Beyond Click Rates: Optimizing Your Appeals for Gifts

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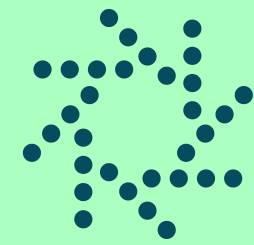w: www.boostmyschool.com

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Poll Time!

How do you think about optimizing your outreach?

Agenda:

Topics:

1. *The Challenge of Rising Above the Noise*
2. *Letting Data Drive*
3. *Building Donor-First Journeys*

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 200+ schools modernize their fundraising

Giving

Events

Auctions

Leaderboards & Challenges

Streamlined CRM Support

On-Site Auction Support

Peer-to-Peer

Boost Marketing

Live & Silent

Introducing Boost Marketing

- **The only development email & text platform that is built to bring in more dollars and donors.**

- **Automatically suppress recent donors from active outreach so supporters only receive relevant, timely messages.**

- **Embed social proof directly into your emails to massively increase conversions.**

Giving Tuesday - Parents

November 26, 2025 at 9:00am

50%	**7%**	**5.1k**	**$57.4k**
Open rate (80th percentile)	Click rate (Top 5%)	Audience	Revenue

Hi Jonathan,

You've helped us before—and we're so grateful.
As we take on new challenges this year, your continued support ensures we can keep delivering the excellent education our students deserve.

Would you consider renewing your support with a gift today?

Make Your Gift Today

Help your decade rise in the leaderboard!

Class year	# Donors ↓		Total
2010s		21	$16,458
1990s		16	$14,312
1970s		14	$12,448
2000s		13	$8,031

The Challenge of Rising Above the Noise

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What's Happening Now?

- Across channels conversion is falling.

- Alum & parent participation is falling despite rising dollars. Why is this happening?

- When driving most donors to give, the appeal is the most important part of your outreach.

What the data says:

- Alum participation rates are down 2% YoY nationally for independent schools.

- Schools are sending more emails than ever before, up 12% from 2024.

- Attributed revenue per email fell 11% YoY from 2024 → 2025.

- Average annual fund goal amounts have been increasing YoY

The Noise Problem

- **For every email you send your donors receive >10 emails from other nonprofits.**

- **In general, the average American donor receives more than 150 emails each day.**

- **In a changing economic climate, not only is it harder to stand out, but you're fighting for fewer contributions.**

The Impact on Participation

- When appeals don't convert, participation suffers and this compounds over time.

- As participation falls, major donor prospects become harder to convert.

- This is why participation numbers are a leading indicator of annual fund changes.

