

The Most Important Ingredient For

# Donor Retention



**NIO** NONPROFIT  
INNOVATION  
& OPTIMIZATION

**SUMMIT**

**2023** DALLAS, TX  
.....  
SEPT. 19-21

DIGITAL FUNDRAISERS **COME ON DOWN!**



*“NIO obviously is a good time.*

*It’s not only been really valuable  
educationally, but it’s been a ton of fun!”*

**Marissa Stein**  
**Coral Reef Alliance**



Get \$500 Off Through Monday at Midnight



**NIO** NONPROFIT INNOVATION & OPTIMIZATION  
**SUMMIT**  
**2023** DALLAS, TX  
.....  
SEPT. 19-21

DIGITAL FUNDRAISERS **COME ON DOWN!**



*“There was so much information that was applicable.*

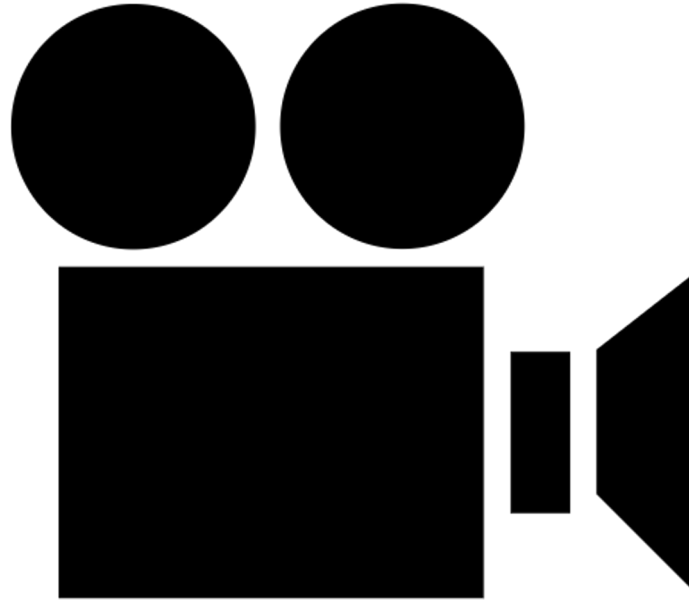
*It won’t just change the way we approach our donors, but our philosophy of why we’re talking to them in the first place.”*

**DeNail Sparks  
EveryNation**



**[niosummit.com](https://niosummit.com)**

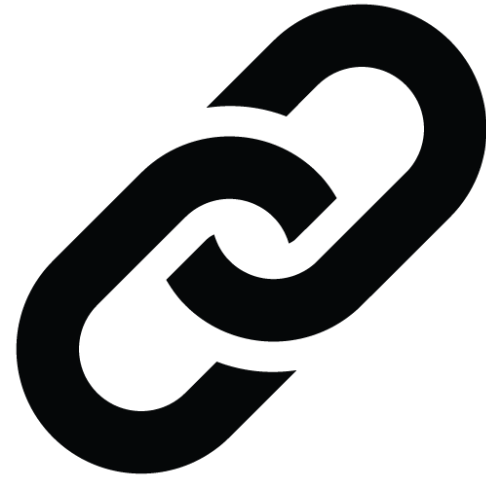
# A Few Quick things...



A video recording of this live webinar will be sent to you afterwards.



# A Few Quick things...



Links to the slide deck and other featured resources will be sent out with the recording.

# A Few Quick things...



We have time for additional Q&A.





# The Comprehensive **Online Donor Retention** Benchmark Report

Part 1: Value Proposition

Presented By  **NextAfter**



Get your free copy of the  
**brand-new**  
**report**

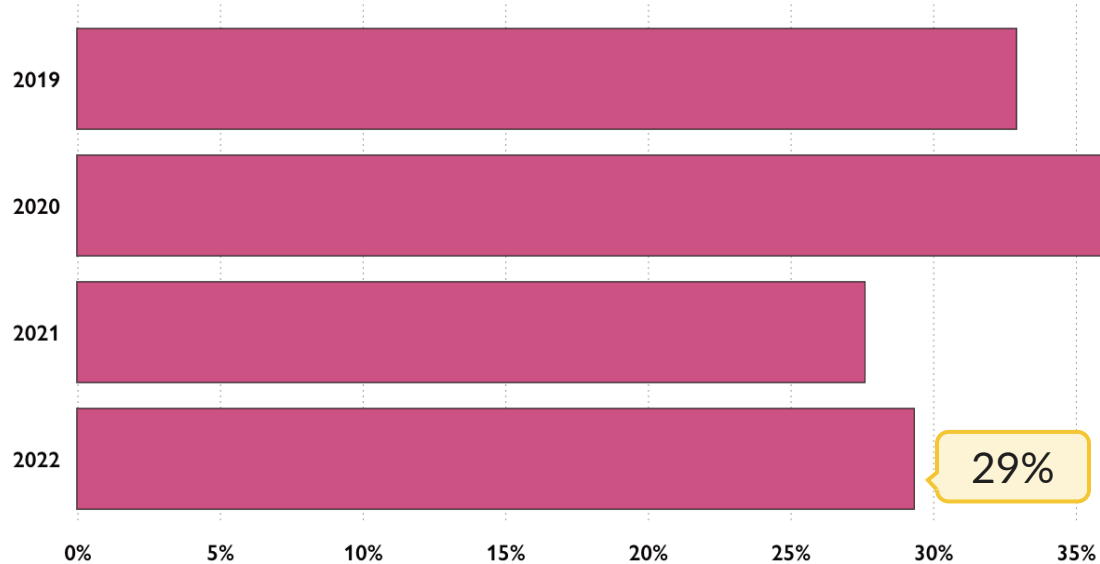
Why focus on retention?





## Overall online one-time donor retention

View as graph ▼



## Online one-time donor retention

View as table ▼

	Overall	New Donors	Prior Donors
All	29%	16%	49%
Cultural	15%	14%	49%
Disaster/International Aid	29%	15%	49%
Environmental	32%	19%	48%
Health	26%	14%	49%
Hunger/Poverty	33%	16%	46%
Public Media	37%	22%	50%
Rights	25%	14%	46%
Wildlife/Animal Welfare	31%	19%	50%

82

DONORS  
LOST

*for every*

100

DONORS  
GAINED

*According to 2005 Fundraising Effectiveness Project*

How do you decode  
donor retention?





Grandma Kay





No quantities or measurements

cook time serves

INGREDIENTS

DIRECTIONS

*Onion*  
*Garlic*  
*Crushed tomatoes*  
*Italian sausage*  
*Bay leaves*  
*Oregano*  
*Worcestershire sauce*

*Directions area with a yellow callout box.*

Absolutely no cooking instructions

???





Are these the right ingredients?

cook time

serves

INGREDIENTS

DIRECTIONS

*Thank you calls*

*Meaningful cause*

*Recurring donations*

*Strong donor relationships*

*Good technology*

*Donor cultivation strategy*

*Worcestershire sauce* ???

How do you put them together?





# We help nonprofits grow their digital fundraising.

Research Lab. Digital-First Agency. Training Institute.





# We help nonprofits grow their digital fundraising.

Research Lab. Digital-First Agency. Training



## We perform experiments...



▲ 14.4% lift

How a simplified decision process and contextual landing page design affects conversion

[VIEW](#)



▲ 28.8% lift

Will a less designed, more text based email lead to more donations?

[VIEW](#)



▲ 125.9% lift

How an open field on a donation form affects donor conversion rate

[VIEW](#)





# Mystery Donor Research



# Donor Retention Performance Data



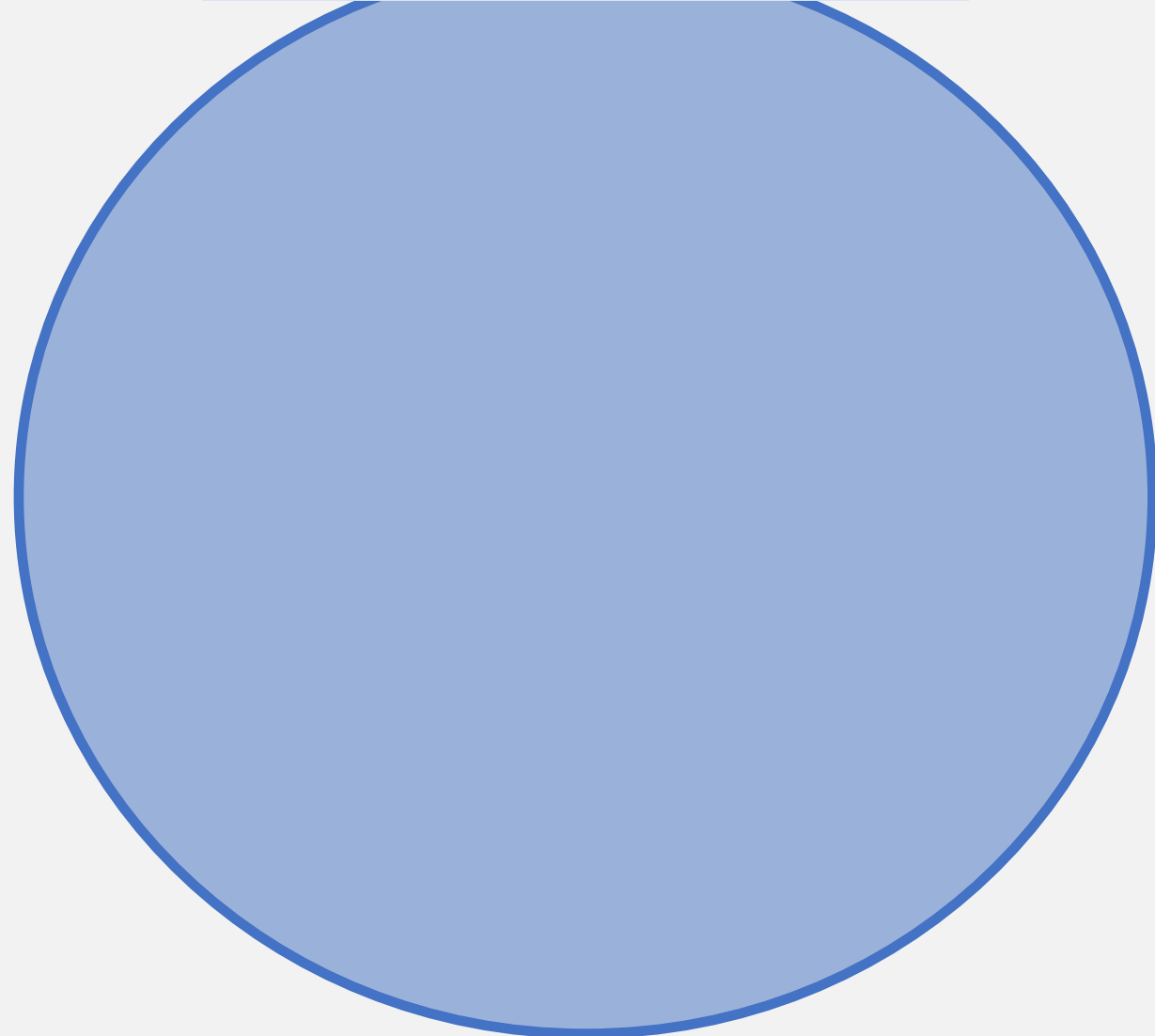
What do donors **experience**?

