The Donor Journey Explained: 
A Roadmap to Grow Generosity at Scale
Today’s speakers

Daniel Sullivan
Director of Philanthropy
Parkland Health Foundation
LinkedIn

Erik Tomalis
Director of Business Development
Virtuous
LinkedIn
**Economic**
Global economy is showing signs of recovery
Federal Reserve officials announce pause in US interest-rate hikes
Stocks climb on inflation data, moving further into a bull market

**Social**
Top agenda items for WEF Davos Meeting 2023 were reversing inequality, safeguarding economic futures, and upholding civil freedoms
UNESCO report reveals $97B global gap to reach the Sustainable Development Goal's education targets

**Political**
World leaders will come together in September to discuss the Sustainable Development Goal midpoint
The US has begun ramping up to its 2024 presidential election
Global tensions rise between the US and China over Taiwan, and ongoing crises in Ukraine

**Technological**
Generative AI and machine learning are becoming more disruptive and accessible
Shakeups amongst top tech leadership are playing out in the stock market and economy
US, Europe, and China racing to drive quantum computing innovation

**Environmental**
Jan. 2023’s climate report showed 7th highest global average temperature since 1850
US cities see unprecedented impact from climate crisis
WEF, WTO, and WBG launch Action on Climate and Trade
2022 IN PHILANTHROPY

FRESH FACES
FEBRUARY

POWER SHIFT
MAY

THE GIVING CRISIS
JULY

FUNDRAISERS WANTED
NOVEMBER

MARCH

JUNE

SEPTEMBER

DECEMBER

THE FIERCE FIGHT FOR CLIMATE PHILANTHROPY’S FUTURE

“WHERE DID ALL THE EMPLOYEES GO?”

VOLUNTEERS: WHY AND HOW CHARITIES SHOULD REVIVE A DECLINING BUT VITAL SOURCE

THE FUTURE IS NOW

virtuous
Giving declined to $499.33 billion in 2022, a year influenced by the stock market and economic uncertainty.
New economic challenges emerged in 2022 that had a dampening effect on giving

CHALLENGES INCLUDED:
- S&P 500 declined 25.4% adjusted for inflation (-19.4% in current dollars)
- Disposable personal income declined 7.5% adjusted for inflation (-0.1% in current dollars)
- Inflation reached 8.0%, the highest rate in 40 years

DESPITE THESE CHALLENGES, THERE WERE SOME BRIGHT SPOTS:
- Unemployment reached one of the lowest rates in the last 50 years
- GDP grew 1.1% adjusted for inflation (9.2% in current dollars)
Although giving fluctuated in 2022, it remains resilient over the years.
Giving by individuals experienced decline after two of the most generous giving years on record.

**GIVING BY INDIVIDUALS, 2018-2022**
*(in billions of dollars)*

- **2018:** $352.9B, $302.8B
- **2019:** $344.5B, $300.9B
- **2020:** $365.1B, $323.0B
- **2021:** $368.2B, $341.0B
- **2022:** $319.0B, $319.0B

Giving by foundations is growing as a share of total giving.
Why does generosity matter?
“We have to devise means of making known the facts in such a way as to touch the imagination of the world. The world is not ungenerous, but unimaginative and very busy.”

Eglantyne Jebb | Founder of Save the Children
We’re facing a major challenge...
Why nonprofits are changing...

**Traditional Approach**
- Lagging Donor Retention
- Drifting from Today’s Donor
- Legacy Tactics = Same Results

**Responsive Fundraising**
- 10% increase in average gift
- 12% increase in retention
- 20% decrease in staff time
- 10x ROI

*Based on aggregated results from other Virtuous customers*
The world you fundraise in has changed.
What changed?

Shift from mass communications to personal, responsive experiences.

- **Personalized experiences**
  Moving away from one-size-fits-all

- **Two-way, behavior driven**
  Triggered in response to data signals
Giving is personal

Today’s donors expect a personal connection to causes they care about.
The legacy, impersonal model

Donor/Prospect Acquisition
- Personal and varied
- Based on donor’s intent

Retention & Cultivation
- One-to-many (“Spray and Pray”)
- One-way based on nonprofit timing.
- Disconnected from intent
Two important questions

1. Why do donors continue to give?
2. How can you cultivate this at scale?
Responsive Fundraising

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Responsive Fundraising

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The Insight

Donors continue to give when they feel **connected with** and have **confidence in** an organization working on a cause they **care deeply about**.
Two important questions

1. Why do donors continue to give?
2. How can you cultivate this at scale?
The First Principles of Fundraising

Connecting supporters with your story through systems.

Supporters
Donors, Stakeholders, Volunteers, Board, Staff

Strategies & Systems
Campaigns, Processes, Habits, Metrics, Communications, Platforms

Story
Mission, Impact, Purpose, Outcomes, Beneficiaries
The Fundraising Growth Model

Fundraising Growth Levers

**Acquisition**
How you engage new donors with your nonprofit’s impact.

**Advocacy**
How frequently your donors refer others to support your cause.

**Retention**
How you build lasting relationships and earn donor loyalty.

**Cultivation**
How you deepen the engagement each donor has with our cause.
A better approach

**Responsive Fundraising**

Flourishing nonprofits are using responsive fundraising to connect personally with each supporter and unlock holistic generosity.

01 **Listen**
Identify key signals and learn why supporters give

02 **Connect**
Connect personally and automate touches as needed

03 **Suggest**
Suggest next right step with personalized asks

04 **Learn**
Test and validate to become even more responsive
One important gap...
The Problem

Most nonprofits are **handcuffed** to **systems and mindsets** designed for a world that **no longer exists**.
“Every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets.”