High Goals lead to a focus on Major Donors

The broader base feels neglected and participation drops

Weak participation means major donors lose confidence

Harder to close major gifts -> more pressure on goals
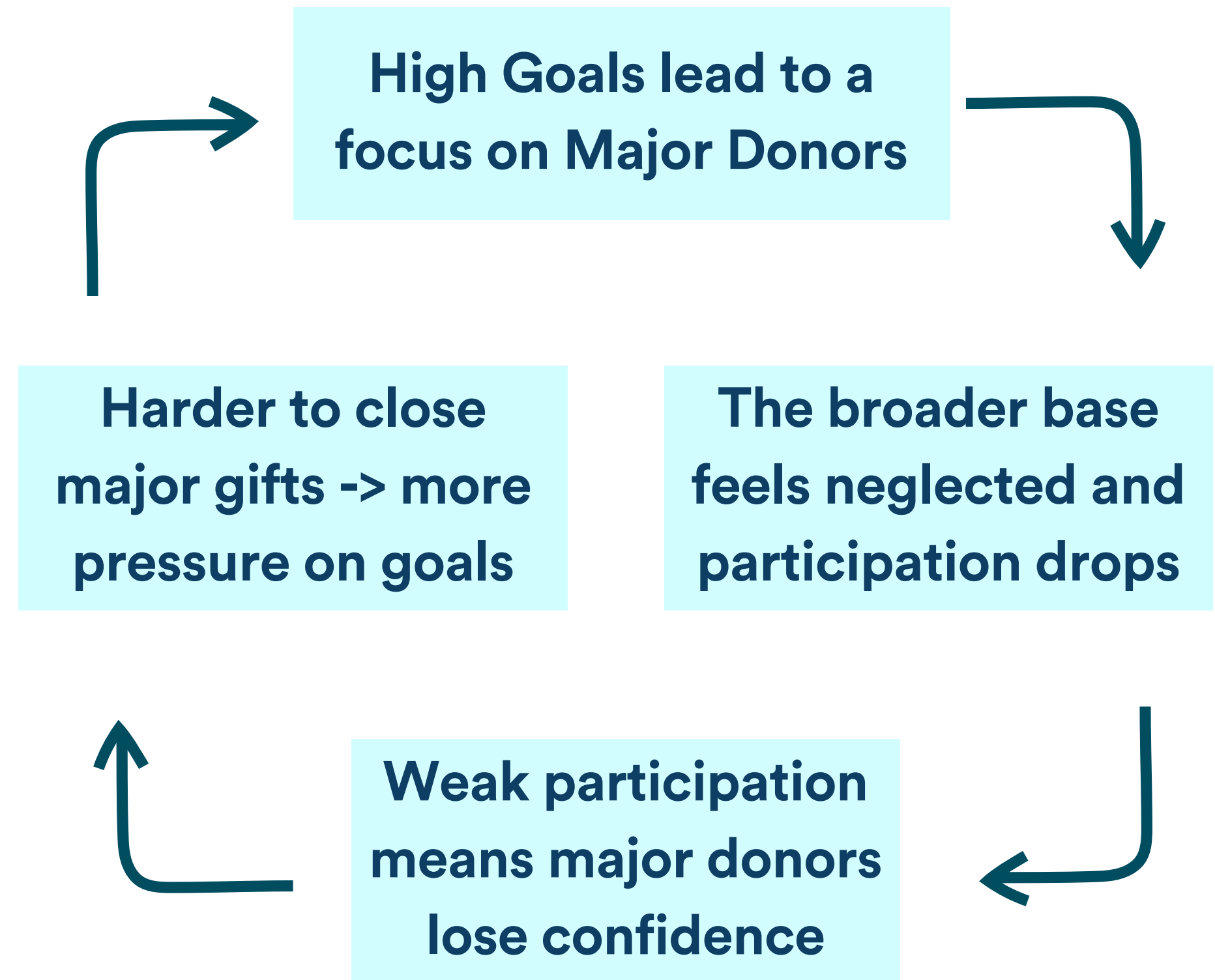
Part Two

Letting Data Drive

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Taking an Honest Look at your Numbers

- How are you tracking the success of your appeals? Opens? Clicks? Something else?

- Many schools see really strong open and click numbers (above the 35% open benchmark & 3% click benchmark).

- But why isn't this engagement turning into gifts?

What each number says:

- Opens are a measure of your subject line strength and whether your donors trust your name.

- Clicks are a measure of the content inside of your outreach and its ability to get donors to click.

- ROI is the truest measure of success, it combines the above metrics & adds your landing page's ability to generate gifts.

Why ROI Wins

- Tracking appeal ROI for giving and events lets you see what messaging drives giving.

- Even emails with very high open and click rates can perform poorly and hamper your ability to drive RSVPs and gifts.

