



Web Conversion: Re-Evaluating Your Online Donation Form

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Agenda

FRANK AUER

3 Pillars of Digital Success

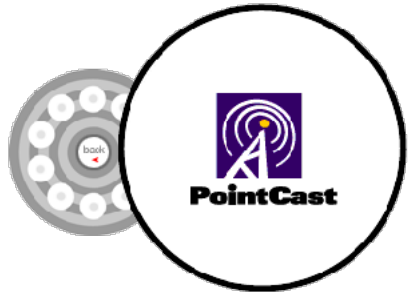
MI TIAN

Test Donation Form Your Way



Important Note

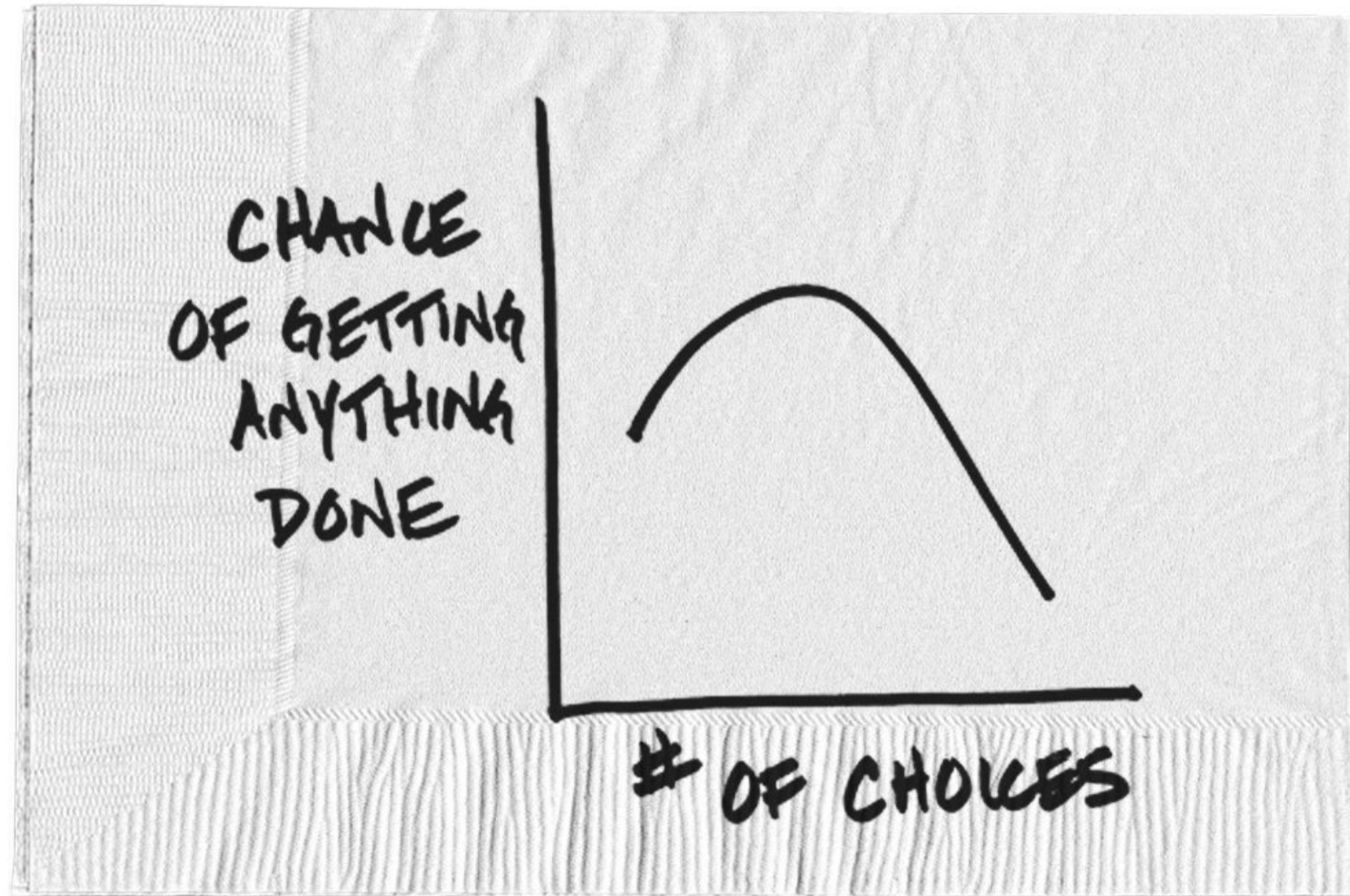
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Web³



The First Challenge of Digital



Maximize the immediate giving experience and life-time donor value.

- How to we make it easy to donate?
- How to we retain their value?
- How do we make sure we are not leaving money on the table?

GOOOOAL!

3 Pillars of Digital Success

Ease of
Use



Emotions



Testing



First Pillar

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Ease of
Use



Why is Ease of Use Important?

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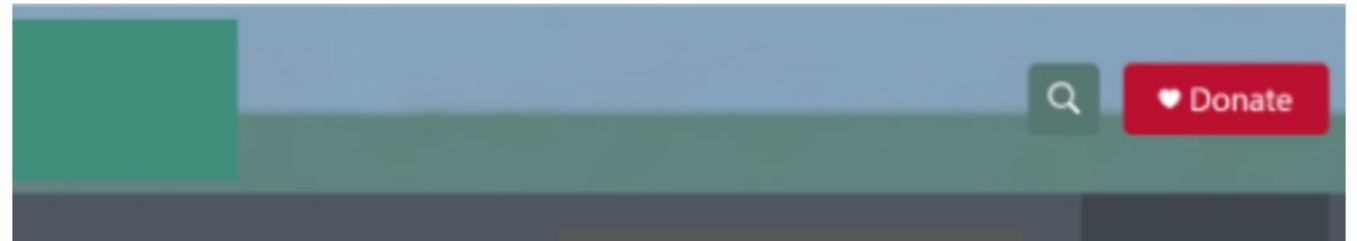
- The most important question:
 - What is the mental load on a donor to convert and how can you lessen it?
 - ▶ The less “thinking” a donor must do the greater the chance of a conversion.
 - ▶ The less time they spend on the process the lesser the chance of a distraction.
- Ultimate goal: Simple and Obvious
- Areas of Highest Impact:
 - ▶ Donate button
 - ▶ Form path
 - ▶ Form
 - ▶ Mobile

Ease of Use: Donation Button

- Color
 - It must stand out from the rest of your website
 - It should not match the rest of your menu



