Unlocking Fundraising Success in an Election Year

May 1 | 10 am PT

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Mission

Mobilize & Empower the World for Good

collaborative

The Nonprofit Conference for Innovative Leaders

May 15-16, 2024 | Chicago

Tickets on sale at collaborative.classy.org
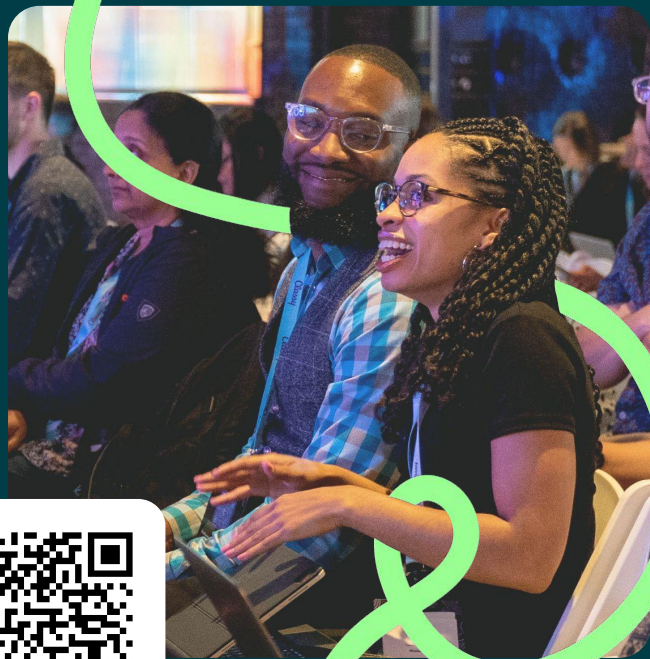
Your speakers

Michelle Hansen

Sr. Manager,
Customer Success
Classy

Will Valverde

Sr. Creative Director,
Digital Fundraising
M+R

Gwen McGarry

Sr. Creative Director,
Advertising
M+R

Zoom reminders

Join in the conversation with the Q&A

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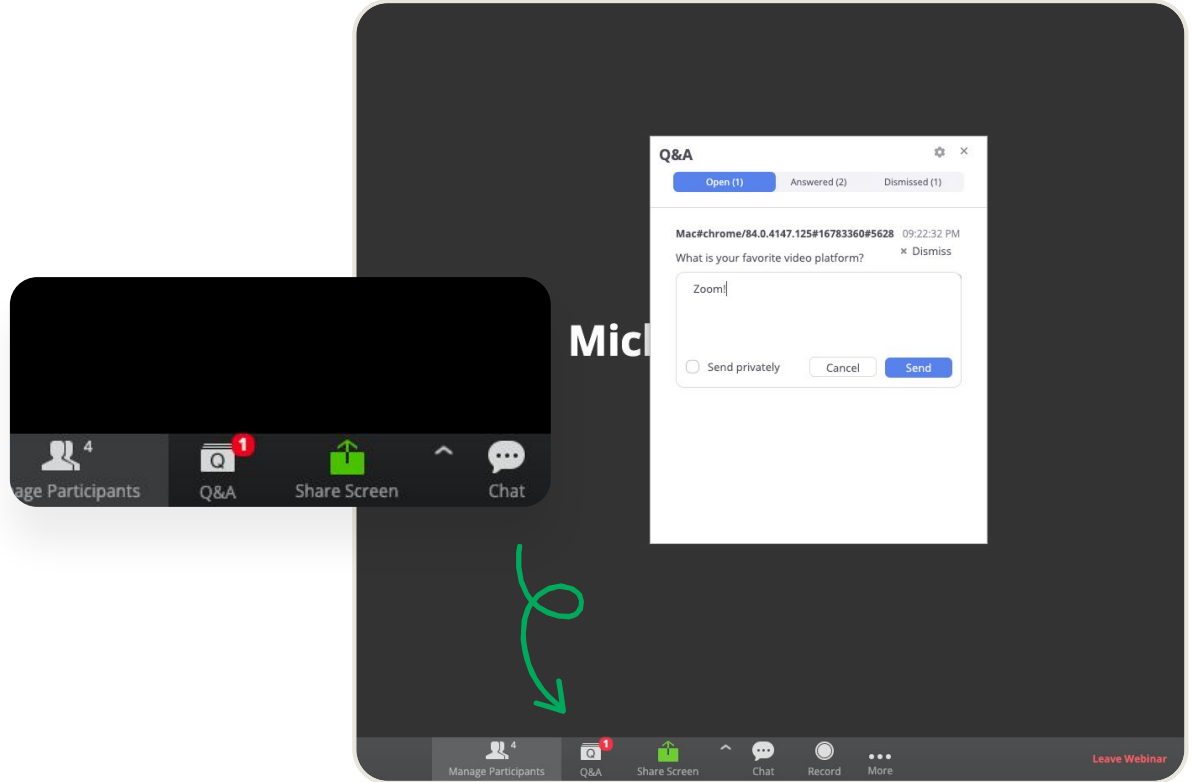
Agenda