How are nonprofits **performing**?

**What do  
donors experience?**



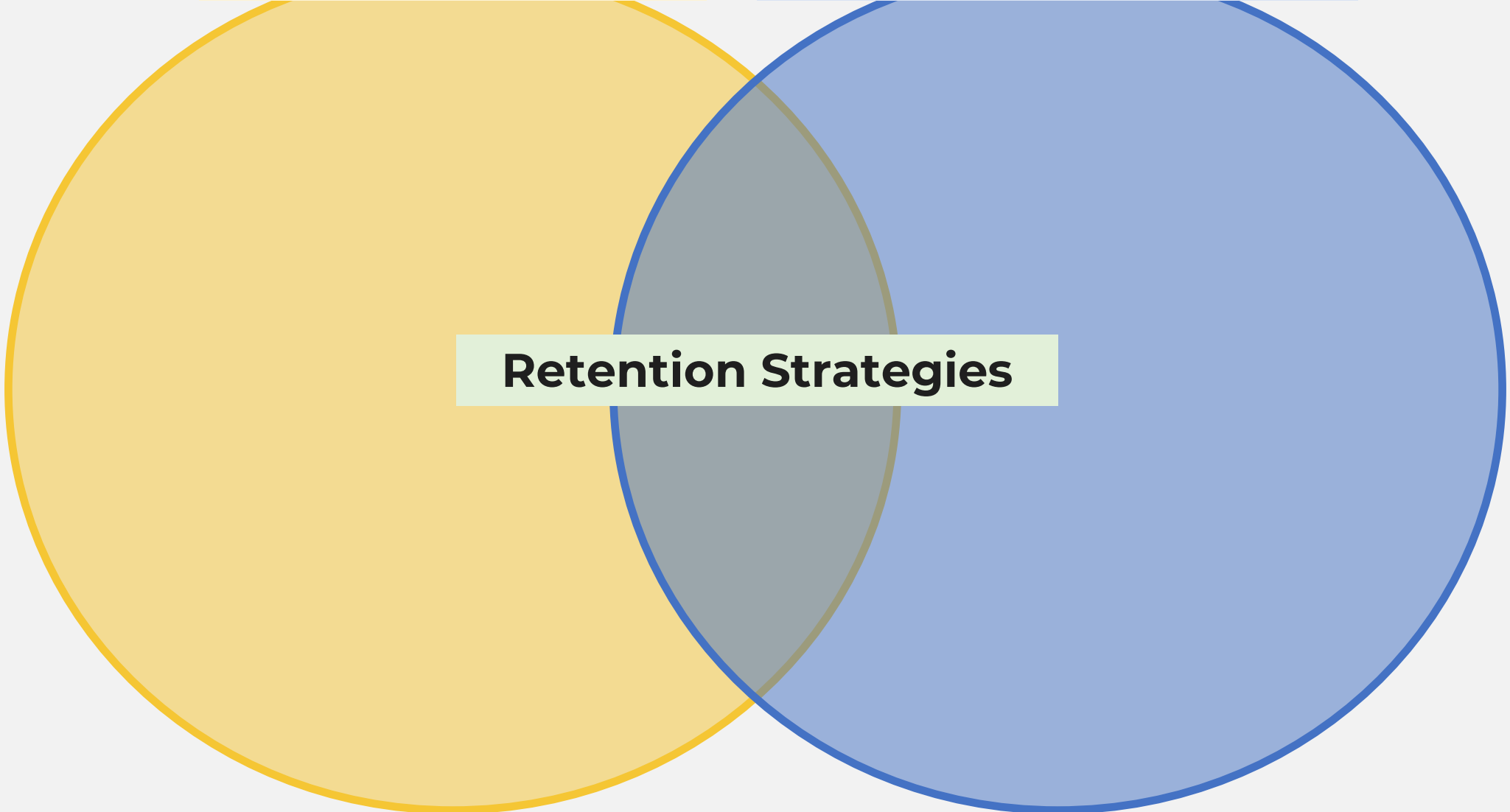
**How are  
nonprofits performing?**



**What do  
donors experience?**

**How are  
nonprofits performing?**

**Retention Strategies**

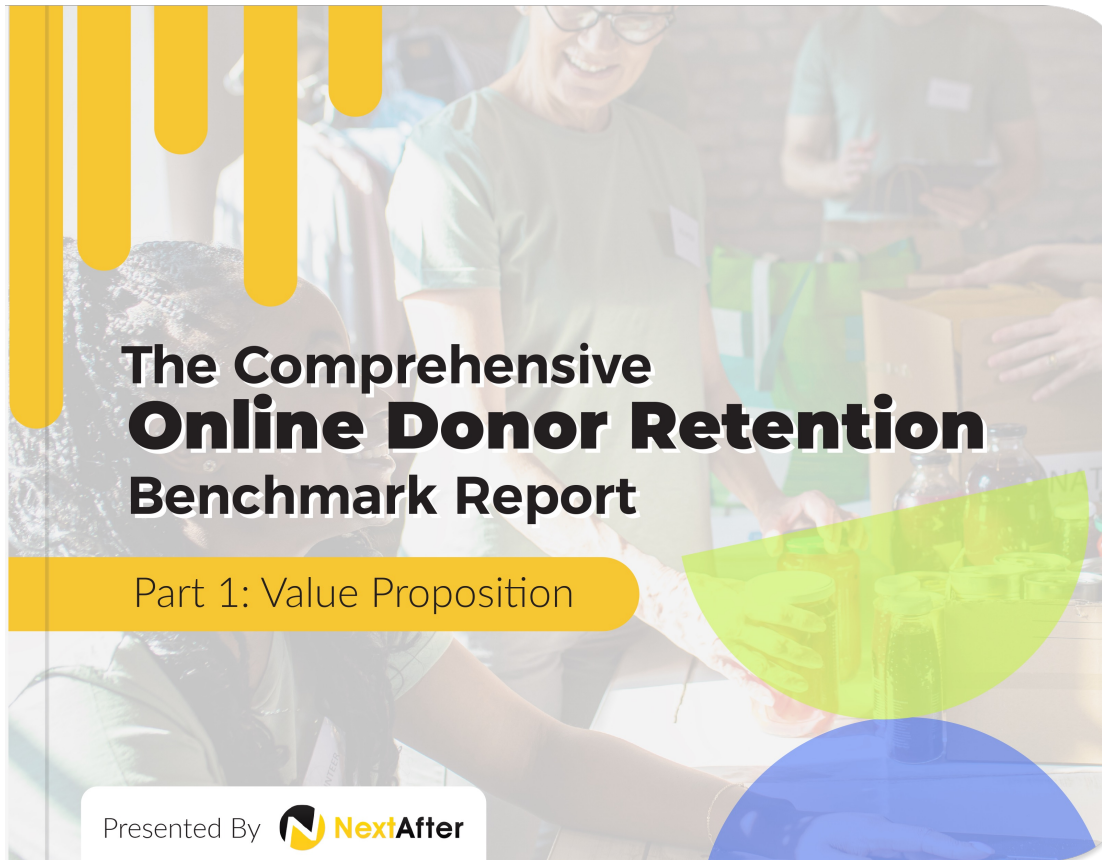


*Special thanks to*  


**211** Organizations

Donor Retention **KPIs**

Donation Experience **Analysis**



Let's start with the **essentials**





*Is retention a function of size?*

Key Question



High Performers

