

BBDO KNOWS

**GET CATEGORY
SMART**

*The Art of Giving in
2021*

The Art of Giving in 2021

Pre-COVID, giving was mostly a personal pursuit; people tended to give money to causes they personally felt passionate about. This type of giving lacked urgency, a sense of tangible impact, and solidarity, which took away from some its more meaningful impact. Because of this, in-person fundraising was declining, as was giving across generations: 50% of millennials donated regularly, but only 42% of Gen Z did so.¹

COVID-19 and its aftermath has fostered a greater desire to give, and to give back. The world felt the urgency of COVID-19 and the responsibility to support local communities in meaningful ways. Donors during COVID-19 were more invested than ever because they were donating to a cause that felt close to home. Emotional investment made their donations more personal and impactful, furthering a sense of commitment to giving. In a time when widespread need made many feel desperate, charitable giving and actions helped people re-gain their sense of control.

“As the pandemic continues to ravage the globe, with millions of confirmed cases and hundreds of thousands of lives lost, philanthropy has provided a consistency of hope.”

- Patricia McIlreavy, President and CEO of Center for Disaster Philanthropy

In this article, giving is defined as anything that works toward the common good, including donating funds, offering time and talent, and giving physical items like food or clothing. Here we dive into the spectrum of giving, including giving to the wider world, to local communities, and to friends and family.

CHARITABLE DONATIONS TO THE WIDER WORLD

During COVID-19, giving exploded globally; according to Funraise, 60% of donors worldwide donated to pandemic-related causes.²

¹ GWI, 2021 [LINK](#)

² Funraise, 2021 [LINK](#)

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A global goal and sense of unity was established, ultimately creating more meaningful impacts. For example, in 2020 there was a 43% increase in giving in India³ and over \$471 billion dollars donated to charity over the course of the year in the US.⁴

The rise in charitable giving is also a result of a shift towards technology, which made giving more convenient and accessible. Throughout the pandemic, charities used online events, fundraising initiatives, and contactless payment to accommodate donors during lockdown. The shift online will continue to accelerate going forward, with 24% of baby boomer regular donors using a mobile payment service like Apple Pay in the last month, rising to 27% of Gen Z donors.⁵ Charities plan to retain their donors by continuing their current use of technology and introducing new innovations like hybrid events, AI initiatives, and creative digital campaigns.

The generosity following the COVID-19 epidemic is here to stay. 9 in 10 people plan to give the same in 2021 as they did in 2020.⁶ To support this generosity, brands must drive a more sustainable approach to giving, starting with local communities.

LOCAL DONATIONS TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Not only did the frequency of giving increase during the pandemic, but the ways that we gave broadened to include community engagement, random acts of kindness, and the donation of resources. Values were refocused on causes close to the heart like COVID-19 relief and racial discrimination.

Lockdown left many with extra time on their hands, and that time was used to give. Over half of the world's adult population helped a stranger in 2020, equating to more than 3 billion people giving to someone they didn't know.⁷

Donations during the pandemic also became more specific. More than 85,000 laptops and tablets were donated to improve the lives of school children who do not have a device at home⁸ and America's Food Fund became the largest GoFundMe of all time, raising over \$44 million to help people struggling with food insecurity due to COVID-19.⁹

³ CAF India, 2021 [LINK](#)

⁴ CAF, 2021 [LINK](#)

⁵ GWI, 2021, [LINK](#)

⁶ Fidelity Charitable, 2021, [LINK](#)

⁷ CAF 2021, [LINK](#)

⁸ BBC UK, 2021 [LINK](#)

⁹ GoFundMe 2020, [LINK](#)

GIFTING AND GIVING TO THOSE WE LOVE

As giving to global causes and local communities grew during the pandemic, giving to family members and friends also became more considered. Instead of gifting for the sake of gifting, people have shifted towards giving in more thoughtful ways to show gratitude and love.

Because lockdown kept apart in-person relationships, people had to get creative to stay connected. Consumers gave virtually; flowers, gifts, and virtual presents were among the most popular ways for consumers to show their loved ones they were thinking about them. There was a 30% growth in the e-commerce flower industry over 2020.¹⁰

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR BRANDS

The art of giving is linked to how we feel and how we want to feel. Brands must understand this notion to drive a more sustainable giving approach. The challenge is to encourage donors to continue to give, even after disaster passes, in order to get ahead of the next disaster. To accomplish this, companies must develop frequent and transparent communication with their customers. Increased communication will allow for a better understanding of what drives consumers to give.

Consumers are more likely to give if brands demonstrate authenticity and meaningful impact because these allow for emotional resonance and connection. To set themselves apart, brands must demonstrate both and continue to search for engaging and innovative ways to approach consumers.

¹⁰ Meldium, 2021, [LINK](#)

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ABOUT BBDO KNOWS

BBDO KNOWS is a planning resource for the BBDO network.

BBDO KNOWS offers thinking, strategy, insights and inspiration on key categories, key themes and consumer segments.

If you are interested in learning more about the way BBDO thinks please contact bbdoknows@bbdoknows.com.

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