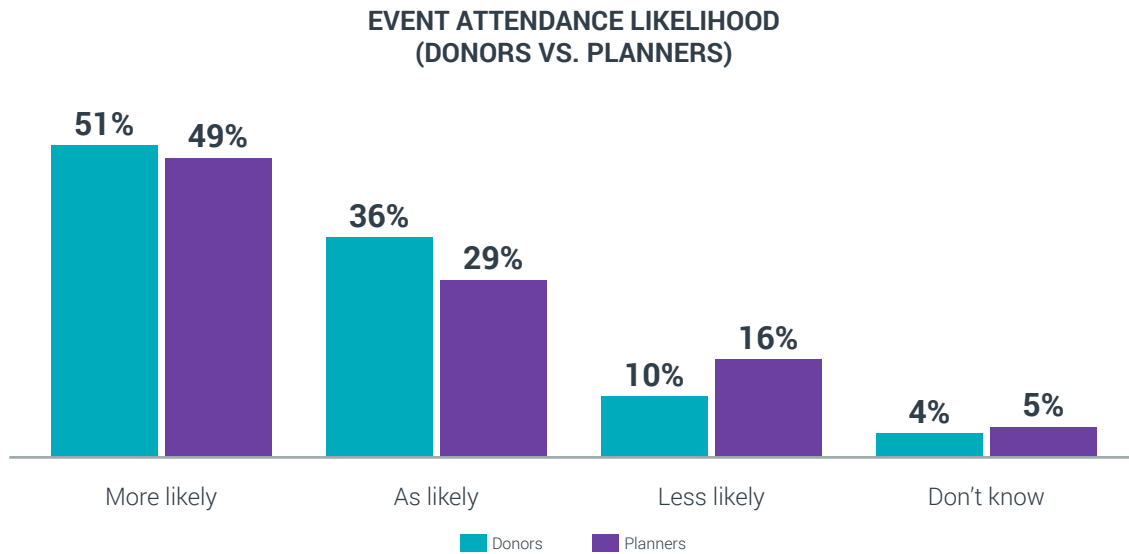


Figure 3: Generally speaking, are [you/your donors] more or less likely to attend a signature event for an organization you care about than [you/they] were five years ago?

When looking at the different generations, nine out of ten millennials and Generation X donors are likely to attend events today versus five years ago. Two out of three millennials are more likely to attend events versus five years ago. On the flip side, two out of five boomers+ are more likely to attend events, while eight out of ten are still likely to attend, which is not surprising.

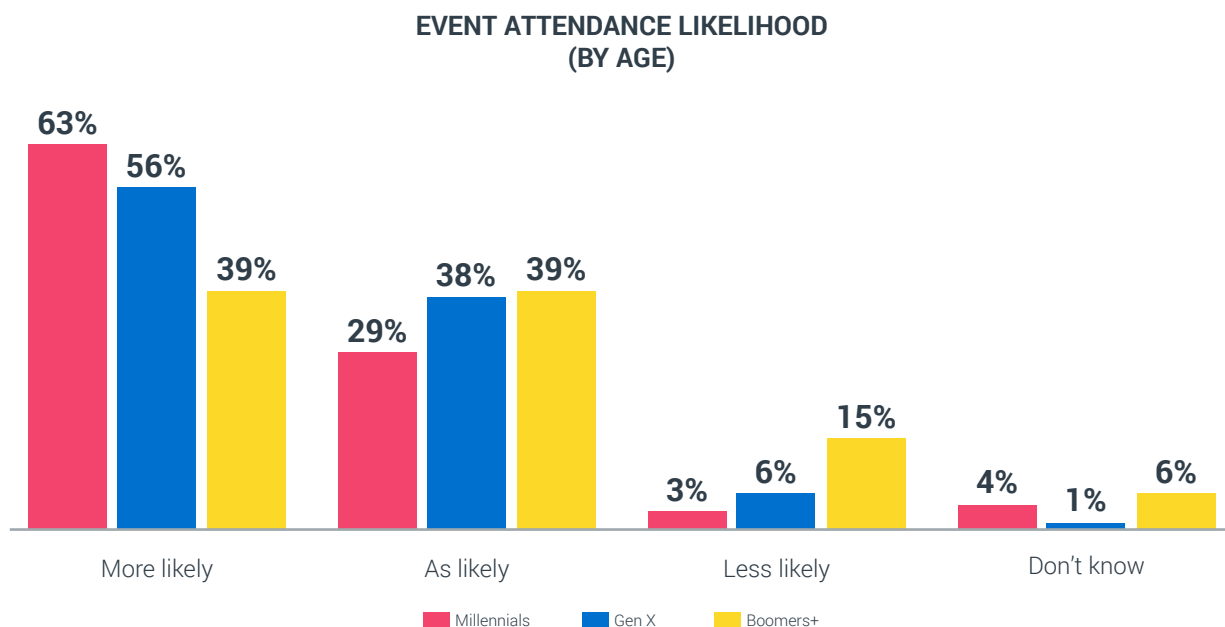


Figure 4: Generational breakdown of Figure 3.

Donors have no preference when it comes to a signature annual event or a variety of events throughout the year; they like either option. On the other hand, planners prefer signature events that create more of a tradition.

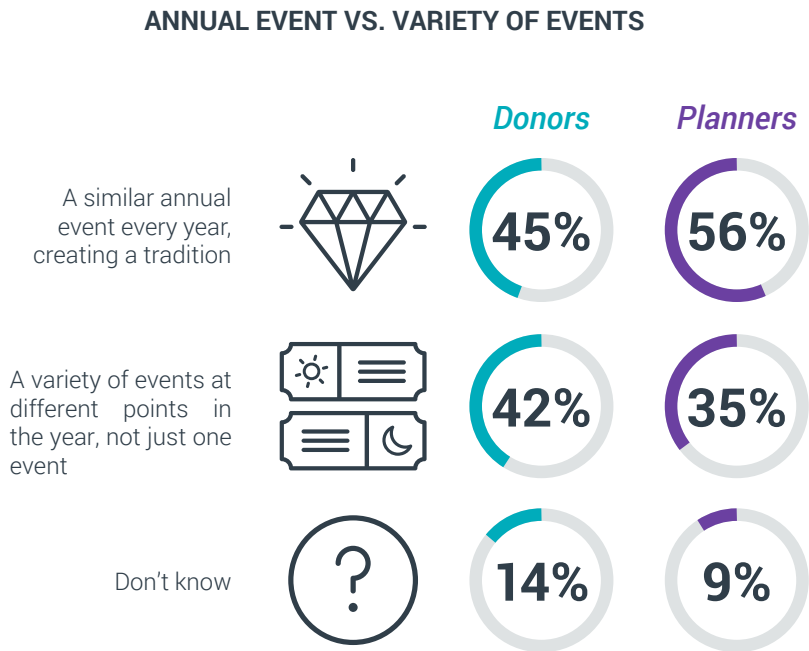


Figure 5: Thinking about [an organization whose signature event you might attend annually/your signature event], would you rather there be...

The donors in the boomers+ generation are more interested in annual events rather than a variety of events throughout the year. Generation X and millennials are more balanced in their interests with one out two Generation X donors being interested in a variety of events throughout the year.

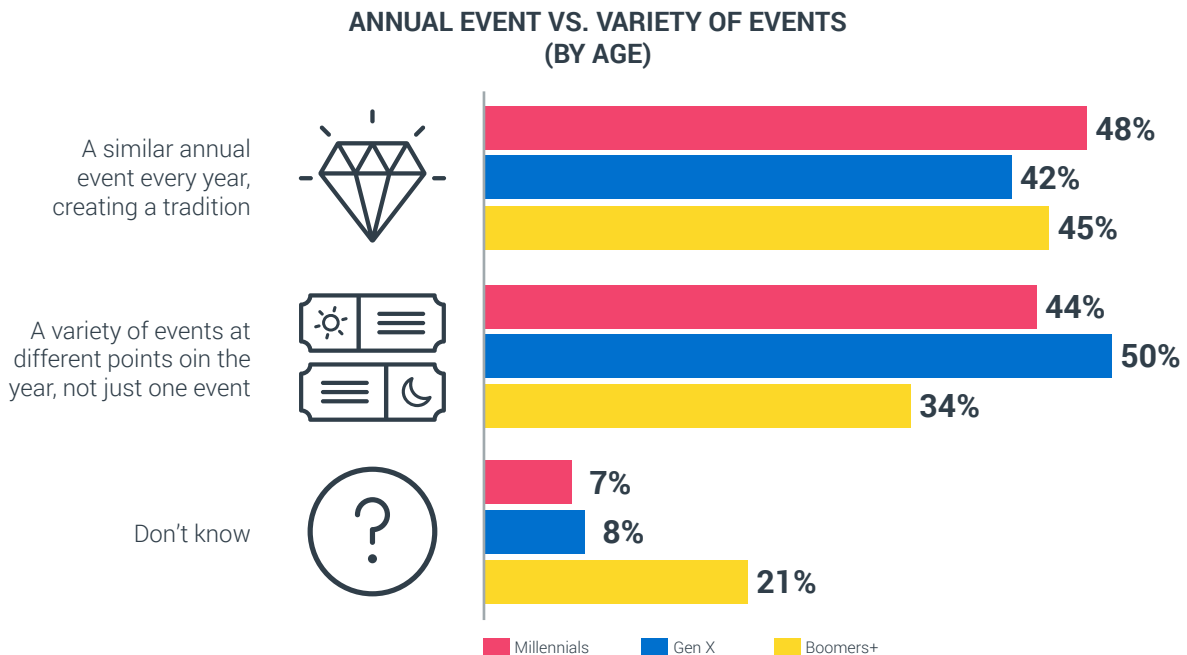


Figure 6: Generational breakdown of Figure 5.

