

Seven Motivations for Giving

The Communitarians: Doing Good Makes Sense

Communitarians, the largest segment (26.3%) give because it makes good sense to do so. Communitarians are typically local business owners who find that service on boards and committees of local nonprofits can be good for business because of the relationships that often develop in such settings. The other reason Communitarians believe active philanthropy makes good sense is that they help their own communities prosper by supporting local charities.

The Devout: Doing Good Is God's Will

The Devout are motivated to support nonprofits for religious reasons; they say they believe it is God's will for them to help others. Almost always members of a local church, which is part of a regional or national religious group, the Devout channel nearly all (96.4%) their giving to religious institutions. The Devout make up the second largest group (20.9%) of major donors.

The Investor: Doing Good is Good Business

Investors are affluent individual donors who give with one eye on the nonprofit cause and one eye on personal tax and estate consequences. Investors calibrate their giving to take advantage of tax and estate benefits and therefore want to work with nonprofits that understand these concerns. To achieve their tax, estate, and philanthropic interests, Investors donate to a wide range of nonprofits and are the segment most likely to support umbrella nonprofits such as community foundations (22.5%). About 15.3% of major donors are investors.

The Socialite: Doing Good is Fun

Socialites find social functions benefiting nonprofits an especially appealing way to help make a better world and have a good time doing it. Socialites are members of local social networks with which they interact to select nonprofits for support and to leverage in fund-raising activities. They seek opportunities to create fundraisers and social events benefiting nonprofits, and are less interested in participating in the day-to-day operations of the nonprofit or activities directed at constituents. Socialites, who tend to support the arts and education as well as religious nonprofits, make up 10.8 percent of major donors.

The Altruist: Doing Good Feels Right

Altruists embody the popular perception of the selfless donor - the donor who gives out of generosity and empathy to urgent causes and who modestly "wishes to remain anonymous."



Altruists give because they believe it is a moral imperative, and because it helps them grow as human beings or evolve spiritually. Altruists make giving decisions without the input of advisors and are not usually interested in active roles in the nonprofits they support. A far greater proportion of Altruists than any other group focus their philanthropy on social causes. Nine percent of major donors are Altruists.

The Repayer: Doing Good in Return

Repayers tend to have been constituents first and donors second. A typical Repayer has personally benefited from some institution, often a school or medical center, and now supports that institution from a feeling of loyalty or obligation. Repayers concentrate their philanthropy on medical charities and educational institutions. Repayers are 10.2 percent of major donors.

The Dynast: Doing Good is Family Tradition

Unlike other segments, Dynasts typically inherit their wealth. The philanthropic motivation of Dynasts stems from their socialization. Giving is something their family has always stood for and they believe it is expected of them to support nonprofits. However, younger Dynasts will seek out different philanthropies than their parents. Although Dynasts have been significant figures in philanthropy for some time, they now comprise 8.3 percent of major donors.

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