Turning Alumni Engagement Into Dollars: 9 Proven Strategies from Peer Schools

February 18, 2026

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e: hello@boostmyschool.com
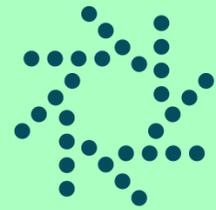w: www.boostmyschool.com

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Poll Time!

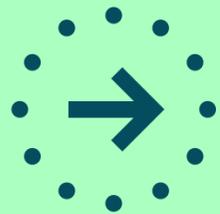**How are you currently tying your alum events into giving?**

Agenda:

Topics:
1. *Identifying the Gap*
2. *Filling the Room*
3. *Turning RSVPs into Revenue*

Our Case Studies:
- *Hathaway Brown School (OH, K-12)*

Resources and Q&A

The only fundraising platform built for K-12

Engage

Fundraise

Understand

212%

1166
of 550 supporter goal

Leaderboards

Alumni Leaderboard

Class year	# Donors		Total
1984		125	$16,912

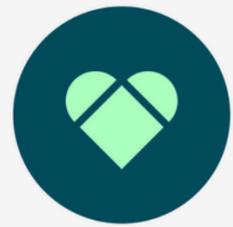 Pay DAFs

PayPal **venmo**

Pages that feature your K-12 community

No-setup modern payment options

Dedicated 1-1 support from a K-12 expert

Helping 300+ schools modernize their fundraising

Giving

Events

Auctions

Leaderboards & Challenges

Streamlined CRM Support

On-Site Auction Support
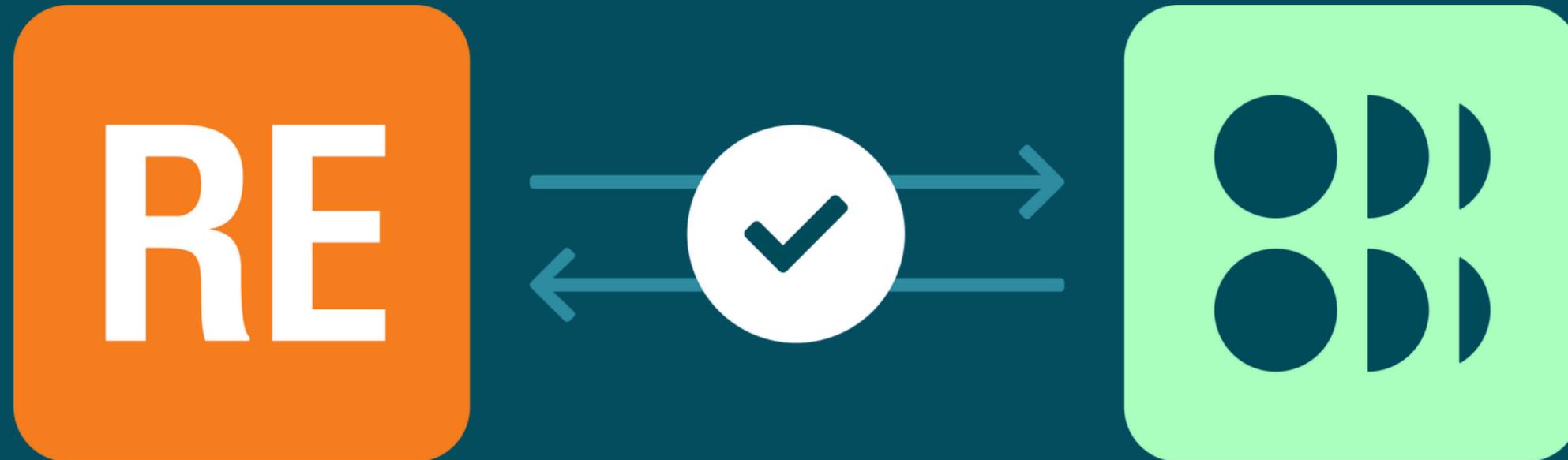
Peer-to-Peer

Boost Texting

Live & Silent

Part One

Identifying the Gap

BOOST MY SCHOOL

The Reality of Spring for Most Teams

- You have alumni events and a giving day happening before FYE

- Your events team and your annual giving team might be treating them as separate programs

- Alumni who attended your last event didn't necessarily give and donors didn't necessarily attend.