For activities at signature events, donors expressed the most interest in concerts or events with dancing, galas and parties, fun runs or races, and silent auctions. Planners, on the other hand, preferred galas or parties, silent auctions, live auctions, and concerts or events with dancing. This is a similar list, but with a different emphasis on the importance of silent auctions and dancing.

Only 21% of planners indicated concerts or dancing were associated with their events, while 50% of donors found this the most appealing.

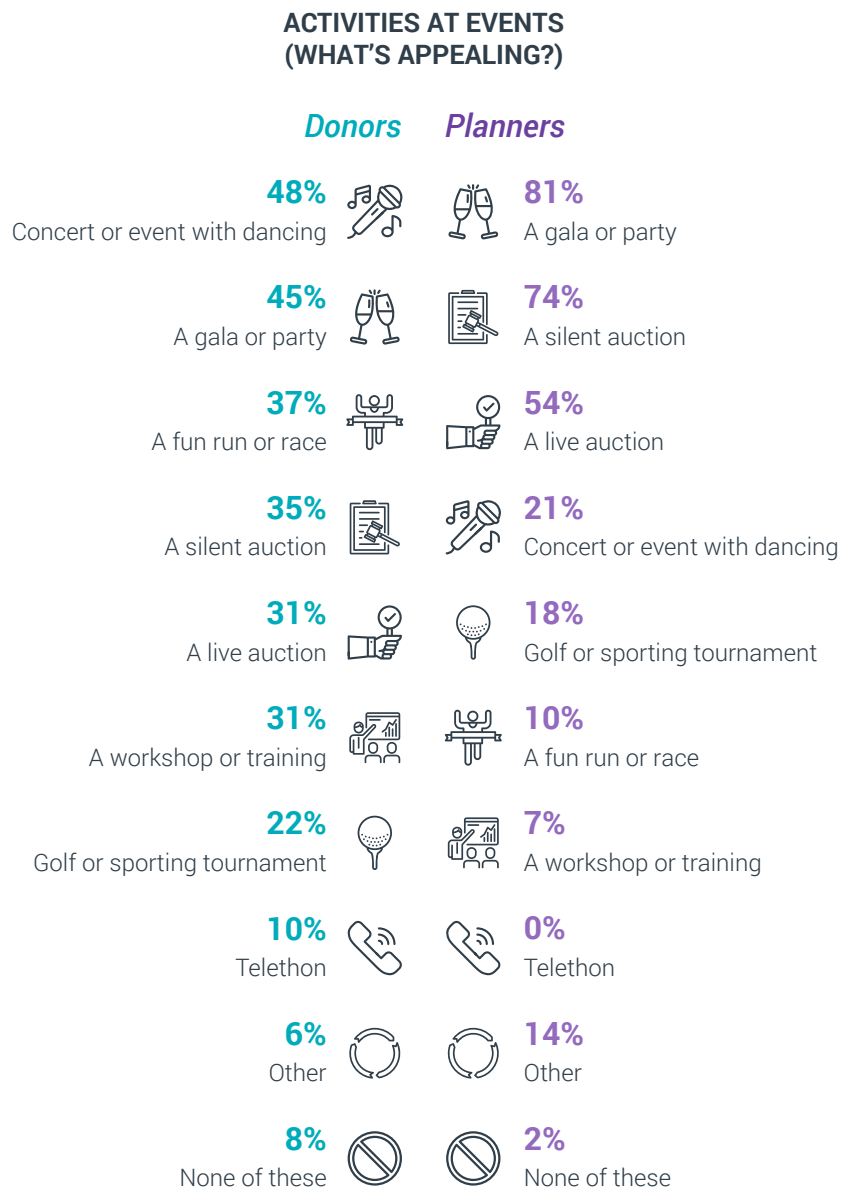


Figure 7: Donors: Which of the following types of events or activities at events are especially appealing for you personally? Select all that apply. **Planners:** Which of the following types of events or activities at events describes something your associate with your organization's signature event?

Figure 8 shows a breakdown based on generation and gender and the appeal of different activities at events. Over half of women find concerts and gala/parties appealing while men were more inclined to attend golf/sporting tournaments and fun runs and races. 46% of millennials find fun runs or races appealing, and 47% of Generation X donors feel the same way. Half of Generation X donors are interested in concerts and gala/parties, while two out of five boomers+ are interested in the same types of activities. Two out of five millennials expressed interest in workshops or trainings as well.

**ACTIVITIES AT EVENTS
(BY AGE AND GENDER)**

	<i>Donors</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Millennials</i>	<i>Gen X</i>	<i>Boomers+</i>
Concert or event with dancing	48%	39%	56%	48%	53%	43%
A gala or party	45%	39%	50%	41%	53%	40%
A fun run or race	37%	40%	34%	46%	47%	24%
A silent auction	35%	31%	40%	34%	34%	37%
A live auction	31%	30%	33%	30%	34%	30%
A workshop or training	31%	27%	34%	39%	31%	25%
Golf or sporting tournament	22%	31%	12%	24%	26%	17%
Telethon	10%	10%	10%	10%	12%	8%

Figure 8: Generational and Gender breakdown of Figure 7.

One out of three donors donate annually through a signature event. Figure 9 shows that about three out of five donate less than \$100 at those signature events. Two out of five donors give annually through one-off contributions or annual giving campaigns, which was the highest percentage with annual giving and regular monthly giving receiving 10% of donors indicating they give more than \$1,000 in these methods.

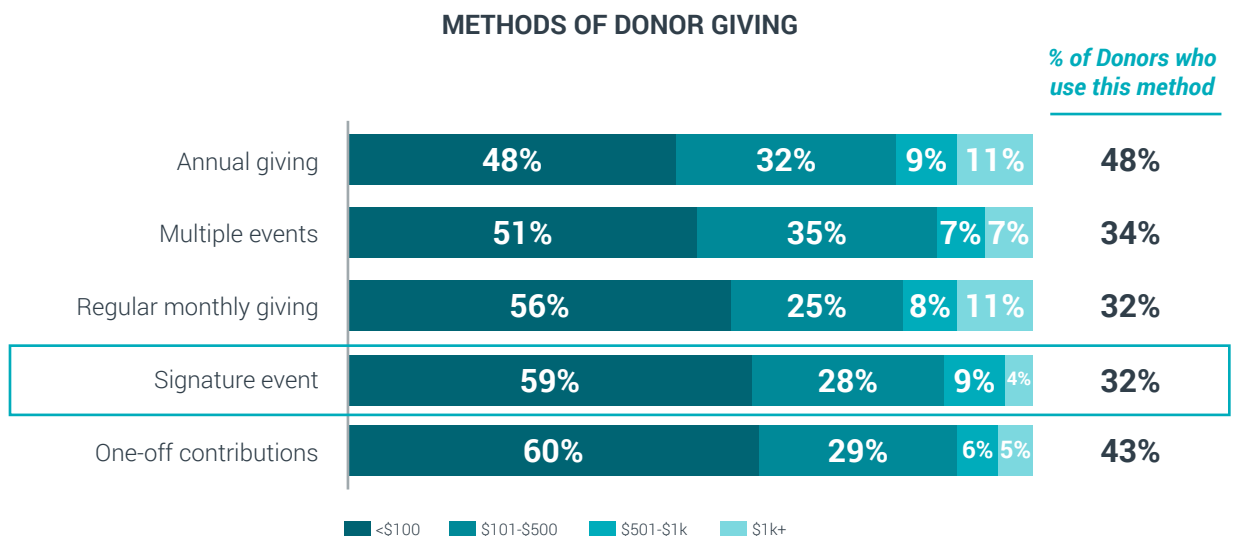


Figure 9: Thinking about the nonprofit organization you support the most, how much do you donate in a typical year through the following methods.

Seven out of ten planners believe donors are more likely to donate a higher amount at a signature event, but only one out of three donors indicated they were more likely to donate a higher amount at a signature event. Of the donors surveyed, one out of three responded that the method of giving did not matter to or impact them to give more.

