



National Religious Broadcasters

Measuring and Improving Donor Engagement

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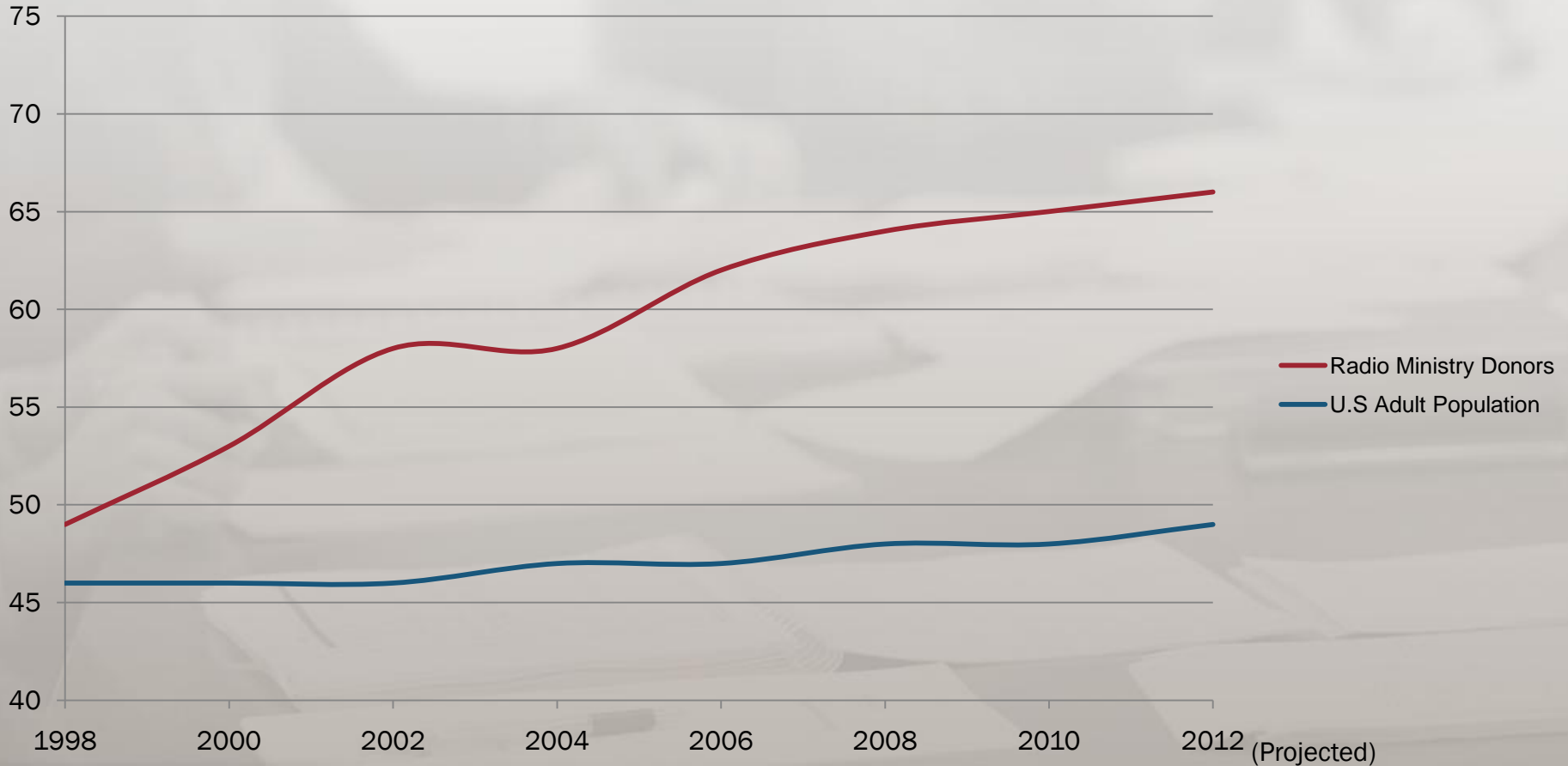
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THE PROBLEM



An increasing number of radio ministry donors are aging and are on fixed incomes. This presents challenges when soliciting them for donations.