Identifying the Gap

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FY26 Alumni Participation Trends

- **Median Alum Participation is down 2% since FY23**

Alum Participation by Region

■ 2025   ■ 2024
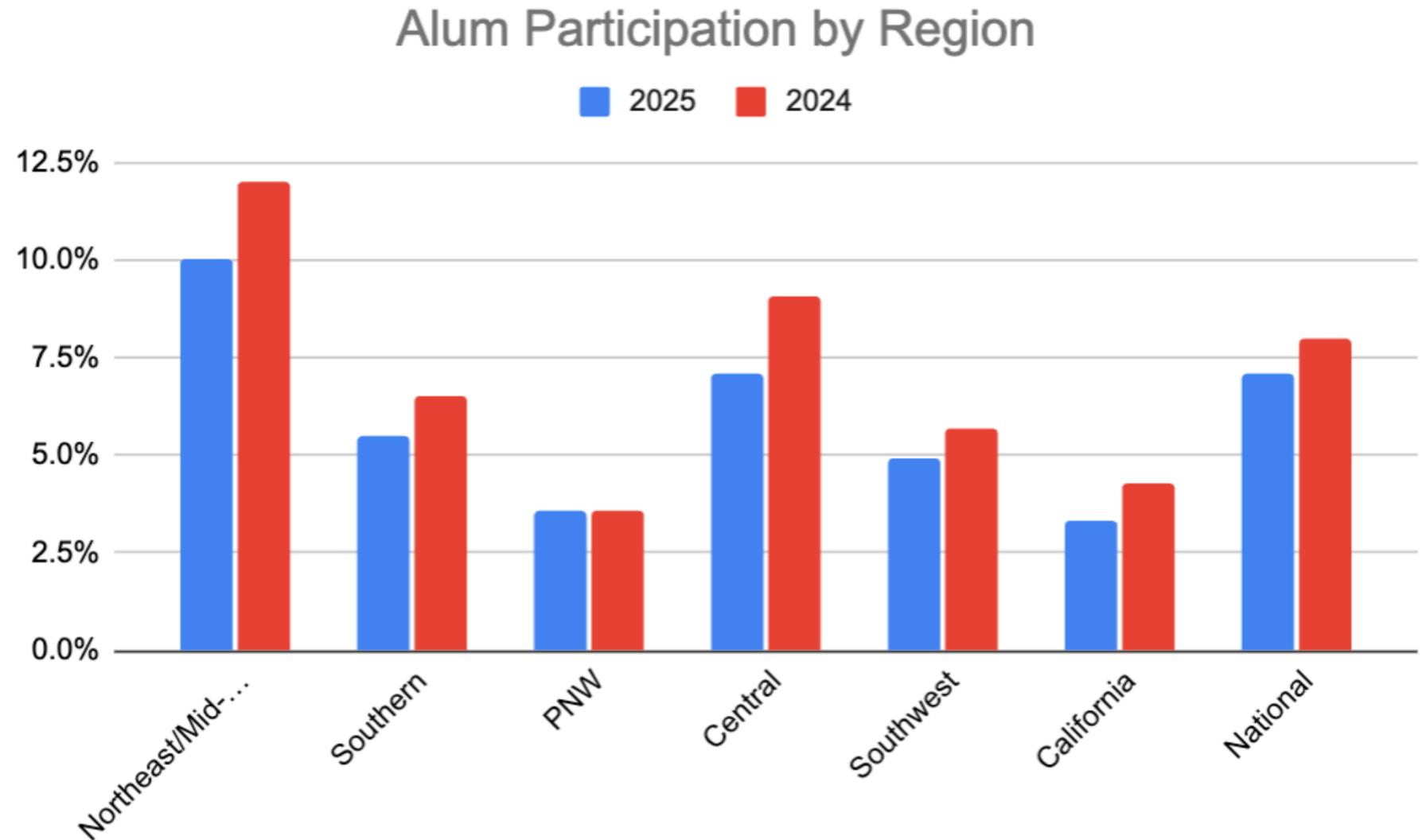
Source: NAIS Facts at a Glance

Are Young Alums Not Giving OR Are They Not Giving To Your School

- **87% of young alums report volunteering or making donations to causes they support. (RNL)**

