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# Lather, Rinse, Repeat

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# ENGAGEMENT

The Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) defines donor engagement as a way to interact with donors that goes **beyond securing a donation**. It's an **organizational mindset** that involves building relationships with donors and is closely linked to donor retention.

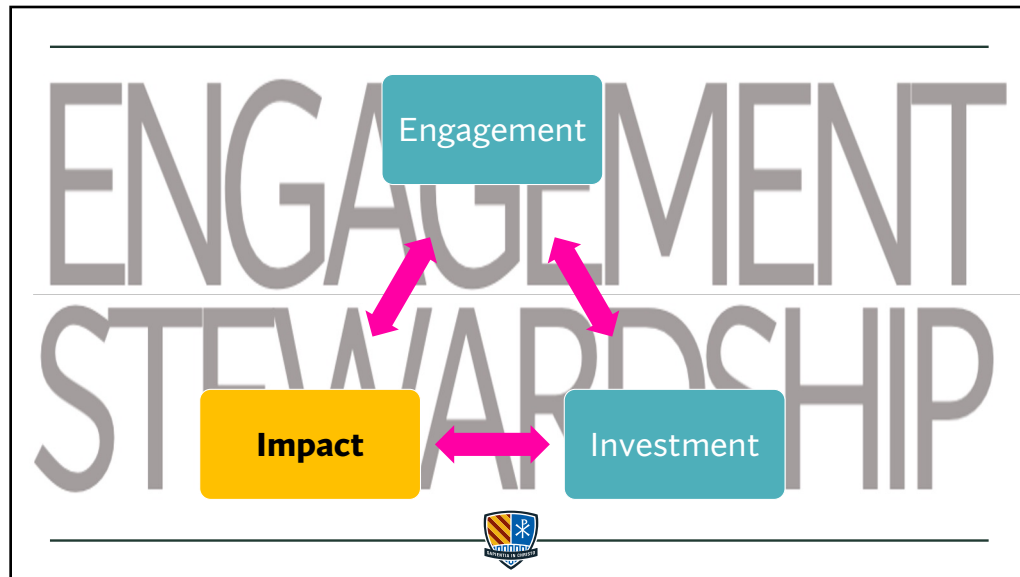
*Donors who are engaged with a nonprofit are more likely to donate again and may remain involved with the organization over the long term.*



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# Research Findings

Penelope Burk, *Donor-Centered Fundraising* (2003)

**45%**  
**2 days**  
(p. 45)

**94%**  
**give again**  
(p. 23)

**64%**  
**give more**  
(p. 23)

**74%**  
**give INDEFINITELY**  
(p. 23)



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# Research Findings

Dan Pallotta, *Uncharitable* (2008) and his TED Talk “The Way We Think about Charity is Dead Wrong” (2013)

- We don’t want our fundraising epitaph to be “We Kept Charity Overhead Low”

Chip & Dan Heath, *The Power of Moments* (2017)

- Creating **experiences** that resonate creates relationships that endure



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# Research Findings

Jason Saul, *The End of Fundraising* (2011) and *Social Innovation* (2010)

- Stop asking for the “leftovers”
- Know your organization (school)’s worth



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# 2023 research echoes

“The most robust evidence found suggests charities could increase donations by (1) emphasizing individual beneficiaries, (2) increasing the visibility of donations, (3) describing the impact of the donation, and (4) enacting or promoting tax-deductibility of the charity.”

Saeri, A.K., Slattery, P., Lee, J. *et al.* What Works to Increase Charitable Donations? A Meta-Review with Meta-Meta-Analysis. *Voluntas* 34, 626–642 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-022-00499-y>



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## 2023 research echoes

“Semantically framing charitable giving as a gift (rather than a donation) increases not only donors’ intention to contribute but also their actual contribution amount...[the authors] provide convergent evidence that the effect of framing charitable giving as a gift rather than a donation on contribution is driven by donors’ perceived social distance from beneficiaries.”

Wang, P. X., Wang, Y., & Jiang, Y. (2023). Gift or Donation? Increase the Effectiveness of Charitable Solicitation Through Framing Charitable Giving as a Gift. *Journal of Marketing*, 87(1), 133-147. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00222429221081506>



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## 2023 research echoes

“Given fundraising trends...to reconsider relational outcomes beyond organizational performance, the study re-centers stewardship on donor preferences and highlights the need to co-create stewardship strategies with donors to nonprofit organizations... Analysis suggests dialogic stewardship consists of five dimensions: Reporting on Responsibility, Strategic Recognition, Organizational Values, Financial Management, and Engagement.”

Harrison, V. (2023). The communicative power of nonprofit actions and values: A pilot study of dialogic stewardship. *Public Relations Review*, Volume 49, Issue 1. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2022.102280>



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## Impact Language: dos & don'ts

**DON'T** chase mimetic isomorphism and  
**DON'T** provide “shock and awe” materials.



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## Impact Language: dos & don'ts

**DO** be true to your school (/organization) and  
**DO** rely on authentic representation. *Authentic*  
beats *slick*.



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## Impact Language: dos & don'ts

**DON'T** talk about "need"...in fact, eradicate that word from your fundraising vocabulary.



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## Impact Language: dos & don'ts

**DO** talk about **IMPACT** by telling your story *that involves your constituents.*

- Once Upon a Time
- When Suddenly
- But Then
- Happily Ever After



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## Impact Language: dos & don'ts

**DON'T** make it all about the money.  
(Haven't we already discussed that engagement goes beyond dollars?)



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## Impact Language: dos & don'ts

**DO** make it all about your relationship with your constituents.



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# Baseline Metrics

## Quantitative Data

- Test scores (HSPT, ALEKS, STS, GPA, SAT/ACT, AP Scores)
- Socio-emotional data (# clubs/co-curriculars/athletics; leadership involvement [peer mentoring, retreat/SGA/other exhibitions]; interests)
- Leikert-scale measurements + Search Institute's Developmental Assets Framework\*

\* <https://searchinstitute.org/resources-hub/developmental-assets-framework>



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# Baseline Metrics

Don't forget **QUALITATIVE** data, too!

"Carol will be meeting with [REDACTED] in the coming weeks to start a conversation about where he might like to attend college and setting academic goals for him to achieve that reality...something she says would not have been a possibility or even on his radar had his middle school principal not reached out to Rockhurst to signal his potential which could only be supported at Rockhurst with significant financial assistance. Your scholarship gift is his present – and his future. Literally."



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## Baseline Metrics

Don't forget **QUALITATIVE** data, too!

“Not only have we seen our Hurtado Scholars continue to thrive here at Rockhurst, but as well we have seen the result of their obvious advocacy for the school and the program in their home communities, as we have 13 other young men from those communities *who did not come through the program* attending Rockhurst this year. The program has not only made it possible for Hurtado Scholars to be here – but their success has made a Rockhurst education and formation both worthwhile – *and attainable* – in the eyes of their community.”



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Lather (them up  
through **engagement**)...

Rinse (them in your  
mission and their  
**impact**)...

Repeat.



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