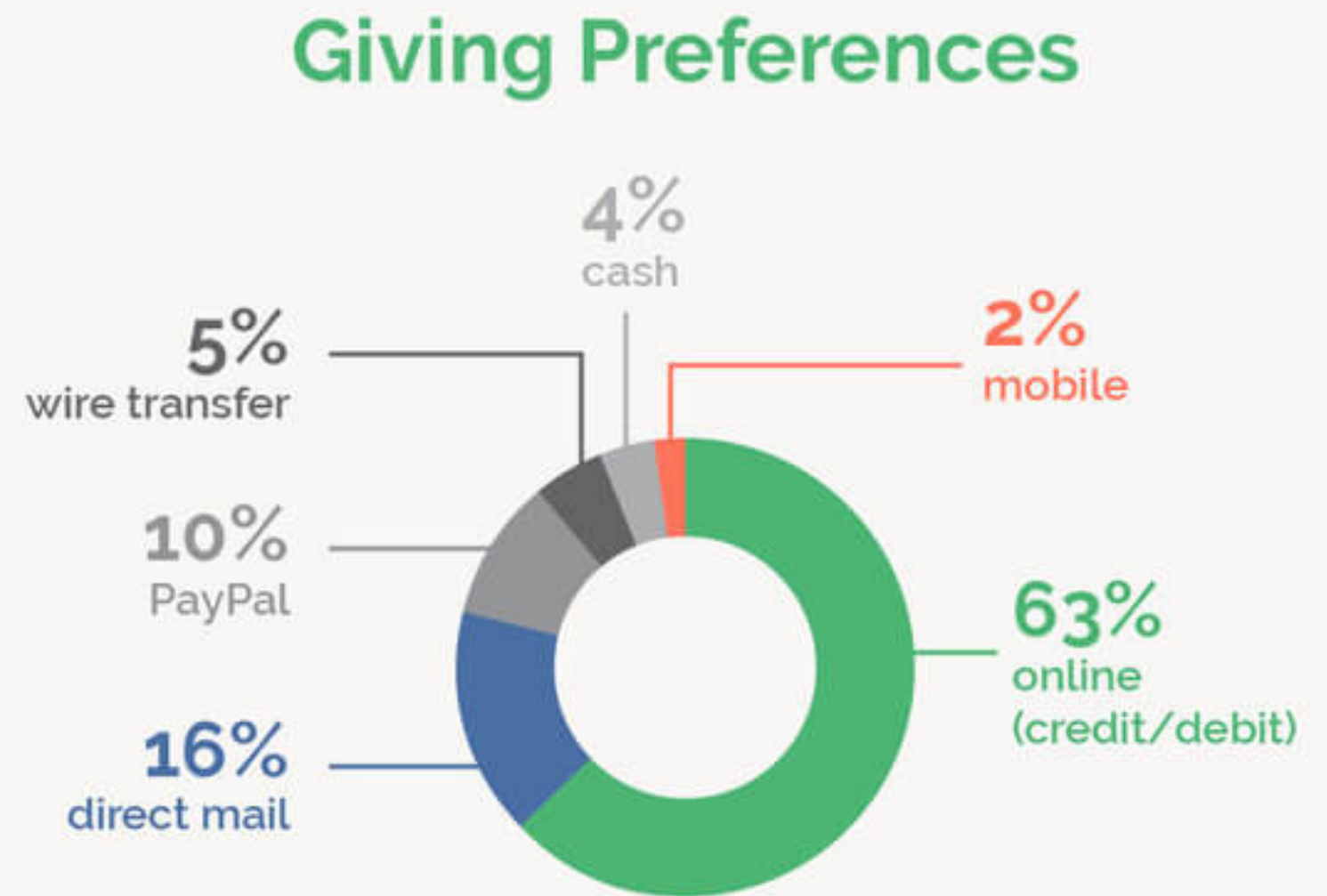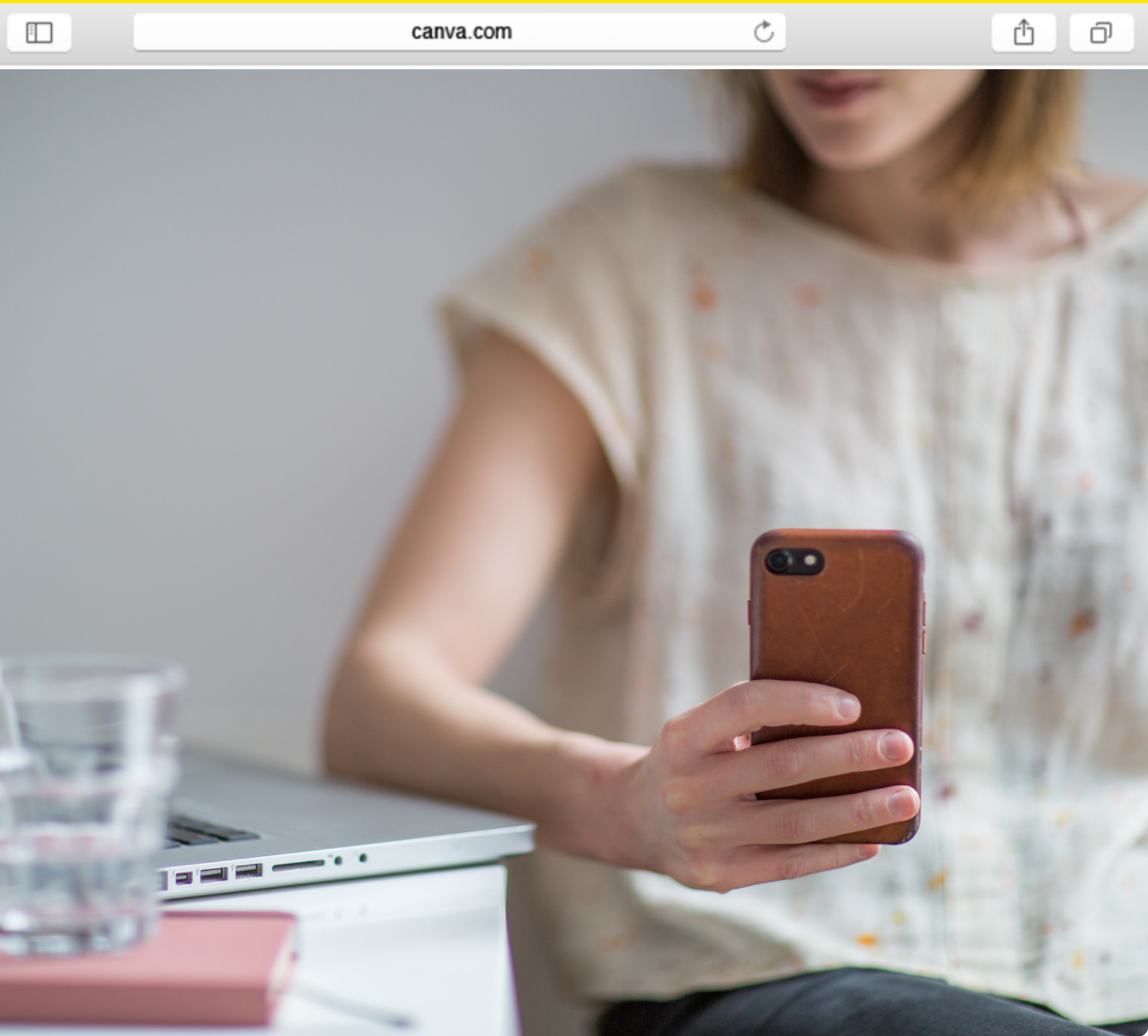Presenter: Macy Zhelyazkova, M.S.
February 21, 2024