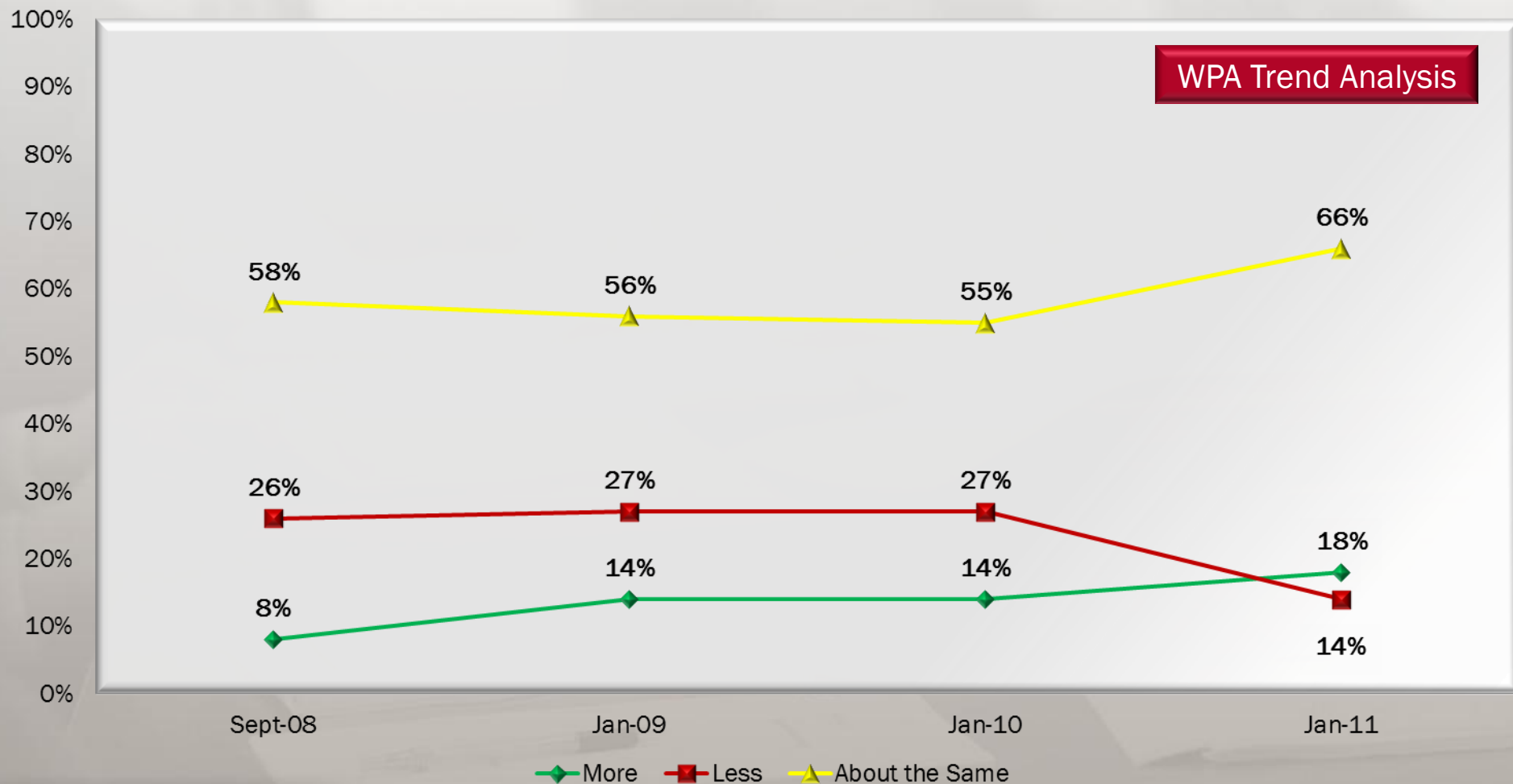
Average Age – Radio Ministry Donors and U.S. Adult Populations





Through a series of national donor research surveys, WPA has found that a majority of U.S. donors anticipate giving only the same amount that they did the previous year.

Trend of Anticipated Giving





There are a number of factors that can contribute to a decline in donations for an organization.