- **There isn't a philanthropy shortage, there's a connection shortage.**

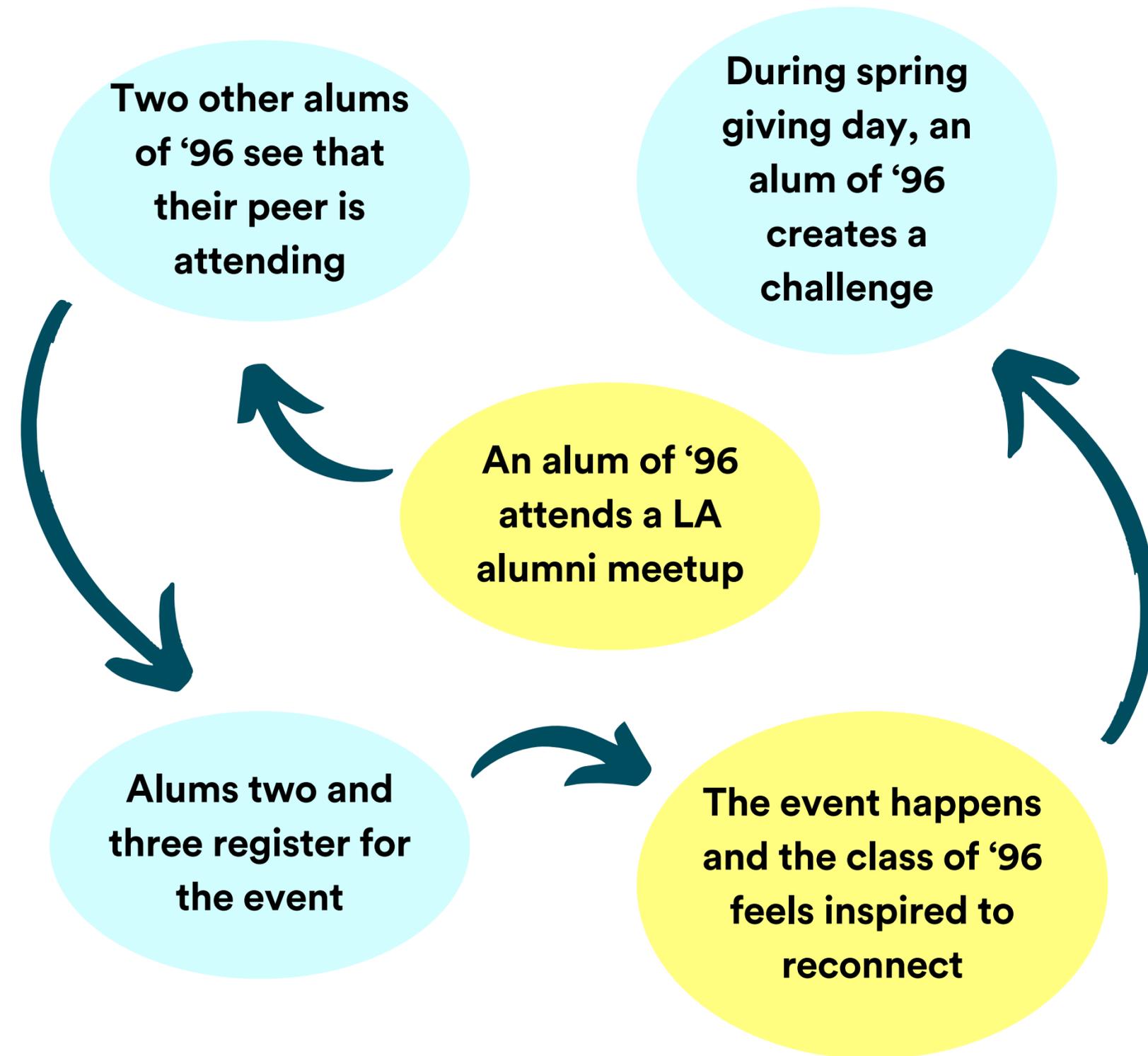# The Gap Isn't Effort. It's Infrastructure.

- **Most advancement teams run alum events and appeals through separate initiatives that don't talk**

- **That gap is where alumni fall through: they showed up, they felt connected, and then nothing captured that moment**

- **The schools winning at alumni participation have closed that gap**

The Engagement-to-Giving Loop

- When alumni feel connected to a shared experience, support follows

- Alumni who make an initial gift are 5x more likely to continue giving. Alumni who give within 5 years of graduating are 5-7x more likely to make a major gift later.