Living in a Digital World

→ Building a Robust Digital Fundraising Communication Strategy

MACY ZHELYAZKOVA, M.S.

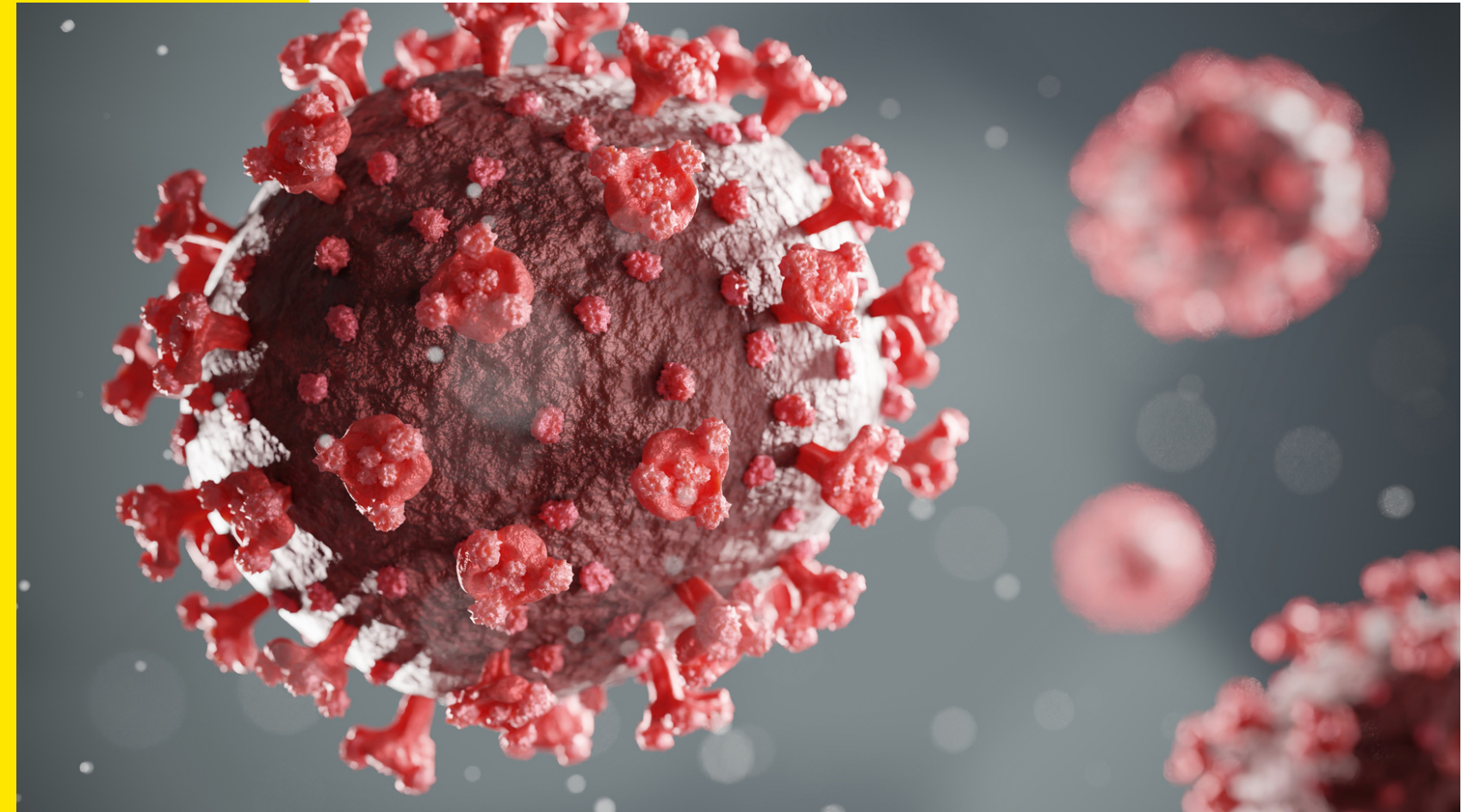**Donors are online and digital communication is now an effective way to reach them**