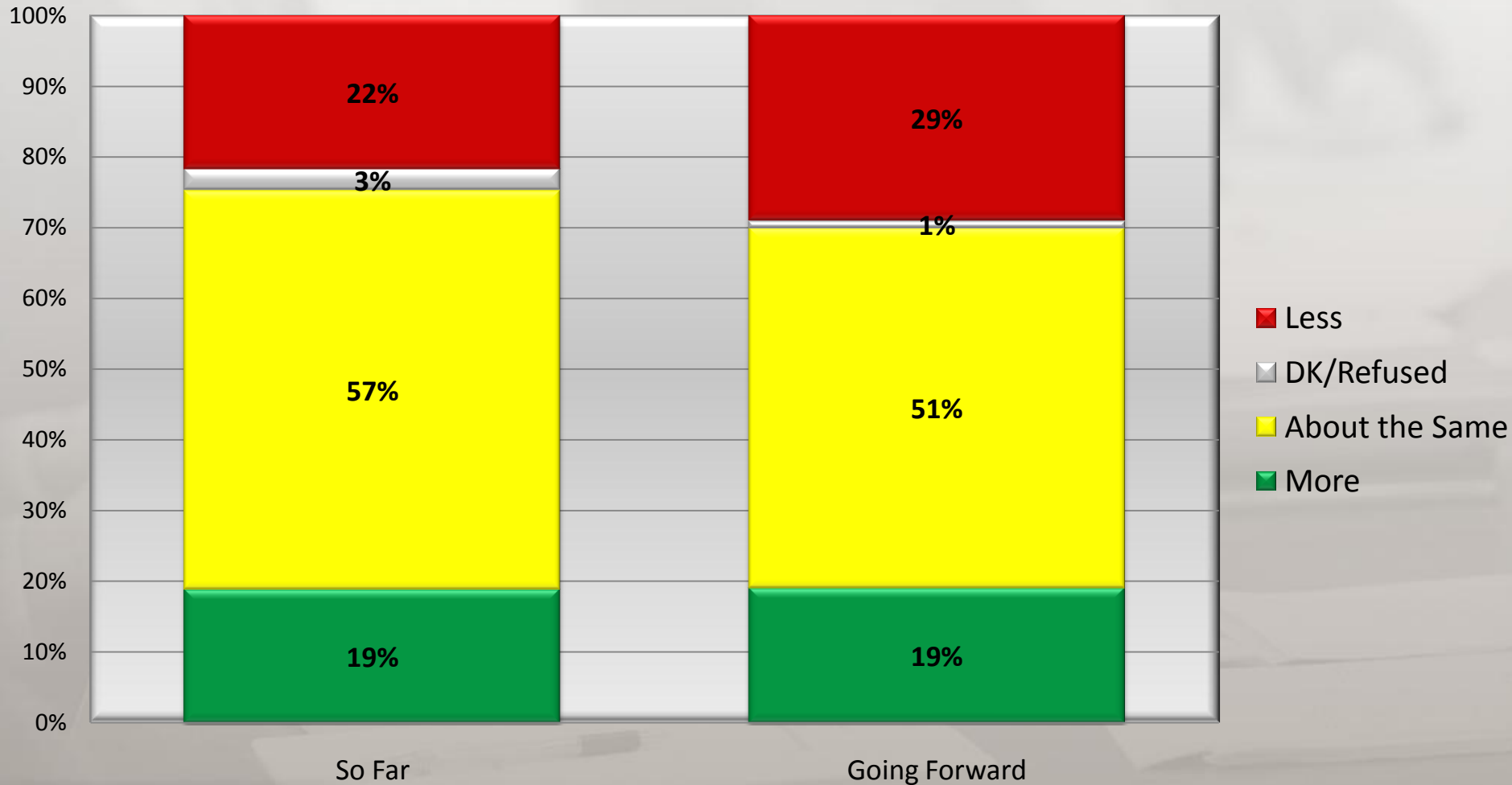
Ministries have been hurting for a variety of reasons:

- WPA has found that many of the ministries we work for have seen a sharp decline in their end-of-year giving.
- Reasons for this decline include:
 - The perception of the ministry and the work that they do.
 - The worldview of the ministry.
 - Their personal economic situations.
 - Leadership in the organization.
 - Amount of communication from the organization.



In a May 2011 survey for a charitable organization, WPA found that more donors plan to give less to that organization in the next year than they have in the previous year.