- The struggle is that most email and text platforms do not allow schools to track giving generated from a send.
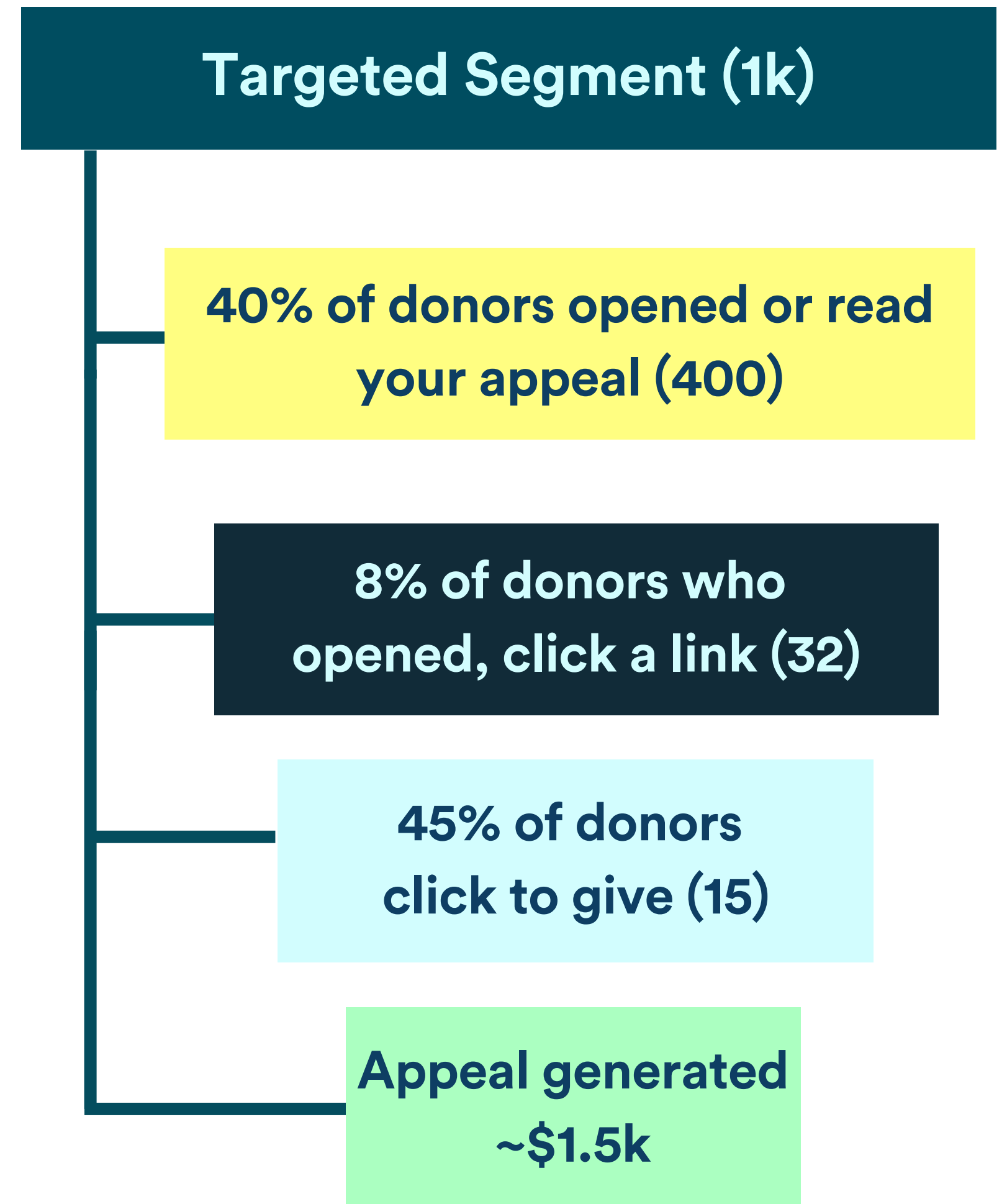
Open Rates