Technology continues to grow making it easier to build relationships with donors

COVID-19 pandemic emphasized the new reality that NPOs must invest in digital fundraising communications

Robust Digital Fundraising Communication Strategy

- Branded content and communication across multiple digital platforms
- Guides a prospect down the path of making a donation
- Withstands and overcomes adverse conditions in rapidly changing environments
- Reaches the organization's constituent demographics as they continue to age and evolve in their use of digital technology

What It is Not

Digital fundraising communication is not a replacement for traditional fundraising communication

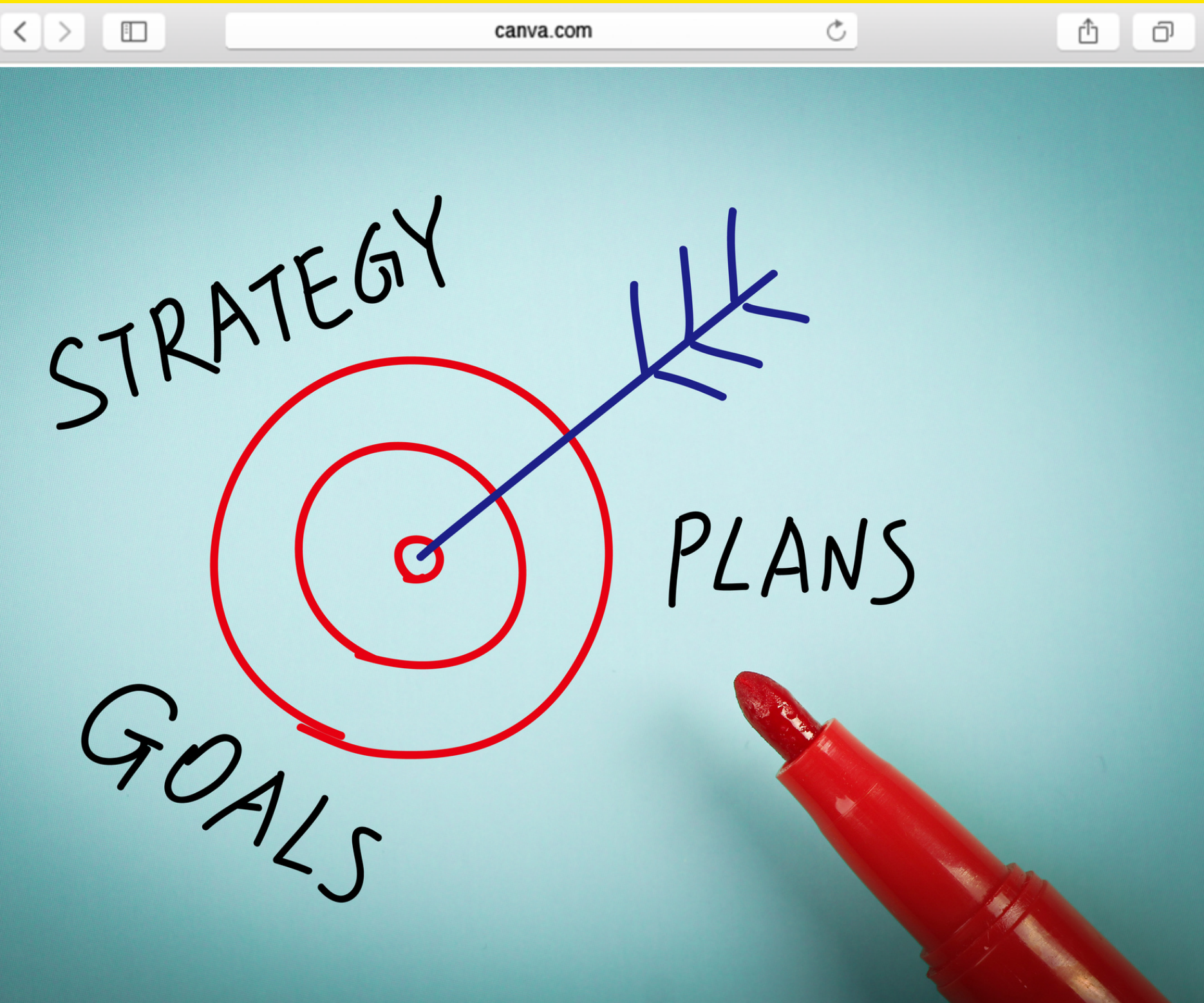# A Robust Digital Fundraising Communication Strategy Includes:

Website

Quality digital content

Digital donation capability

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Email

Social media

Peer-to-peer fundraising

Online fundraising events

…And more

canva.com

Digital fundraising communication is an essential part of the long–term programming and fundraising success of a nonprofit organization
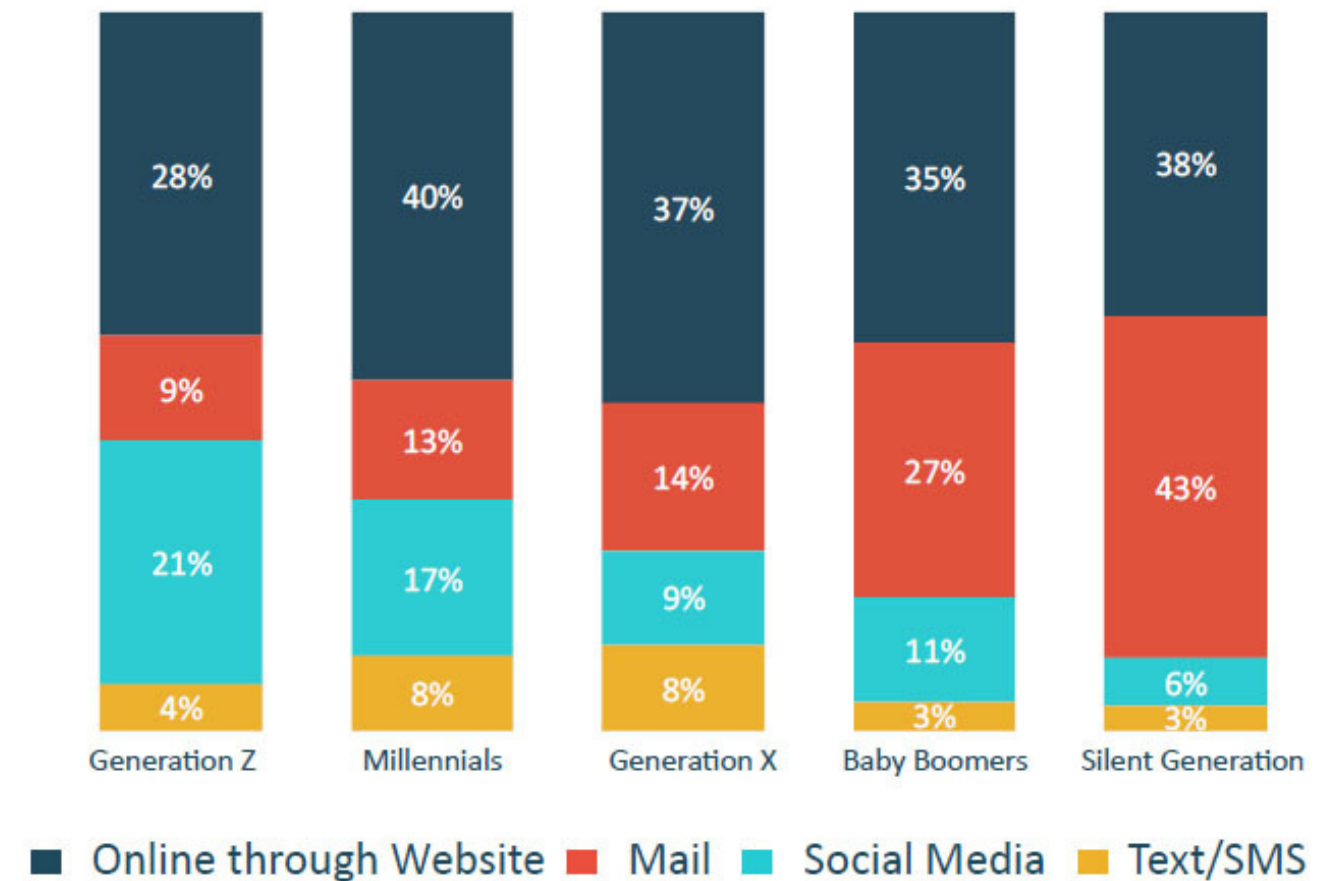
Even Grandma is Online

UNDERSTANDING HOW GENERATIONS USE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Understanding how generations use digital technology helps pinpoint and deliver a more personal ask

*The Philanthropic Landscape 2020 Report

CHANNELS USED BY EACH GENERATION

	Generation Z	Millennials	Generation X	Baby Boomers	Silent Generation
Online through Website	28%	40%	37%	35%	38%
Mail	9%	13%	14%	27%	43%
Social Media	21%	17%	9%	11%	6%
Text/SMS	4%	8%	8%	3%	3%