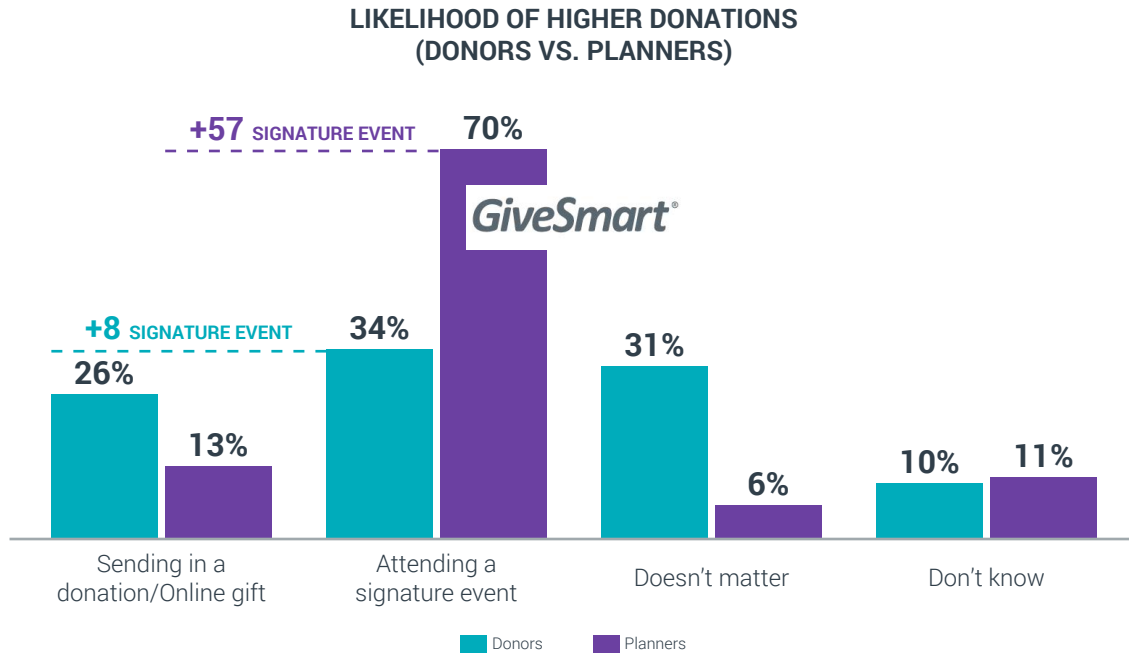


Figure 10: In what scenario [are you likely/do you find donors are likely] to donate at a higher dollar amount?

When asked about signature events versus giving online annually, almost half of the millennials surveyed indicated they'd give more at a signature event, while only 25% of boomers+ indicated they would give more at signature events. Women are more inclined to give more at signature events versus men (36% vs. 31%). The propensity for giving more at events also is attributed to more than one of every three Generation X donors (38%).

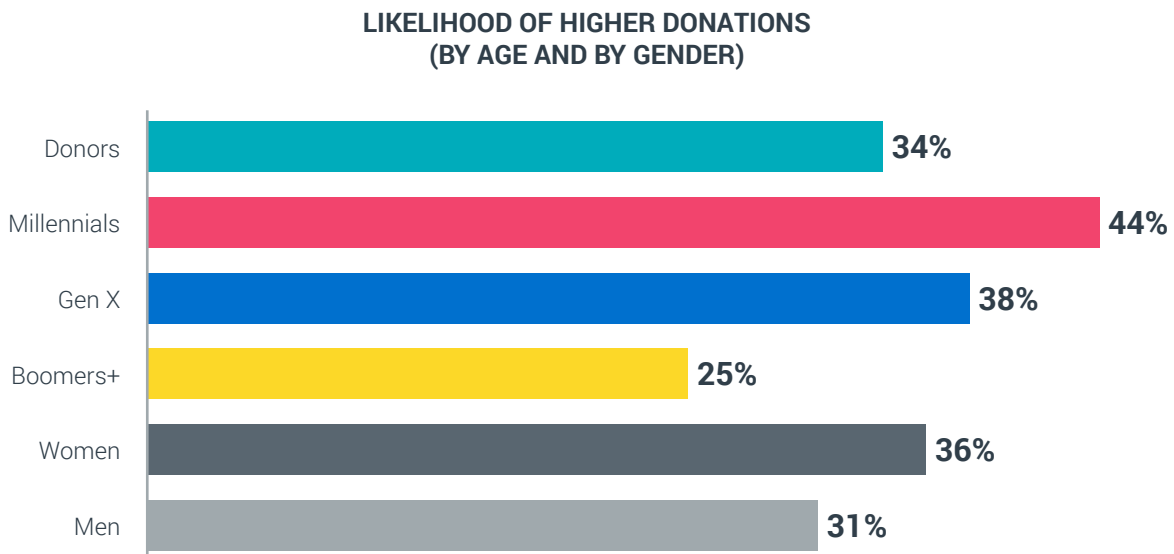


Figure 11: Generational and Gender breakdown of Figure 10.

Section 2: Promotion of signature events

Today, we're flooded with multiple channels of communication. As an event planner, it's crucial to understand how your donors see and hear you if you want to truly connect.

The biggest discrepancy between donors and planners for event promotion is the importance of email. Planners place most of their focus on email, whereas donors are more likely to hear about an event they'd like to attend in person. As a planner, it's important to encourage attendees to talk to their friends, family, and professional networks and personally invite people to come to the event with them. Direct mail was a close second for how donors are likely to hear about an event they'd consider attending. Donors and planners are most closely aligned when it comes to event advertising through TV, radio, print, etc.

HOW PLANNERS PUBLICIZE EVENTS VS. HOW DONORS HEAR ABOUT THEM

	<i>Donors</i>	<i>Planners</i>	<i>Planners minus Donors</i>
Via email	34%	87%	+53
Through print materials/flyers	27%	66%	+39
Through the mail	38%	68%	+30
Word of mouth	29%	56%	+27
In person	40%	66%	+26
Over the phone	17%	38%	+21
Via text	13%	22%	+9
Via advertising on TV, radio, print, etc.	22%	30%	+8

Figure 12: Donors: Which of the following are ways you would be at least somewhat likely to learn enough about an organization's signature event that you would decide to attend? **Planners:** With which of the following do you focus your efforts when it comes to publicizing a signature event?

Across all age demographics, donors are most likely to hear about an event in person. Hearing about events through the mail was a close second, and one percentage point higher than in person for boomers+. Millennials are more likely than other generations to be responsive to information received over the phone relating to upcoming events.

HOW DONORS LEARN ABOUT EVENTS (BY AGE DEMOGRAPHIC)

	<u>Donors</u>	<u>Millennials</u>	<u>Gen X</u>	<u>Boomers+</u>
In person	40%	42%	38%	39%
Through the mail	38%	36%	36%	40%
Via email	34%	32%	32%	36%
Word of mouth	29%	27%	28%	30%
Through print materials/flyers	27%	24%	23%	33%
Via advertising on TV, radio, print, etc.	22%	17%	21%	26%
Over the phone	17%	24%	20%	11%
Via text	13%	16%	13%	10%

Figure 13: Generational breakdown of Figure 12.

Donors are most likely going to learn about an organization’s signature event through a personal email. However, planners are putting most of their efforts into Facebook, e-newsletters, and their website. All of these elements are important, but not the top way that donors will engage with event-related information. Personal email has a large discrepancy of 21 points, and an e-newsletter has an even larger gap of 54 points. When it comes to digital channels, expectations of donors and planners are most closely aligned for YouTube and Twitter.

EVENT PROMOTION ON DIGITAL CHANNELS

	<u>Donors</u>	<u>Planners</u>	<u>Planners minus Donors</u>
E-Newsletter or a blast email	28%	82%	+54
Facebook	35%	88%	+53
Organization’s website	34%	84%	+50
Instagram	19%	48%	+29
Personalized email	44%	65%	+21
Twitter	19%	34%	+15
YouTube	19%	6%	-13
Snapchat	15%	2%	-13

Figure 14: **Donors:** For which of the following digital platforms would you be at least somewhat likely to learn enough about an organization’s signature event that you would decide to attend? **Planners:** For which of the following do you focus your digital efforts when it comes to publicizing a signature event?

Most donors say they would learn about a signature event through personal email. Millennials are more likely to learn about a signature event on Facebook than other generations, and it is their top digital channel.

Millennials are also more likely than other generations to hear about a signature event that they would attend through a digital channel.

**EVENT PROMOTION ON DIGITAL CHANNELS
(BY AGE DEMOGRAPHIC)**

	<u>Donors</u>	<u>Millennials</u>	<u>Gen X</u>	<u>Boomers+</u>
Personalized email	44%	43%	43%	46%
Facebook	35%	52%	36%	25%
Organization's website	34%	36%	35%	32%
E-Newsletter or a blast email	28%	33%	26%	27%
Instagram	19%	29%	20%	13%
Twitter	19%	25%	19%	15%
YouTube	19%	29%	17%	14%
Snapchat	15%	19%	13%	14%

Figure 15: Generational breakdown of Figure 14.

Section 3: Elements of signature events

Every element of an event has an effect on giving. As a planner, understanding the elements donors prefer is a big piece of event planning and enhancing the giving process.

Donors are most likely to love nicely catered dinners, fun games/raffles, and live music or dancing, but famous keynote speeches are not nearly as appealing. Planners were more inclined to say compelling speakers telling stories about the organization's success would be the favorite along with a catered dinner. Games and live music or dancing were also deemed important by planners with over half indicating so. Half of planners also believe that sporting competition or runs were not important at all and over half of donors said they didn't like competitions or runs.

