

NONPROFIT TIP SHEET

14 Characteristics of High Propensity Donors

By Eddie Thompson, Founder and CEO

High propensity donors are the best prospects for making a major gift of assets (and for our charitable estate planning process). They have both the ability to give and interest in giving to your organization. But, how do you know who they are? Our experience shows that high propensity donors have some combination of the 14 characteristics listed below.

1

Consistency in donating at a high level.

Establish your high level benchmark at your organization (\$500, \$1,000, etc.). For this group, review what month these donors tend to give and the assets used to make the gift. These strategic donors view their gift as an investment in your organization.

2

No children.

Individuals without children give differently. This also applies in a blended marriage where assets are still held individually, not as a couple. These donors often have available resources.

3

Have "successful" or "spend-thrift" children.

When parents feel their children are providing for themselves, they are more likely to increase contributions to charity. Listen for the donor to talk proudly about their child's house or career. Or, perhaps they are hesitant to leave too much to their children either because they don't manage money well or other struggles.

4

Highest amount ever donated in one year.

Identify spikes in a donor's giving and have a conversation about what drove the gift. It may indicate there is something driving that one gift (like an inheritance or the follow up to an inheritance).

5

Having funded a trust.

This could be an indicator of having assets available. You aren't just looking for charitable trusts, consider all forms of irrevocable trusts.

6

Female.

It has long been recognized that women are great prospects for charitable giving.



7

Wealthy (not perceived wealth).

Focus on finding net worth assets. You're looking for donors who can affirmatively answer the question, "do I have enough to live on for the rest of my life?"

8

Not married.

Singles tend to be cautious, careful accumulators of wealth because they don't have anyone to depend on.

9

High donation amount recently or before.

Research shows that donors will make large donations during and after they include charity in their estate plan. Keep the lines of communication open with these donors.

10

Growing trajectory of wealth leading up to death.

For many donors, wealth continues to grow even in retirement. When this happens, they are often open to making a gift.

11

Consistency in volunteering.

People willing to give the gift of time have a higher propensity to give a gift of money. As donors age, they may be unable to continue volunteering, but do not take this as a sign of disinterest!

12

Religious (this does not suggest that non-religious are not givers).

Someone who regularly worships may be more likely to give. They have been taught to give to help others. You might hear them say they "feel blessed and want to bless others."

13

Positive feelings about their health.

People who believe they are in good health tend to be more optimistic, which makes them more willing to give.

14

Age 70+.

Older donors are often more open to giving and are often actively thinking about their estate plan. Start educating donors at age 60 so they become familiar with planned gifts.

+

BONUS: Memorialize or honor someone.

People tend to give more when they're remembering someone. Always ask, "Is there someone you want to honor with this gift?"

About Thompson & Associates

Thompson & Associates partners with nonprofits to provide estate planning services to their supporters. Our planning process helps you move from "hoping" planned gifts materialize to active gift creation by putting your supporters' needs first. We give your supporters an opportunity to work closely with an independent advisor to clarify their values to develop a plan that reduces uncertainty, freeing them to make a lasting impact on their family, community and the world.