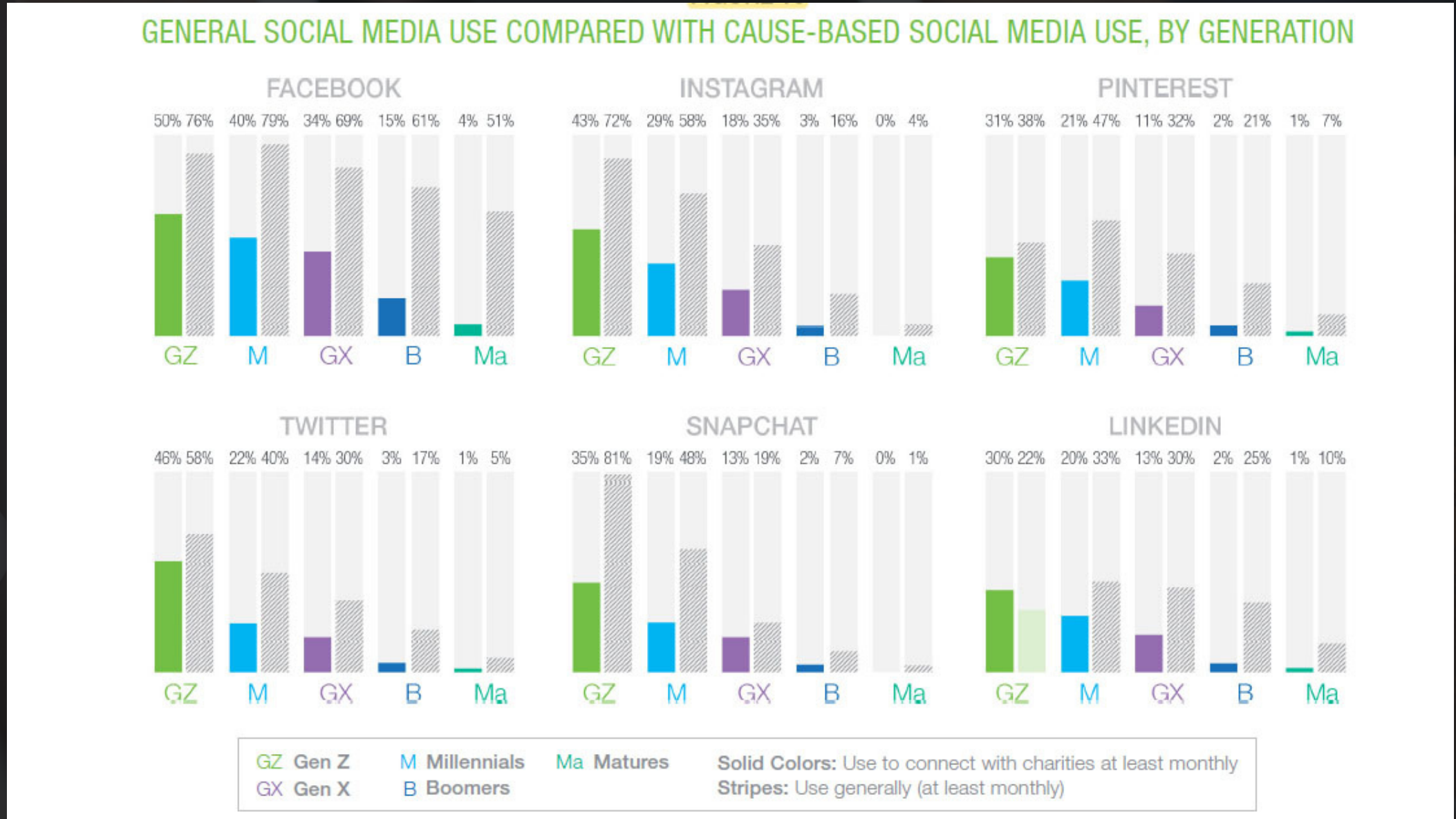■ Online through Website ■ Mail ■ Social Media ■ Text/SMS

The more technologically advanced giving channels are favored by younger generations but older generations still show website giving rates comparable to younger generations.

Social media is used across generations both to connect with NPOs and in general

*The Next Generation of Giving Report, 2018

GENERAL SOCIAL MEDIA USE COMPARED WITH CAUSE-BASED SOCIAL MEDIA USE, BY GENERATION

FACEBOOK
50% 76% 40% 79% 34% 69% 15% 61% 4% 51%
GZ   M   GX   B   Ma

INSTAGRAM
43% 72% 29% 58% 18% 35% 3% 16% 0% 4%
GZ   M   GX   B   Ma

PINTEREST
31% 38% 21% 47% 11% 32% 2% 21% 1% 7%
GZ   M   GX   B   Ma

TWITTER
46% 58% 22% 40% 14% 30% 3% 17% 1% 5%
GZ   M   GX   B   Ma

SNAPCHAT
35% 81% 19% 48% 13% 19% 2% 7% 0% 1%
GZ   M   GX   B   Ma

LINKEDIN
30% 22% 20% 33% 13% 30% 2% 25% 1% 10%
GZ   M   GX   B   Ma

GZ Gen Z   M Millennials   Ma Matures   **Solid Colors:** Use to connect with charities at least monthly
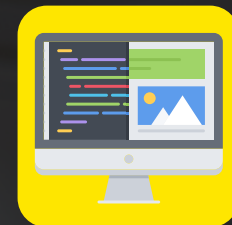GX Gen X   B Boomers   **Stripes:** Use generally (at least monthly)

Building Relationships with Digital Communication

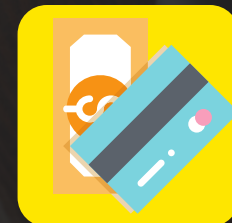# Elements of a Robust Digital Fundraising Communication Strategy

Take advantage
of the tools available.