*60.6% to 100%*

Mid Performers

*44.6% to 60.6%*

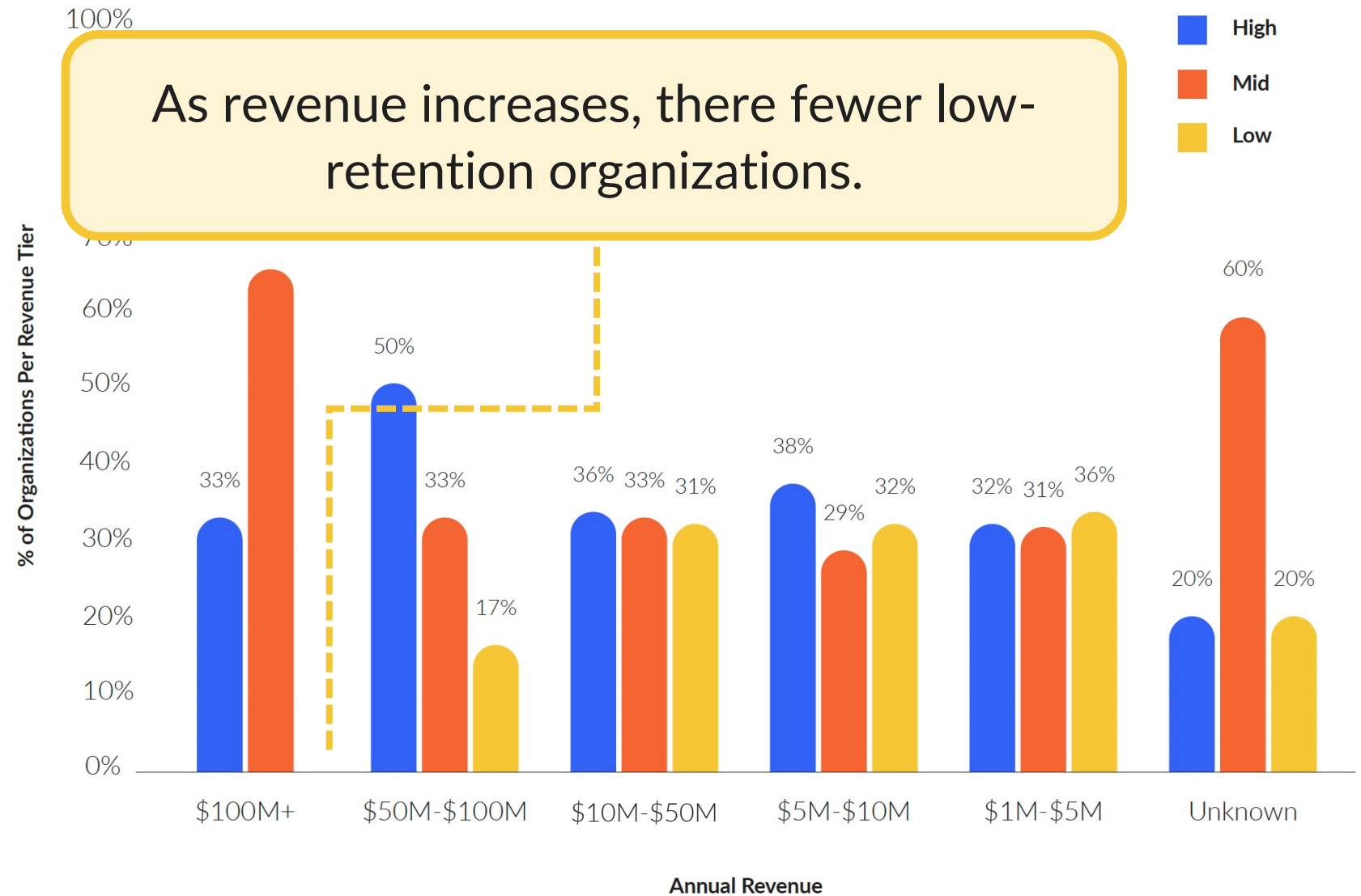
Low Performers

*0 to 44.6%*



## Retention Rates by Revenue

### Donor Retention by Annual Revenue



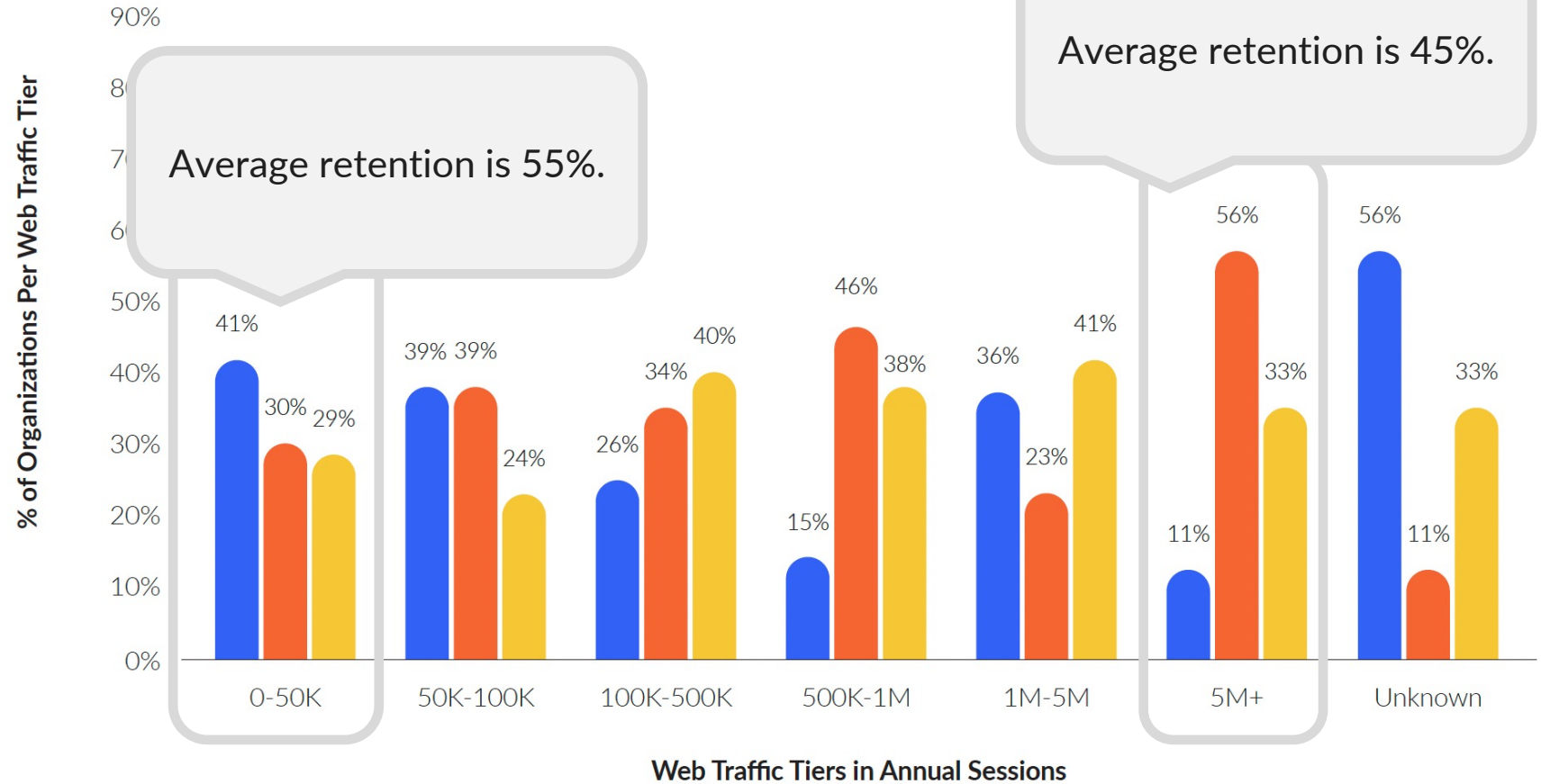


Which comes first? Revenue or Retention?

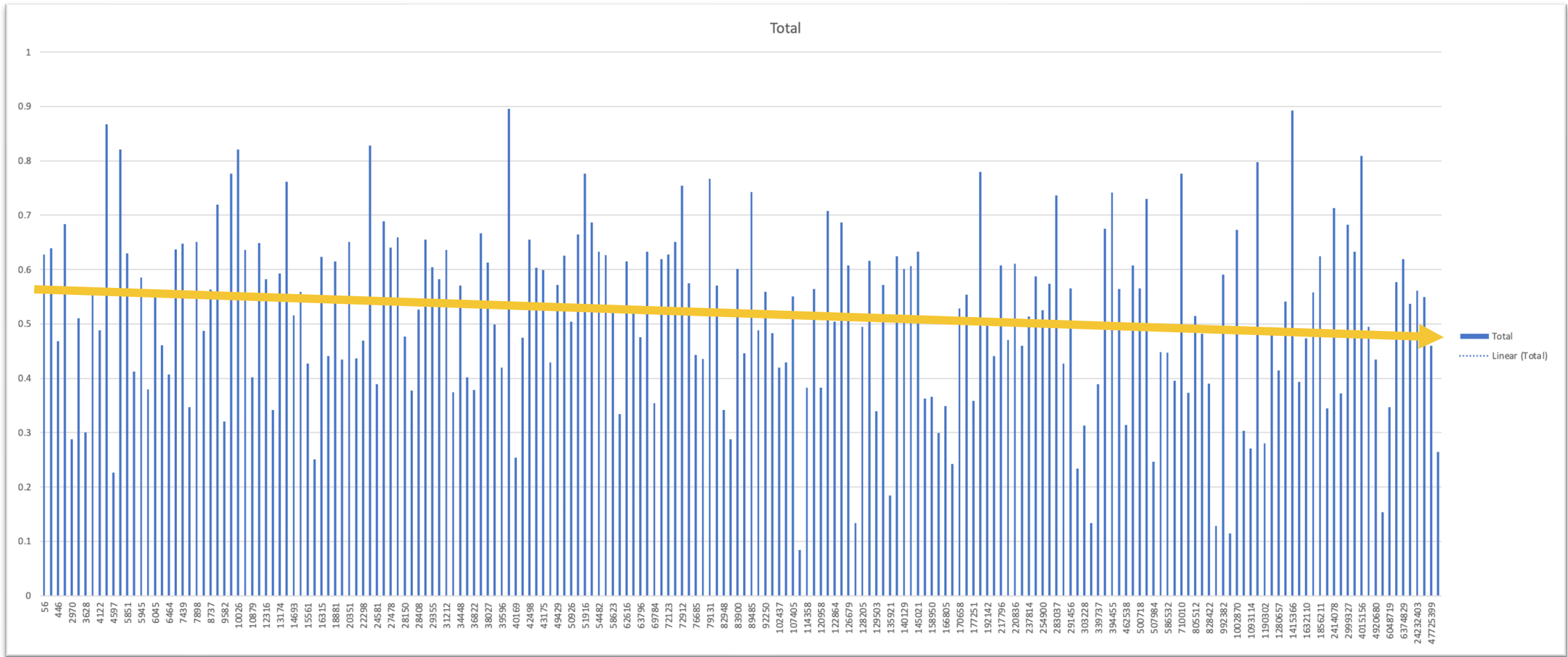


As web traffic increases, retention decreases slightly. traffic

## Retention Rates by Web Traffic



This is the trend, but there is a lot of variance.





Is retention a function of size?

