

Successful Giving Day eGuide

Introduction

Giving Days - a virtual party for your cause

If you're a fundraiser, you're seeing news about **Giving Days** everywhere.

And the buzz about **Giving Days** is for good reason - when done well, they have all the excitement and engagement of a great party, while they build awareness and donations for your cause.

And like a great party, the secrets to **Giving Day** success combine great planning with a little magic.

Not to overstate the analogy, but these are a few parallels to consider:

- Timing is key
- A unifying theme creates excitement and engagement
- There are some key people you want in attendance to make the party great It's got to be fun - games and activities can make a big difference
- The execution details matter: flow, food, decorations, music
- Party favors (rewards) can be an unexpected delight
- Sharing memories - stories, pictures - after the party keeps the good feeling going, and makes everyone want to attend next year.

We incorporated each of these elements into **BMore Gives More**, a GiveCorps campaign to be the most generous city in America on **#GivingTuesday 2013**. By following a detailed plan, **we raised \$5.7 million in a day!**

About the Author

Jamie McDonald is the Chief Giving Officer of [Network for Good](#) and the Founder of GiveCorps. Jamie is an expert in online engagement and giving, inspiring Millennial donors, and the force behind **BMore Gives More**, the movement to raise \$5.7 million in a day on **#GivingTuesday 2013**. Prior to founding GiveCorps, she spent 17 years as an investment banker at Alex. Brown and Deutsche Bank.



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What is a Giving Day?

A Giving Day is a 24 hour fundraising event bringing together donors, volunteers and /or communities around a common cause.

Giving challenges, another form of a giving “day,” can take place for different durations, and generally include a significant matching funds challenge as a core component of the day.



Geographically driven
BMoreGivesMore
GiveMN
Give Local America



Organization driven
Columbia University
St. Paul’s School for Girls
GlobalGiving



Theme driven:
#GivingTuesday
Twive and Receive

About the campaign to make Baltimore the most generous city in America.



In 2013, with the second annual #GivingTuesday effort on the horizon, GiveCorps formed a coalition of key leaders and stakeholders to plan a unique #GivingTuesday campaign: **BMore Gives More**.

BMore Gives More was a simple campaign with a big ambition: to make Baltimore the most generous city in America on #GivingTuesday.

BMore Gives More made a splash for Baltimore on the national stage, as a groundbreaking Giving Day. **The campaign raised \$5.7 million**, far exceeding our \$5 million goal. It built support in dollars and volunteer time for 100s of Baltimore nonprofits – large and small.

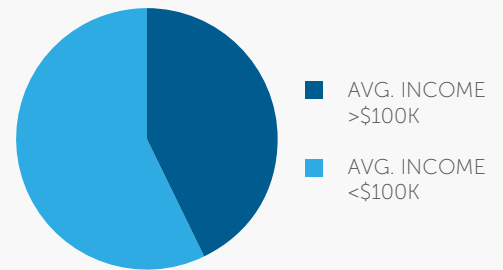
It has been praised by leaders and leading publications around the country for its unique approach to engaging citizens, nonprofits, companies, and small businesses in **an inspiring day of generosity**.

Great reasons to participate in a Giving Day

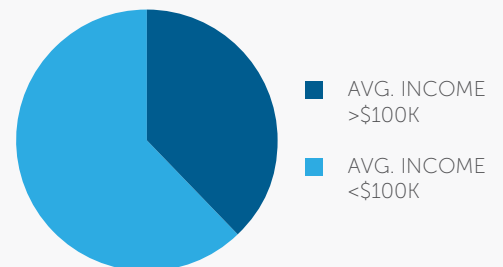
- 1 Leverage your team's efforts by capitalizing on the energy, publicity, and branding of a bigger campaign.
- 2 It's an incredible opportunity to tell your story, to inspire your connected audience of donors and non-donors.
- 3 Fundraising continues after the big day because of the good spirit it fosters, according to Justin Ware of Bentz, Whaley and Flessner (Post May 14, 2013).
- 4 Great way to acquire new donors. According to Kimbia, past Giving Days have yielded 20% to 60% new donors for participating nonprofit organizations.
- 5 Online donors have higher average incomes: so there is more potential over time! See chart →
- 6 Giving Days are fun. Talk to any organization that has done one, and they will share with you that, beyond the dollars, the energy, goodwill and sense of accomplishment that results from a Giving Day are one-of-a-kind.