 Website

 Content

 Digital Donation Acceptance

 Email

 Virtual Fundraising Events and Campaigns

Website

The most significant digital tool to communicate with donors

Main online identity of NPO

Engages and solicits the visitor with a clear call-to-action through a well-defined donation funnel

Website 411

Capture visitors' attention quickly →

Positive user experience (UX) design →

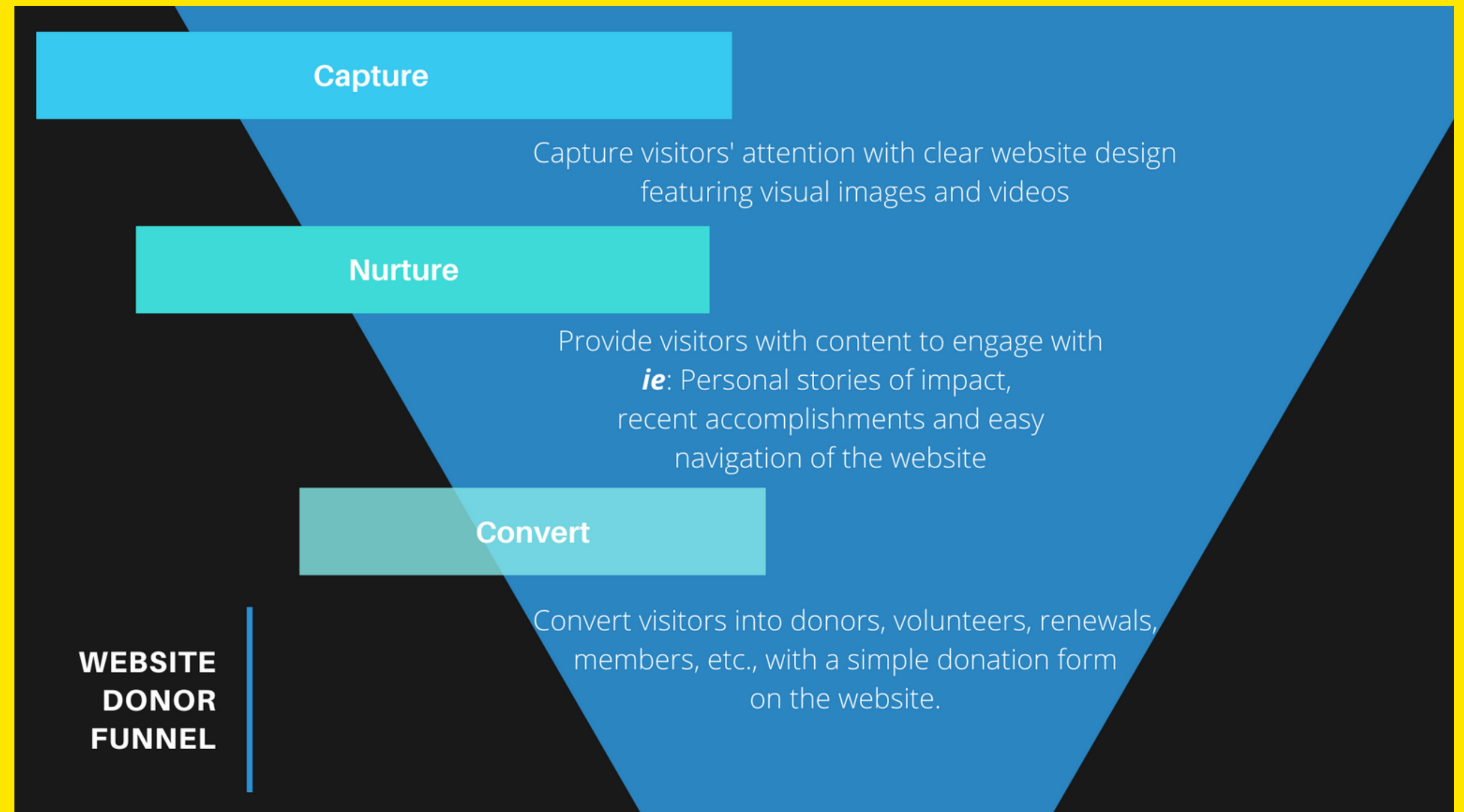**Web Accessible Compliant & Responsive** →

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)
www.w3.org

Donation Funnel guides visitors to donate on a website

Capture

Capture visitors' attention with clear website design featuring visual images and videos

Nurture

Provide visitors with content to engage with
ie: Personal stories of impact, recent accomplishments and easy navigation of the website

Convert

Convert visitors into donors, volunteers, renewals, members, etc., with a simple donation form on the website.

WEBSITE
DONOR
FUNNEL

Content

Positions the NPO to be the expert in its niche

Reputable content built and published by the organization establishes credibility and also creates organic Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Positions organization as a favorite cause and motivates the audience to take action

Content, Content, Content.

Drives interest, builds reputation and relationships →

Tells NPO's story →

Engages audience and motivates them to take action →

Blog

In–depth news, upcoming events, fundraising campaigns, engaging stories and thanks to supporters

Easy and organic way to incorporate Search Engine Optimization (SEO) into the website

Builds a deep relationship with readers

Social Media

Motivates attendance, elevates reputation, heightens the online experience, and builds a community

Selecting Social Media Platforms

Social media's role is to motivate attendance, elevate reputation, and heighten the onsite experience, and most of all, build a community.

*Pew Research Center

Facebook

3B users
Used across all generations
- 19% – 25 to 44 year-olds
- 11.4% 45 to 54 year-olds
- 7.2% 55 to 64 year-olds
- 5.7% 65+

Best with images and videos that speak on a personal level

Youtube

2.7B users

Video content accounts for around 80% of all internet traffic and gets up to 10 times more reach and engagement than links and photos

Reaches more 18 – 49-year olds than any broadcast network

Selecting Social Media Platforms

Social media is not a one-size-fits-all channel

Instagram

1.3B users

Source of inspiration and positive thinking

Stimulates user's imagination, pushed to try new things

X (Formerly Twitter)

528.3M users

Mini-blogging platform to keep in touch with breaking news around the world

Good to share links to original blog posts

Requires consistent posting throughout the day

Content Engagement

Promotion of NPO and programs with direct call-to-action →

Share news, ideas, and advice related to the NPO's mission →

Share inspirational stories, quotes and other uplifting content →

Encouraging engagement with the website (sharing content from the blog on social media pages, and links to different website pages) increases organic SEO.