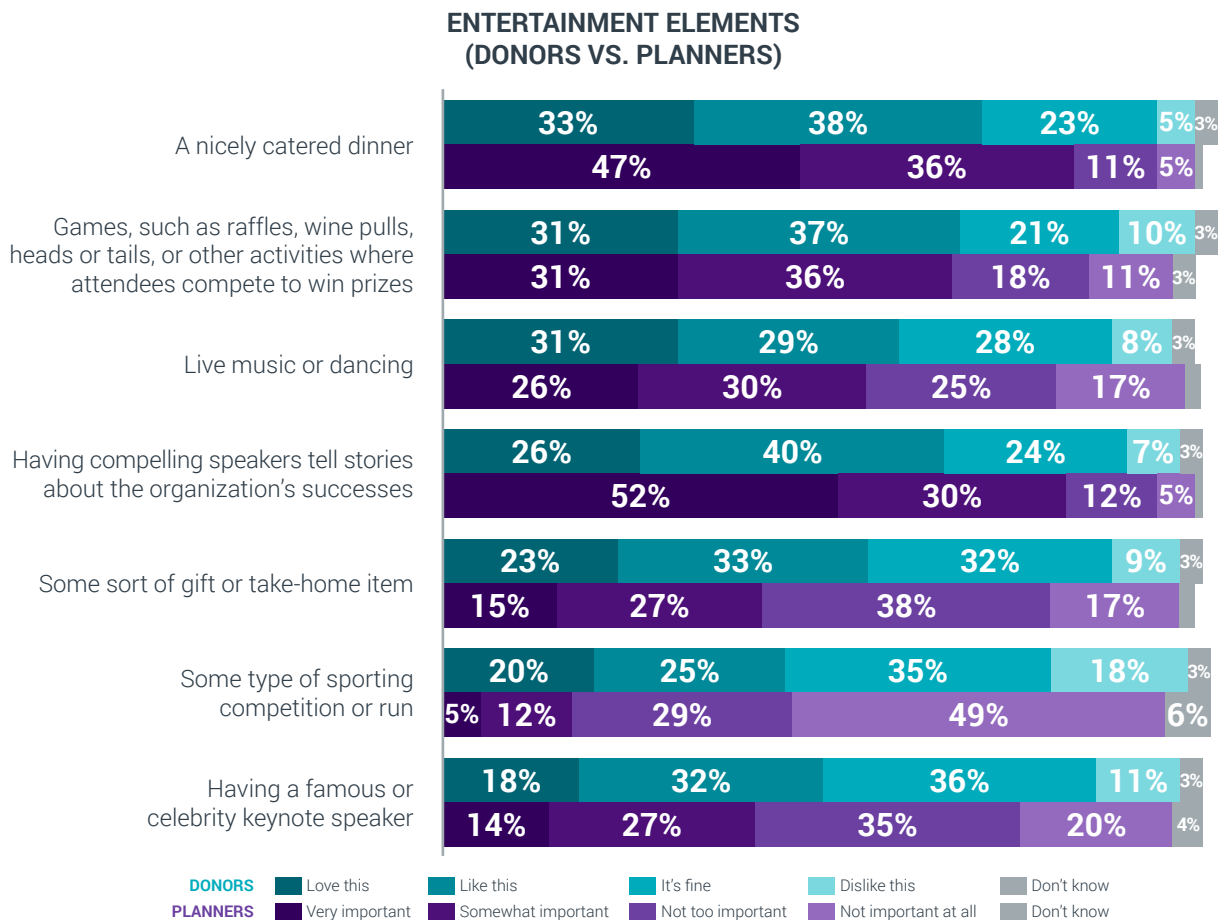


Figure 16: Donors: Thinking now about signature events you have attended or would consider attending, how would you characterize your feelings about each of the following *entertainment* elements at these types of events? **Planners:** Thinking now about your own signature event, how important do you think each of the following is to your attendees when it comes to the following *entertainment* elements?

When it comes to the differences in preference between men and women for entertainment at events, women prefer live music or dancing, nicely catered dinners, games like raffles, and taking home some kind of gift, while men prefer a sporting competition or run.

ENTERTAINMENT ELEMENTS (BY AGE AND BY GENDER)						
	<i>Donors</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Millennials</i>	<i>Gen X</i>	<i>Boomers+</i>
A nicely catered dinner	71%	68%	73%	73%	72%	68%
Live music or dancing	60%	53%	67%	75%	66%	47%
Games, such as raffles, wine pulls, etc...	68%	66%	69%	78%	71%	59%
Having compelling speakers talk about org successes	66%	64%	68%	75%	68%	60%
Some sort of gift or take-home item	56%	51%	60%	68%	58%	46%
Some type of sporting competition or run	44%	52%	36%	60%	53%	28%
Having a famous or celebrity keynote speaker	49%	48%	51%	59%	51%	42%

Figure 17: Generational and gender breakdown of Figure 16.

Figure 18 summarizes how donors and planners characterize programming elements at signature events. Donors tended to like presentations or segments about the organization’s success more so than segments devoted to thanking volunteers and donors. There was little variance among the donors on the programming elements. Comparing them to planners though, shows that planners believe there is more importance to designating time to mingle versus the presentation of success. 97% of planners indicated this was at least somewhat important.

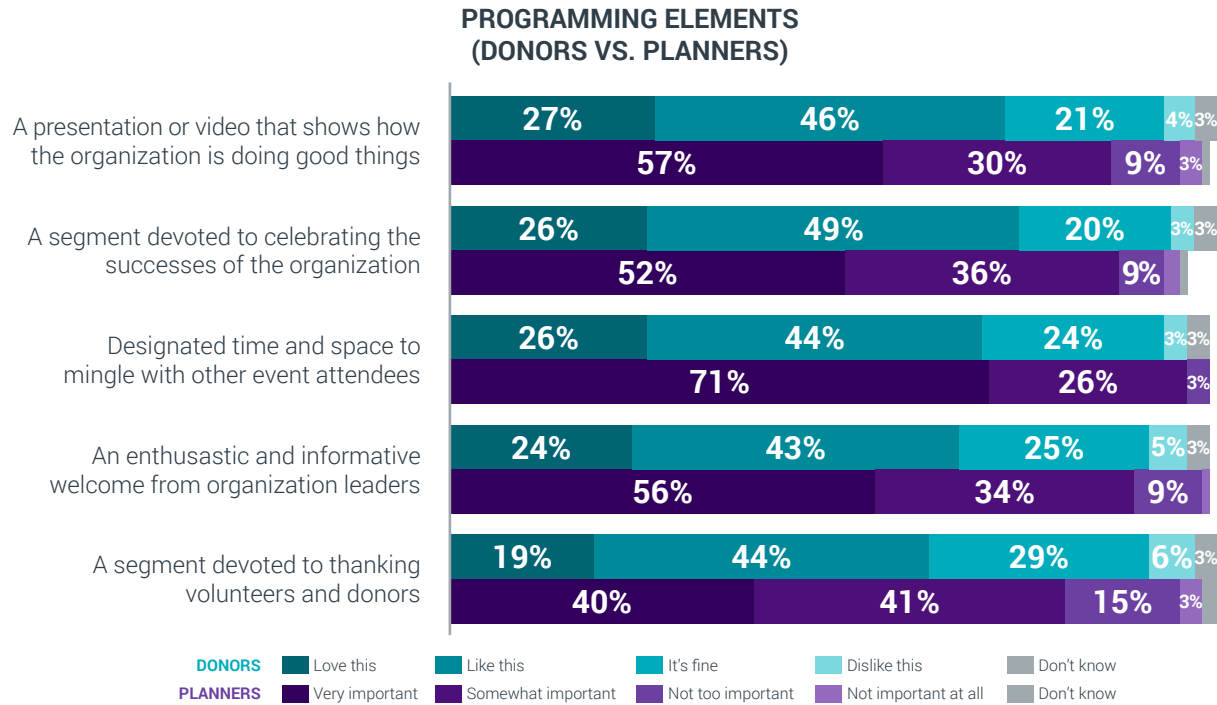


Figure 18: Donors: Thinking now about signature events you have attended or would consider attending, how would you characterize your feelings about each of the following *programming* elements at these types of events? **Planners:** Thinking now about your own signature event, how important do you think each of the following is to your attendees when it comes to the following *programming* elements?

When looking at the programming elements of a signature event, the millennial generation prefers presentations or videos about the positive things an organization is doing. They aren’t the only ones, Generation X donors love this too.

**PROGRAMMING ELEMENTS
(BY AGE AND BY GENDER)**

	<u>Donors</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Millennials</u>	<u>Gen X</u>	<u>Boomers+</u>
A presentation or video that shows how the organization doing good things	73%	73%	73%	74%	79%	68%
Designated time and space to mingle with other event attendees	70%	67%	73%	77%	68%	67%
A segment devoted to celebrating the successes of the organization	75%	71%	78%	79%	74%	73%
An enthusiastic and informative welcome from organization leaders	67%	65%	69%	76%	68%	61%
A segment devoted to thanking volunteers and donors	63%	62%	63%	69%	65%	57%

Figure 19: Generational and Gender breakdown of Figure 18.

Donors and planners responded differently regarding fundraising elements. Only three out of ten donors like donation appeals, but eight out of ten planners indicated live appeals were very or somewhat important. Donation appeals are the least popular fundraising element according to donors. About six out of ten donors said they liked silent auctions and only one out of ten dislike them. Live auctions are almost evenly popular with silent auctions among donors, but only half of the planners thought they were important.