YOY MSB Station Cohort Comparison
1% Greater Digital Growth



Optimized Site – Donation Button

- Size
 - Make it obvious

Community Watch LIVE About **Support** 

YOY MSB Station Cohort Comparison
1% Greater Digital Growth

TV Schedule Radio Newsletter Contact Media Center

DONATE 

About Watch Passport **SUPPORT** 

Optimized Site – Donation Button

- Placement
 - Ideally do not hide it in your menu of other content options

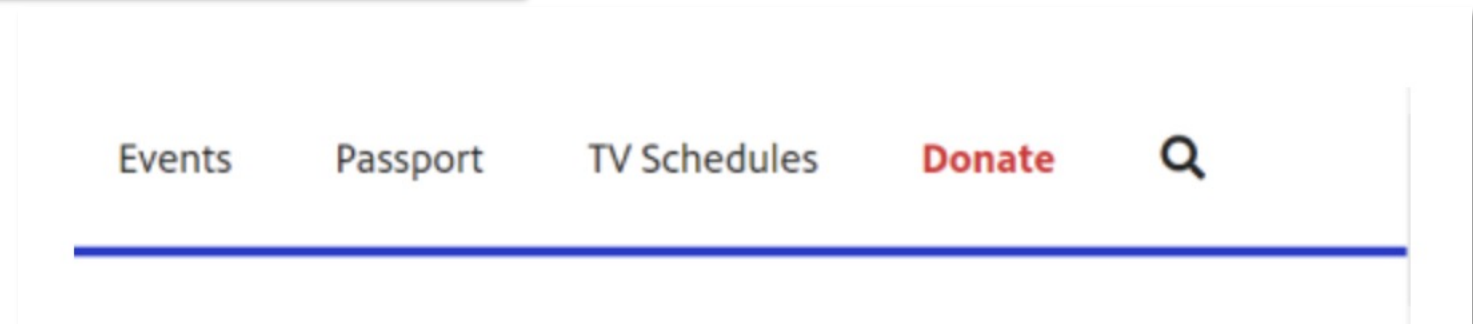
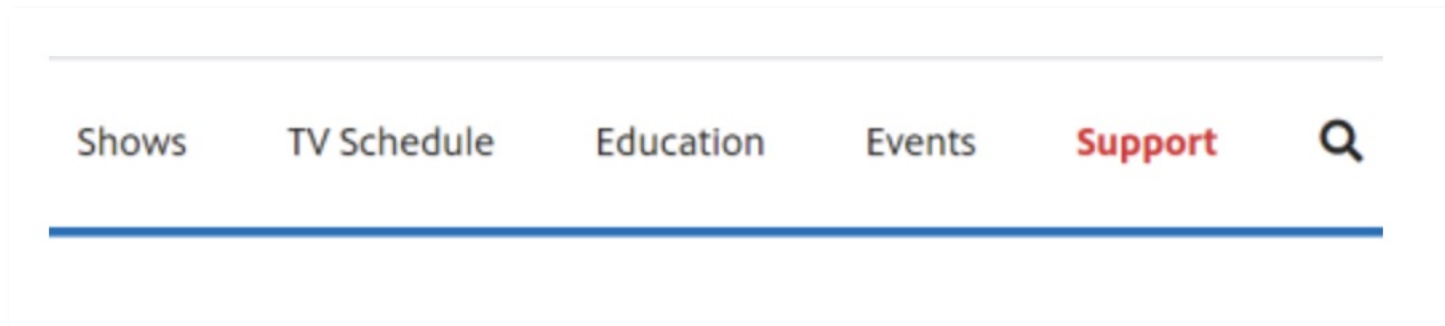


YOY MSB Station Cohort Comparison
2% Greater Digital Growth



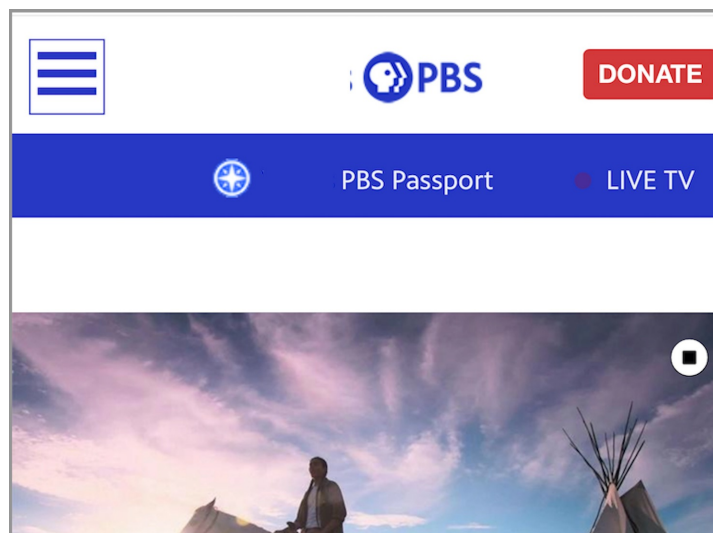
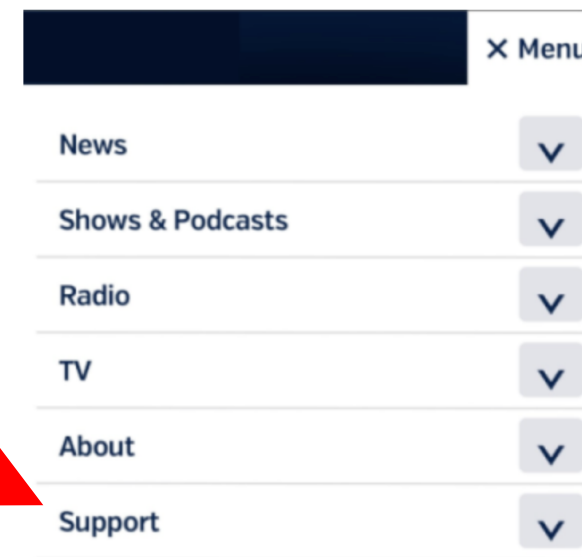
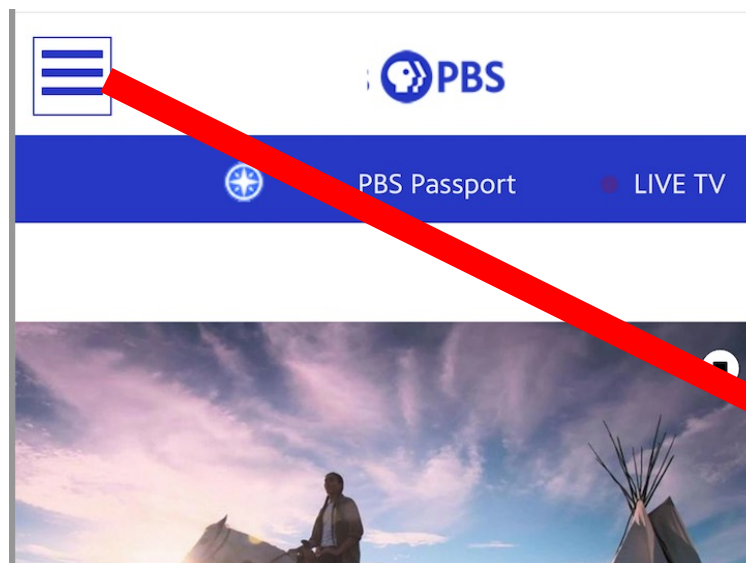
Optimized Site – Donation Button

- Language
 - A simple “Donate” beats all other options
 - Previously tested “Donate” vs. “Donate Now”, “Support WXYZ”, “Join” and “Contribute”
 - “Donate” outperformed the others by between 10% - 40% in previous testing



Optimized Site - Mobile

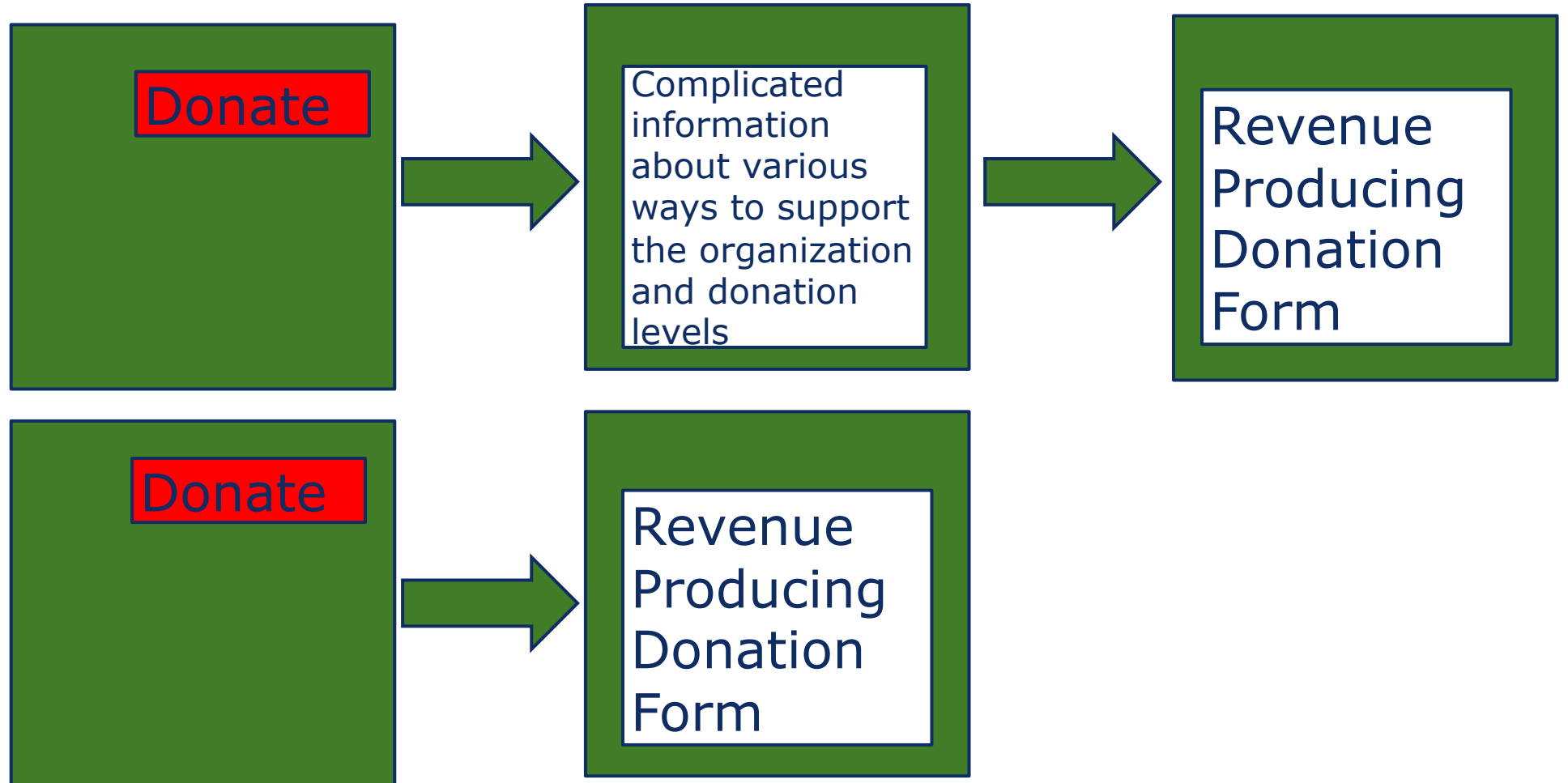
- Increase in mobile traffic to donation pages
 - Most of our partner stations now have over 50%+ mobile traffic,
 - Up 15 percentage points from two years ago!
- Don't hide donate under the hamburger
- Amplifies all other concerns
 - Form simplicity
 - Fewer fields
 - No distractions