Two other alums of '96 see that their peer is attending

During spring giving day, an alum of '96 creates a challenge

An alum of '96 attends a LA alumni meetup

Alums two and three register for the event

The event happens and the class of '96 feels inspired to reconnect

Part Two

Filling the Room

Drive more attendees and engage your community

BOOST EVENTS

20% of page visitors to Boost Events pages end up RSVP'ing

- **Automatically updating leaderboards, attendee maps, and comments.**

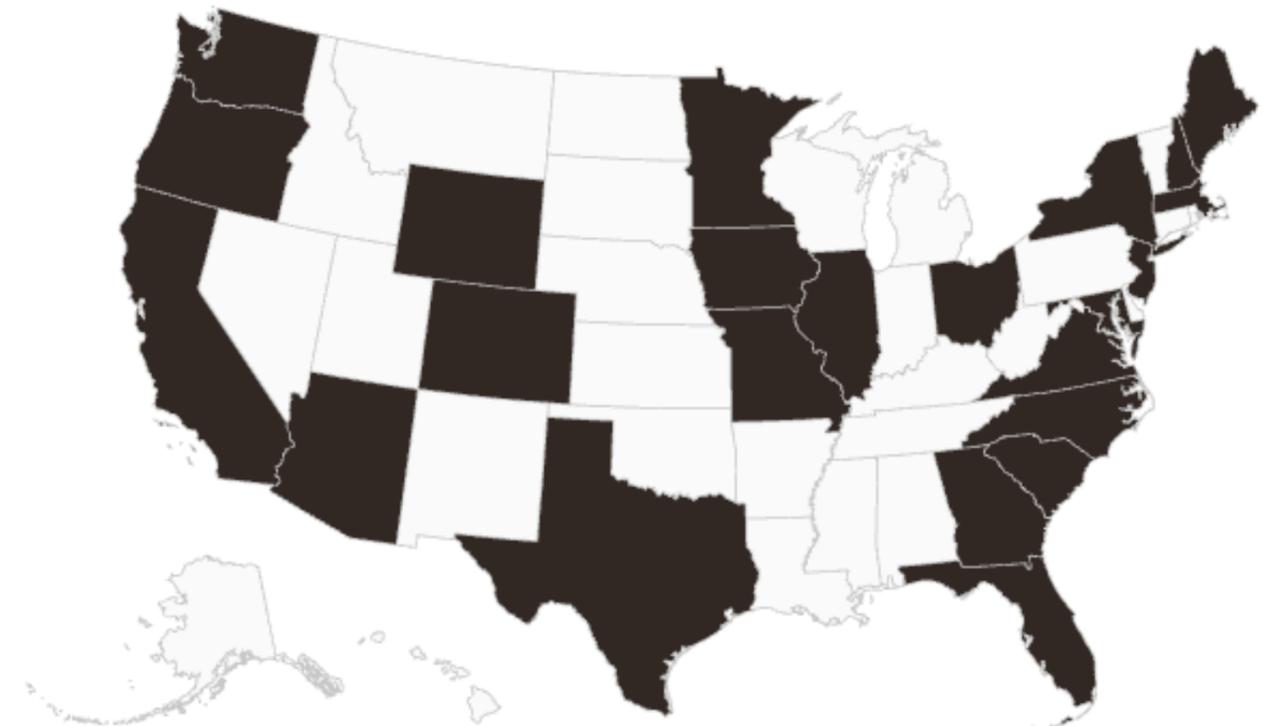- **Flexible registration and payment options built for complex events.**

🔗 *See Hathaway Brown's Alumnae Weekend*

Show attendees by class year

Select affiliation(s)...

Attendees across the USA

Leveraging Personalized Email

- **Email is the most difficult channel to earn RSVPs from because there is the most "noise." Personalization lets you stand above it.**

- **What basic pieces of personalization should every invite email have?**
  - **Recipient Details**
  - **Class Year**
  - **Salutation**
  - **Personalized Link**

Countdown to Reunion 2026!

161 : 01 : 59 : 49
Days   Hours   Minutes   Seconds

{{Custom Salutation}},

Big news — the **Class of 2016** is leading the charge for Reunion Weekend.
As of today, **50% of your class is already registered**. Yes… half your classmates will be here.