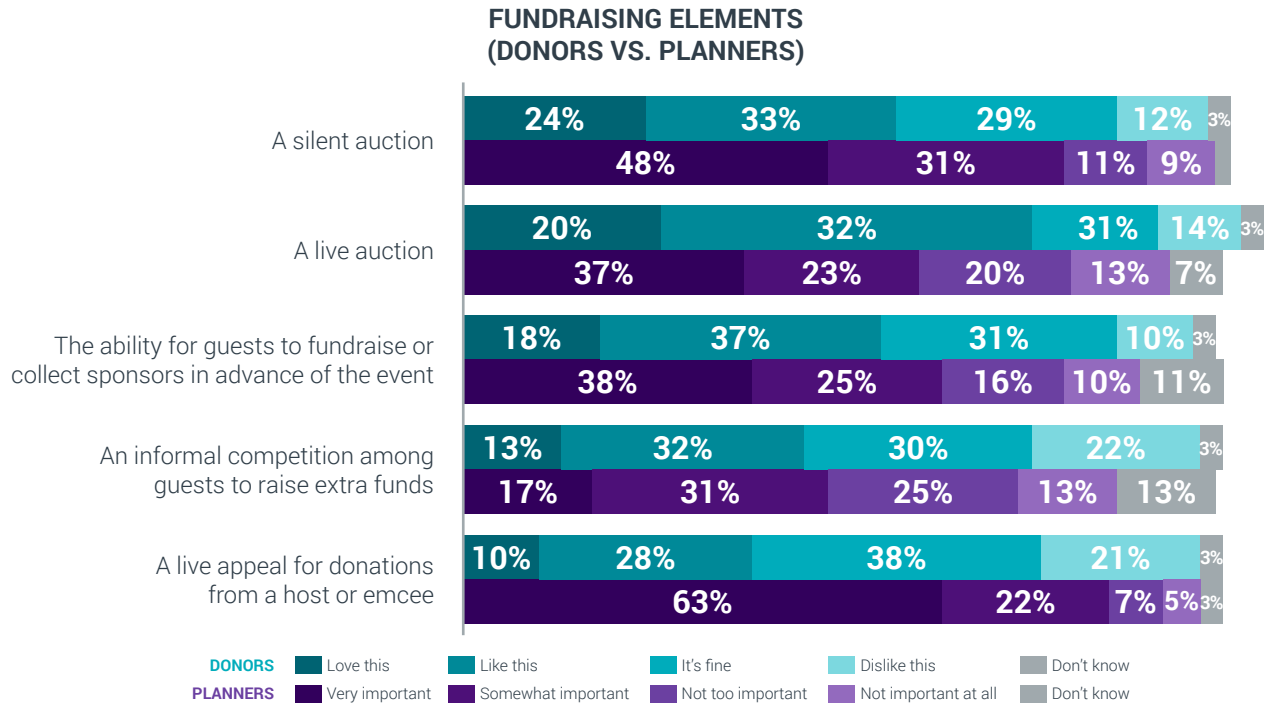


Figure 20: Donors: Thinking now about signature events you have attended or would consider attending, how would you characterize your feelings about each of the following fundraising elements at these types of events? **Planners:** Thinking now about your own signature event, how important do you think each of the following is to your attendees when it comes to the following fundraising elements?

Regarding fundraising elements, one out of four millennials love silent auctions, live auctions, and the ability for guests to fundraise before an event, while boomers+ were mostly interested in silent auctions. One in four women love silent auctions, but otherwise there were not indicators in major differences between men and women.

**FUNDRAISING ELEMENTS
(BY AGE AND BY GENDER)**

	<u>Donors</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Millennials</u>	<u>Gen X</u>	<u>Boomers+</u>
A silent auction	56%	53%	59%	61%	57%	53%
A live auction	52%	56%	49%	58%	58%	43%
The ability for guests to fundraise or collect sponsors in advance of the event	55%	54%	55%	71%	59%	49%
An informal competition among guests to raise extra funds	44%	43%	46%	59%	51%	30%
A live appeal for donations from a host or emcee	38%	37%	39%	46%	46%	28%

Figure 21: Generational and gender breakdown of Figure 20.

Planners and donors differ by almost 30 points when asked about live appeals regarding which elements will raise the most money at a signature event. One in three planners indicated the live appeal was where the most money was donated, but only 7% of donors agreed. A quarter of donors acknowledged that the silent auction was where they were most likely to donate the most. The second most popular response from donors was the live auction.

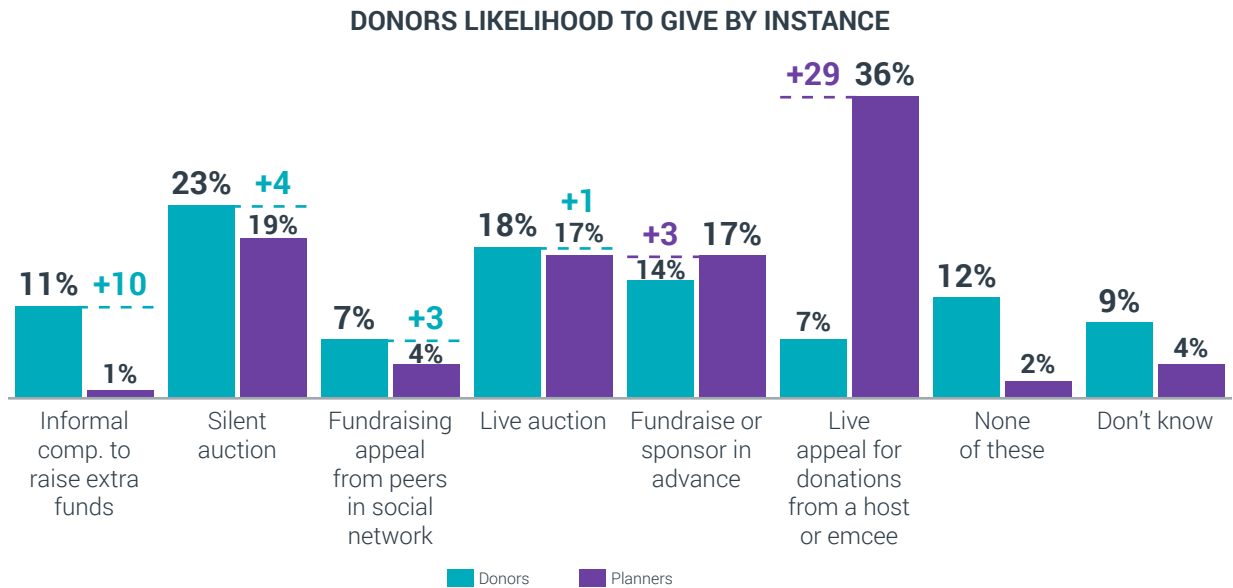


Figure 22: With which of the following [would you be most likely to] [do you find attendees] donate the most money?

When thinking about the live appeal at a signature event, donors and planners have very different impressions on the likelihood of donating. Seven out of ten planners believe a live appeal will be successful in collecting attendee donations, but only four out of ten donors said it was likely for them to donate. Another four out of ten donors were sitting on the fence saying there was a 50/50 chance of them donating.

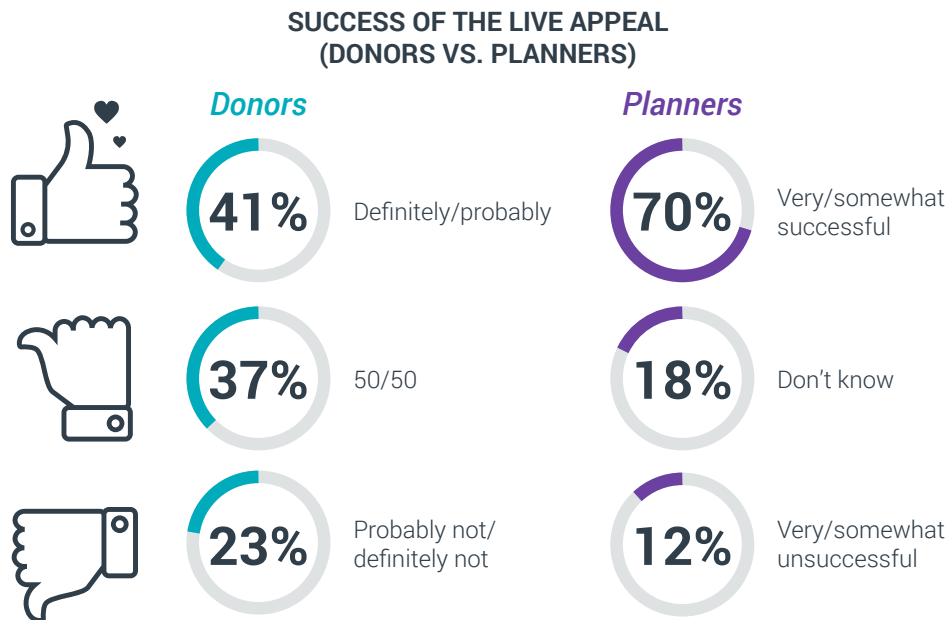


Figure 23: **Donors:** If a live appeal for donations is given by someone representing the organization at a signature event, generally how likely would you be to donate? **Planners:** If a live appeal for donations is given by someone representing the organization at a signature event, generally how successful are those appeals in getting attendees to?

Beyond ticketing or entry fees, donors and planners have an almost 40-point gap between whether it is critical for donors to donate on top of those fees versus whether they will donate. 85% of planners believe donors will donate on top of their entry fee, but only half of donors indicated they at least probably would. Another 40% of donors sit on the fence (50/50) in this instance.