Key Question

**NOT REALLY**



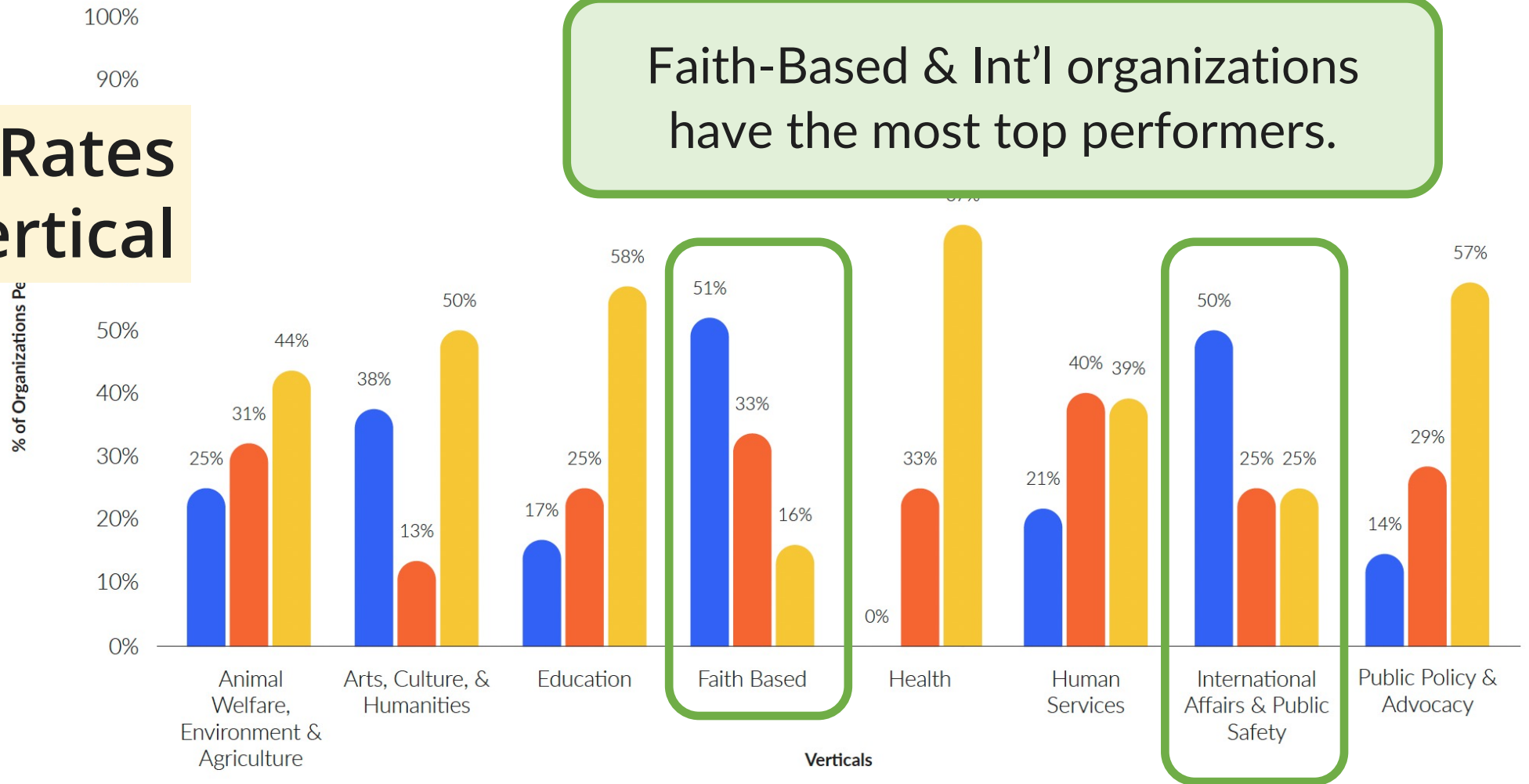


*Does retention vary by vertical?*

Key Question

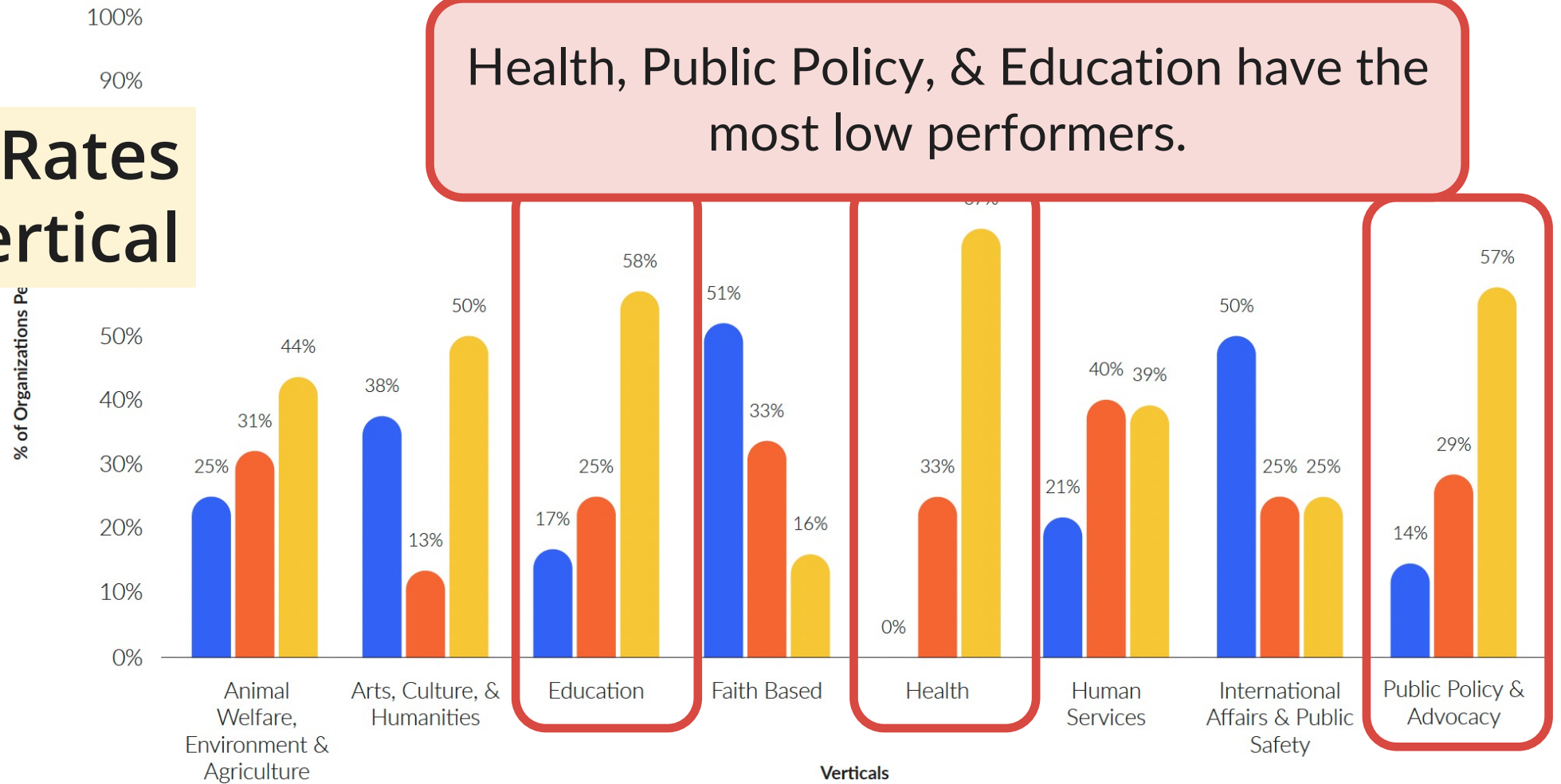


# Retention Rates by Vertical



# Retention Rates by Vertical

## Donor Retention by Verticals



## High Performers

Values-Focused Messaging

Strong Core Beliefs

Long-Term Focus

## Low Performers

Current Events Driven

Temporary Affinity

Short-Term Focus







*Does retention vary by vertical?*

Key Question

**HECK YEAH**





*Is retention simply a matter of recurring donations?*

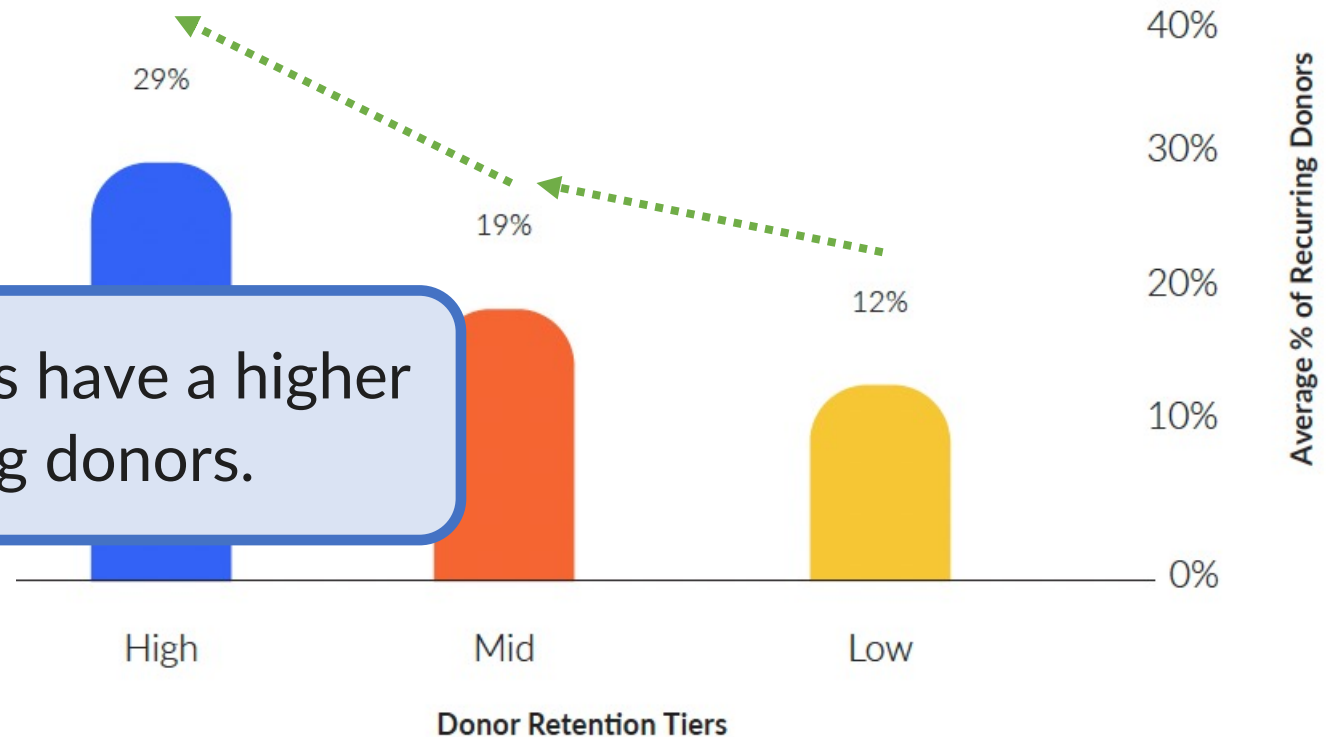
Key Question



## Retention Rates by Recurring %

High-retention organizations have a higher percentage of recurring donors.

Average % of Recurring Donors by Retention Tier





Is retention simply a matter of recurring donations?