We'd love to see **you** there too, {{First Name}}.

Here's your personalized link to check the attendee list — including which of your classmates have already signed up:
👉 {{Personalized RSVP Link}}

This year's reunion is shaping up to be one of the most connected classes on campus. Whether you haven't been back since graduation or you were here last year, you'll walk into a room full of familiar faces and people excited to reconnect.

Join the 2016 momentum — your class is making this year something special.

If you have questions or want to see a preview of the weekend schedule, just hit reply. We're here to help.

Hope to welcome you back soon,
{{Sender Name}}
{{Sender Signature}}

Ambassador and Class Agent Outreach

- **Treat ambassadors as distribution channels, not message creators. Provide them with pre-built touchpoints and letting their social capital deliver reach.**

- **For smaller programs, don't jump straight to an ambassador program, ask alums to opt-in to you using their name in outreach.**

Alums need 6+ touchpoints to RSVP

| Save the date mailer | Advancement office text 1 | Social media announcement |

The alum you want to attend

| Peer to peer text #1 | Class FB group announcement 1 | Misc. peer networking |
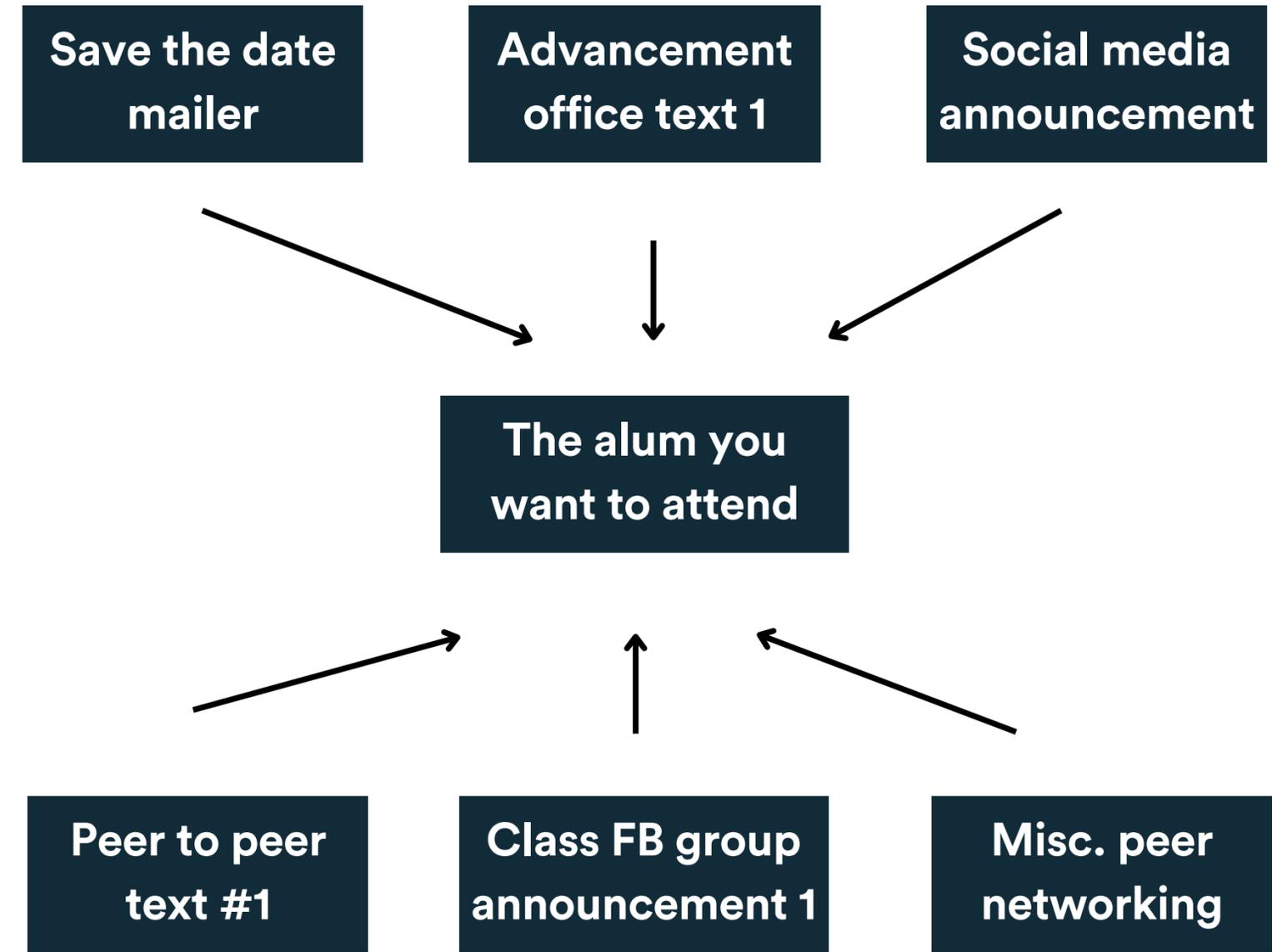
Rethinking your Volunteer Asks

