



A MINISTRY- FIRST APPROACH TO GENEROSITY



Giving habits don't define your givers.

But they can provide church leaders with clues on their needs.

Historical giving patterns can serve as a remarkably accurate ministry health check. It can provide cues to your givers' well-being and the challenges in their lives and, thus, to how you can best serve them.

Your members' giving behavior can signal changes or needs in their lives...assuming your giving system can report on past gifts.

LOOK FOR MOVEMENT

A video usually tells a more complete story than a snapshot. In the same way, a picture of someone's giving captured on any given Sunday doesn't tell you much about their giving behavior, spirituality or life.

But tracking giving over time helps you see trends and patterns. It's the movement (or lack thereof) that can be most reflective of the seasons of their lives.

So, look for these giving "personas" in your data and consider these practical ways to engage them, no matter where they are in their giving journey.

By far, the most overlooked aspect of giving data is that it can allow you to meet givers where they are and minister to their specific needs.






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4 Approaches for Engaging with **FIRST-TIME GIVERS**

A first-time gift is a big deal! Someone is making a statement: *I find this church worth investing in.*

Whether they're new to your church, new to giving in general, or new to online giving, celebrate this step in a way that tells them you recognize where they are.

Address givers by name.

You can make it even more personal by including a short video introduction to the Pastor sharing their gratitude and vision.

Share ministry impact.

If your giving solution doesn't include the impact of gifts, point the way to a source that will show them what the church is doing in the community, whether it's a bulletin board, newsletter, or online section of your website. Understanding the impact of their gift is a critical factor for many givers, especially Millennials.

Resources for newcomers.

If your first-time giver is new to your church, include links in your welcome email to other items of interest to newcomers, such as classes, ministries, upcoming events, and how to subscribe to news. Invite them to try out your app, if you have one.

Call and say thank you.

If they're new, introduce yourself and let them know they were noticed and that you want to get to know them and help them in any way you can. If they're Millennials, consider texting this message and inviting them to call or text you back if they have any questions or needs.

Pro Tips:

Long-time guests and uninvolved members who suddenly decide to give also need to receive easy access to resources, too. So don't hold back just because they have been around a while.

Save suggested ways to serve for a follow-up email!

4 Approaches for Engaging with **INCONSISTENT GIVERS**



Studies indicate a strong connection between church attendance and tithing/giving. In other words, inconsistent giving may be a result of general poor engagement with the church.

The key to greater integration and participation is often directly related to attendees' ability to quickly establish potentially meaningful connections and friendships within the church. So focus focus on engagement rather than giving, in these ways:

Welcome first-time guests from the pulpit ... and beyond.

Many churches aren't as friendly as they think they are. Encourage your members to act like hosts, not guests: Ask questions, introduce them to others, point out resources, and invite them to lunch or to an upcoming gathering.

Share ministry impact.

Poor attendance may indicate severe financial or other needs. Make sure all givers have access to a church ministry list that includes resources for groceries, handyman help, abuse services, single pregnancies, childcare during services and events, etc. that you offer. End with: "If you or anyone you know needs help in these areas, please don't hesitate to contact us."

Personal Invitations.

For years, people have said that a personal invitation to church is one of the most powerful motivators for a first-time guest. In the same way, being asked by a ministry leader (face to face, if possible) to have coffee or to join a discipleship quad with other people in their demographic (i.e. new moms, divorced dads, etc.) may help establish important connections.

Serving together is also powerful. As a means of connecting people to one another, encourage internal outreach, such as asking volunteers to invite someone they don't know well to join them in attending an event together or volunteering with them in a one-time event (i.e. check-in at VBS).

Train up "connectors" in your church.

"There's someone I'd like you to meet" can be a powerful way to spark a friendship and greater integration into the church.

2 Approaches for Engaging When RECURRING GIVING CHANGES

Whether they're upgrading or downgrading their amounts, changes in recurring gift schedules can indicate financial shifts in givers' budgets.

It can also signal changes in priority. If they've lowered their gift amount, perhaps they are diverting part of their tithe elsewhere. Perhaps they have doubts about the direction of the church or have personal grievances. Try these tactics:

Personalized email notification.

"We noticed that you changed your recurring gift schedule and just want to reach out and check to see that all is well. We care about you, so please let us know if this adjustment is a result of any challenges or concerns that we should be aware of, or if you need prayer or assistance of any kind."

In some giving systems, this email can actually be automated to trigger any time a recurring schedule is downgraded or canceled.

Say thank you.

It goes without saying that if they've upgraded their recurring gift schedule, a hearty thank you is in order.

Consider asking them to share what led them to increase their gift. It will be nice to hear their success story and possibly learn about something the church did right!



Changes in recurring gifts can indicate financial or priority shifts. Investigate the why.

6 Approaches for Engaging with **CONSISTENT GIVERS**



Offer ministry resources to bolster their challenging lives, starting with recovery groups, financial training, and marriage and family resources.

