

Showing donation amounts of other donors increases average donation amounts

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This article explores how donation amounts can be increased without donors feeling unhappy about donating a higher amount.

What happens when fundraisers mention the donation amount of other donors?

People donate higher amounts (10%) if they can see the donation amount of others. However, the chance of giving is unaffected: it cannot be used to increase the number of donors. Donors also reported better moods after donating, especially within the group that could see the donation amount of others (10%). Since there was no adverse effect on donors' moods, this implies that this method to increase donation amounts is not perceived as forceful.

[#fundraising](#) [#donations](#) [#donorbehavior](#) [#charities](#) [#happiness](#)

Background

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Context



- **People like to follow others**, often to avoid social sanctions and the be liked and loved. If the behaviour of others is described, we expect donors to behave similarly: to copy the behaviour by donating similar amounts as others.
- For donors, quality signals of charities are important. People prefer to give to charities of higher quality since this increases the likelihood of them efficiently using their donations. **Seeing that others donate to a specific charity could inspire others to do so as well.**
- **People do not like feeling pushed**: freedom of choice is important. Presenting the donation amount of others could give people the feeling that they have no other option but to donate a similar amount. This could result in aversion: they opt not to donate.
- Some care about their impact: personally increasing the chance that a charity collects enough to call it a success. Seeing that others are already committed to supporting a charity could prevent them from giving: **their donation would not make a difference.**

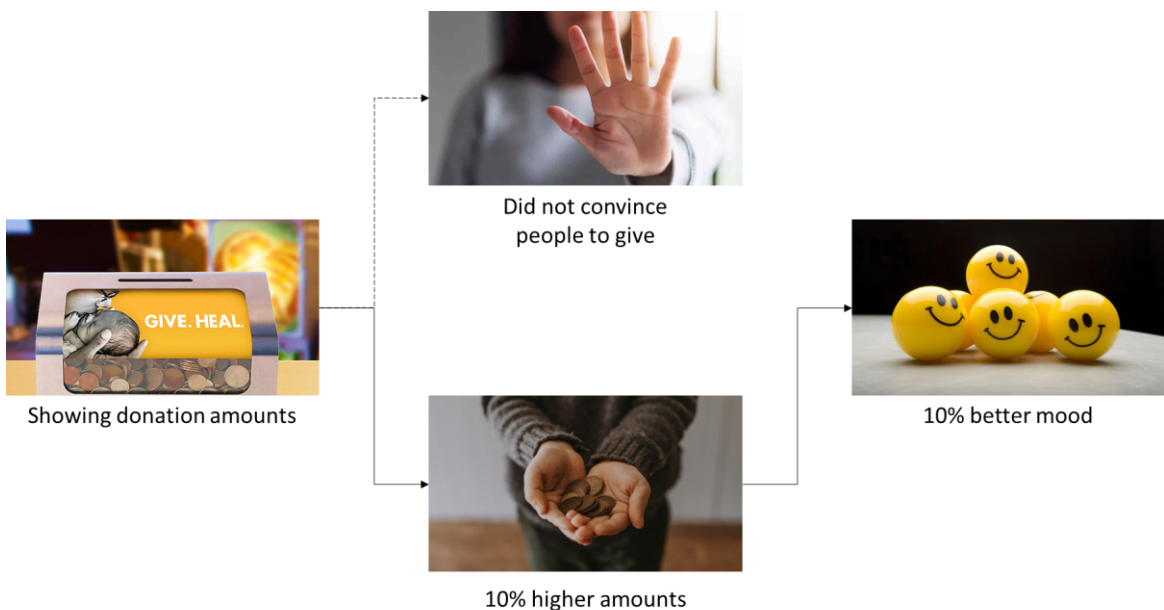
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Take aways & Learnings



- **In this experiment, participants donated higher amounts after reading about other participants' donations.** Showing the donation amount of others increased donation amounts by 10%. It is a simple way to increase donation amounts; all that is needed is the average amount of previous donations.
- It did not result in aversion or inspire others to give. **The chance of giving was unaffected:** those who do not want to give cannot be convinced by showing the donation amount of others. However, there was no adverse effect on the number of donations.
- **Donors reported better moods (10%) if they had previously read about the donation amount of others.** This suggests that participants did not feel restricted in their freedom of choosing an amount since that would have lowered their mood.
- **It did not decrease high donations.** The percentage of donors who gave away high amounts was unaffected by showing the donation amounts of others. It seems that they did not use the amounts of others as an excuse to lower their own donation amount.
- Too much information leaves donors unaffected, but **adding the mention that others should do it too was more effective than just mentioning the donation amount.** The following framing is suggested: *Other donors said that donors such as yourself should give €5.*



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