- **Reframe around specific, low-commitment actions with clear scope: permission to use their name in outreach, one targeted text to five classmates, identifying two lost contacts**

- **Volunteers aren't always doing the work for you, just being able to use their name is an easy win!**

Display name ❓   Volunteer 1

Email address ❓   volunteer   @stchris.schooloutbox.com

Reply to ❓   advancement@stcrhis.com

91 : 01 : 07 : 15
Days   Hours   Minutes   Seconds

Hi {{recipient_first_name}},

It's {{volunteer_first_name}} {{volunteer_last_name}} from the Class of {{class_year}}. I'm helping coordinate our {{reunion_year}} reunion this spring, and I wanted to reach out personally because I saw you haven't registered yet.

So far **{{registered_count}} classmates** have already signed up, including {{peer_1_name}}, {{peer_2_name}}, and {{peer_3_name}}. You can see the full list of who's coming here: {{event_page_link}}
The event is {{event_date}} at {{event_location}}. We're keeping registration simple - just takes 30 seconds to RSVP and you can update your details anytime.

Would love to see you there. Let me know if you have any questions!

Best,
{{volunteer_first_name}}

Make Participation Visible Before the Event

- **Alumni aren't asking "should I attend?" They're asking "will my people be there?"**

- **Public attendee lists by class year answer that question before a single follow-up email is sent**

- **Visibility creates momentum. Momentum creates attendance. Attendance creates giving.**

Attendees of HB Alumnae Weekend 2025
Alumnae '95

Bianca Motley Broom Alumnae '95	**Carin Lightner-Laws** Alumnae '95
Carla Marable Alumnae '95	**Courtney Wilson Jonke** Alumnae '95
Jennifer Radin Alumnae '95	**Judy Zamore** Alumnae '95
Karyn Jenkins Alumnae '95	**Kristi Little** Alumnae '95, Faculty/Staff

Filling the Room

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Turning Comments into Content and Community

- The most powerful section of any giving day page is your comment wall.

- On average, donors who visit that page section spend 1-2m reading through community comments.

- Schools that add a prompt and pre-load community comments see much higher conversion rates.

What's your favorite memory of Alumnae Weekend?

Show comments by affiliation

Select affiliation(s)...

Search by supporter name or message

🔍

Cathy Newpher (Alumnae '75)
10 months ago

Looking forward to my 1st class reunion after 50 years! Where does the time go?

Kate Siegel Olena (Alumnae '75)
10 months ago

Seeing dear friends of my adolescent years.

Building a RSVP Process for 2026

- **Your RSVP page cannot just be a form - it has to be built to answer objections and questions.**

- **Leveraging "what's simplest" for a page can lead to a decrease in on-page conversion from viewer → attendee.**

- **Look to split your RSVP process into two parts: your landing page that primes donors and your form that converts them.**

🔗 *See Hathaway Brown's RSVP Form*

Part Three

Turning RSVPs into Revenue

Initiating Loops

- Now that you've leveraged your event, it's time to turn that momentum into giving.

- Whether you're running a giving day, a FYE push, or a campaign, initiating a giving loop is the best way to encourage momentum.