Digital Donating

Online donating is now recognized as a significant source of fundraising dollars and will continue to be so in the coming years
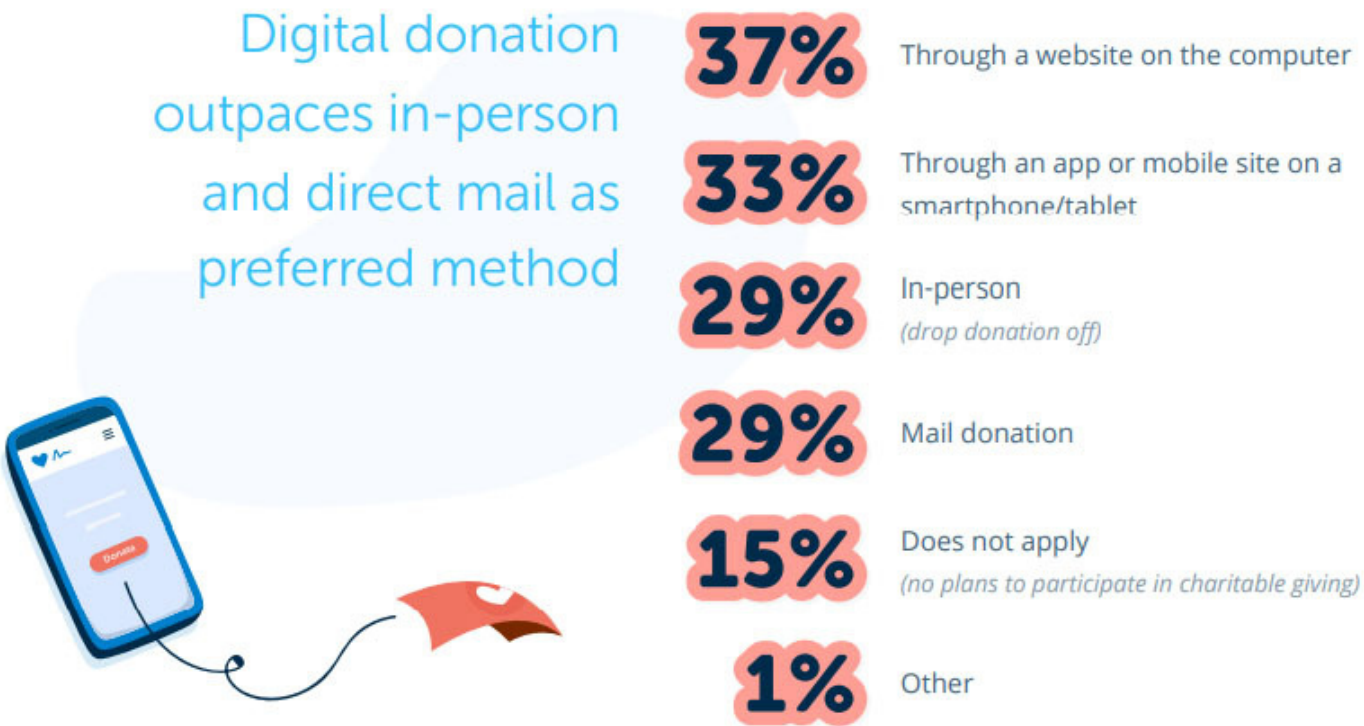*CauseVox

- **In 2021, small organizations (budgets of less than $1 million) received a larger percentage of their gifts online compared to medicum organizations (budgets of $1 million to $10 million)**
*Philanthropic Landscape 2022

This data illustrates how imperative it is for nonprofits to provide a seamless mobile and online giving experience in order to capture support across generations.

Digital donation outpaces in-person and direct mail as preferred method

37% Through a website on the computer

33% Through an app or mobile site on a smartphone/tablet

29% In-person *(drop donation off)*

29% Mail donation

15% Does not apply *(no plans to participate in charitable giving)*

1% Other

In Classy.org's Why America Gives Report-2020, published mid-November 2020, evidence showed that digital donation outpacing in-person or direct mail as the preferred method, especially during the pandemic.

*Classy.org, Why America Gives Report, 2020

Digital Donation

Introduce all giving options →

Make it simple →

Email

→

One of the strongest tools for an NPO – but frequently misused

Fast, cheap and versatile

Still considered the preferred method of communication that a donor wants to receive from an organization
*Nonprofit Marketing Guide

Email

Healthy Email List →

Welcome Series →

Personalization →

Healthy Email List

The list must be consistently built with legitimate email addresses and cleared of ones not working or have lapsed.