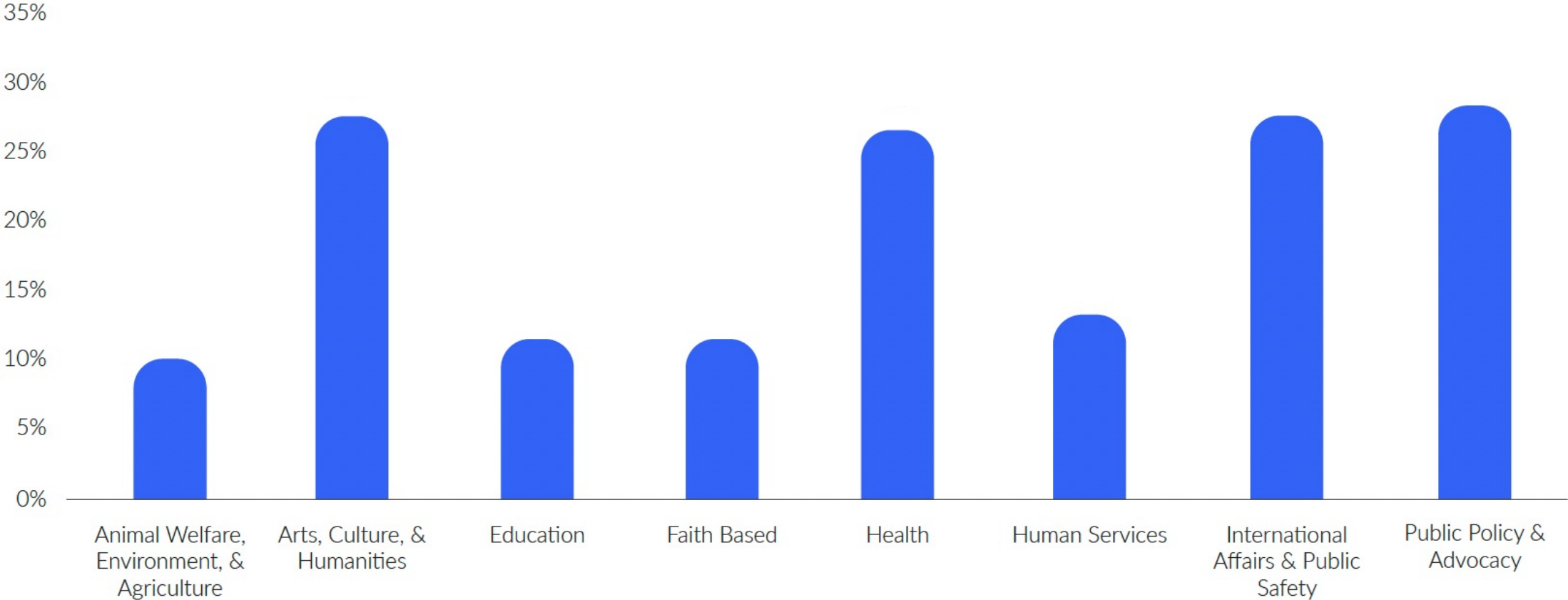
Key Question

**MAYBE**



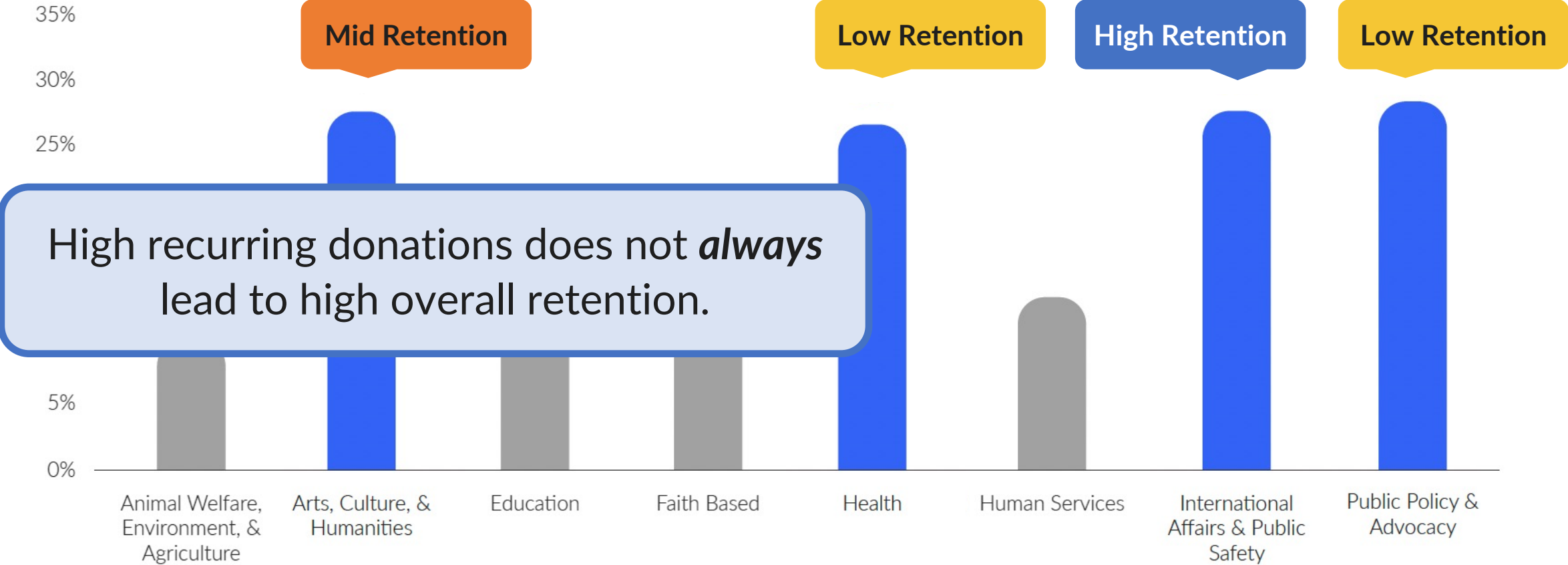
# Recurring Donor % by Vertical

Average % of Recurring Donors by Vertical



# Recurring Donor % by Vertical

Average % of Recurring Donors by Vertical



*The Working Recipe for*

## High Donor Retention

Values-Focused  
Fundraising

+

Recurring  
Donor Program

=

High  
Donor Retention



# *WHY?*

The Most Important Ingredient in Donor Retention





# VALUE PROPOSITION:

*An answer to one critical question:*

*“If I am your ideal donor, why should I give to you rather than some other organization (or at all)?”*



#1

# *Appeal*

*How badly do I want it?*

# #2

## *Exclusivity*

*Can I get this somewhere (or anywhere) else?*

# #3

## *Clarity*

*How quickly and easily do I understand it?*

# #4

## *Credibility*

*Do I believe what you're claiming is true?*

How are we doing?

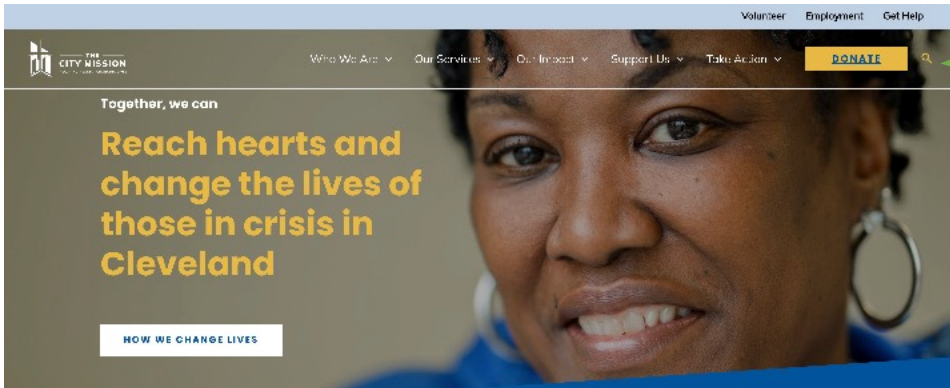




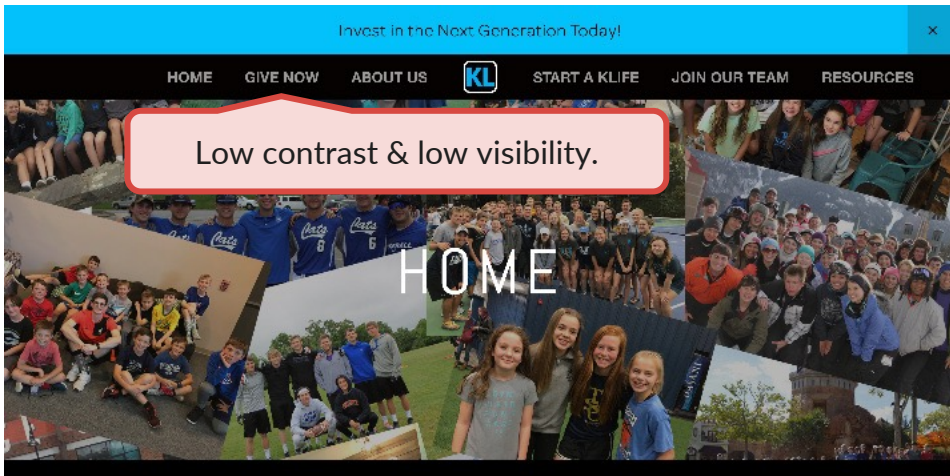
*How easily can you find  
where to give?*

Key Question



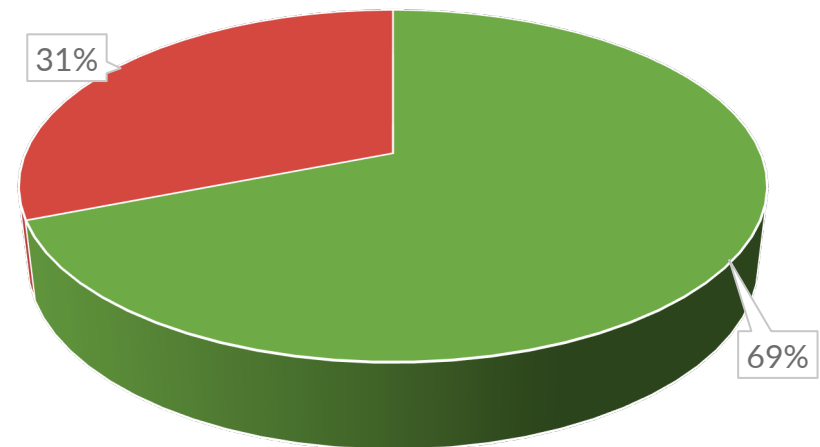


High contrast & clearly visible donate button.



Low contrast & low visibility.

