

Unlocking Fundraising Success in an Election Year

May 1 | 10 am PT

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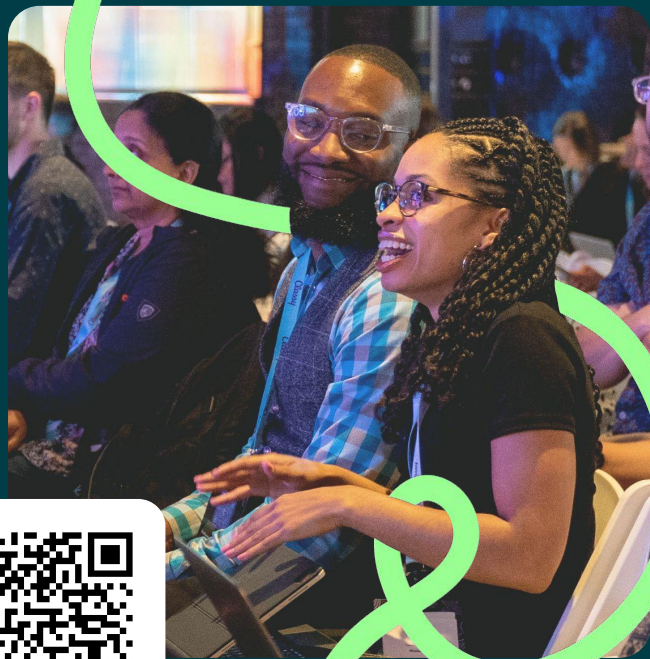




The Nonprofit Conference for Innovative Leaders

May 15-16, 2024 | Chicago

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Your speakers



Michelle Hansen

Sr. Manager,
Customer Success
Classy



Will Valverde

Sr. Creative Director,
Digital Fundraising
M+R

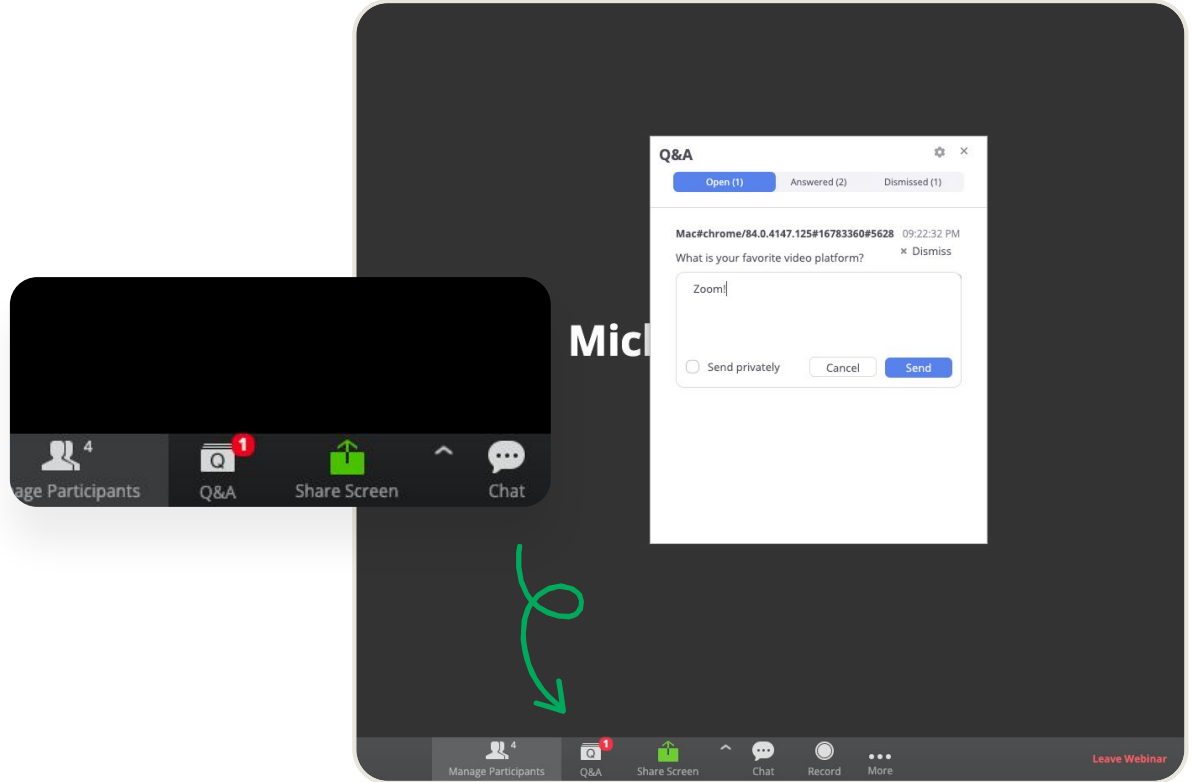


Gwen McGarry

Sr. Creative Director,
Advertising
M+R

Zoom reminders

Join in the conversation with the Q&A



Agenda

01 | What does the data tell us?