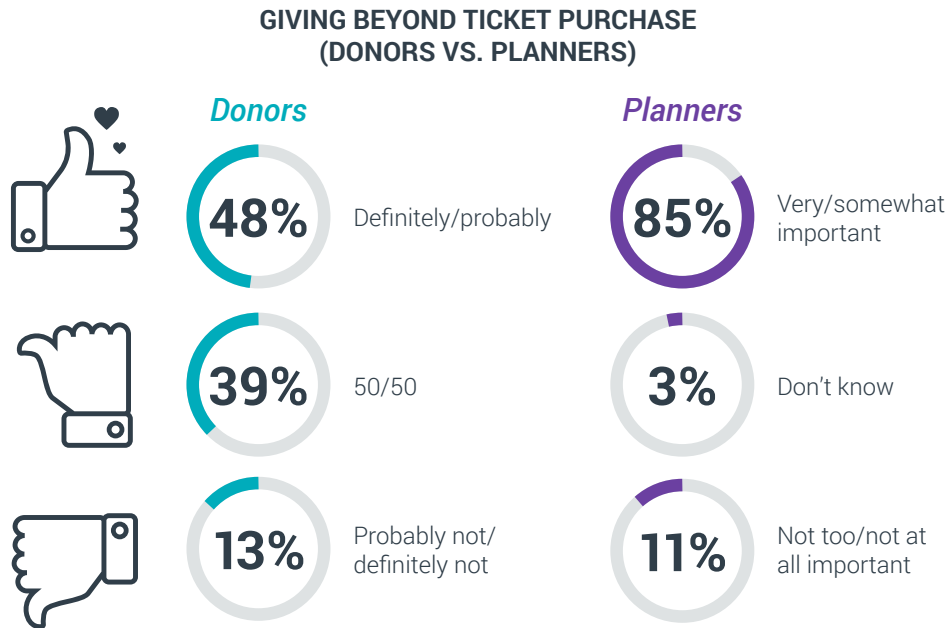


Figure 24: Donors: Aside from ticket prices or entry fees, how likely would you be to donate an additional amount at a signature event if you were attending one? **Planners:** How important is it that donors donate at the signature event itself, beyond any ticket prices or entry fees?

Considering the live appeal, over 55% of donors in the millennial generation are likely to donate in the live appeal while only 30% of boomers+ donors said they would likely give. Three out of every five millennials also said they would likely donate an additional amount beyond the ticket price at a signature event, but boomers+ were less than 40%. Half of Generation X donors would also give additionally.

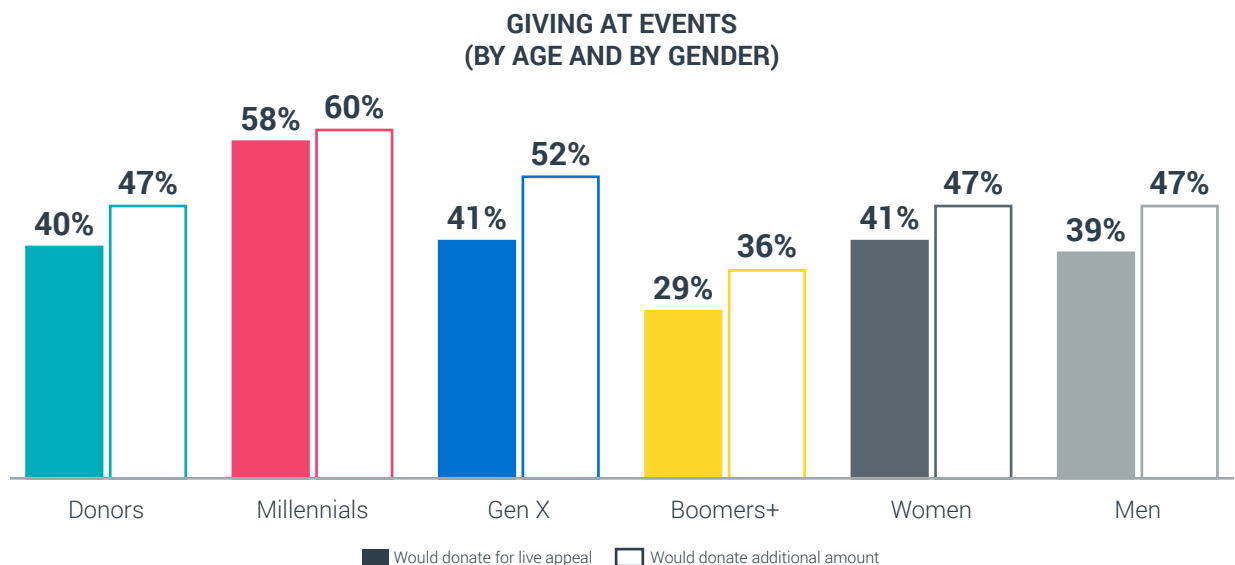


Figure 25: Generational and gender breakdown of Figure 24.

Similarly, most planners assume attendees sometimes plan to donate but do not because they do not win an auction item. However, when asked, only a quarter of donors ended up not donating due to not winning an auction item.

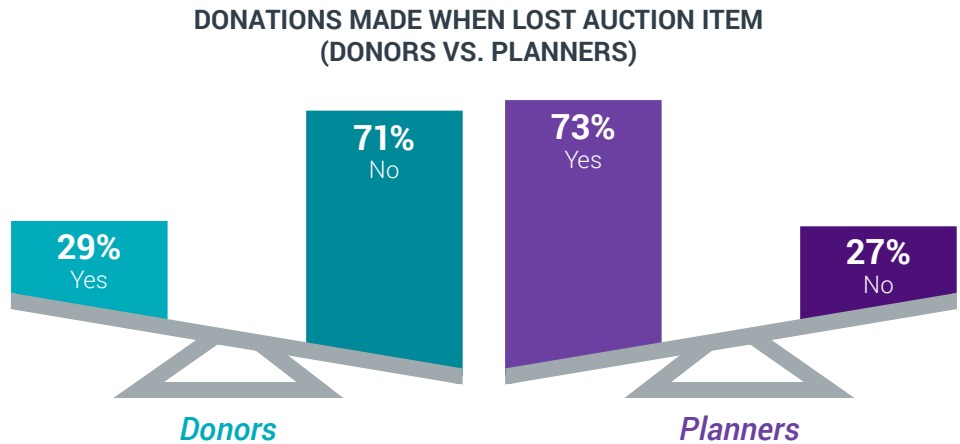


Figure 26: Donors: Have you ever been in the situation where at a live or silent auction you would have been glad to spend a certain amount, but ultimately did not donate because you did not win any items at the auction? **Planners:** Do you think attendees at live or silent auctions (whether your signature event has one or not) sometimes would have been glad to spend a certain amount, but because they do not win any of the items at the auction, they do not make that donation?

One in three donors indicated they are rubbed the wrong way by fundraising appeals at signature events, but three quarters of planners believe attendees didn't seem to mind them. Over 20 points separate the number of donors who are comfortable with fundraising appeals and planners who believe they are comfortable.

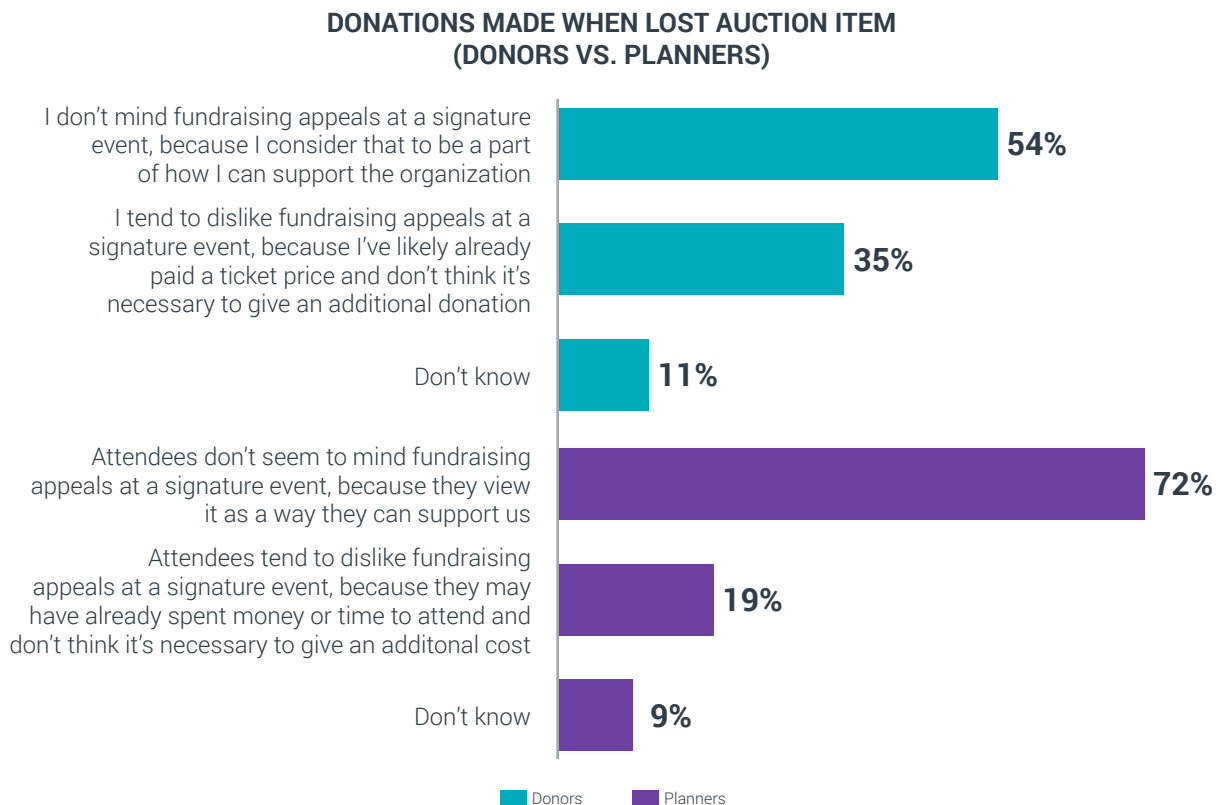


Figure 26: Which of the following better characterizes how you feel, even if neither is exactly right?