### Donate Button Visibility

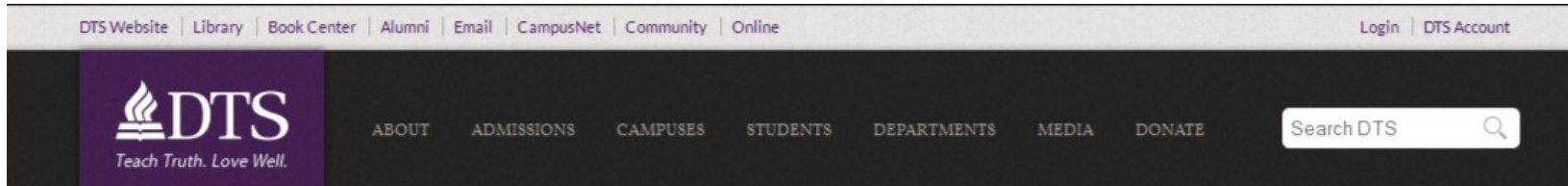


■ High Contrast ■ Low Contrast

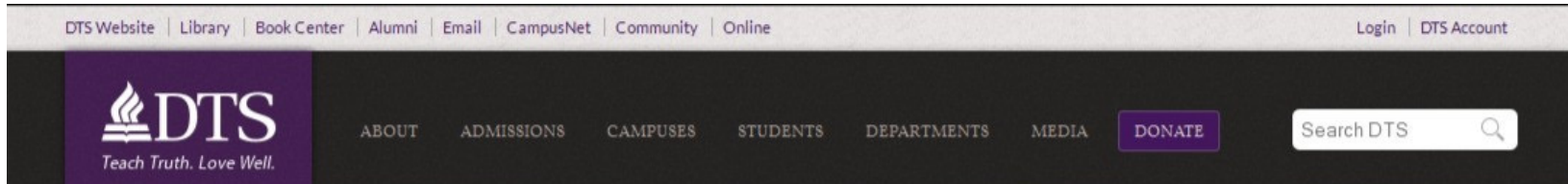




# Donate



# Purple Donate



\* Based on a 94% statistical level of confidence



## Key Finding

Donor retention is not dependent upon the clarity of your website navigation. But *a lack of clarity can keep someone from giving* in the first place.





*Is there value-focused copy  
on the donation page?*

Key Question



**MISSION ONE** Our Work Your Impact Blog Give

### YOU ARE HELPING TO MAKE MORE COMMUNITIES LOOK LIKE THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Because of faithful supporters like you, Mission ONE has been reaching unreached people groups for over 30 years. We partner with indigenous local organizations to plant churches, build schools, open clinics, create oppression, and so much more.

When you support Mission ONE, you are partnering with the Global Church to invest in local serving their communities' greatest needs.

Join us as we equip and train the Global Church to transform families, children, and communities in the hardest places.

- \$100 a month supports entire communities in India to learn to read the Bible in their own language.
- \$50 a month can support a pastor in Togo and their family while they engage in outreach and plant churches in both urban and rural areas.
- \$35 a month can support a woman in Kenya who knows the trade of sewing to support her family and earn a dignified wage.

Your generous support has a long life impact on individuals, but more than that, it brings glory to God and honor to all peoples.

### YES! I WANT TO SUPPORT COMMUNITIES TO LOOK MORE THE LIKE THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

To give by check mail to: Mission ONE PO Box 750 Phoenix, AZ 85001

**Donation Amount\***

\$35 \$50 \$75 \$100 Other

**Make Recurring Gift**

First Name\* Last Name\*  
 Email Address\* Phone Number  
 Address Line 1 Address Line 2  
 City State/Province Postal\* Country\*  
 Use my funds for  
 Where Needed Most  
 Gift Notes  
 Credit Card Bank Account  
 Credit Card Number\*  
 Card Expiration\* CVV\*

4+ sentences of copy explaining why you should give.



**35 OUR OWN** HOME THE CRISIS WHAT WE DO ABOUT US

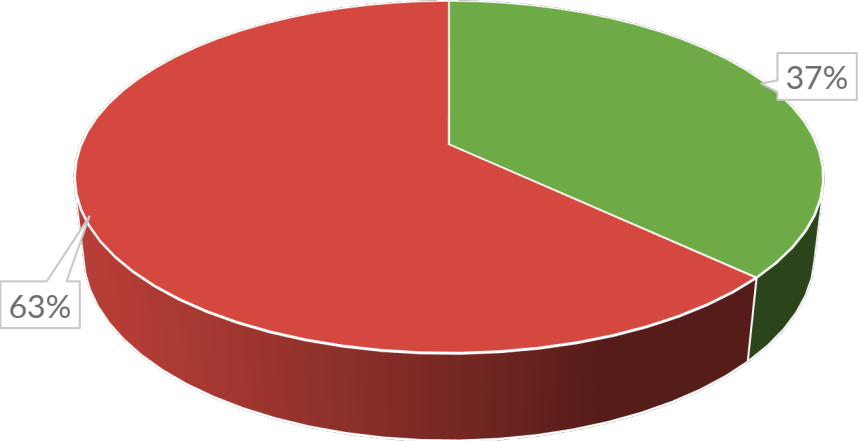
### Donate

SEND MAILED DONATIONS TO:  
 35 Our Own  
 1211 S. Lamar Blvd., Suite 202  
 Houston, TX 77028

Gift  
 Donor  
 Title\*  
 Mr. Ms. Mrs.  
 First Name\* Last Name\*  
 Email Address\*  
 Phone Number  
 If received as specified on the front of the envelope.  
 Address Line 1 Address Line 2  
 City State/Province Postal\* Country\*  
 Credit Card Number\*  
 Card Expiration\* CVV\*  
 Credit Card Bank Account  
 In this donation is honor of or in memory of someone?  
 Name (Please Print)

Little to no copy explaining why you should give.

4+ Sentences of Copy



■ 4+ Sentences ■ Less than 4 Sentences



# Control

CARING BRIDGE.org

## You make Kelly's Website Possible

When you give to CaringBridge, you ensure that Kelly's private, protected place to share health updates and connect with a community of support will always be here.

### Donation Amount

(minimum \$10.00)

\* **Payment Plan**

- One-time payment for the full amount
- Monthly (12 per year) ongoing payments.

# Increased Clarity

CARING BRIDGE.org

## This website helps Kate stay connected to family and friends.

### You make this website possible.

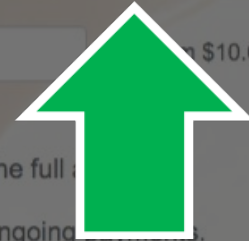
When you give to CaringBridge, you ensure that Kate's private, protected place to share health updates and connect with a community of support will always be here.

### Donation Amount

(minimum \$10.00)

\* **Payment Plan**

- One-time payment for the full amount
- Monthly (12 per year) ongoing payments.



21%

In Donor Conversion



## Key Finding

One-off tactics have minimal impact on long-term retention. But *donation page copy can greatly improve performance at the point of conversion.*





*How strong is the  
value proposition copy?*

Key Question



# Just a Headline



# Value Prop Copy



Together, we're writing the next chapter of Illinois' comeback story.



### Select Donation Amount

\$35	\$50	\$100	\$250
Other Amount			

### Donor Information

Cardholders Name	
Address	Address 2
City	
Illinois	Zip
Email	
Phone	

### Payment Information

Visa, Mastercard or American Express Number		
Month	Year	Security Code

The Illinois Policy Institute is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, and contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

If you would like to donate by mail, please send checks to:  
Illinois Policy Institute  
190 S. LaSalle St.  
Suite 1500  
Chicago, IL 60603

Illinois Policy Institute does not accept government funding.

### Getting the unbiased truth

Illinoisans already have the highest overall state and local tax burden in the country, and the state is experiencing the largest exodus of residents it has ever seen. Lawmakers in Springfield are telling their constituents – people like you – that the only way to fix these problems is through more taxes. **That is simply not true.**

At the Illinois Policy Institute, we believe in the old adage that knowledge is power. To spur change, to get Illinois back on a more prosperous path, we need to make sure that families in Illinois receive accurate and actionable information.

### That is why we created IllinoisPolicy.org.

This website is an unbiased source of what is happening across the state. We are putting out the truth that lawmakers don't want people to have. We are finding the stories the legacy media aren't reporting. **And we are doing all of this for people like you.**

But we must rely on the people we serve. We depend on the support of individuals like you.

You can keep Illinois Policy as your source of unbiased news by making a gift today.

### Select Donation Amount

\$35	\$50	\$100	\$250
Other Amount			

### Donor Information

Cardholders Name	
Address	Add
City	
Illinois	Zip
Email	
Phone	

The Illinois Policy Institute is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, and contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

If you would like to donate by mail, please send checks to:  
Illinois Policy Institute  
190 S. LaSalle St.  
Suite 1500  
Chicago, IL 60603

Illinois Policy Institute does not accept government funding.



# 150%

## In Donor Conversion





# Control

EDITORIAL PODCASTS EVENTS



HOW MUCH WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE?

\$

MAKE THIS A MONTHLY GIFT

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

NAME

PHONE NUMBER

EMAIL

I AM REPRESENTING AN ORGANIZATION

CARD NUMBER

EXPIRATION DATE

ADDRESS

COUNTRY

CITY, STATE AND ZIP CODE

GIVE NOW



# Value Proposition Heavy

**Thank you for your interest in making a gift today. It will help share gospel-centered resources with believers and churches around the globe!**

We are committed to equipping the church to grow wise, faithful Christian disciples in a chaotic age.

But in order to do this, we rely on support from believers like you, who care about bringing gospel light to the internet and helping people think wisely and biblically.

When you make a gift to TGC today, you will help:

- Provide articles, podcasts, videos, and more that will encourage others to know the gospel and connect it to all areas of life
- Support believers in a culture growing increasingly hostile towards Christianity
- Provide gospel-centered resources to our 9 million+ readers outside the U.S. who access TGC through our Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Korean, Spanish, and other regional based websites
- Help believers think carefully and Christianly about the complexities and challenges of a rapidly changing culture

If you're willing to help us encourage believers, strengthen the church, and provide hope for the searching, please make your gift now using the secure form below:

HOW MUCH WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE?