02 | 5 key considerations in an election year

03 | Q and A

Fundraising success in an election year

Election year fundraising data

What does the data tell us?

By the Numbers



What does the data tell us?

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

5 tactics for fundraising success

I.

Review your historical data + surveying



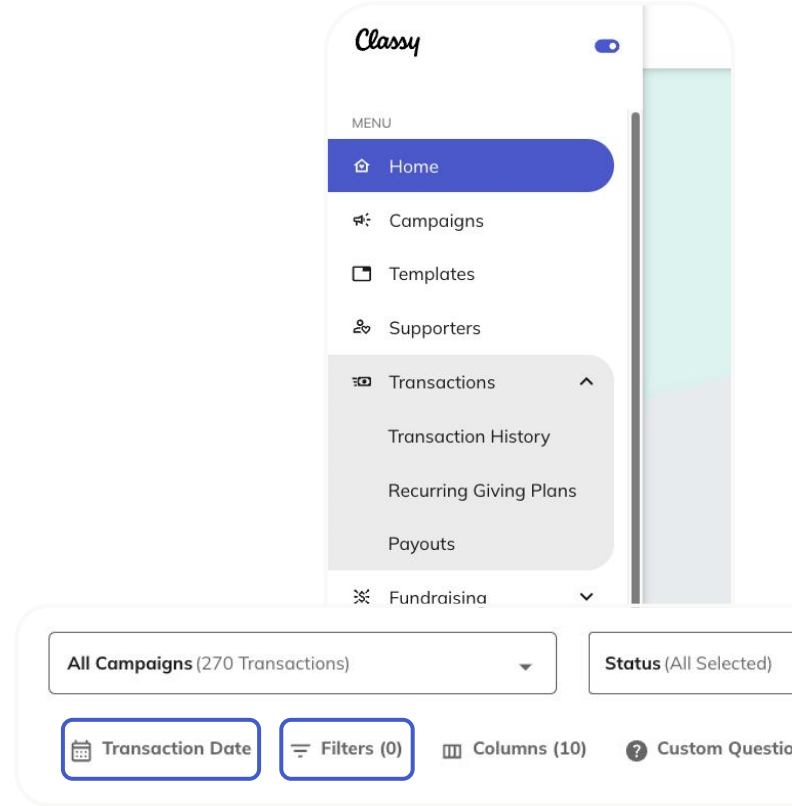
Activate with Classy

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	1	Most important
Building resilience against climate change, disasters or other unforeseen crisis	Empowering women small business owners	2	<input type="text"/>
Other (please describe)		3	<input type="text"/>
<input type="button" value="edit"/>		4	<input type="text"/>
		5	Least important

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

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?](#)

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**



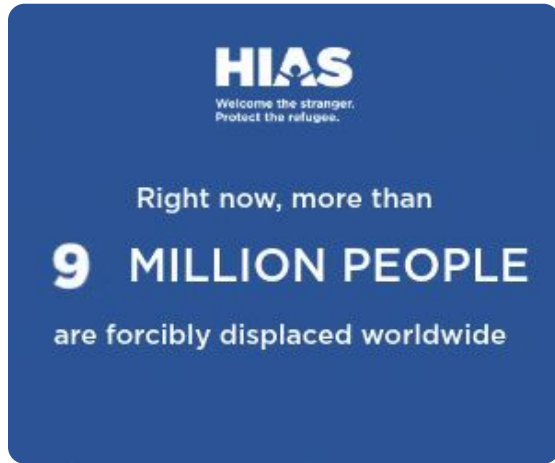
Will —

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.](#)



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.

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?