Offer them opportunities to lead, if they are not already.

Say, “We’re so grateful for how you serve, but we just want to make sure you’re being fed. Is anyone ministering to you? How can we pray for you?”

This group of givers is your foundation in more ways than just giving. They tend to be self-motivated, enabling your operations and helping to keep your budget stable. They are often your most dedicated volunteers and most engaged members.

Many in this group may feel that their generosity is an intrinsic part of their worship and undeserving of recognition. But just because they look and seem okay doesn't mean you should neglect them. You want their participation and growth trends to continue and even increase, and that may require your ministry focus.

The fact is, leaders also need to be poured into. They have marriages that need attention, chaotic schedules with multiple kids, dual careers, debt, and a whole host of other challenges in their lives. They may be single and lonely. They may be struggling with addiction. The thing that makes them consistent givers also makes them less likely to show these cracks in their facades.

Send an annual, hand-written thank you note. They can't engage with a personal note, however, so be sure to also reach out digitally or in person.

Host a year-end banquet to honor their contributions, based on all your data around giving, volunteering and leading.

Listen when they express concerns or have ideas. Being disregarded when they invest so much of themselves makes them feel devalued and less inclined to continue helping, which can sometimes be the first step in leaving.

5 Approaches for Engaging with LAPSED GIVERS

The first step here is to determine how you will define a lapsed giver and how soon to reach out. For a weekly tither, a year should be considered an outer limit for effectively following up (we recommend much sooner), but it's the earliest you would be able to identify a "missed gift" from a "holiday giver."

Once you've set those parameters, your giving data can identify all those who fit the criteria.



Remember, you're exploring ministry needs, so there's no need to mention gifts.

If they've been otherwise active and ask why you're concerned about them, you can state that your system's giving data indicated a change in their giving patterns and you're just double-checking to see if they've experienced any challenges they need help with.

Investigate other avenues of participation.

Remember, giving can serve as a cue to look deeper, but it's not your only source of information.

Has anyone seen them recently (i.e. small group, nursery or children's program)? Have they attended an event? Could there be an email from them in your inbox that you missed, stating that they were moving or requesting prayer? Are your emails to them going unopened?

Connect as personally as you can:

- A **handwritten card** conveys care, but may not give you any information.
- A **phone call** offers your best chance at two-way communication.
- **Inviting them for coffee** to catch up is the beginning of ministry action, conveying care, offering personal attention they may be craving, and allowing you to get the scoop on their life. This should be from the most relevant staff member (i.e. Stewardship minister or staff that knows them personally)
- A **follow-up email** can be a good idea. This can be a targeted email to all those the data identified that you were unable to connect with through other channels. Recipients will see only their own email.
- Make sure your email content perfectly fits each recipient and you're 100% sure they've fallen off everyone's radar. You don't want to say "we've missed you" if they are still attending. Instead, say, "**We've been trying to reach you.**"

5 Approaches for Engaging with **TOP GIVERS**

Your most extravagant givers play an important role in your church's impact and their loss can be crippling to the church's finances. That's why it's so crucial to prioritize your relationships with them in these ways:

Ensure pastor and executive leadership acknowledgment.

Leaders should maintain consistent communication with them and always show appreciation for their support.

Always make the impact of their funds as clear as possible.

Most donors want and deserve to hear about the tangible results of their gift. Major donors are especially conscious of the ROI of their gift, so share details, such as "Because your \$10,000 gift allowed us to _____, this community/group/school was able to _____."

Solicit their opinion about a proposed strategy, project, or change.

As you cast a vision for a new idea with your top givers, remember to communicate how much you need, what that money will accomplish (with as much detail as you can provide), and what the overall end result will be.

Ask them to volunteer.

As mentioned earlier, volunteering gives every participant a close-up look at a ministry and its champions, increasing their bond with others, buy-in to the ministry, and passion for championing it. For major givers, especially, volunteering can spark creative input on specific ways they would like to impact the ministry.

Invite them to share a public testimonial.

This tactic can be effective at any giving stage.



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VISION2 PROVIDES THE DATA AND TOOLS YOU NEED TO MINISTER EFFECTIVELY AND COMPASSIONATELY

Giving is personal, serving is personal, and ministry should be personal, as well.

Unfortunately, it's often not. There can be a disconnect between the needs of your members and the church's ability to provide the personalized love, connection and spiritual care required for effective healing.

Truth is, in a classic picture of getting the cart before the horse, we really shouldn't expect

or hound people to give if the church isn't ministering to them.

The flip side? If they feel seen and cared for, their loyalty and financial support will usually follow.



Giving data can be a valuable guide to the ministry needs of your church.

We're here to help.

Vision2's comprehensive, end-to-end contributions and donor management platform provides the data to know your givers, and the tools to automate the personal touch.

Ready to learn more?

Vision2 is more than giving software. A true solution like Vision2 solves your church's giving challenges.

Do Good. Better.™

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Our Promise:

As your partner, we'll support you every step of the way.