Donor Income Per Channel

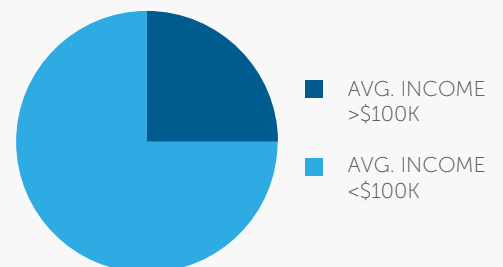
Dual Channel Donors



Online-Only Donors



Offline-Only Donors



Source: 2012 Convio Study

When should I do a Giving Day?

The timing of your Giving Day is an important question, with no single “right” answer. These are a few possibilities to consider:



- GivingTuesday – Takes place on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving.
- City/regional/state Giving Days – Talk to your local community foundation or nonprofit convener.
- Other meaningful timeframes:
 - An anniversary
 - Founder’s Day
 - Theme timeframe (Breast cancer awareness month, Earth Day, etc.)

The most important timing for your Giving Day is a timeframe that gives you a meaningful, inspiring connection with potential givers and adequate planning time.

How much time do I need?

Depending on the size of your goal, and the capacity of your team, 3 months is the minimum planning time. Six to nine months is recommended by many experts.



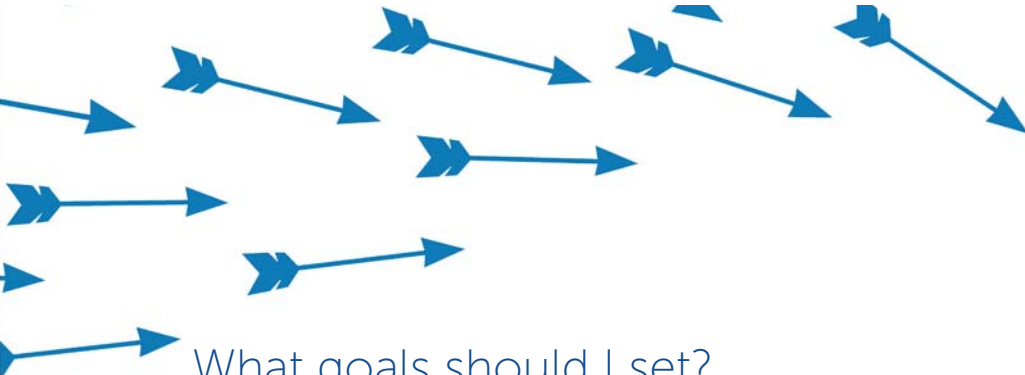
One consideration: sometimes shorter timeframes can really create focus. We decided to launch BMore Gives More in August 2013, held our first partners meeting in September 2013, and raised \$5.7 million on #GivingTuesday, December 3, 2013. We plan to take longer this year, but the tight timeframe spurred focused effort that served the campaign well.

What budget should I plan for?

If you are planning a Giving Day in conjunction with a bigger initiative – like #Giving Tuesday or a regional day of giving – you will be able to piggyback on some of the marketing that is done by the organizers. In this instance, a budget of about 10% of your fundraising goal is a good rule of thumb.



If you are planning a standalone giving or challenge day, you should budget 15-20%



What goals should I set?

Every successful endeavor is a combination of planning and luck, and your successful Giving Day will be no exception.

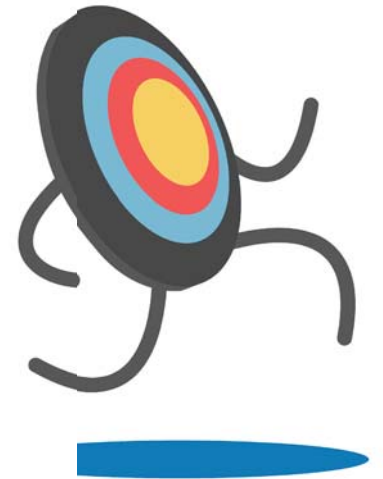
In your first year, setting goals will be an educated best guess. Achieving your first year goal is where the

$$(\text{Planning} + \text{Luck}) = \text{Success}$$

equation comes in. So from a planning perspective, these are a few key goals to consider. You don't have to use them all:

- Dollars to be raised
- Number of donors
- Number of new donors
- Number of volunteers (if you are including an activity)
- % Participation among key groups – like staff

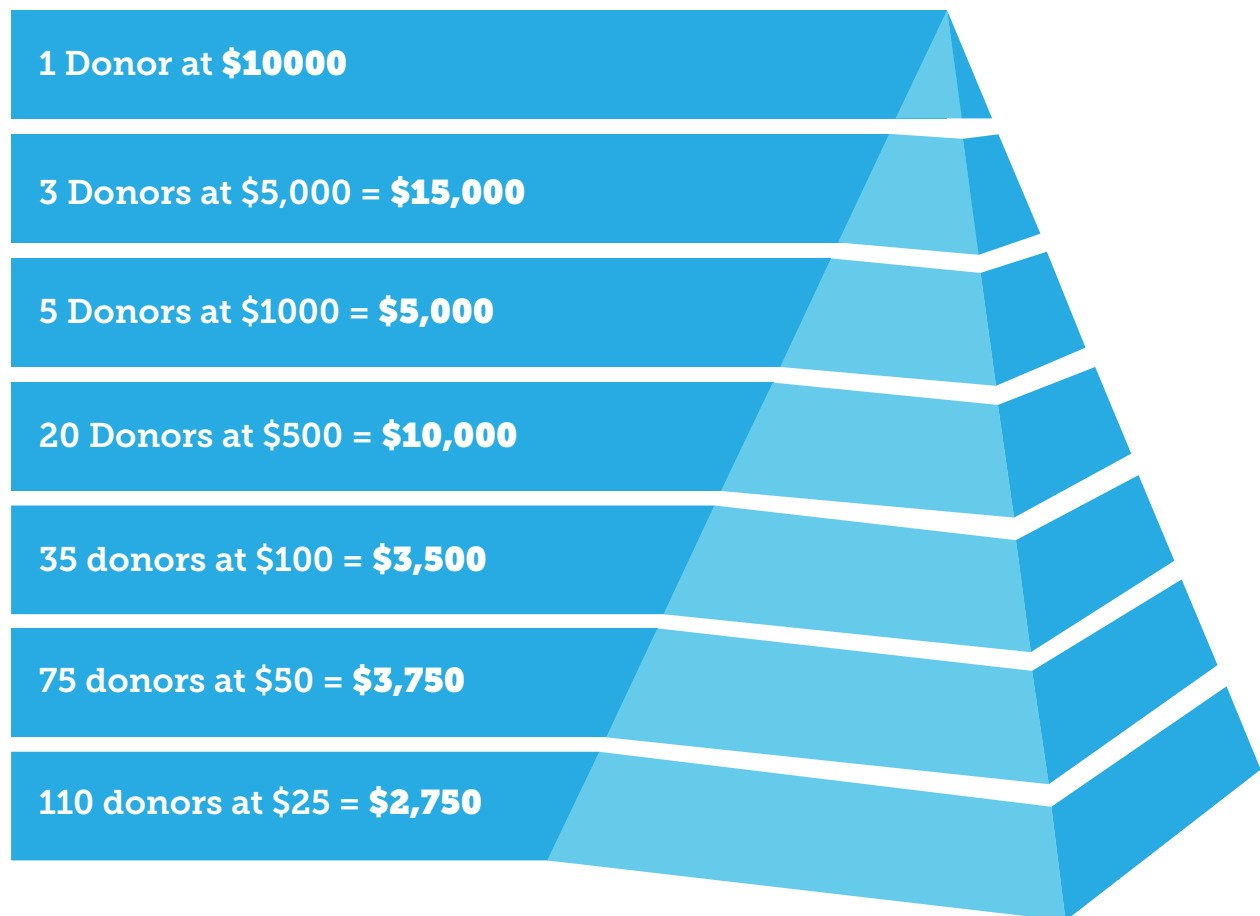
While you won't have experience to work from, you can do some predictive planning around logical paths to your goals.



For example: If your goal is to raise \$50,000 on your Giving Day, then this is one way to predict a path to success:

- \$50,000 Goal
- 8,500 donors in data file
- 255 Donors if you achieve 3% participation (and you'll definitely attract new donors too, so this should be a safe bet)

So how does that set up in a giving pyramid?