YOY MSB Station Cohort
Comparison
4% Greater Digital
Growth

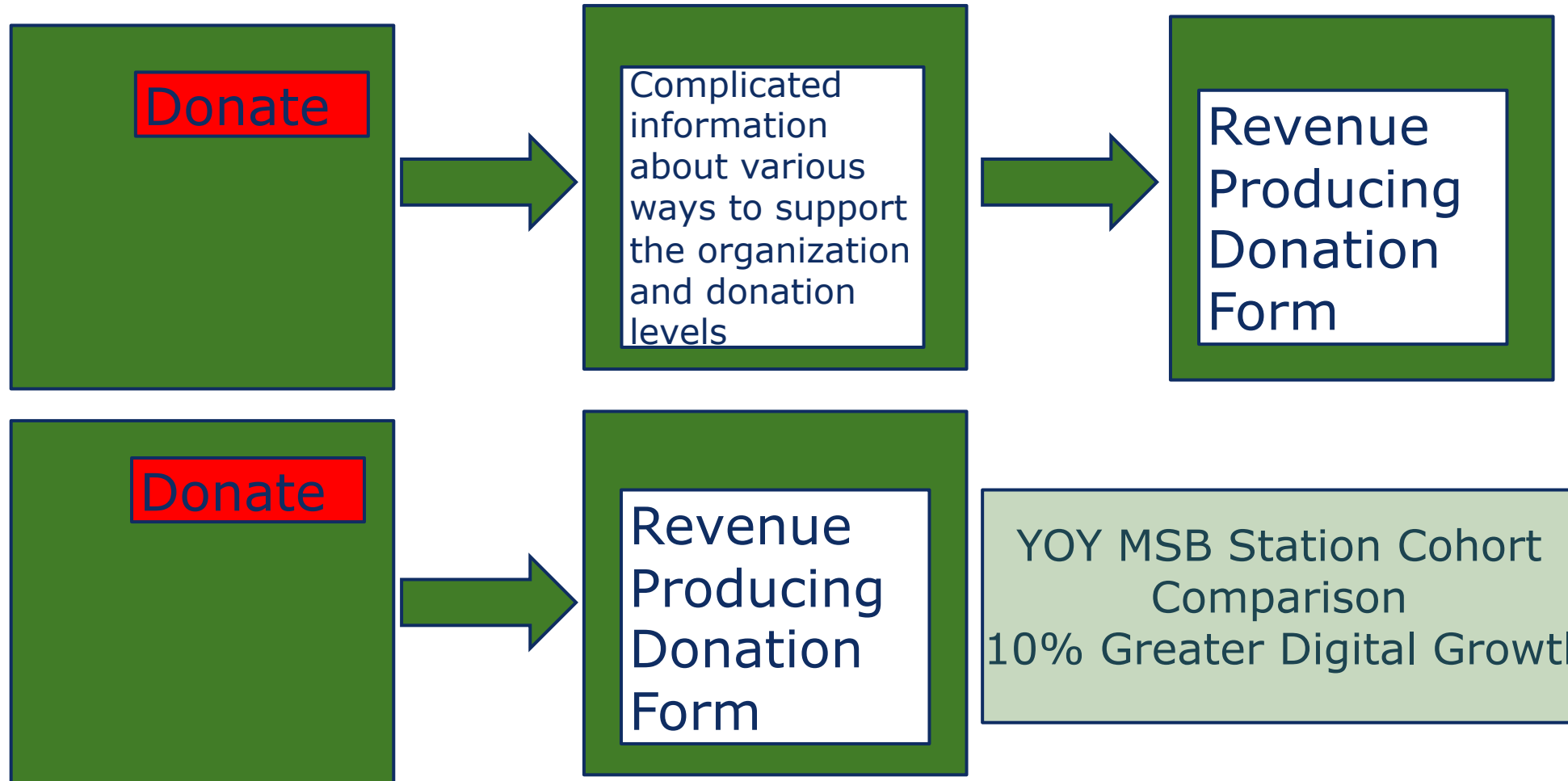
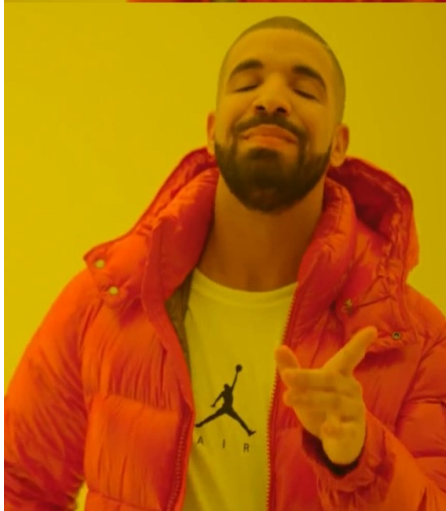
Optimized Site – Straight to the Form

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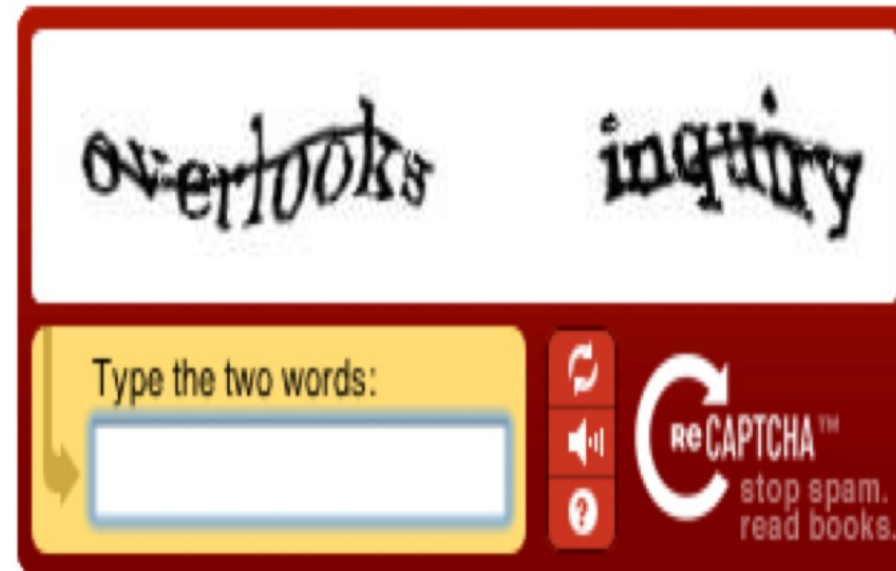
Optimized Site – Straight to the Form

NPR ran a test and found an interstitial page, even one about premiums currently featured on air—
reduced conversion by **15.3%**