Paul Batalden | MD, Researcher, Healthcare
How do you upend the status quo and lead your teams to be responsive?
The Responsive System

- **Donor Growth Model**
  - Donor Growth Model
  - Acquisition, Retention, Cultivation

- **Responsive Fundraising**
  - Listen, Connect, Suggest

- **Responsive Teams**
  - Visibility, Collaboration, Integration

- **Responsive Platforms**
  - Responsive CRM, Automation, Smart Giving, Email/Mail/Text, AI, Analytics
Responsive Mindset #1

Personal for All

From the $10,000 to the $50 donor, responsive teams design personalized donor journeys, and build the processes and adopt technology to treat all donors like major donors.
Imagine for a moment...

Meet Stephen
Attends 2023’s Glimmer of Hope Gala

1 hr
TY email with a survey on interests

1 Day
Thank you call from team

2 Days
SMS from Program Team based on interests

1 Day
Email w/ donation ask based on page Stephen visited

Stephen Visits Site

15 Days
Postcard closing the loop on impact

Stephen Gives!

Connection is based on timing & intent. Multi-channel. Hyper personal.
What if...

Barnabas
First gift to Health System

New Donor Journey

Jenna
Abandons donation page

Online Gift Recovery

Courtney
Hasn’t given in 13 months

Lapsed Donor Journey

Neal
Grateful Patient Journey

Awareness Donor Journey
Responsive, dynamic campaigns

Donor/Prospect Acquisition
Personal. Based on Donor Timing

Invited by a friend
Events
Story that Resonates
Mail
Fun with Friends
P2P
Urgent & Newsworthy
Media
Personal Connection
Friends

Donor/Prospect Acquisition
Personal. Based on Donor Timing

12% Retention
10% Average Gift
Engagement
Responsive Mindset #2

Innovate, Experiment, & Embrace Failure

Responsive nonprofits are constantly innovating, experimenting, and adapting their processes. They try new things. They embrace new ideas. And they get comfortable with failing.
Responsive Mindset #3

Focus On Trust

Every relationship thrives on trust and accountability. We all want to know the people we are supporting will do what they say and act in the ways we expect.
“Resources will tend to flow naturally toward you when you focus on the most important aspect of the fund-raising process: creating human connections.”

Jennifer McCrea | The Generosity Network
The Insight

Donors continue to give when they feel connected with and have confidence in an organization working on a cause they care deeply about.
Responsive Mindset #4

Value Motivational Insights Over Behavior

Responsive nonprofits seek out the motivation behind the behavior first. They don’t value what someone is doing as much as why they’re doing it.
The more you listen, the more you begin to understand how each person wants to connect with the cause.
# What Are You Listening For?

Three (3) types of donors signals you should listen for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involvement</th>
<th>Interest</th>
<th>Intent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How they engage</td>
<td>What they engage with</td>
<td>Why they engage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active donor ~4 years LTD Giving &gt; $5k Volunteers often</td>
<td>Gives monthly to women support programs</td>
<td>Said in a survey that she gives because of she saw first-hand the value of mentorship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-time donor Attended a virtual event Gave $500 online</td>
<td>Requested more info on child advocacy programs</td>
<td>Visited the website again after being disengaged for four (4) months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Viewed child adoption articles on our website</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Responsive Mindset #5

Break Down Silos: People & Data

Silos between programs, fundraising, and communications departments no longer serve your organization, donors, or beneficiaries. The more crossover between teams, the more responsive your organization can be.
How Virtuous Enables Responsive Fundraising

Listen
- Donor Development
  - Fundraiser Pro
- Marketing & Communications
  - Marketing Platform
- Digital Fundraising & Events
  - Giving Pro

Connect

Suggest
- Fundraising Operations
- Automation
- Signals
- Nonprofit CRM

Acquisition
Retention
Cultivation
Advocacy
Responsive Mindset #6

Be Abundantly Thankful

Generosity begets generosity. This means giving back to your donors even more than they give to you — prioritizing your relationship over their money.
Responsive Mindset #6

“Thank You” Works

Thank you call → 39% In Revenue

Source: Penelope Burk’s ‘Donor Centered Fundraising’
Responsive Mindset #7

Design Plans To Adapt & Stay Curious

True responsive nonprofits keep changing, innovating, and adjusting. They are always looking to the future.
“Some organizations will thrive from this increased chaos, some will be unprepared, and some will merely fight it and lose.”

Seth Godin | Marketer, Innovator, Author
Responsive nonprofits need to embrace a shift in mindset that moves away from treating generosity as a transaction and instead recognize it for the meaningful experience it is.
Flourishing nonprofits are using responsive fundraising to connect personally with each supporter and unlock holistic generosity.

A better approach

**Listen**
Identify key signals and learn why supporters give

**Connect**
Connect personally and automate touches as needed

**Suggest**
Suggest next right step with personalized asks

**Learn**
Test and validate to become even more responsive
The Responsive Fundraising Pack

Send an email to Erik.Tomalis@virtuous.org with subject line “Responsive Fundraising” and we’ll send you:

☑️ A 30-minute video showcasing the why and how of responsive fundraising

☑️ The 100+ Page Responsive Fundraising Blueprint & Playbook

☑️ A self-paced Responsive Assessment to benchmark your nonprofit’s fundraising

Want it right now?

Scan this QR code!