



The Art and Science of Donor Retention

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What is Donor Retention? ...and why does it matter!

Bloomberg defines **donor retention** as a measure of how many donors continue to donate to your organization.

High donor retention rates (DR%) = donors who come back year after year, and low DR% require organizations to acquire new donors or larger gifts



Measuring Donor Retention

Calculate DR%:

of 2019 donors= 600

#of 2020 donors (so far)= 250

$250/600 = 41.6\%$



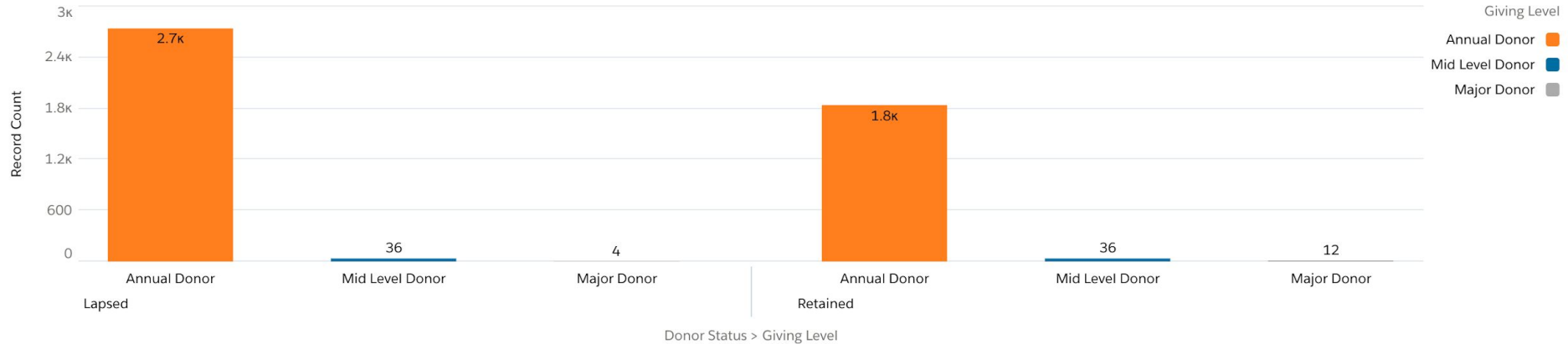
Science of Donor Retention: Strategy

Don't limit your calculations

Most organizations calculate their DR% only at year end and only by these categories:

- Average
- First-Time

Add donor level and start calculations on FY day one

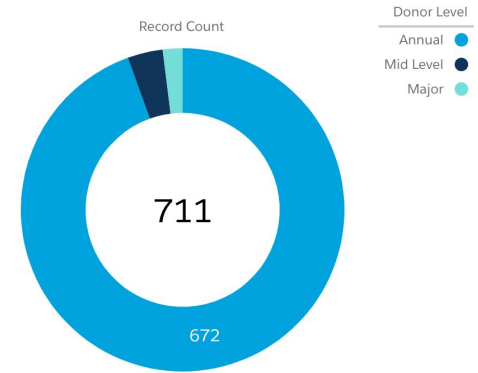


Reading into the Data

Calculate the donors from 2019 who are still lapsed, how many of them have given in 2018, and 2017 as well. Why?

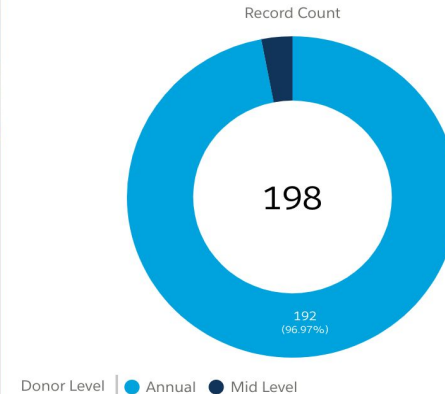
Calculate lapsed donors from a 15 month period.

Lapsed CY w/prior 2 year giving history



[View Report \(Lapsed CY w/prior 2 year giving history\)](#)

Donors retained from 2 years ago



[View Report \(Donors retained from 2 years ago\)](#)



Revenue

Leadership and the board are interested in what this means in revenues. So show them...

What do these numbers and percentages mean in terms of cash?

How much are retained donors giving?

2019 Donors	Households	Percentage of Donors	Revenue	Percentage of Revenue
Total	4,785		\$2,561,764	
Brand New Donors	2,565	54%	\$512,835	20%
Retained Donors from 2018	1,704	36%	\$1,880,535	73%
Lapsed from Before 2018 (2013-2017)	516	11%	\$168,394	7%



Art of Donor Retention: Always Thinking Ahead

Development Focus

As development professionals, our behaviours have a tremendous impact on increasing or decreasing our donor retention rate.

Marketing Focus

You are trying to build a strong and engaged community, who convert into donors. What can you do as marketers to help development retain donors?

Example:

Are you or your CEO traveling to Boston? Who on your lapsed donor list is in the area? Reach out for coffee! Looking for donors to send to your board to make stewardship calls? Look at your lapsed list of donors who have given for many years and not only retain their giving this year but increase it.





Work Smarter, Not Harder!

We do this work so we can enhance the missions we represent.

Conclusion

Retaining donors makes you more money, with less effort.

Next Steps

What are ways you can begin implementing strategies and tools to help you use data to benefit your organizations revenues?

Q + A