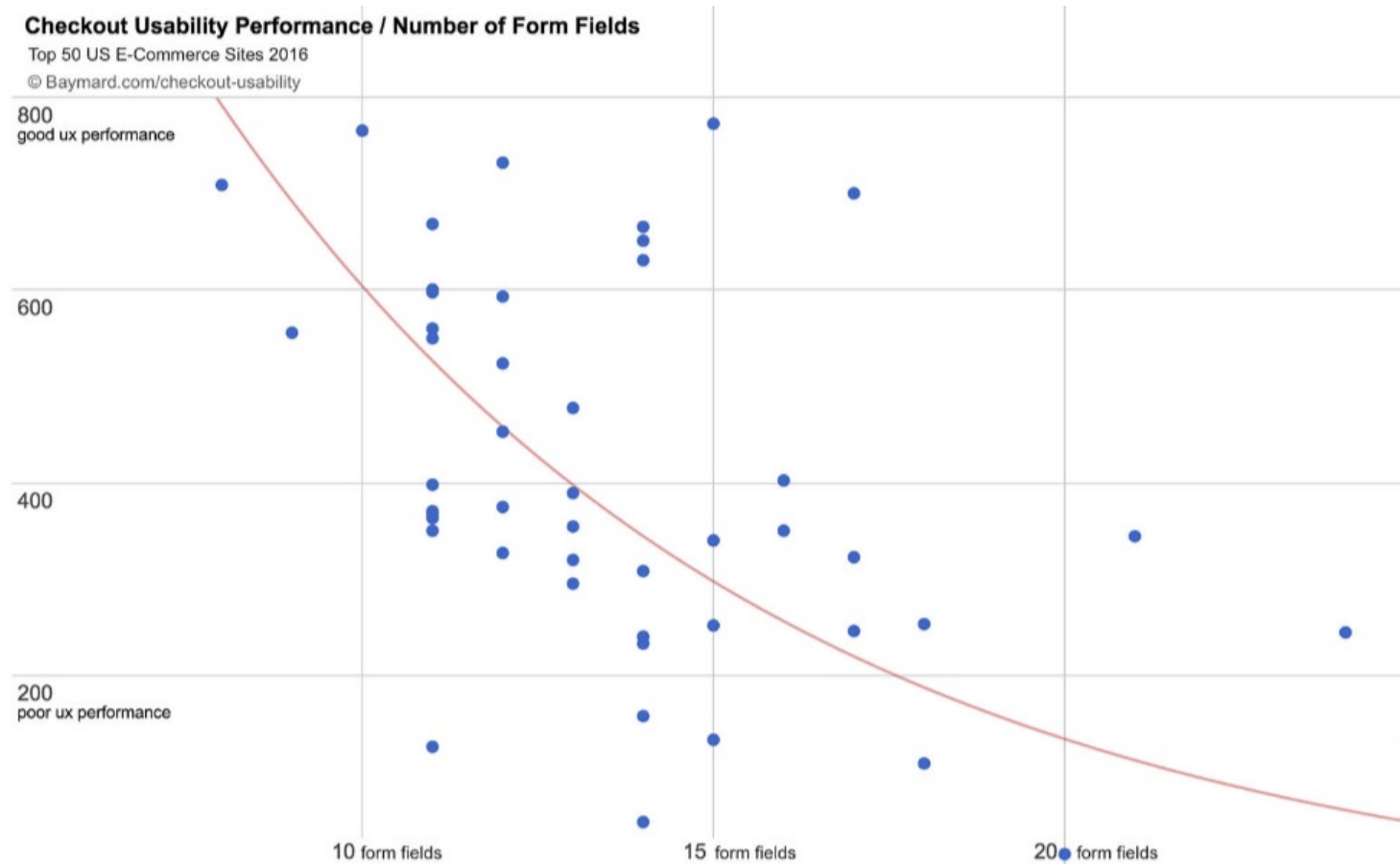
Optimized Site – Keep the Form Simple

- Reduce fields to only those 100% required!
 - One recent study by Vital Design demonstrated a 47% drop in conversion rates when a field was added asking for a phone number (not a public media form).
- Do not use captcha's unless they are automatically deployed and do not live on the form ALL the time.
 - SEO MOZ showed that captcha's lowered conversion rates by 3.2% (not a public media form).



Efficiency of Conversion

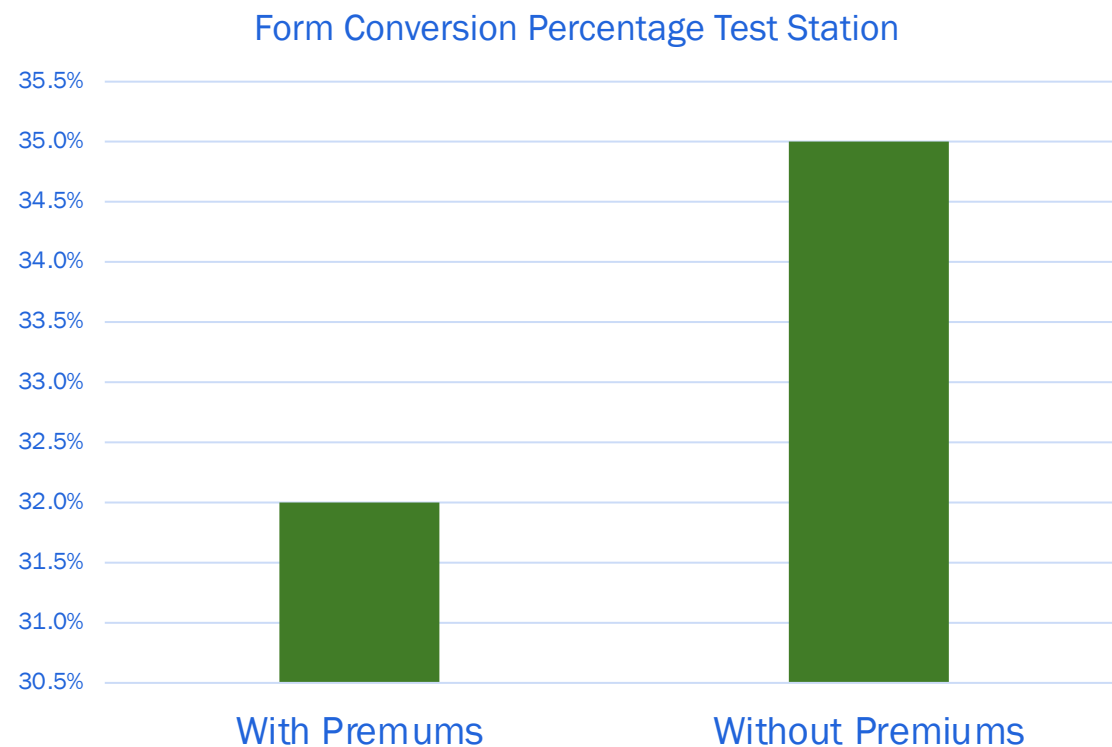
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Digital is all about efficiency of the conversion — the longer someone spends on a digital form, the more likely you are to lose the donation.

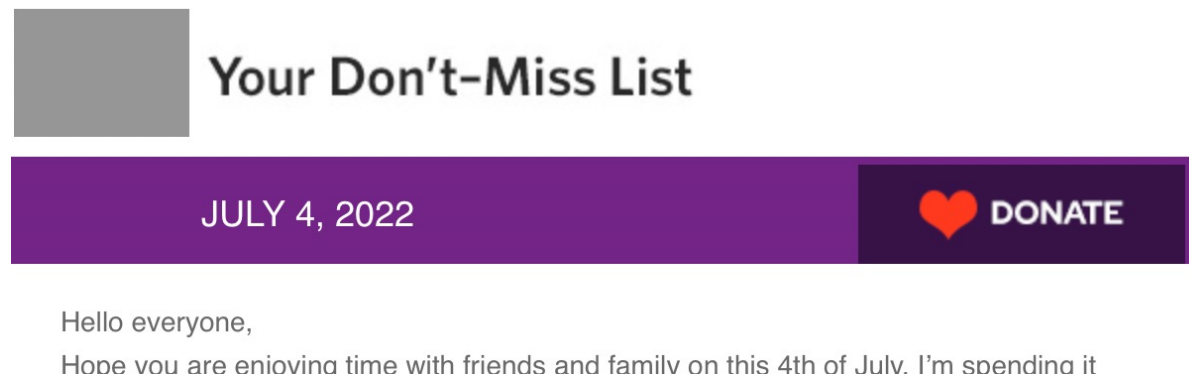
Optimized Site – Keep the Form Simple

- Only have premiums during pledge (and then ideally only after an 'I'd like a gift button')
 - Premiums, on your main donation form, outside of pledge will lower your conversion rate.
 - They are the additional field problem in the extreme.
 - They will also drive more transactional donors that will have a lower LTV over ensuing years.
 - Compounding this, due to paradox of choice, they will be less satisfied donors.