Centering relevance and authenticity

- Influencers — reaching audiences and telling stories
- State/local focus
- Outside validators — news headlines, special signers

The image shows a screenshot of a sponsored social media post. At the top left is the Second Harvest Heartland logo, a circular emblem with a green leaf and the word 'HEARTLAND' below it. To its right, the text reads 'Second Harvest Heartland Sponsored' and 'Library ID: 1386906638894839'. In the top right corner, there are three dots indicating more options. The main text of the post asks, 'Did you know that right now, hundreds of thousands of your neighbors in Minnesota are facing hunger?' and follows with, 'When you donate to Second Harvest Heartland you can help get food to families who need it most. Your donation today will help make sure none of our neighbors go hungry this winter.' Below this text is a green banner with white text that says 'Gifts Matched - \$1 Can Provide 6 Meals' and 'Gifts Matched'. The background of the post is a dark teal color with a faint map of Minnesota. On the right side of the map, the text reads 'URGENT: Neighbors Need Your Help' in large, bold, light green letters, followed by 'Hunger is on the rise in Minnesota this holiday season. Will you help?' in smaller white text. At the bottom left of the post is the Second Harvest Heartland logo and the text 'second harvest HEARTLAND'. At the bottom right is a white button with the text 'Donate now'. At the very bottom of the screenshot, there is a white bar with the text '2HARVEST.ORG NOT AFFILIATED WITH META Families Urgently Need Your Help'.

Second Harvest Heartland
Sponsored
Library ID: 1386906638894839


Did you know that right now, hundreds of thousands of your neighbors in Minnesota are facing hunger?

When you donate to Second Harvest Heartland you can help get food to families who need it most. Your donation today will help make sure none of our neighbors go hungry this winter.

Gifts Matched - \$1 Can Provide 6 Meals Gifts Matched

URGENT:
Neighbors Need Your Help

Hunger is on the rise in Minnesota this holiday season. Will you help?

 second harvest
HEARTLAND

2HARVEST.ORG
NOT AFFILIATED WITH META
Families Urgently Need Your Help

Donate now

Messaging takeaways



Capitalize on
key moments



Know your
audience



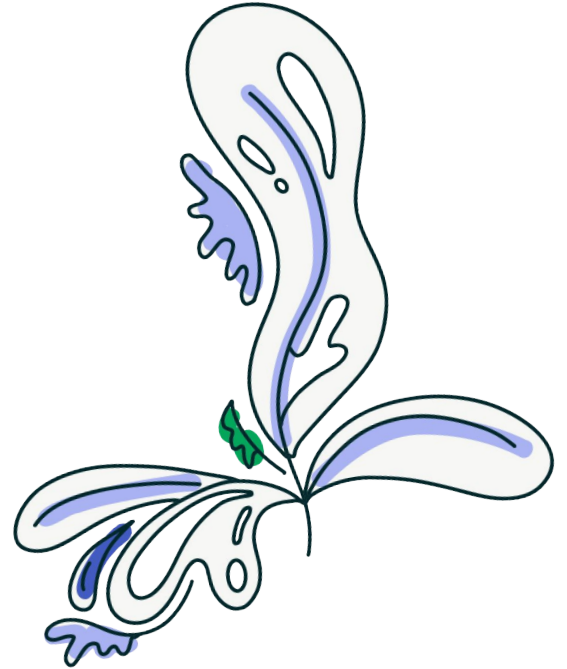
Build
authenticity
and trust



Omni channel
approach

3.

Communication timeline



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

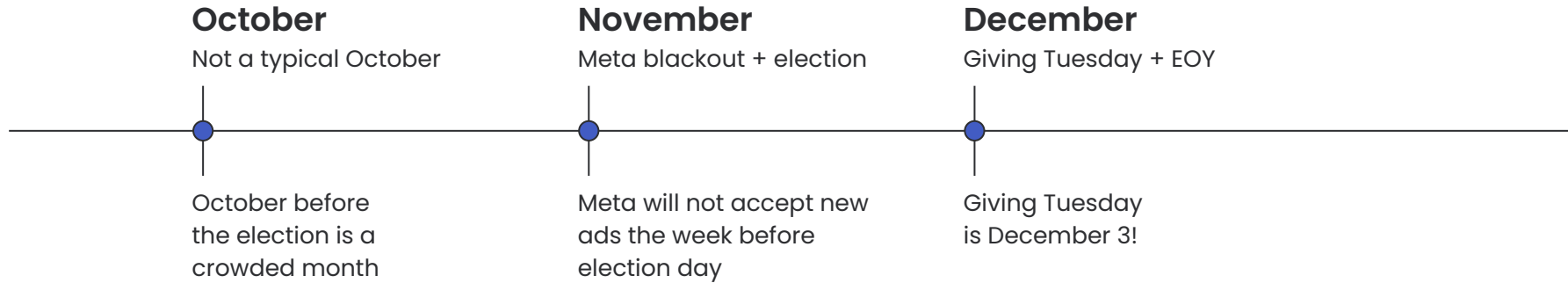
Election Day

- November 5

Giving Tuesday

- December 3

Key timing considerations



4.

Ad spend + strategy



State of play

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

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

State of play

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

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

Q and A

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