Charitable giving so far this year vs. the upcoming year



WPA Analysis of a charitable organization's donors from May 2011

TYOLOGY OF DONORS



WPA has found that most charitable donors fit into three different types of donors.

WPA has examined our database of broadcast ministry and other ministry donor research.

- Key finding is that a common pattern emerges where each ministry has an identifiable mix of three different types of donors.
- Each of these donors bring a different type and level of engagement to their relationship with the ministry.
- Each poses a different type of challenge in terms of building and maintaining engaged relationships.
- The three types of donors are:
 - **Personality-Centered Donors**
 - **Mission-Centered Donors**
 - **Program-Centered Donors**



Personality-Centered Donors

Definition

- Personality-Centered Donors feel a strong personal commitment to support a strong founder or ministry executive.
- Their willingness to give to the ministry is based on a trust for this strong leader.
- Often the strongest engagement pattern that we observe in donor research.

Donor Attributes

- Often the oldest cohort of donors because they have been with the ministry, and its founder, since the beginning.
- In a broadcast ministry these donors are more broadly distributed across age groups and durations of relationship because of the more personal connection that is possible.
- Similar pattern in organizations where donors support a specific volunteer's mission directly, such as Campus Crusade for Christ.

Challenges Posed

- Challenge comes when it is time to change leadership of the organization or when a specific person leaves a broadcast or other aspect of the ministry.
- This can lead to substantial attrition problems unless steps have been taken to build other types of engagement in anticipation of the change.
- Difficult to transfer these donor's engagement to a new leader. Rather it is necessary to use both appeal and engagement messaging to slowly shift them into a Mission-Centered donor.



Mission-Centered Donors

Definition

- Mission-Centered Donors value the “big picture” goal of a ministry and feel a personal engagement and value for achieving that over-arching goal.
- Often older than Program-Oriented Donors and have been with the ministry for a long period of time.
- Often became donors before certain set of programs existed but have continued to support the ministry because the mission itself has such a powerful values-based psychological appeal to them.

Donor Attributes

- Often these donors have multiple points of engagement with the ministry:
 - Dollars
 - Time
 - Receiving Services.
- This is an important element of their engagement pattern because it ensures that even if they temporarily reduce their financial support due to financial stress there are still other ways in which they can engage with the ministry.

Challenges Posed

- More difficult to measure and assess success in building this engagement pattern.
- A simple analysis of response to appeals in the short or medium term is insufficient because it does not measure whether those appeals are helping to build a Mission-Centered engagement in the longer term.
- Survey research can help measure this pattern in addition to other “trivial” efforts such as asking them to return a postcard expressing support or engage with the ministry on social media.

Definition

- Most donors to a ministry tend to be Program-Centered Donors.
- They support the ministry one specific action or need at a time.

Donor Attributes

- These donors are quite often younger and newly acquired donors.
- Their first interaction with the ministry was in the form a programmatic or need-based appeal.

Challenges Posed

- The ministry is effectively re-acquiring them with each successive appeal because there is not a deeper personal or psychological values-driven connection.
- Often harder to keep when their own financial stress increases.

A successful Mission-Centered Engagement will have a Values-Centered Approach

- The key is identifying and using specific values-oriented language in the ministries communications which will have psychological triggers that tap into the specific “why” behind actions and outcomes.
- Listening to the donors, through a series of survey questions, about what matters most to them, the ministry can adopt language in their donor communications that helps move them from Program-Centered to a deeper Mission-Centered donor pattern.

THE THREE "A'S"

AFFECT

Definition: Affect

- Affect is the sense that an organization is good and is doing good.
- This most basic metric of Mission-Centered engagement tests our success in using psychological values triggers to build an emotional response from the donors to the work that a ministry does.
- The more intense the affection a donor feels toward a ministry and its mission and activities, the closer they are to forming a strong engagement bond with the ministry.