Section 4: Wrapping up signature events

Donors don't feel that post-event communications from an organization is a must, like most event planners do. However, donors do want to leave events feeling like they had a good time, were thanked, and learned more about the positive work the organization is doing.

Event planners feel that the most important event factor is showcasing the positive difference that donors make to their cause. Donors agree, but not quite to the extent that donors believe. At 35%, donors think that having fun at an event is just as important as seeing the positive difference their contributions make to a given cause. Donors also think that it's more important to thank and recognize volunteers and donors and to leave with something tangible than event planners.

IMPORTANT EVENT FACTORS FOR POST-EVENT DONOR ENGAGEMENT

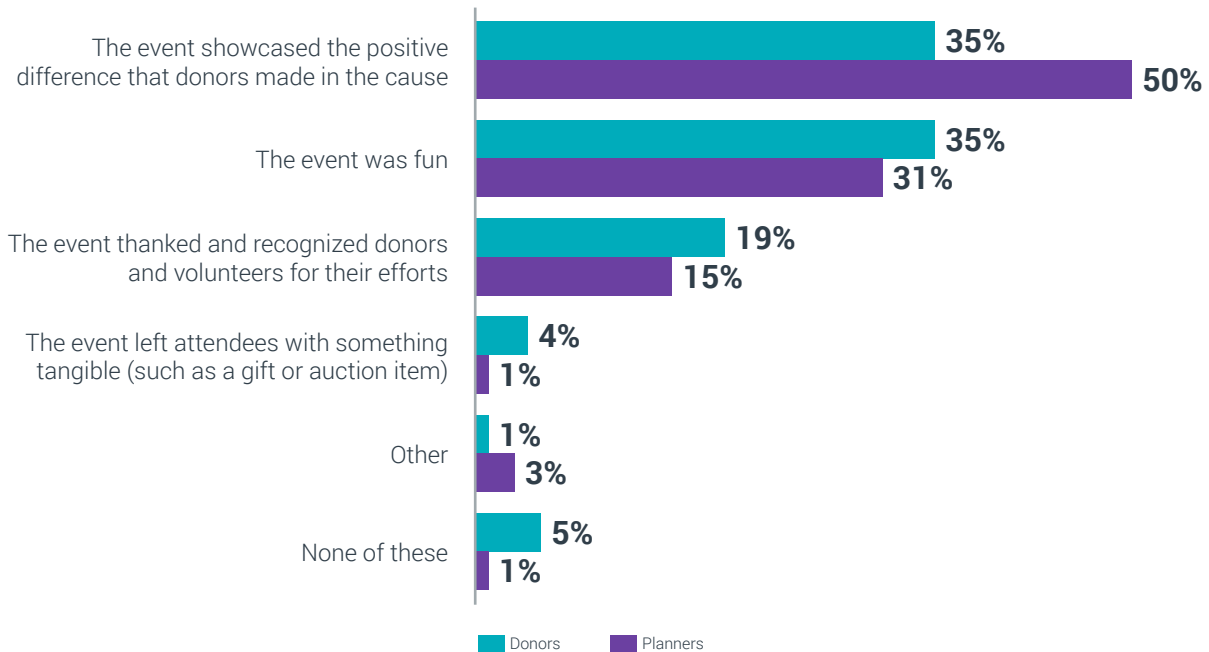


Figure 28: Which of the following do you think is most important when it comes to [feeling engaged] [donors feeling engaged] after attending a signature event? That...

Planners over anticipate that leaving an event feeling adequately thanked is “very important” to donors at 86% compared to donors’ 29%. Most donors feel that leaving an event with adequate understanding of how the organization depends on donors is “very important” at 53%. This is the biggest gap in post-event expectations, whereas both parties think that leaving an event with something tangible is the least important.

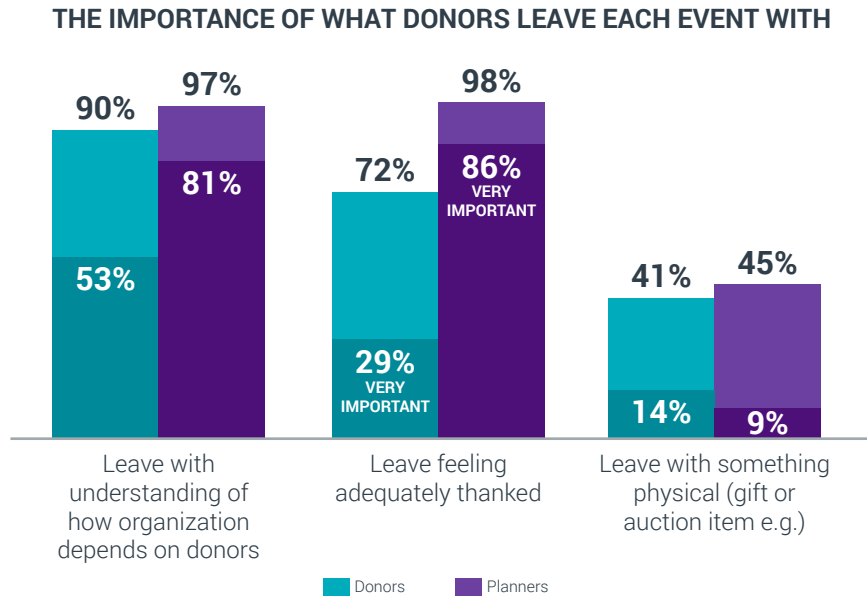


Figure 29: How important are each of the following?

96% of planners think that it’s somewhat or very important to follow up with donors after a signature event. Only 55% of donors think that it’s somewhat or very important for organizations to follow up with them after an event. Additionally, 41% of donors think that it’s not too important or not at all important to receive post-event follow up, and only 3% of donors feel that way. Overall, post-event follow up doesn’t play as strong of a role as planners think when keeping donors engaged with their organization after an event.

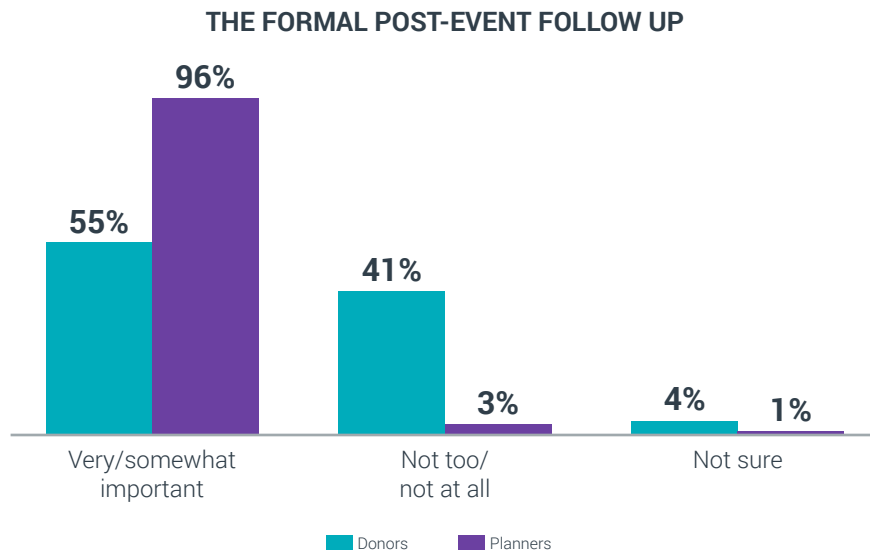


Figure 30: Donor: How important to keeping you engaged with an organization is it that someone from the organization follow-up with you after the signature event? Planner: How important is it to keep donors engaged with formal follow-up after the signature event?

Nearly four out of five event planners think that it's very important or somewhat important to follow up with guests after an event so that they don't miss out on their attendance for a future event. However, less than two out of five donors feel the same way. Donors don't feel that post-event follow up contributes too heavily to whether they attend an event by that same organization in the future.