So create your own giving pyramid and think it through.

If your giving pyramid feels ambitious but achievable, then it is a great place to start with a first year goal. If it seems too easy to achieve, boost the dollar amount. Too much of a stretch? Dial back.

How do I incorporate matching funds?

One of the most powerful tools on a Giving Day is matching funds. Consider identifying a lead donor for your Giving Day who is willing to donate marketing fuel to your Giving Day engine, with matching funds. Even a small amount of matching fund dollars can provide significant benefit to a campaign.



If you can raise as little as 5% - 10% of your total fundraising goal in matching funds, there are simple but effective ways to use this to amplify your campaign. These are a few ways to deploy the dollars effectively:

- Match a % of dollar raised up to the amount of matching funds you have. So if you have \$5,000 against a \$50,000 goal, match \$1 for every \$10 raised until you reach your goal.
- Match the first gifts every hour up to an hourly amount. So, if you have \$10,000 in matching funds, match the first \$1,000 each hour for the busiest ten hours of the day.
- Match only gifts up to a certain amount. If one of your goals is number of donors, rather than just dollars, cap your matching funds at \$100 or another amount that reflects your likely average gift.

What technology will I need?

Technology matters in a big way on a Giving Day, and every day. Your online giving platform needs to:



- Feature your inspiring stories on special landing pages
- Be mobile ready for both learning and giving
- Have a clean, simple giving process
- Send an automated thank you and tax receipt
- Be equipped to show your matching funds
- Be easy for your team to set up, update, and manage
- Have instant reporting on the progress of your day

There are many online giving platforms on the market. Network for Good has solutions that offer all of these features and more.

Top 11 Strategies For Your Giving Day

1 Set a BIG goal

Your goal will be one of the most visible anchors of your Giving Day, so make it a motivator.

Your goal should be big and meaningful enough to get people excited to work hard. If it's too easy to reach, it will feel like just another day at the office, and it will be hard to motivate your team.

2 Convene a passionate team

The most important person on your Giving Day is the leader, the quarterback of the day, who leads the team from planning to execution to evaluation. The first decision you should make is who is the passionate, committed, ORGANIZED, individual to assume this role.

With the quarterback identified, you must then focus on engaging the key thought leaders - and loudest voices – among five key groups:

- Staff
- Board
- Clients, participants, or alumni
- Volunteers
- Committed Donors and other potential Ambassadors

Key individuals from each of these groups will form the heart of your Giving Day team – and will largely determine your success. Be sure that they are willing to spend at least an hour or two a week on the campaign, particularly as you get close to the big day.

3 Create a branded campaign

Your Giving Day should stand out from your everyday marketing. If you are participating in a broad Giving Day – like #GivingTuesday or a regional campaign - tie into the campaign. Make use of their marketing assets to associate your organization with the campaign, visually and thematically.

At a minimum, develop a theme and a visual that is used consistently in all of your Giving Day outreach.



Our campaign for Giving Tuesday was branded **BMore Give More**, using the graphic heart of #GivingTuesday and their hashtag, but with a very Baltimore-focused name and message.

4 Build a hub and spoke model

Maximize your team's reach while minimizing the time required from each ambassador by creating a hub and spoke communications model.

Organize and distribute content centrally to your key committee members and ambassadors. They can then distribute to a manageable number of contacts, and be ready to support and answer questions.

5 Build a regular communication plan for all key ambassadors and partners

Your successful Giving Day will depend on SHARING. Using either your organizer's suggested content or your original content, be sure to communicate consistently with your roster of Partners and Ambassadors. Their personal sharing is the most effective way to reach new and lapsed supporters.

Improve your chances of driving this "network effect" by creating a communication plan. We have a complete planning template that you can use as a model at the end of this document. At a minimum, we recommend:

- A weekly touch base leading up to your Giving Day will ensure your Partners and Ambassadors have the latest information and content to share.
- Encourage Ambassadors to use pre-prepared posts, Tweets and visuals in the days leading up to the Giving Day and then hourly on the Giving Day.
- On your Giving Day, send email and social channel updates as you reach key milestones such as 30%, 60%, 80%, 90%, and 100% of goal.
- Prepare thermometers and other visual elements in advance so you will have them handy to share.