01 | What does the data tell us?

02 | 5 key considerations in an election year

03 | Q and A

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Election year fundraising data

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What does the data tell us?

By the Numbers

Should we look at 2020?

2020 was an anomaly year because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

To better assess how your organization might be affected, look at your 2016 and even 2012 data.

Who are political donors?

- Male

- Younger (ages 18–34)
  or much older (65+)

- High household income ($100k+)

- Highly educated
  (bachelor's degree or higher)
  or currently attending college

Also donated to…

- Animal rights
- Social services
- Public media
- Educational causes
- Environmental causes
- Public health
- Arts and cultural institutions

Reactionary/ Rage Giving

"[Rage Donors] are the philanthropic by-product of polarized politics, social media magnification, and global connection."

Philanthropy Daily

Reactionary/ Rage Giving

A Chronicle of Philanthropy analysis suggests that a similar phenomenon has occurred during at least three other elections

+57.55%

In contributions associated with the opposite political ideology of the winning candidate

−2.9%

In contributions associated with the same political ideology of the winning candidate

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5 tactics for fundraising success

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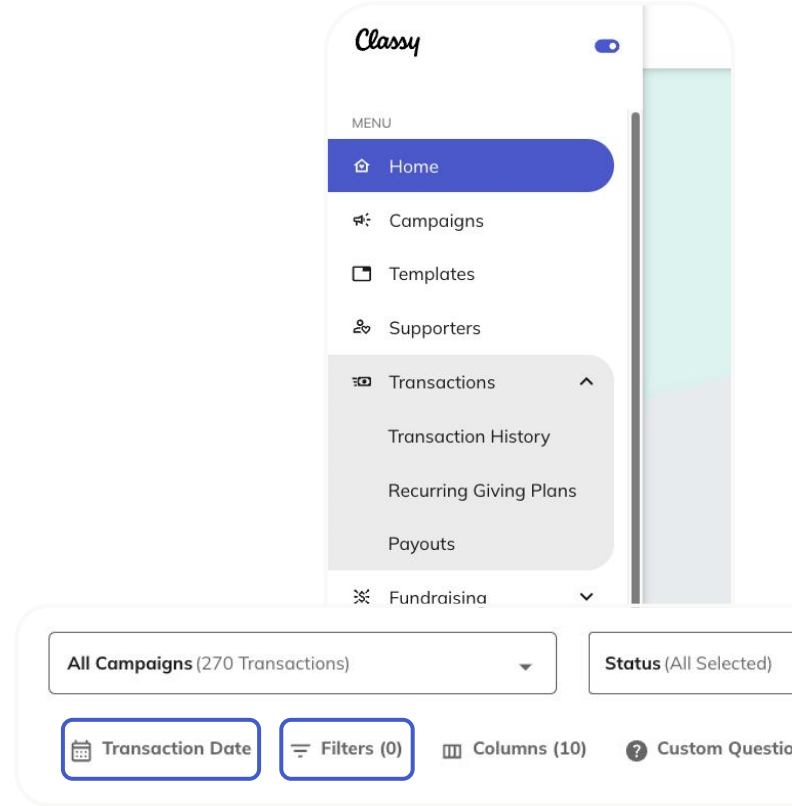# Review your historical data + surveying

Activate with Classy

Classy Reporting

Filter your supporter and transaction reports to find your target audiences

Major Donors: Filter for average transaction size > $X

Recurring Donors: Use recurring giving plans report

Surveying your audience

Some of the most reliable information you can glean about your audience is what they tell you themselves.