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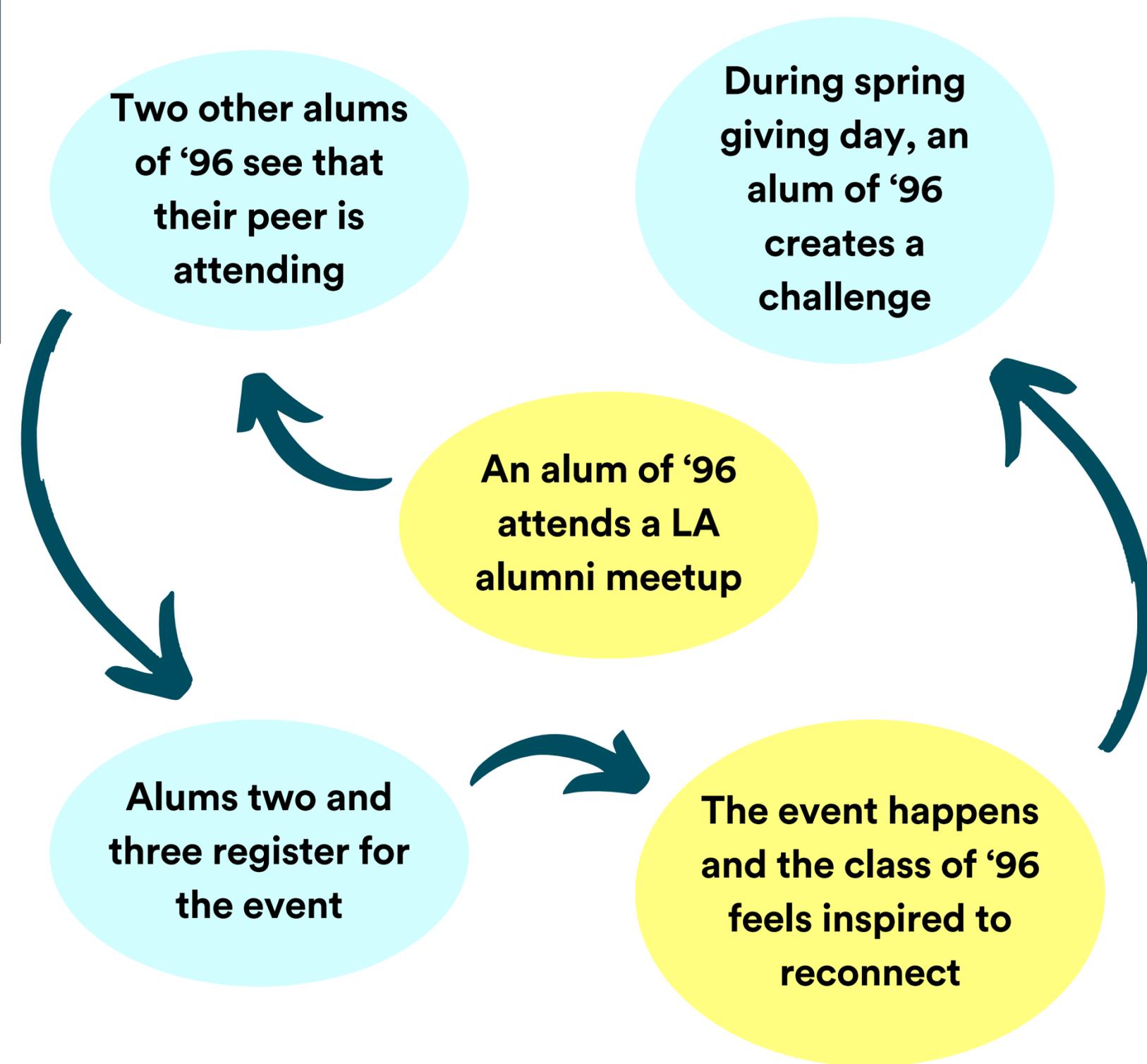
Start by Crafting your Segmentation Plan

- Just like alums want to see other alums attending before they RSVP, the same is true of giving.

- Leverage your existing alumni network of volunteers or more engaged community and ask to use their name and gift as a starting point to drive giving.

Baseline segmentation:

Class Year **Lapsed?** **Attended?**

Subject: {{peer_donor_first_name}} just gave to the Class of '96 - join her?

Hi Michael,

I wanted to share something exciting - **Sarah Chen** just made a gift to this year's annual fund in honor of our 30th reunion year, and she left this comment on our giving page:

"Coming back for reunion reminded me how much this place shaped who I became. So grateful to give back so the next generation of students can have the same experience." — Sarah Chen '96

[IF ATTENDING REUNION:] I know you're already registered for reunion in June, and I'd love to see the Class of '96 show up strong both on campus and in participation.