Ease of Use Summary

- In everything you do attempt to reduce the mental workload of a potential donor.
- Donor will always take the easiest path you lay out in front of them.
- Simpler, shorter forms reduce decisions by the donor and increase conversion.
- Always be closing in fundraising communications.
- Always think of other ways you can improve Ease of Use for your donors



WXYZ Radio and Television | Trusted. Valued.
Independent. | Support Public Media.

[Ad donate.wxyz.org](https://www.donate.wxyz.org)

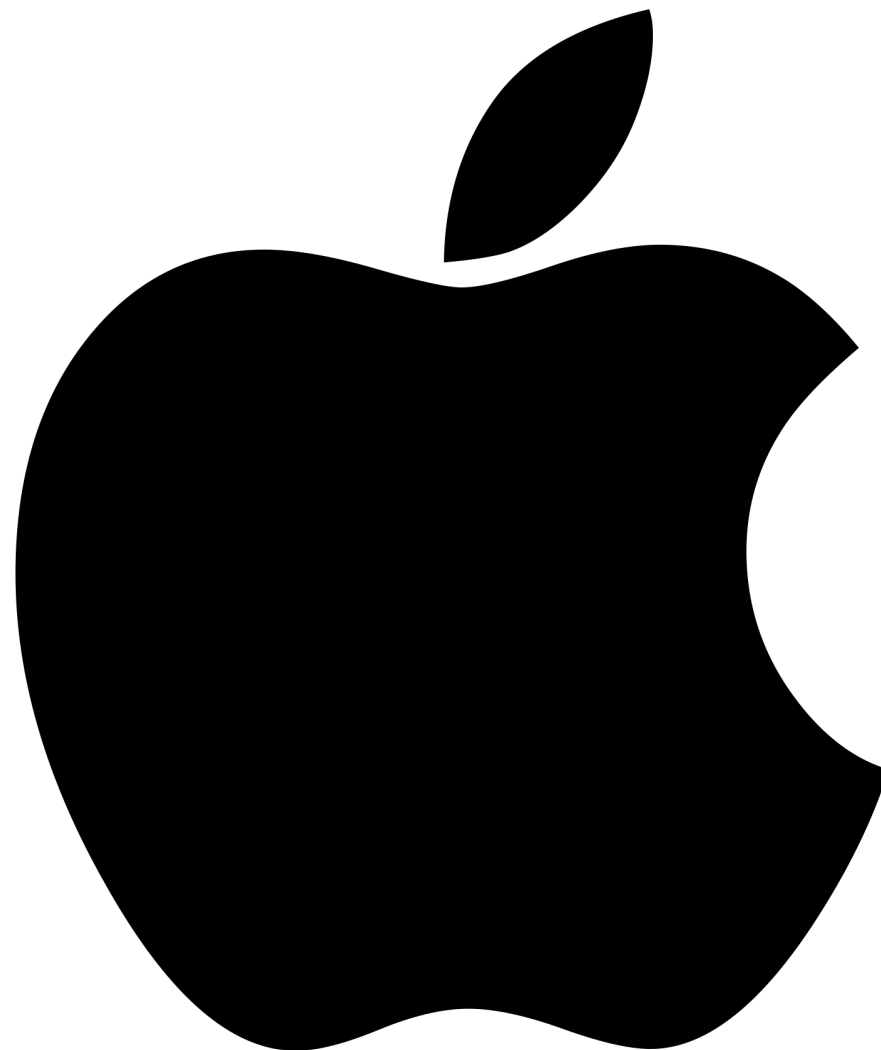
Will your gift be counted? Fiercely independent journalism and storytelling transformed. Donate this December to help us build a more informed, engaged and curious society.

Second Pillar

Emotional
Power



Second Pillar



Emotion Behind Donation

Science magazine, “Neural activity further increases when people make [donations] voluntarily. Both pure altruism and warm-glow motives appear to determine the hedonic consequences of financial transfers to the public good.”



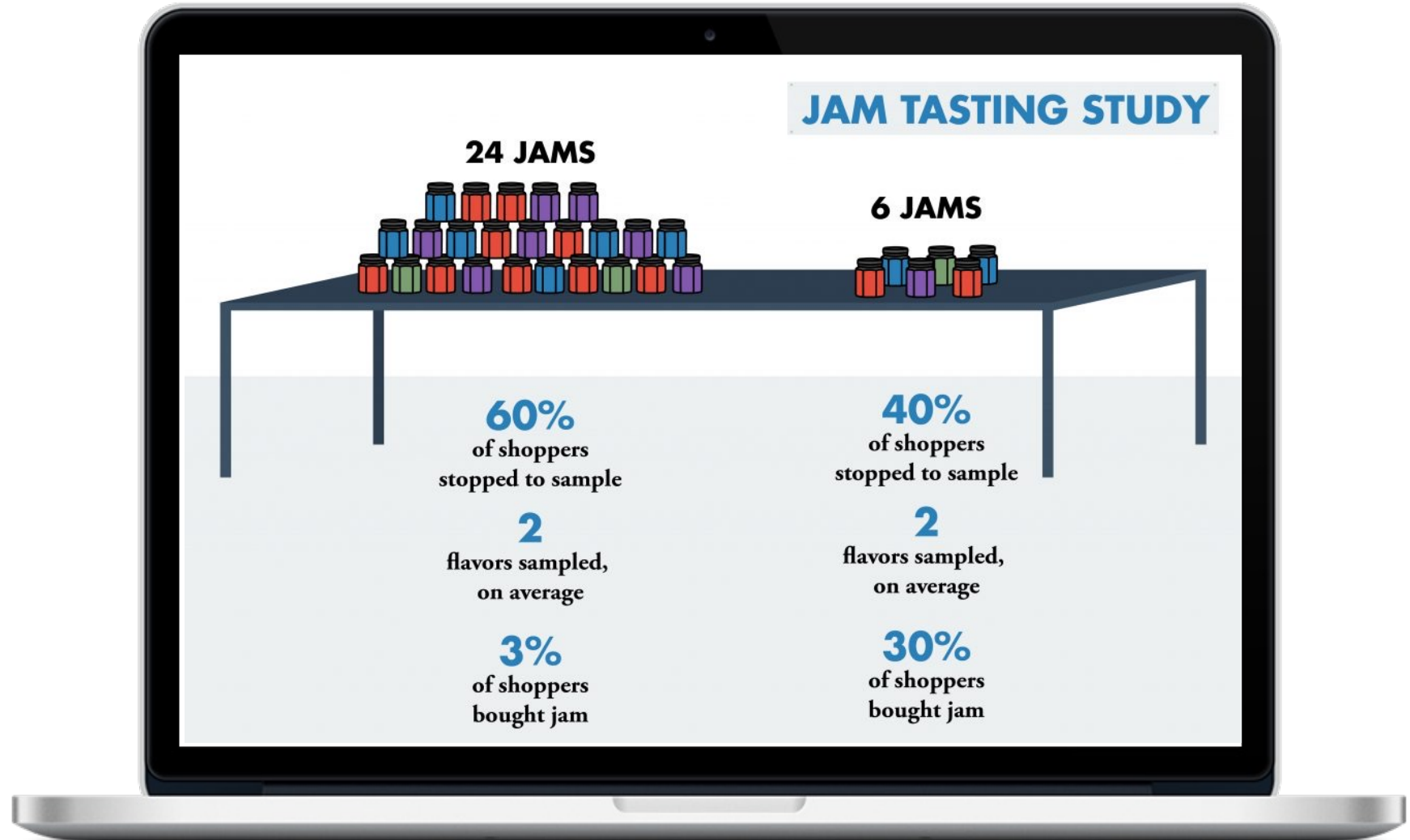
Emotion Behind Donation

- "Hedonic Consequences"
- If donations are ultimately a hedonic action – driving pleasure what does that mean?
- It means donating to Public Media is a "Hedonic purchase" not a "Utilitarian purchase" - it is driven by emotion not need.
- Hedonic purchases also are often viewed by the degree to which they provide joy and are often "luxury" purchases to a degree.