You indicated that ending poverty is one of the causes you care about. Why is it a cause that's important to you?
Select all that apply

☐ I've been fortunate enough to never experience poverty myself and want to help uplift others

☐ I experienced financial hardships in the past myself and want to help those in similar circumstances

☐ I feel a strong sense of compassion for individuals and communities facing poverty

☐ I've seen the impact anti-poverty programs can have on improving people's lives

☐ Other (please describe) _____

Now, when thinking about ending global poverty, which approach do you feel is most important? Rank the approaches below in order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 4 being the least important.
Click or drag each item into position on the right

Increasing access to education for children	Reducing food insecurity in vulnerable regions of the world
Building resilience against climate change, disasters or other unforeseen crisis	Empowering women small business owners
Other (please describe) edit	

1 — Most important
2 —
3 —
4 —
5 — Least important

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What to ask

- What areas of our work interest you the most?

- What's the main reason you support us?

- What would make you more likely to support us?

- What other causes or organizations do you support?

- How likely are you to recommend us to friends, family, and colleagues?

2.

Messaging matters

Effective creative expresses five elements

NEED — Who needs help? What needs to be changed?
What problem needs solving?

IMPACT — How will the audience affect the situation or contribute to change?

URGENCY — Why is *right now* the moment to take action?

RELEVANCE — Why should the audience care?

AUTHENTICITY — Why is the speaker someone who the audience should listen to?

More depth and detail: www.mrss.com/guide

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Centering need

Being specific about who needs help doesn't just sharpen your ask – it's a way of respecting your client base (and your audience!)

Elijah in San Antonio, Texas

When Elijah grows up, he wants to be an engineer, building things that can help people. "Helping people makes me feel proud of myself," Elijah said.

But when school is out, Elijah's family can have a hard time putting food on the table.

"When I'm hungry, I get tired or I'll get distracted," he said.

So many families, like Elijah's, need extra help making sure there's food on the table all week. As a Feeding America supporter, your generous donation of $25 or more can help provide meals for members of our community experiencing hunger.

Before midnight tomorrow, can you make a gift to help your neighbors experiencing hunger this weekend and all year long?

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Centering urgency

- Not just "why does it matter" but "why does it matter *right now?*"

- Use external deadlines (key electoral calendar moments, FEC filing deadlines, etc.)

- Create internal deadlines (membership goal, matching gift expiration, flash campaign, etc.)

- Match language and visuals to the urgency of the moment

Name: Will Valverde
Profile ID: 106857993

Match: **OFFER UNCLAIMED**
Deadline: **MIDNIGHT TONIGHT**

Planned Parenthood®
Planned Parenthood Action Fund

Act. No Matter What.

Will —

We can't afford to hold back right now. **We are in the middle of the most widespread and dangerous attack on reproductive rights in decades.** More than 20 states have banned some or all abortions, and members of Congress are threatening a national abortion ban.

Now is the time to step up. **Until midnight tonight, your donation will be doubled by a special matching gift.** Make your gift to Planned Parenthood Action Fund before time runs out.

00	00	00
HOURS	MINUTES	SECONDS

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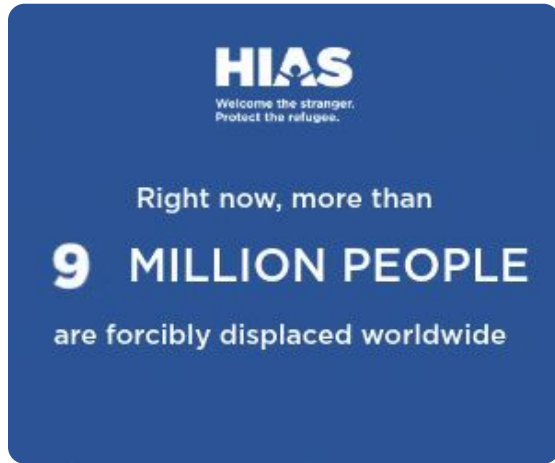
Centering urgency

- Staccato text paired with a stark stat.

