

# THE DONOR RESPONDS, ARE YOU LISTENING?

## The Value of Data From Your Donation Processor

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I have worked in nonprofit fundraising for nearly a decade. I've been on the client side, the agency side, and for the past year have had the opportunity to experience the service partner side. During that time, I've seen the challenges to our industry continue to grow, including rising costs, the increasing difficulty of acquiring new donors, and declining retention rates.

As an industry, we have embraced and accepted these challenges, always looking for ways to improve our traditional fundraising. It's in my current role that I've seen a golden opportunity to complement existing fundraising strategies and improve overall results. That opportunity lies more fully in leveraging donor response data and the touch points that occur on the back end.

Every time a donor responds to a fundraising appeal—whether it be with a donation, a comment, or a combination of the two—they provide valuable and unique behavioral data that can help a nonprofit organization better understand the needs and wants of a donor. These insights can help an organization optimize their interactions with a donor to enrich the overall donor experience, thus increasing retention and lifetime value.

Insights can be as simple as a donor updating their mailing address, adding their phone number or email address, or showing an interest in certain programs that indicate their desire to continue a relationship with your organization. These insights are actionable and should be followed up on in a planned and specific way.

Other insights may be a bit more involved, such as when a donor replies with a note explaining how they wish they had the money to make a donation, but can't because they live on a fixed income. At first glance, this seems like most pieces of comment mail. But, upon closer inspection, the handwriting is shaky, which suggests they are elderly. And when looking up their record in the database, this donor may have been consistently giving small gifts for ten plus years. This makes them a great candidate for planned giving follow-up.

This is just one of the many valuable insights that are revealed when a mail piece is being processed. Going beyond basic donor data, the detailed response data that can be gathered during donation processing can inform meaningful personalization for follow-up efforts and subsequent interactions, all while improving the donor experience and year-over-year performance metrics. ➤



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