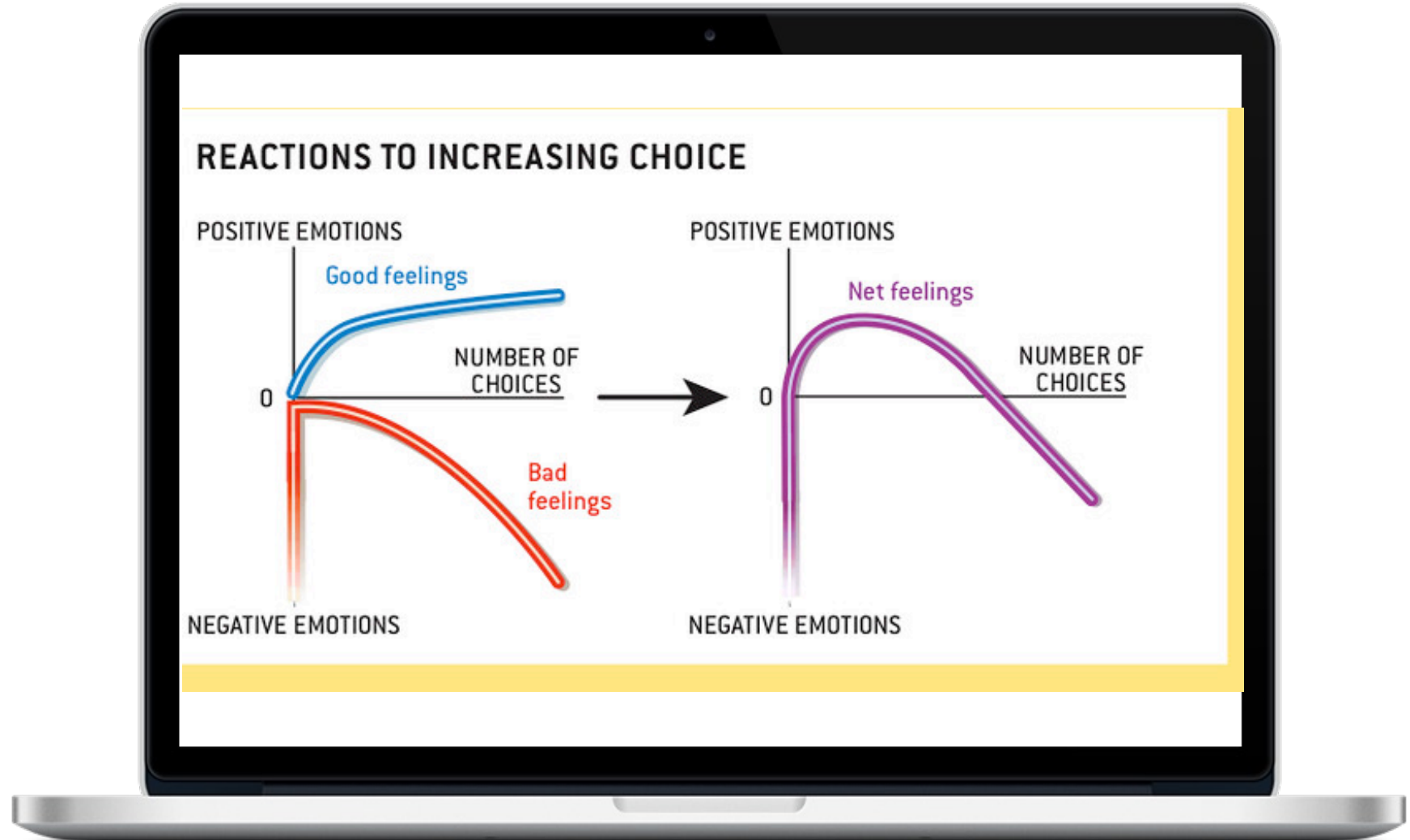
Paradox of Choice – Jam Study

- Jam Study by psychologists Sheena Lyengar and Mark Lepper
- When shoppers were offered only six jam options, they were significantly more likely to purchase than those who had 24 jam options.
- Follow-Up studies have repeated the experiment but also found lowered satisfaction from the purchases of the 24 jams.



Maximize the Hedonic Joy

- Too much choice leads to disappointment and less joy!
- This can apply to too many donation levels or too many premiums.
- You want your donors leaving the experience feeling elated, not subconsciously worried they made the wrong choice!



Transactional donors affect on retention

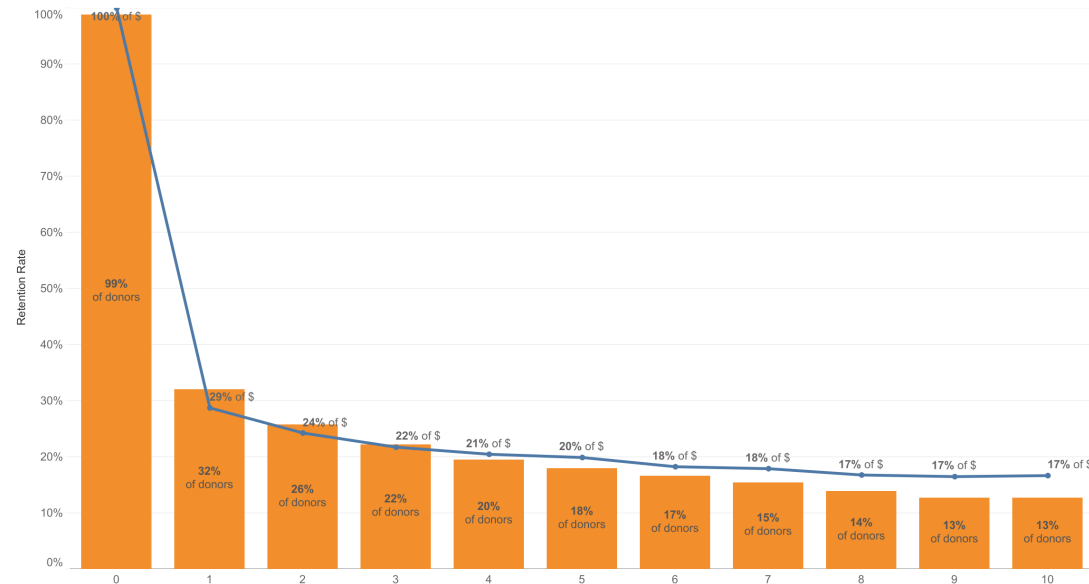
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In the graphs below we designated digital transactional donors as those that took a premium

Transactional Donors

All Member & Revenue Retention by Years since First Gift

The bars represent the percentage of Digital & Digital: Passport donors who made a membership payment in each year since their first membership payment. The line represents the percentage of their first year amount paid by those donors in each year since their first membership payment.

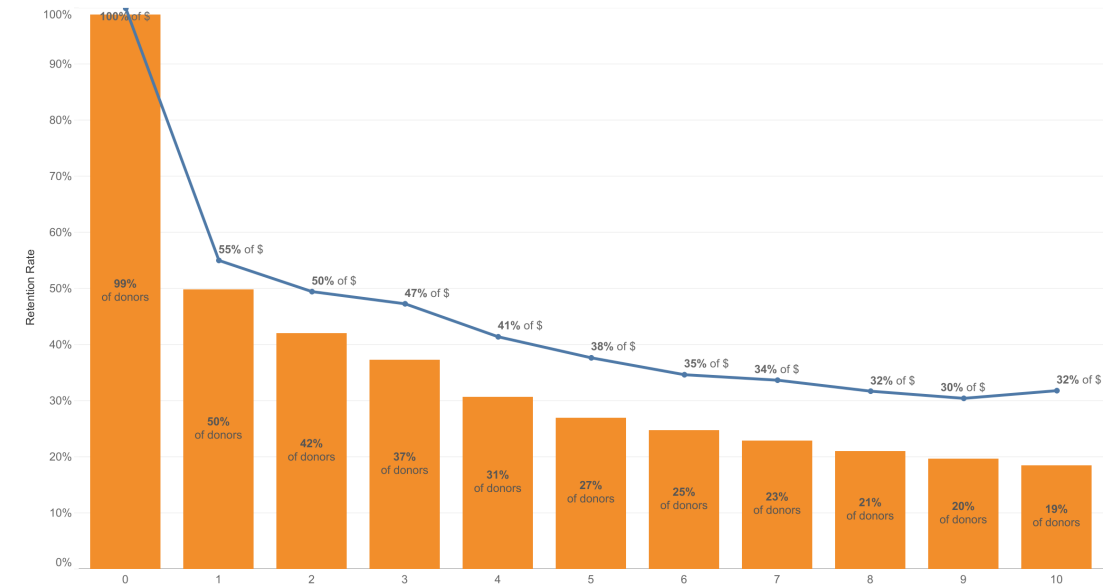


First Year Donor Retention: 32%
First Year Revenue Retention: 29%

Emotional Donors

All Member & Revenue Retention by Years since First Gift

The bars represent the percentage of Digital & Digital: Passport donors who made a membership payment in each year since their first membership payment. The line represents the percentage of their first year amount paid by those donors in each year since their first membership payment.