[IF NOT ATTENDING REUNION:] Even if you can't make it back to campus for reunion this year, you can still be part of what makes our class special. Right now **47 classmates** from '96 have given, and we're working toward **50%** participation.

You can see everyone who's contributed here: [giving_page_link]

I noticed you didn't have a chance to give last year, and I wanted to reach out personally. A gift of any size gets you back in the fold - it's truly about participation, not the amount.

Building a Multi-Channel Strategy

- Just like every donor has preferred messages that make them more likely to give, they also have preferred communication channels.

- When targeting younger alumni and women aged 35 - 50, use text as your primary method of outreach.

Texting Stats:

The average text raises $3.48 on Boost

Texts convert to gifts at 1.1% per text

Many texts raise between $10k and $25k

Build a Giving Page Worth Staying On

- Every gift and online registration that you generate replaces an in-person conversation with a potential donor.

- The goal should never be moving them to your goal (whether gift or RSVP) as quickly as possible, because you will generate fewer gifts.

Event Benchmarks

Time on Engagement Pages → 1-2m

View to Attendee Ratio → 20%

Average Page Visits/Donor → >2

Giving Page Benchmarks

Time on Engagement Pages → 1-2m

View to Donation Ratio → 40%

Average Page Visits/Donor → >1.5

Class Attendee Leaderboards

- **Class attendee leaderboards are a simple and effective way to encourage competition among attending classes.**

- **They are a particularly strong tool for cluster reunions as they can push on class rivalries.**

- **For schools with spirit clubs or groups, look to leverage affiliations.**

Reunion Attendees by Class

Class year	# Attendees ↓
1994	17
2014	15
1999	14
1989	13

Giving Challenges Participation Leaderboard

Class year	Participation ↓	Total
1975	38 of 86 have supported — 44%	$80,743
1990	29 of 67 have supported — 43%	$31,417
2000	12 of 81 have supported — 15%	$13,085

Combining your Form with an Ask

- **To optimize your alumni giving even further, consider whether you can combine your registration with giving.**

- **In general, your best moments for converting an alum into a donor are right at the moment they register, when they're at the event, and right after.**

Alumnae Weekend 2026 Confirmation

Will you be attending?   ⊙ Yes   ○ No

Reunion Class Giving

Make Your Reunion Gift Today!

Celebrate HB's 150th Anniversary and the incredible community that helped shape your journey! Your gift during this milestone year will make an immediate impact, supporting HB girls today and for generations to come. Join us in honoring our legacy and shaping the future—your generosity makes it possible.

○ $25	○ $100	○ $250
○ $500	⊙ $1,000	○ $2,500
○ $5,000	○ Custom	

Clear

Poll Time!

How will you leverage alumni engagement for giving?

We're a K-8 school. Some of our alumni feel incredibly connected, others feel stronger affinities to their high school and college alma maters. Strategies for increasing engagement in an environment like this?

- Asca from Cathedral School as well as Brenda from GSL, Greg from Gordon, and Kathryn from Oaks

What are some good examples of roles Alumni volunteers can do...everytime I ask alumni to be a class agent or class rep, they hesitate and think it will require a lot of time. Still even after being fully transparent, they still don't want to join. What type of incentives work?

- Jennifer from Cardinal Spellman

Your Questions Pt. 2

What is a good way to get buy in from management when they see alumni as a 'long play' for donations and not worth the time with limited resources?

- Kristin from Cuyahoga Valley Christian Academy

How can you reengage with alumni if no one has been tasked with doing so for quite a few years?

- Tawnya from Christian Heritage Academy

How to get in a good rhythm with alumni communications. What are some best practices to track alumni and keep engagement?

- Sharon from Academy Prep, Desirea from Eugene Waldorf, and many more!

Your Questions Pt. 3

Have any of your schools run a successful senior class gift program as a way to encourage the act of giving back to their high school alma mater before they graduate? If so, what have been some of the most successful programs and do they translate into giving once the student is in college?

- Denice from Breck School

Do you see a difference when offering an incentive for donations?

- Sharon from Academy of the Sacred Heart

What is working?

- Sarah from Avon Old Farms