\$

MAKE THIS A MONTHLY GIFT

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

NAME

PHONE NUMBER



# 116%

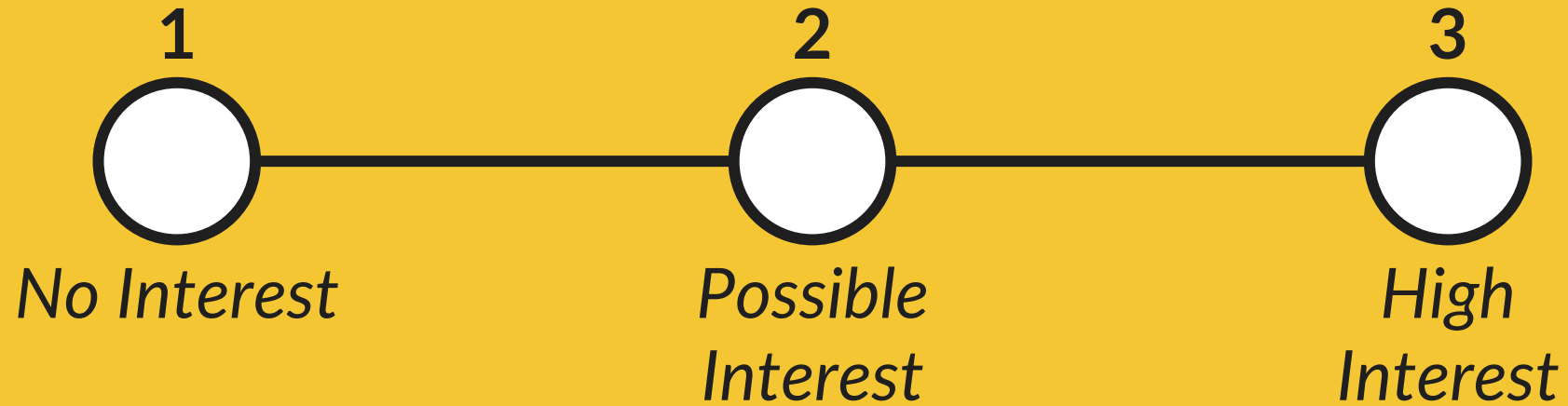
## In Donations



# #1

## *Appeal*

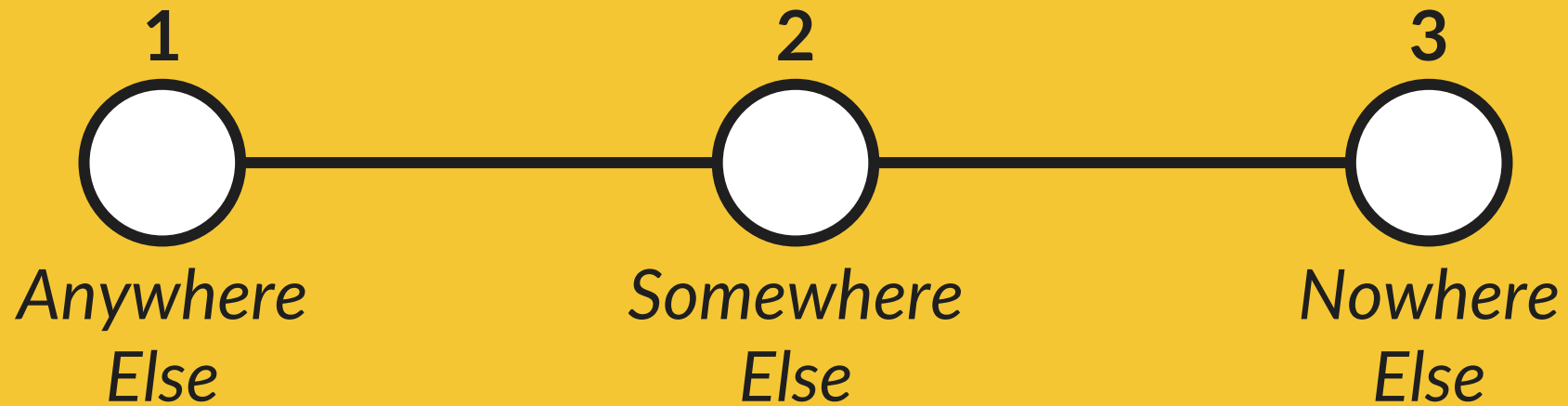
*How badly do I want it?*



# #2

## *Exclusivity*

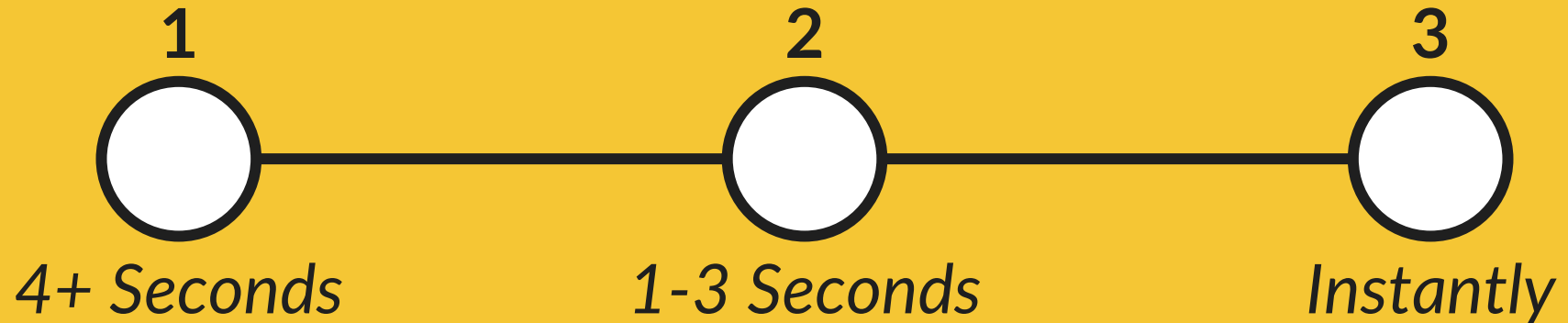
*Can I get this somewhere (or anywhere) else?*



# #3

## *Clarity*

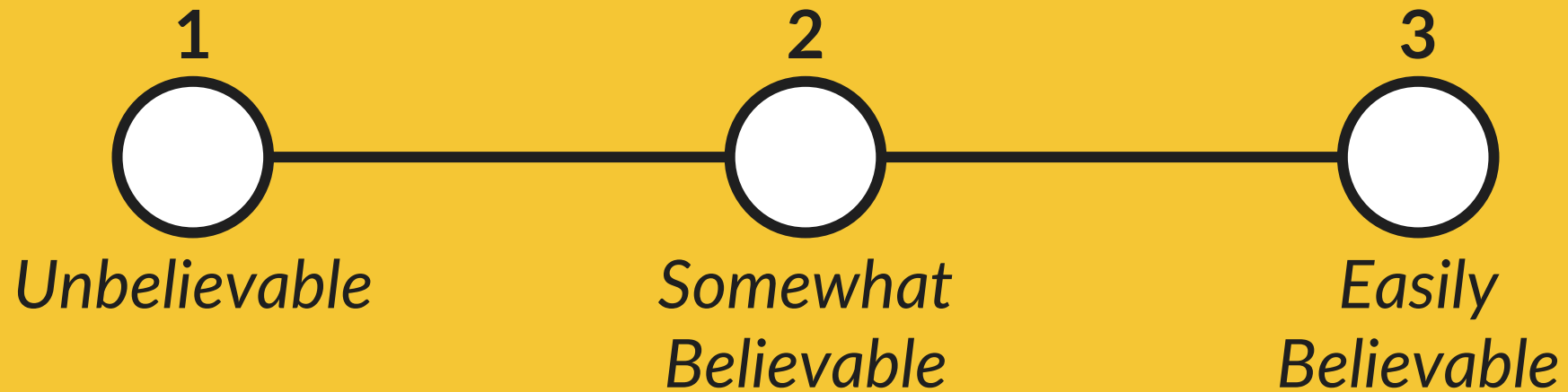
*How quickly and easily do I understand it?*