First Year Donor Retention: 50%
First Year Revenue Retention: 55%

Emotion is universal

- Emotion is more powerful than overly segmenting by content.
- The desire to belong or feel that hedonic joy of giving is stronger than affinity for a specific program.
- If you have the capacity to do both, then great, but if you have to choose emotion or segmentation – choose emotion.



Even urgency can create joy – the donor is the “hero”

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shrink resources and put another program at risk. A downward spiral ensues and...fade to black.

We hope that stays a hypothetical. But it illustrates how your support is a crucial factor standing between what / is today and that worst-case scenario. [Many members are giving additional contributions as we move ever closer to the end of our budget year. Could you?](#)

DONATE NOW

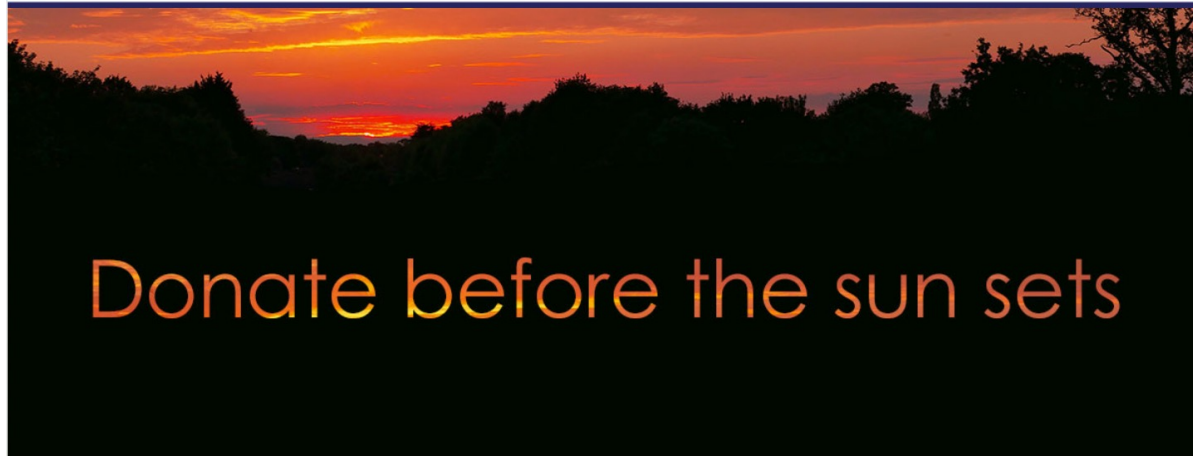
Dear Member,

Imagine a signature series disappearing from Public Television's schedule: **MASTERPIECE** missing in action, **FRONTLINE** somehow sidelined or no more **NOVA**.

Some of our most committed supporters would feel less motivated to give to if that happened. The resulting loss might further

Examples of Emotion in Email

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Dear DPTV Member,

Happy Winter Solstice! Today all of us in the Northern Hemisphere are tilted as far away from the sun as we'll be all year. That makes for some fast-fading daylight, so I'll be brief.

Empowering

Even on a day that will seem to end before it should, you have an opportunity to help accomplish great things before the sun sets.

Urgency

Emotional Power Summary

- People give because it makes them feel good (or better).
- Without emotion donors risk becoming less valuable transactional donors.
- Empowering Urgency is the most powerful combination to drive hedonic impulses that drive donors to convert.

Testing



Third Pillar



Measure what matters!

Sent	% Delivered	% Opened
145,554	94.26%	31.57%



18,902

Total reliable opens ⓘ



37,727

Apple privacy-impacted opens



56,629

Total opens

35

Know what your goal is.



% Clicked	Sustaining Gifts	Non-Sustaining Gifts
0.33%	20	306
% Gave	Avg. Non-Sust \$	Total Value
0.24%	\$101.81	\$38,209.21

Is your test valid and valuable?

Baseline Conversion Rate

20%

Your control group's expected conversion rate. [\[?\]](#)

Minimum Detectable Effect

10%

The minimum relative change in conversion rate you would like to be able to detect. [\[?\]](#)

Statistical Significance

95%



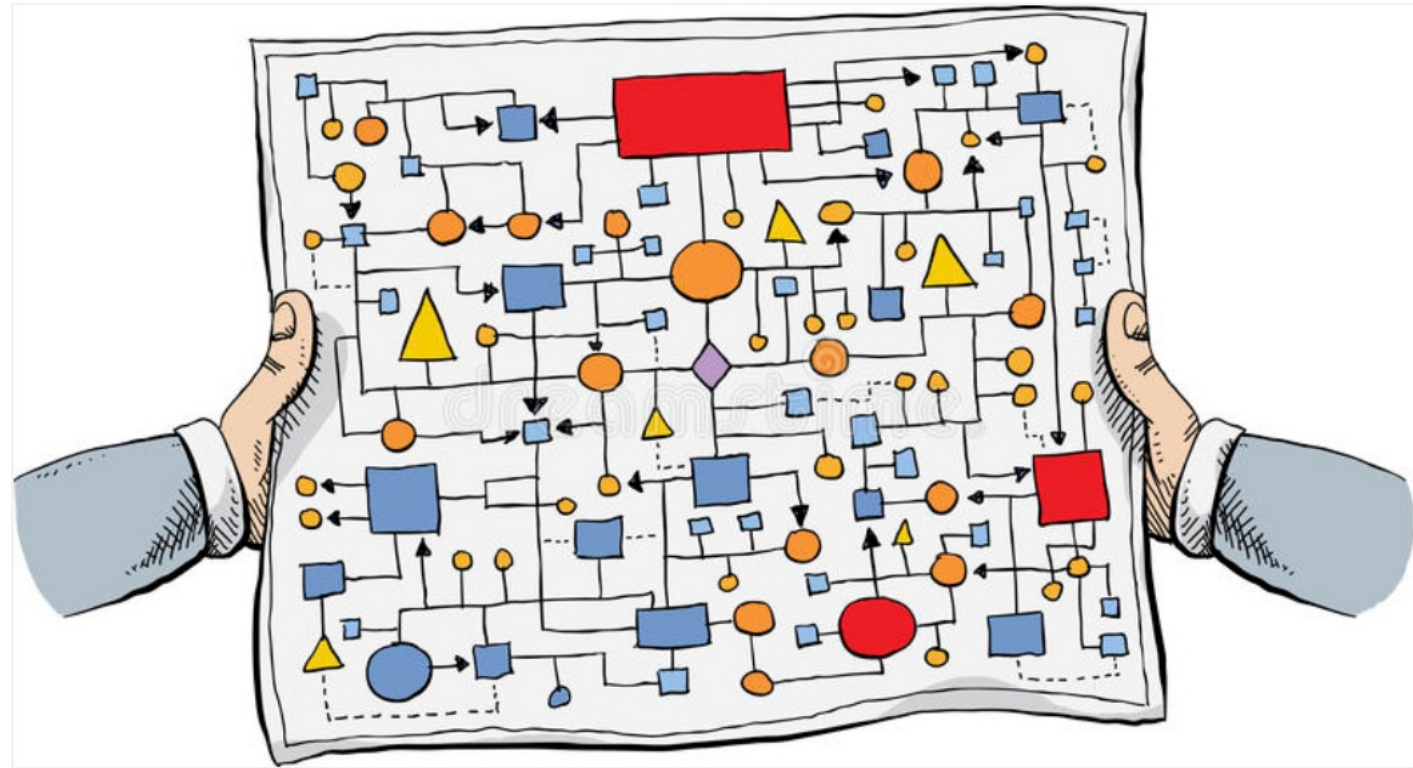
95% is an accepted standard for statistical significance, although Optimizely allows you to set your own threshold for significance based on your risk tolerance. [\[?\]](#)

Sample Size per Variation

5,300

Keep your testing simple

- Try to pick a single metric – you can track others but choose one to “win”.
- Test one item at a time – not a button color AND size at the same time.
- If possible try to use two donation forms, rather than changing content on the page.
- Simple tests will get valid results more quickly - especially important if you are a smaller station with less traffic.