6 Take advantage of creative generosity

Although your Giving Day is built around raising funds online from existing and new donors, you can propel a culture of contribution by letting your broader community know that you want their time and talent, too.

Creative contributors to your campaign can provide some of the most effective and memorable social content. These are just some of the creative ways that people got involved with BMore Gives More.

- A military group organized the cleanup of a lot on the property of a local nonprofit.
- A piano was donated to a music organization.
- Lots of people took "Selfless Selfies" holding up signs saying: I ❤️ [Name of Organization]



7 Engage businesses for support

Local businesses, large and small, like to be associated with good causes in their communities, and there are a range of benefits you can offer.

Sponsorships: Direct business sponsorship can defer hard costs through support of marketing, giveaways, etc. Publicize sponsors on your website, in print and in media releases. Invite sponsors to all activities associated with your Giving Day.

Media Sponsor: A local TV or radio station can really amplify your outreach.



Small Businesses: Small businesses can support your campaign with creative marketing initiatives. These are a few ways that small businesses participated in BMore Gives More:

- A Local French Bakery created a special macaroon and gave 50% of the sales to the matching fund pool
- A favorite pizza place created a special Bmore Gives More pizza and donated proceeds to the day.
- A gym created a special workout and gave a % of proceeds to a local nonprofit
- "Rewards" for donors: Throughout the day, local merchants gave rewards to donors. 12 different merchants gave a coupon to donors during a specified hour of the day.

Volunteer activities: Many businesses participated in BMore Gives More by hosting a day of volunteering. Every kind of generosity matters!

8 Create Once, Publish Everywhere: Build a robust content flow encompassing social, online, offline, mail, email

To help spread the word and sustain momentum leading up to your Giving Day, share your organizer's tools, or create online tools for your ambassadors - and refresh with new content each week.

Include ready-to-use hashtags, Facebook posts and images, Tweets, email copy, Campaign logo, Campaign-related photos, postcard and sign templates, infographics, "Top 10 lists" and links to other engaging content.

Ask your community to use the content each week by posting an alert and sending an update email.

Also, invite new content. Welcome your community to upload photos, ask questions to generate new posts, comments and stories, encourage videos and more to energize the conversation around your Giving Day.

9 Gamify

Matching funds: Matching funds can be allocated in straightforward ways, as described previously, but they can also be used to generate excitement and participation. One example would be to give all of the matching for one hour to the nonprofit with the most donors.

Challenges: Challenges come in many forms, and social engagement is one. Consider a challenge where anyone can post the name of their favorite nonprofit on your facebook wall or in your twitter stream, and the NPO with the most shoutouts gets extra matching funds (or another reward – like an event hosted by a local restaurant).

Fundraising teams: Teams can be an exciting way to get individuals that are passionate about particular organizations to compete against each other. There are lots of variations. One of our favorites...local businesses create fundraising teams on behalf of a favorite charity and the winning business team gets bragging rights, t-shirts and a trophy. The trophy stays for one year until next year's winner is named.

10 Celebrating and Thanking donors is key

Three key times to thank and celebrate the supporters of your Giving Day:

Before: Each time you sign up a sponsor, a rewarder, a matching fund contributor, a creative merchant or a fundraising team, thank them personally first, then thank them publically on your website and in social media. Success breeds success!

On the Day: Social is the secret weapon for celebrating and thanking on your Giving Day. Not only does it make the donors feel great to be publicly acknowledged (unless they've given anonymously), but it builds on itself, as donors feel like they are part of a groundswell of support.

After: This is where you can make the biggest impact and secure early support for the following year. Think about a meaningful way to provide a special and moving thank you to everyone that's part of the campaign. These are a few ideas:

- A video of your work's beneficiaries saying thank you.
- Handwritten notes from staff or clients explaining the impact of donations.
- An infographic showing what will be accomplished with the dollars raised.

At a minimum, it's a personal note from your leader and acknowledgment on your website and social channels.



Baltimore Mayor, **Stephanie Rawlings-Blake**, was a big supporter of BMore Gives More.



11 Build a parking lot: Lots of great ideas will come up, but you can't do everything, so build a list of strategies for future years.