- Keep in mind: Political campaigns double down on tactical urgency, so pulling other urgency levers may be more effective this fall.

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Centering impact

- Shrink down the problem – what can be done with $25? $250?

- What is your audience doing, feeling, seeing at the same time your campaign is running?

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Centering relevance and authenticity

- Influencers — reaching audiences and telling stories

- State/local focus

- Outside validators — news headlines, special signers

Messaging takeaways

Capitalize on key moments

Know your audience

Build authenticity and trust

Omni channel approach

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Communication timeline

Timing Considerations

Super Tuesday

- March 5

Primaries

- March 15, 19, 23
- April 2
- May 14
- June 4

Republican National Convention

- July 15 – 18

Democratic National Convention

- August 19 – 22

Meta blackout

- Week before election

Election Day

- November 5

Giving Tuesday

- December 3

Key timing considerations

October
Not a typical October

November
Meta blackout + election

December
Giving Tuesday + EOY

October before the election is a crowded month

Meta will not accept new ads the week before election day

Giving Tuesday is December 3!

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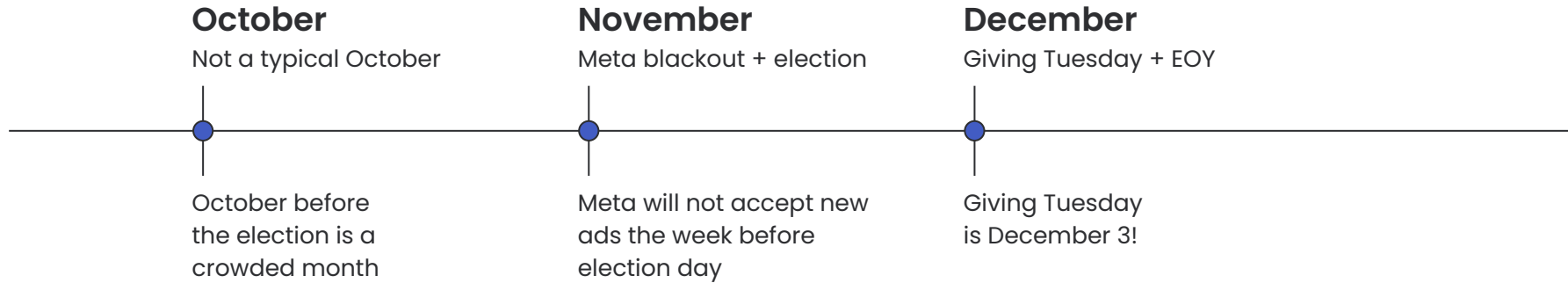
4.

Ad spend
+ strategy

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Election spending expected
to be **30% up** 2024 vs 2020

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Election year approach

- Heavy up your budget in early September, gradually pull back throughout October and then ramp back up in November to kick off EOY

  - Consider *what* kind of content you're running, too: October / November isn't likely the best time for awareness campaigns, for example.

- Shift more into November and December than in previous years to make up for expected lower October returns

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We can expect some sectors to see **a lift in EOY** fundraising depending on the election outcome. However, from 2016 and 2020 M+R Benchmarks, we saw **no detectable difference** in fundraising for election related non-profits and non-profits without electoral messaging

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5.

Focus on
major donors

Major donors

Major donors are significant financial contributors to a nonprofit

- Focus attention on major donors now as they will start to turn attention to politics in some cases

- Research your major donors to see what type of activity they might be doing

- Focus on your retention strategy and impact communication

- Highlight Tax Implications

Top Priorities in an Election Year

- **Deep Dive into Data**
  Compare election years and YoY + surveys

- **Messaging**
  Lead with your mission

- **Calendar Review**
  Be aware and flexible

- **High Net Worth Donors**
  Have conversations now

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Q and A

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