**“Of course we can make fast decisions ...
once we have considered the 4872 factors.”**

Testing Summary

- Never stop testing, even at a minimal level it adds up!
- Know WHAT you are testing – utilize the proper metrics
- Keep it as simple as possible – do not over complicate your testing.

3 Pillars of Digital Success

Ease of
Use



Emotions



Testing





Mi Tian, WBEZ



Chicago Public Media®

Test Donation Form Your Way

Mi Tian

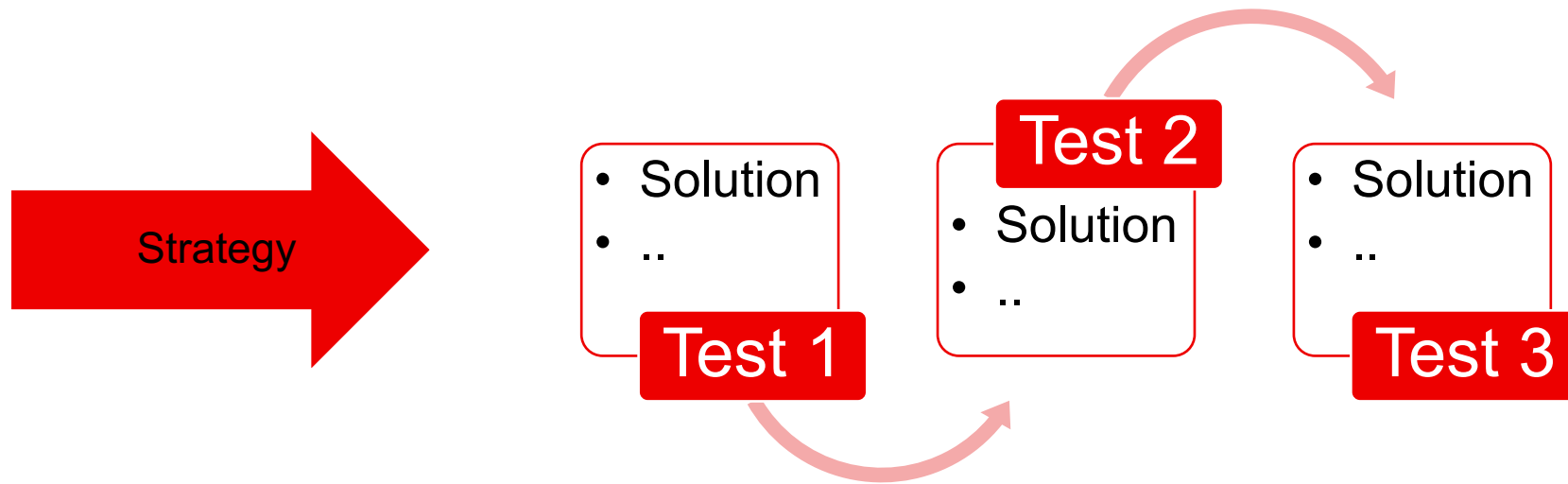
Director, Audience Insights and Strategy

Build tests based on your station's needs

A – Align with your strategy

B – Be creative with solutions

C – Create a repeatable workflow



Align with your strategy

Example:

Use monthly and annual upsell to drive one-time donors to be sustainers.


MONTHLY CONTRIBUTION		ONE-TIME DONATION		
\$60	\$120	\$180	\$360	\$1,200

\$ Or, enter amount

Consider a monthly contribution, it spreads out your donation and helps us. Cancel at any time.

[Make my gift \\$10 a month](#)

Join WBEZ's
Annual Giving Program
and **renew automatically** every year!



Benefits include:

- **Set it and forget it renewal plan**
- **Cost savings for WBEZ**
- **Annual Thank You Gift**
- **Cancel at any time**

Yes! Change my gift to \$120.00 a year.

No thanks, complete my one-time gift of \$120.00 only.

If you join our annual giving program, your first annual gift will process today. If you decline the offer we will continue to process your one-time gift. You can update or cancel at any time.

Be creative with solutions

Examples:

- Use a third-party embedded comment box to optimize the flow
- Use a third-party pencil bar to drive traffic to drive traffic
- Use an email marketing tool to split traffic when the scenario requires too much effort to execute on the form



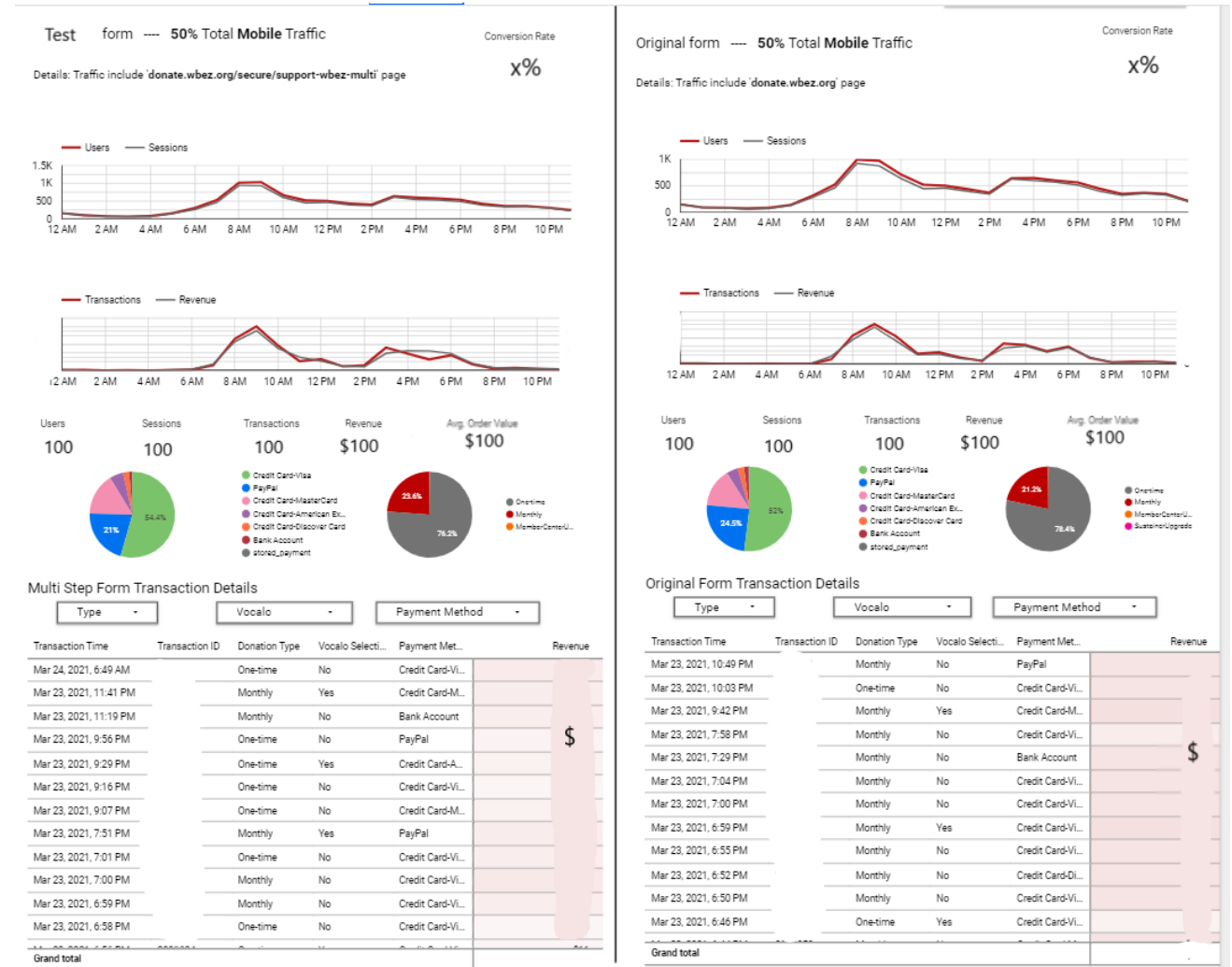
Leave a comment

[WBEZ's pledge drive ends at 7pm tonight. Give now to make your gift count.](#)

DONATE

Create repeatable workflow

- Plan it out in advance
- Standardize schemas, process
- Build reusable templates in every step
- Have a stage testing environment
- Make real-time data accessible to stakeholders



Test donation forms your way

Each organization is different

Don't be afraid to test again

Failures are valuable

A/B testing requires planning, a clear hypothesis, and careful execution. It is not a set-it-and-forget-it process, and it requires continuous efforts as your business evolves.

Go test yours!

Speaker Information/Questions?

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