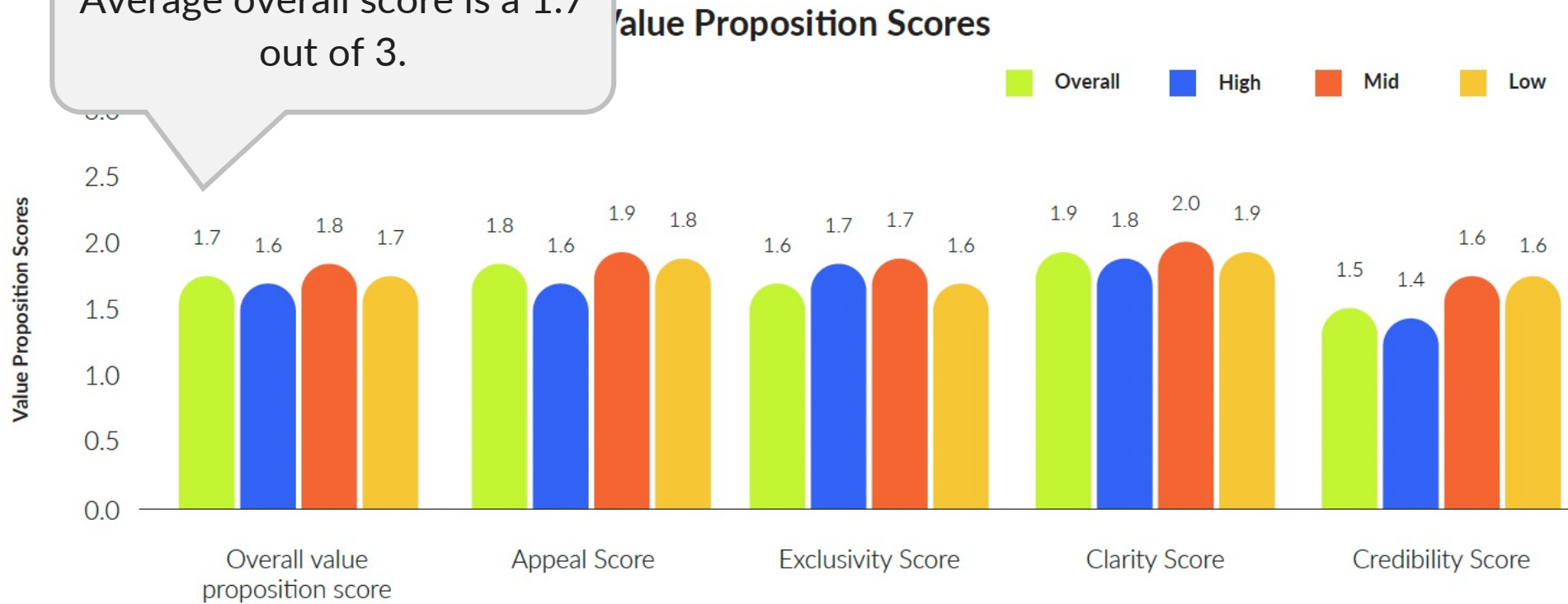
# #4

## *Credibility*

*Do I believe what you're claiming is true?*

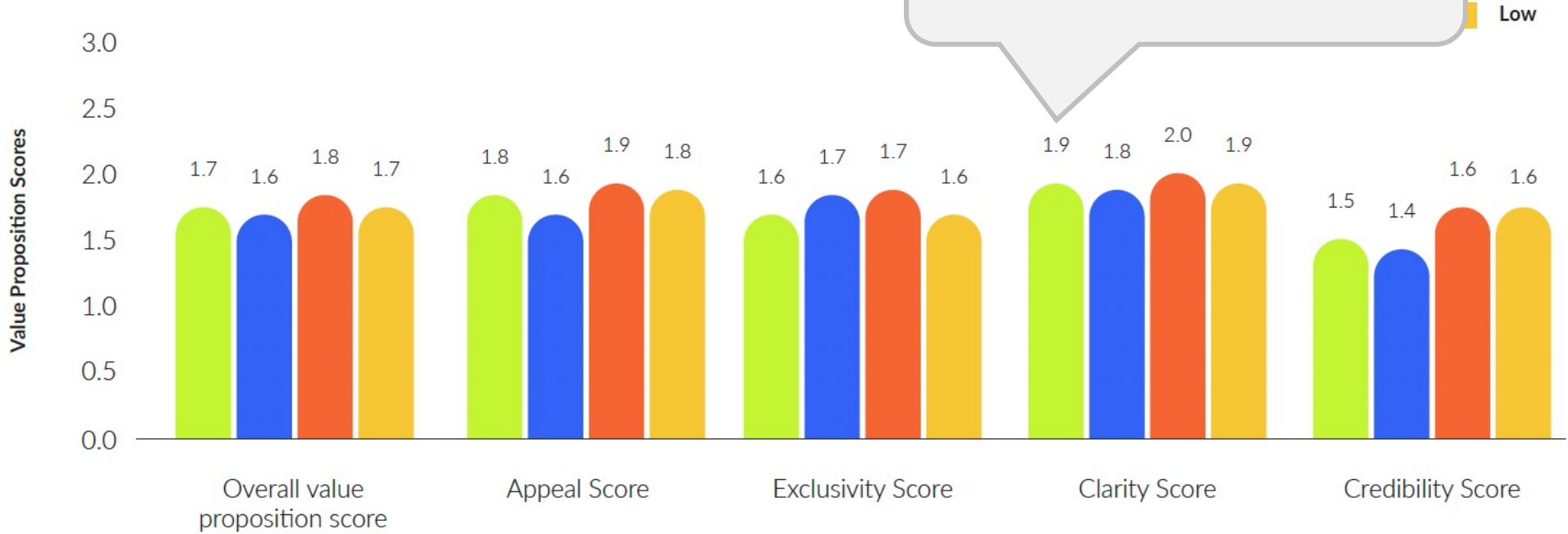


Average overall score is a 1.7 out of 3.

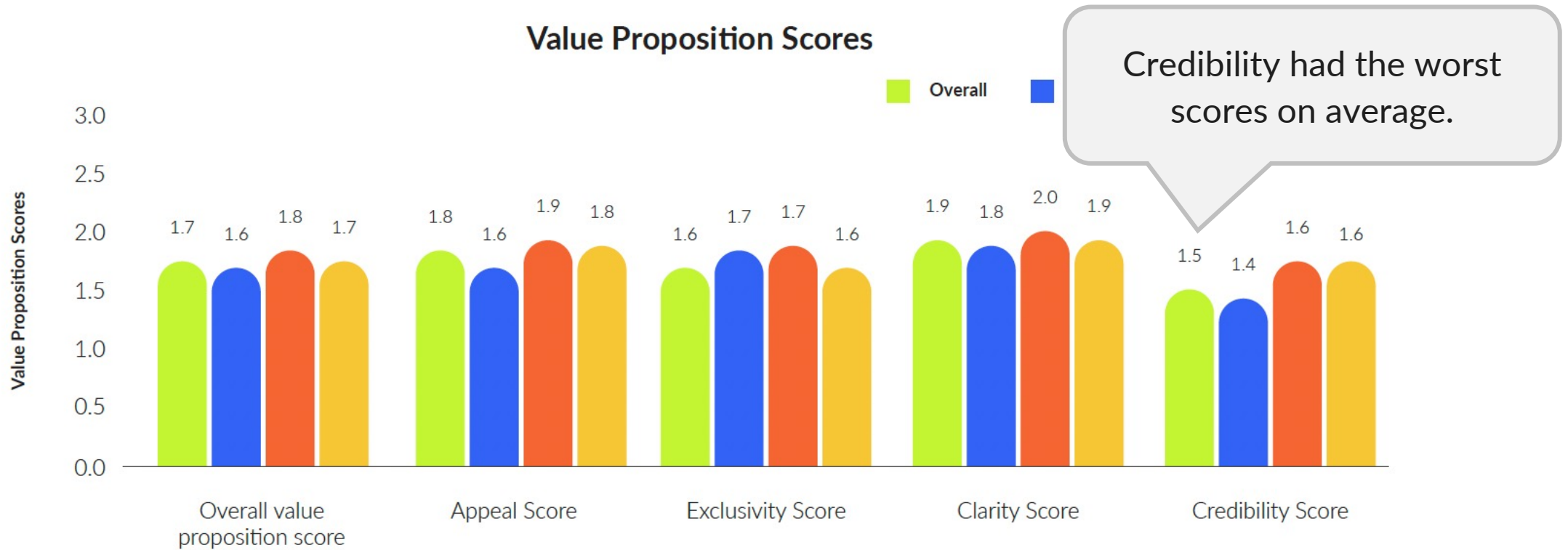


### Value Proposition Score

Clarity had the highest overall score: 1.9 out of 3.



## Value Proposition Scores





## **Key Finding**

Every organization — regardless of size and vertical — has *a tremendous opportunity to improve the strength of its value proposition.*



Practical experiments to improve  
your **value proposition**



## Common Experiment #1

# Nothing to Something

Adding Value Copy to a Donation Page



# Just a Headline



Together, we're writing the next chapter of Illinois' comeback story.



#### Select Donation Amount

#### Donor Information

#### Payment Information



## APPEAL

# How badly do I want it?

# Value Prop Copy



#### Getting the unbiased truth

Illinoisans already have the highest overall state and local tax burden in the country, and the state is experiencing the largest exodus of residents it has ever seen. Lawmakers in Springfield are telling their constituents - people like you - that the only way to fix these problems is through more taxes. **That is simply not true.**

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But we must rely on the people we serve. We depend on the support of individuals like you.

**You can keep Illinois Policy as your source of unbiased news by making a gift today.**

#### Select Donation Amount

#### Donor Information

#### Payment Information



# 150%

## In Donor Conversion



## Common Experiment #2

# Use Text, Not a Video

Using the Right Medium to Communicate



# Video based donation page

The people in India desperately need our help.

Will you join e3 Partners in this important ministry work? We invite you to make a gift today to support the relief effort for those suffering in India.

How much do you want to donate?

\$25.00 **\$50.00** \$75.00 \$100.00 \$ Custom Amount \$0.00

Billing Info

First Name \* Last Name \*

Email \* Phone Number (201) 555-0123

Country United States

Address 1 \* Address 2

City \* State \* Zip Code \*

Payment Type **Credit Card** Debit Card PayPal

Payment Info  I would like to add \$1.94 to help cover the transaction cost.

Give \$50.00 Now

CLARITY  
How well do I understand it?

# Text based donation page

The people in India desperately need our help.

We invite you to make a gift today to support the relief effort for those suffering in India.

How much do you want to donate?

\$25.00 **\$50.00** \$75.00 \$100.00 \$ Custom Amount \$0.00

Billing Info

First Name \* Last Name \*

Email \* Phone Number (201) 555-0123

Country United States

Address 1 \* Address 2

City \* State \* Zip Code \*

Payment Type **Credit Card** Debit Card PayPal

Payment Info  I would like to add \$1.94 to help cover the transaction cost.

Give \$50.00 Now

527%  
In Donations



## Common Experiment #3

# Email Like a Human

Email Design's Impact on Perception



# Control - Designed

Web Version

KUOW | NPR | DONATE

**STAND WITH TRUST.**

**STAND WITH LOCAL REPORTING.**

**STAND WITH KUOW AND NPR.**

**ONE DAY TO RAISE \$1M**

\$0 \$250K \$500K \$750K \$1M

Hi there --

I'm your local host of *All Things Considered* here at KUOW, and I have just a quick note while I'm on air.

As you probably already know, we're taking just one day to come to you on air to raise \$1 million dollars for KUOW, so we can continue to provide our essential local reporting and ensure the station is healthy in the months ahead.

Our commitment to finding you the facts, providing context, and helping you see the larger picture is stronger than ever.

**We're less than \$250,000 away from our goal. Can you pitch in now?**

Thank you for trusting us and coming back to KUOW time and time again to get the news and information you need to keep you and your family safe. It's a responsibility we take incredibly seriously at KUOW and NPR, and we will continue to work as hard as we can to provide that service.

Today's goal is a big one, and it's something we've never tried before, but I know we can get there with you on our side.

If you can join us today, any amount goes a long way to supporting nonprofit, independent journalism.

**DONATE NOW**

Thank you,

Kim Malcolm (she/her)  
Host, *All Things Considered*

f t v e

# Treatment - Plain

Web Version

Hi there --

I'm your local host of *All Things Considered* here at KUOW, and I have just a quick note while I'm on air.

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**Donate Now**

If you can join us today, any amount goes a long way to supporting nonprofit, independent journalism.

Thank you,

Kim Malcolm  
KUOW Host, *All Things Considered*

KUOW  
4518 University Way NE  
Seattle, WA, 98105 US  
Email Preference Policy

**29%**  
In Donations

CREDIBILITY

How much do I believe & trust you?





# recipe

## High Performing Donor Retention

### INGREDIENTS

### DIRECTIONS

- Values-focused fundraising*
- Strong recurring giving program*
- Clarity in the giving process*
- Copy on the donation page*
- Strong value proposition copy*
- Secret ingredient???*







# The Comprehensive **Online Donor Retention** Benchmark Report

Part 1: Value Proposition

Presented By  **NextAfter**



Get your free copy of the  
**brand-new**  
**report**

**NIO** NONPROFIT INNOVATION & OPTIMIZATION  
**SUMMIT**  
**2023** DALLAS, TX  
.....  
SEPT. 19-21

DIGITAL FUNDRAISERS **COME ON DOWN!**



[niosummit.com](https://niosummit.com)

Get \$500 Off Through Monday at Midnight