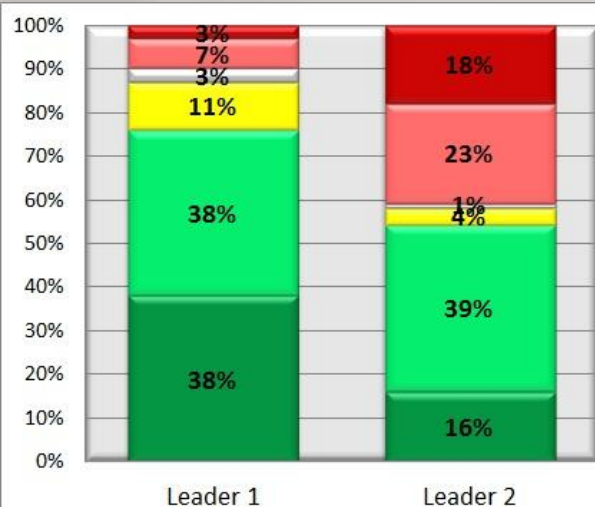
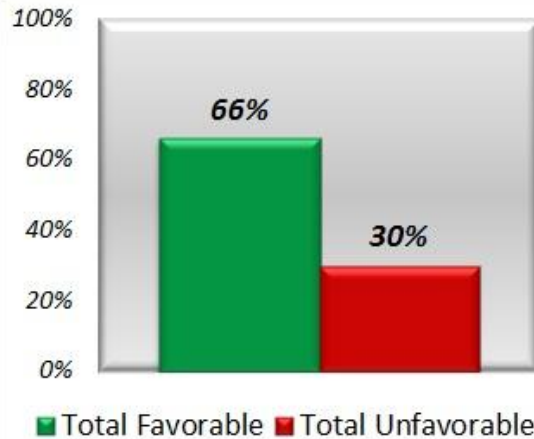


How WPA Measures 'Affect'

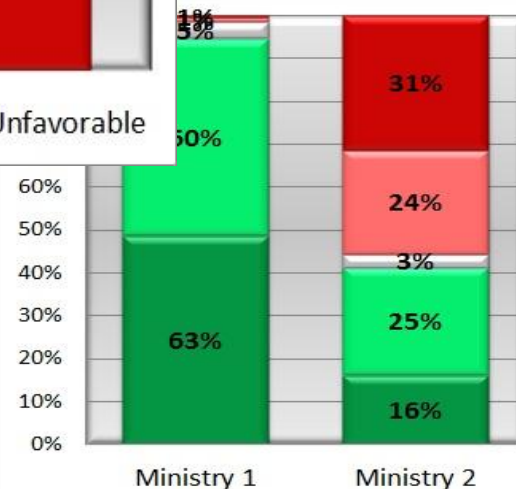
Images of key leaders or mission personalities

Overall favorability of the organization

Support for the missions ministries and values



- Very Favorable
- Somewhat Favorable
- No Opinion
- Never Heard Of
- Somewhat Unfavorable
- Very Unfavorable



- Very Important
- Somewhat Important
- Neither
- Not That Important
- Not Important At All

ALIGNMENT

Definition: Alignment

- Alignment is the sense that an organization's values and actions are in line with the donor's priorities.
- This second measure of engagement measures not just whether the ministry is doing good, but whether that good is personally important to the donor.
- The more intense this feeling of alignment, the stronger the engagement bond becomes.

ATTACHMENT

Definition: Attachment

- Attachment is the sense that being a part of the ministries mission is a personal priority to the donor.
- A donor with strong Attachment to the ministry and its mission has moved fully into a Mission-Centered engagement pattern and support for the ministry is now an important part of their definition of themselves and their personal Christian life.



All of these measures help an organization understand the intention of their donors to donate and how to communicate with them.

Intention to Donate

- WPA is able to get the donor to consider all of their budget constraints for the next year such as household expenses, medical costs, travel and transportation, and support for other ministries and organizations.
- Once the donor is considering the scope of their financial responsibilities we ask them how likely they are to donate to the ministry in the next year.

CONCLUSION

Building and maintaining donor engagement has been a priority of both research and action in the ministry community for some time.

- Wilson Perkins Allen has found that not all engagement is equal. We have found that there are three main types of donor engagement:
 - Personality-Centered Donors
 - Mission-Centered Donors
 - Program-Centered Donors
- Each of these types of donors have their own unique set of characteristics as well as their own set of challenges as the organization tries to keep them as long-term donors.
- Working to convert existing donors to a Mission-Centered pattern of engagement is the best way to build a sustainable donor base.
- Using the right tools to measure the level of engagement in an organization's donors is key to understanding how to communicate with those donors.

CONTACT



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