POST-EVENT FOLLOW UP AND HOW IT AFFECTS FUTURE ATTENDANCE

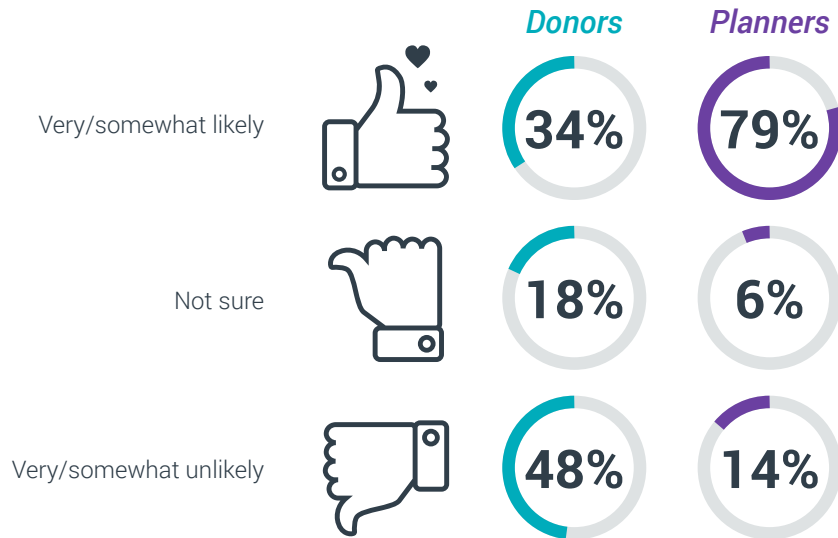


Figure 31: Donors: If an organization neglects to follow-up with you after a signature event, how likely is it that they would miss out on your future *attendance*?
Planners: If your organization neglects to follow-up with a donor after a signature event, how likely is it that you might miss out on future *attendance* from that donor at the next signature event?

The results of post-event follow up affect future donations similarly to how they do future attendance. Planners place a heavier importance on follow-up to help ensure future donations at 82%, but only 31% of donors feel that it's very or somewhat likely that they would stop giving to an organization that didn't follow up with them after an event. More than half of donors say it's unlikely they would not give a donation to that organization, and 14% of planners think that they would miss out on those donations.

POST-EVENT FOLLOW UP AND HOW IT AFFECTS FUTURE DONATIONS

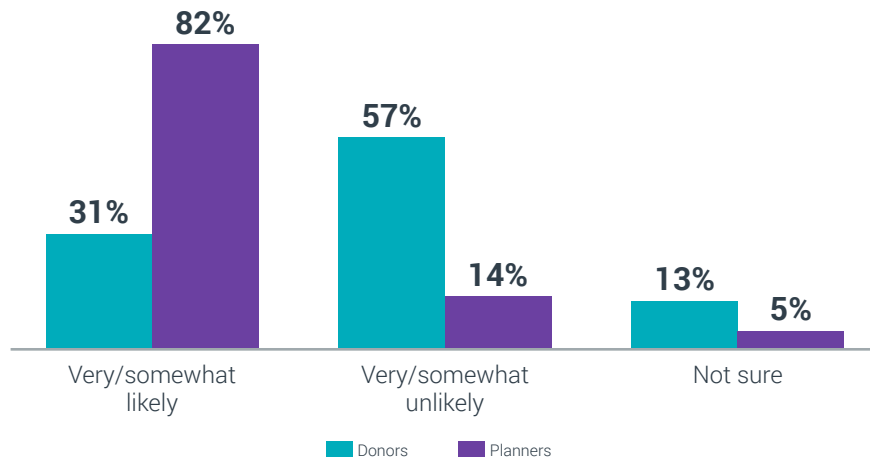


Figure 32: Donors: If an organization neglects to follow-up with you after a signature event, how likely is it that they would miss out future *donations* from you?
Planners: If your organization neglects to follow-up with a donor after a signature event, how likely is it that you might miss out on future *donations* from that donor?

Millennials are more likely than other generations to not make future donations or attend events if an organization doesn't follow up with them following an event. They're followed by Generation X, and then boomers+.

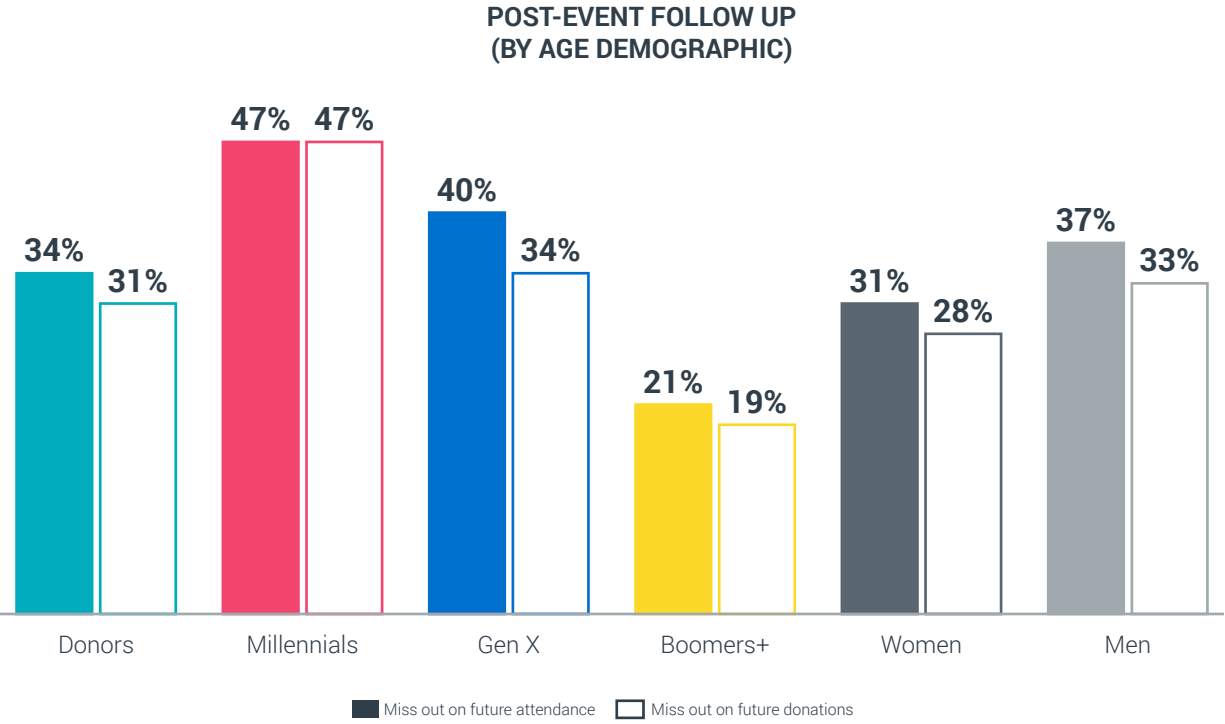


Figure 33: Generational breakdown of Figure 31 and Figure 32.

Recommendations

Based on donor and planner responses to our survey, there are several actions nonprofits can take to enhance and improve signature events and fundraising efforts. Here are our recommendations:

1

Diversify your outreach

when you're trying to find new donors to attend events or give donations. Shake things up and build in some room for experimenting and trying something new. For example, try a telethon with millennial supporters, host networking happy hours before the big gala, or make time to send more personal emails instead of one big e-blast.

2

Incorporate inclusive giving

to encourage participation from all attendees. If you plan to only host a live appeal, perhaps you want to also add a raffle or game of chance to inspire some fun and friendly competition.

3

Communicate your mission

because it will impact future donations and donor engagement. Conveying your mission is important to current donors and also to new donors who might be on the fence in deciding how much they want to give to support your mission.

4

Enhance your silent and live auctions

to keep them fresh for donors. Guests enjoy the competition and fun they bring to events, so don't discount them! Guests also enjoy games of chance, like raffles and wine pulls.

5

Understand the importance of personal networks and social media.

People like to do things with their friends and those within their network, so encourage them to talk to others about your organization and its mission. Social media is also a powerful tool to connect with millennials as both donors and event attendees.

6

Provide multiple ways for donors to give,

as well as multiple times throughout a year. Signature events are crucial elements to fundraising, but donors give 4-10 times in one year (according to our **Donor Experience Study**). Be sure to open those outlets for them to make giving as easy as possible.

Survey Methodology

Commissioned by Community Brands, Finn Partners conducted an online survey of 600 U.S. individuals who self-reported they are 18 years old or older and have donated to a nonprofit organization within the last year, or attended a charity event within the last three years. Survey respondents were recruited through an online non-probability sample, meaning findings are not projectable to the larger population of members. The term "Donors" refers specifically to those who were surveyed. Quotas were set so the survey is representative of key demographics. A parallel online survey was conducted among 720 professionals who identify as professional event planners for nonprofit organizations and foundations. The term "Planners" refers specifically to those who were surveyed. Survey respondents were recruited using both an online non-probability sample and Community Brands' lists. The terms "Donors" or "Planners" refers specifically to those who were surveyed. The surveys were in the field during September of 2019.

About GiveSmart

GiveSmart is a mobile fundraising platform that enables donors to bid, donate, and make purchases right on their phones. Nonprofit organizations use the software for signature fundraising events and giving campaigns throughout the year as a way to track donors and collect payments.

To learn more visit www.givesmart.com or follow us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), or [Pinterest](#).

About Community Brands

Community Brands is the leading provider of cloud-based software and payment solutions for associations, nonprofits, K-12 schools, and faith-based groups. Specifically for associations, Community Brands offers solutions for membership management, learning management, career centers, and event and camp management. Industry-leading products include YourMembership, Nimble AMS, NetForum, Aptify, Crowd Wisdom, Freestone, YM Careers, GiveSmart, MIP Fund Accounting, and Expo Logic. Through innovation and technology, the company empowers more than 100,000 clients and partners of all sizes to create greater member engagement, grow revenue, and improve staff efficiency. To learn more, visit www.communitybrands.com or follow us on [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).



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