Lots of great ideas will come up during your Campaign planning. Create a "parking lot" to help keep on track, while storing the ideas so you can cover them if you find time – or to reconsider for a future Giving Day campaign. Parking lots can be as simple as a folder filled with "sticky notes" or a shared Google document.

The Day of Your Giving Day

The Knight Foundation "Giving Day Playbook" provides useful information on staffing a Giving Day. They recommend staffing for the entire 24-hour period, if you can, starting at midnight. Your Giving Day staff plan should have your team working in shifts during off-peak hours; during the peak hours of 8am - 8pm, your whole team should be in the office.

Suggested staff roles

Leader

- Appoint a Leader so Campaign staff have a single point of contact for questions throughout the day.
- The Leader should have a list of contact information for all staff and partners (include cell phone numbers and email addresses).
- He or she should be ready to address technology issues. Have the phone number of your software provider handy in the event there is an issue.

Donor Support

- Responding to questions from donors by phone and email, including those routed through nonprofits.
- Referring technical questions or issues to the appropriate staff or donation platform representative and ensuring responsiveness to inquiring donors.

Partner and Ambassador Outreach

- Checking in with key partners throughout the day to answer questions, get a feel for what is happening on the ground.
- Arming Ambassadors with content to use throughout the day. Prompt them with phone calls, emails or social channel outreach – and thank them again for their help getting the word out to their networks.

PR

- Sending emails to media outreach list announcing the start of the Giving Day.
- Sending an update email to media outreach list late in the Giving Day.
- Coordinating media appearances for Giving Day leaders.
- Promoting Giving Day events to local media.
- Responding to questions or issues from media partners.
- Responding to media inquiries.

Social media

- Building excitement by posting content to social media channels.
- Engaging with followers, fans, tweets.
- Promoting key milestone content such as Goal Updates, Prize winners, media coverage.
- Alerting other staff to any social postings related to issues or questions. Forwarding any social postings from media to PR staff.

Host a “war-room” or day-of party

Be sure there is water, coffee and food on hand throughout the day to keep everyone energized.

Your team will have worked really hard leading up to your Giving Day, so celebrate their effort and watch the donations tally up with a Giving Day party for staff and volunteers. There will be work to do, as described previously, and a party atmosphere will make a long day more fun.

Generate Media Coverage

Be prepared with updates on your Campaign . People will want to know how the day is going. Have a set of talking points ready for your team.

During regular news coverage cycles:

- Early morning news
- Mid day news
- Evening news
- Late evening news

Email a day-of schedule to your media contact list that includes a reminder of any “day of” events that are happening to attract live footage.

Arm your spokesperson with updated Talking Points. This document will help your spokesperson to:

- Thank key partners and sponsors
- Alert the community to Day-of challenges and contests (especially if they change hourly)
- Inspire the community with Day-of rewards or incentives
- Ask the community to GIVE and SHARE
- Mention the Campaign Hashtag and URL

After Your Giving Day

Measure your metrics

You did it! Now it is important to learn as much as possible from the big day. Evaluate each of these metrics relative to your expectations:

- Donations, and donations by size groupings
- Donors, and new donors
- Social metrics
 - # of posts, tweets, retweets
 - New Likes, Followers
 - Google analytics
- Sources of donors: email, phone, social, other

Honestly assess what the data tells you. What worked and what didn't? Record lessons learned for next year.

Write press release and announcements of your success for all channels of communication

Keep the sharing going. Be prepared with a brief press release announcing the outcome of your campaign – include progress against your goals, quotes from ambassadors on the outcome as well as any interesting facts or anecdotes that might interest the media.

During the early morning hours following your Giving Day, send the press release to your media contact list and announce your success on your same social channels. Use the same quotes, metrics and anecdotes from the press release to amplify the good news story.

Send thank yous and impact statements to donors and partners

A personal note, a thank you video, or an infographic can accompany an email or letter tailored to each important audience that supported your Giving Day:

- New donors
- Prior donors
- Matching fund or challenge contributors
- Business sponsors
- Leadership team
- Staff

Take advantage of the opportunity to capture feedback.

Launch a survey with donors and partners while the day is "fresh" to get ideas and honest feedback to consider for your next Giving Day. Schedule a de-brief to share the survey results.