Ask for email addresses at every opportunity

Incentivize audiences to sign up with an email to receive a free give away, or a valuable resource

Confirm email addresses received are legitimate through auto-confirmation

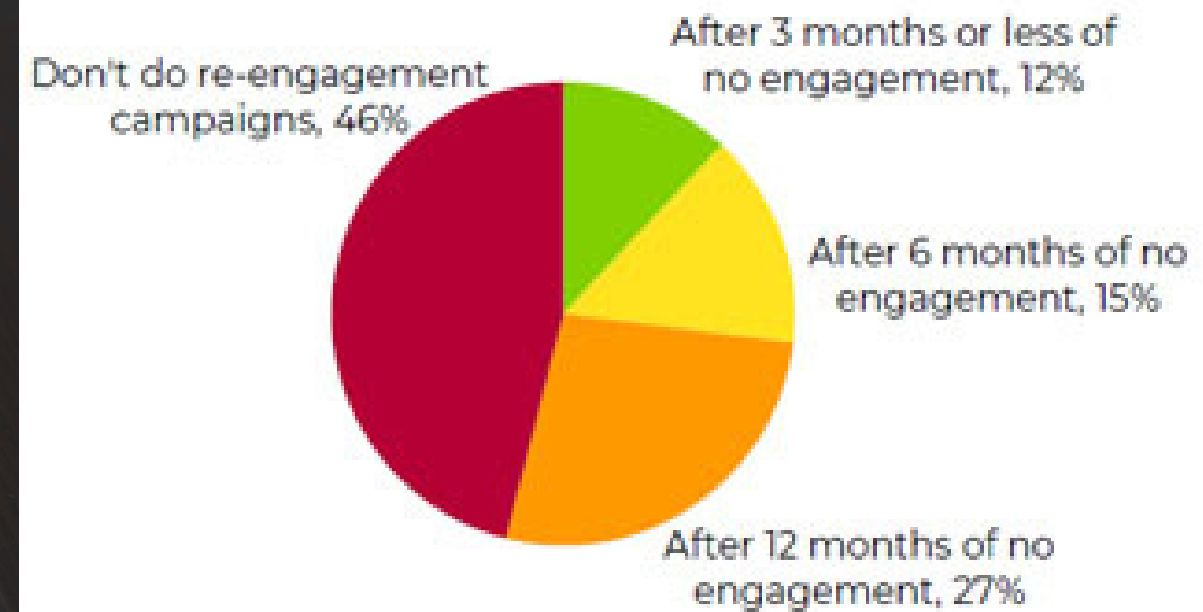Remove email addresses if they are undeliverable

Re-engage Subscribers

Just because they are un–engaged doesn't mean they are lost

At what point do you consider subscribers unengaged and ready for a re-engagement campaign?

Don't do re-engagement campaigns, 46%

After 3 months or less of no engagement, 12%

After 6 months of no engagement, 15%

After 12 months of no engagement, 27%

*Nonprofit Marketing Guide

Send "we miss you" appeals to those who have lapsed, highlighting the organization's best or most popular content and encouraging customization preferences

Send an unsubscribe email

Welcome Series

A Welcome email series can help automate timely and personal communication without risking too much time on the NPO's end, and can let the recipient select what news updates they'd like to receive

📧 Sets the tone and demonstrates that the NPO is a reliable source of valuable content

📧 Saves time – emails are created in advance through a CRM and sends automatically when connected through correct parameters.

📧 Generates buzz – excites recipients about what's to come

📧 Wins donors – the recipients wants–and gets– something. During this initial interaction, subscribers are more likely to make a donation

📧 Easily personalized – emails can be divided into different groups and customized to meet needs of each recipient

📧 Creates a stronger engagement – subscribers pay more attention to welcome emails. Open and click–through rates escalate significantly

According to Nonprofit World Research, of the emails sent during Quarter 2 of 2017, just two percent of NPOs incorporated some degree of personalization in the subject line of their email, yet these emails generated a 50 percent higher open rate than the other 98 percent.

*Nonprofit World Research

Email content

Use emails to humanize what it is that the organization is doing – and how staff members are working on issues that donors care about

Communicate from a staff member's voice (like the ED) in a personal and conversational tone

Avoid the pitfall of catering to staff interests, and focus on the readers' interests, wants and needs

Make the emails skimmable – long bouts of text broken up with headlines, subheadings and compelling photos or short video clips

Make text a clickable link direct to website page for more information when relevant

Consistency is key – schedule bi–weekly or monthly newsletters, not just when there is news to share

Virtual Fundraising & Campaigns

Here to stay, due to the ability to drive greater donations, attract supporters far and wide, and reduce operational costs

NPOs that embrace the digital world to diversify fundraising options have an advantage over peers practicing traditional-only fundraising

Not just for big organizations

Virtual Fundraising & Campaigns
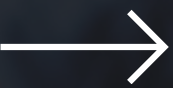
Commitment →

On-going Support →

Shareable Content →

Peer-to-Peer

Peer-to-Peer fundraising continues to grow and is expected to nearly triple in total annual donations by 2025, to an estimated $28.8B

*Kutilek

Participants are more than two times as likely to be recruited by a friend, family member, or colleague, than directly by an NPO *Nonprofit Pro Voice Ep. 7

Changing the face of philanthropy from a focus on "major gifts" to raising smaller gifts in bigger quantity from individuals around the world

Virtual events are now held due to COVID-19

Key Take Aways

- Ensure website is up-to-date, capable of handling website traffic, and uses correct & relevant SEO key terms

- Create & share quality content related to the mission: including personal stories, and how donations make a difference

- Enable a trustworthy, safe, easy-to-use digital donation system, capable of handling different types of donations including bitcoin

- Build & manage an accurate email list, complete with emails that are personalized and relevant to each person on the list

- Keep up-to-date and relevanton social media channels, share approrpiate content for each channel

- Host virtual, hybrid, and peer-to-peer fundraising events

- Utilize digital ads – Google Ads (with Google Ads Grants) and social media ads/boosted posts

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