Segments

Click Rates

Gift Rate
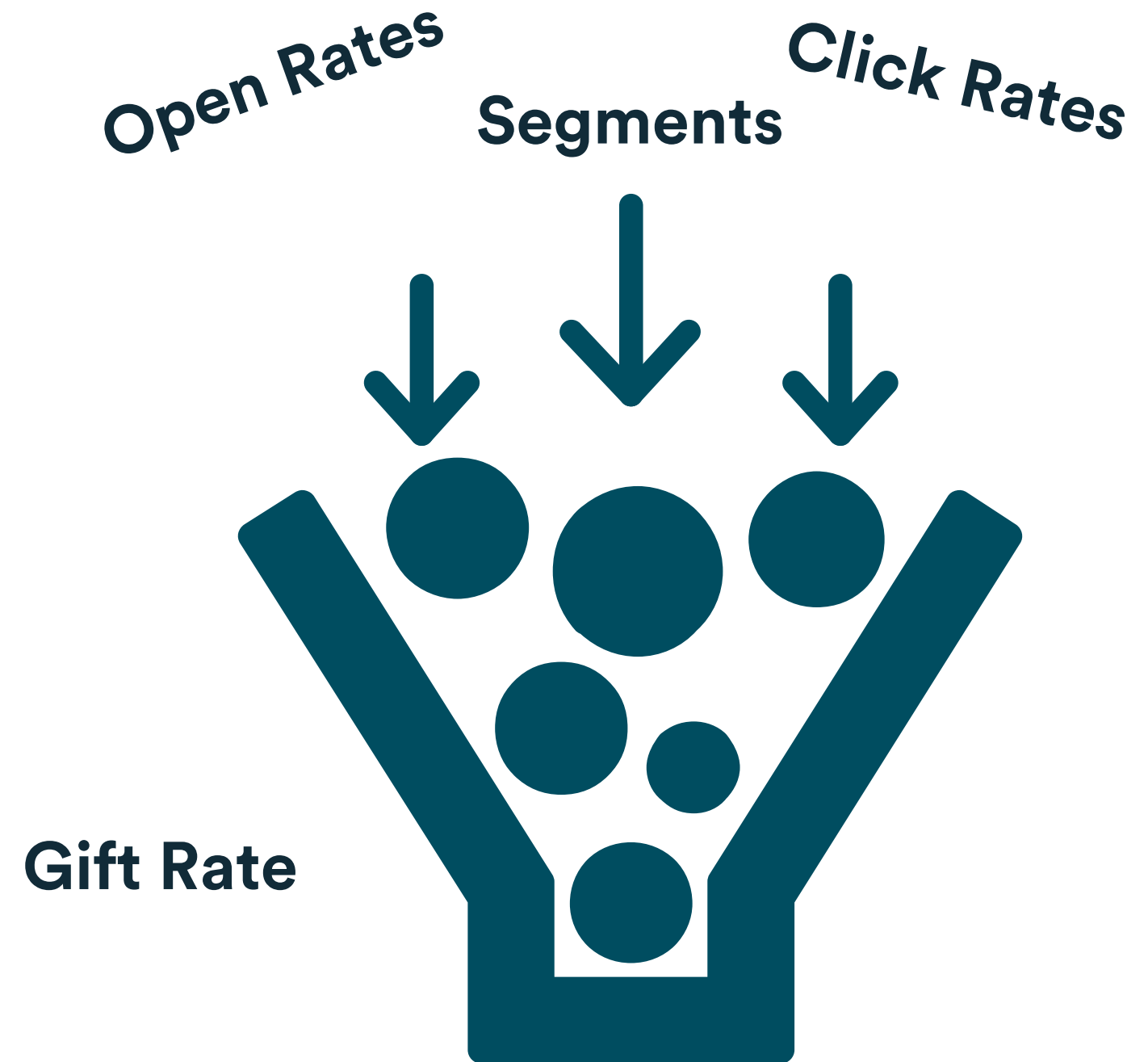
Revenue Generated
by your Appeal

Your Appeal Funnel

- **Each number influences the previous number, but the most key optimization point is who is clicking to give of your original send.**

- **For a major initiative, you should have several appeal funnels that cover every donor's preferred communication channel.**

Targeted Segment (1k)

40% of donors opened or read your appeal (400)

8% of donors who opened, click a link (32)

45% of donors click to give (15)

Appeal generated ~$1.5k

Building Donor-First Journeys

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Your Unique Advantages

- Every K-12 school has unique advantages that make it easier for them to make asks of their community.

- Whether it's a school mission, a tight knit community, or something else, your donors all have a unique reason to care.

- But the first step to making them care is to avoid ask fatigue.

Building your Ask Matrix

⅓ **Whimsy** "Fun" Engagement

⅓ **Stewardship** Stories Thanks

⅓ **Asks** Giving Days Annual Appeals

Crafting your Segmentation Plan

- **The simplest way to improve your email and text ROI is to send to smaller segments of your community about things you know they care about.**

- **You don't need to immediately have large amounts of rich segments to see big gains here.**

Boost's Rich Segment Builder

[Tool] Appeal ROI Calculator

Outreach Type	Segment	# of Potential Donors	# of Sends
Email Outreach	GOLD Alums	1000	3
	Parents of Seniors	120	6
	K-8 Parents	900	4
	Reunion Year Alums	2500	5

Goal Email Open Rate	35%	Expected Donors (Email)	150
Goal Email CTR	5%	Expected Donors (Text)	256
Goal Email Gift Rate	45%	Expected Revenue (Email)	$16,025
		Expected Revenue (Text)	$19,260

Building a Multi-Channel Strategy

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

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

On Average, Texts are the Best Way to Reach Every Segment

	Most Checked	→		Least Checked
Gen Z 2000-2012	Texts	Social Media	Email	Mail
Millennials 1981-1999	Texts	Email	Social Media	Mail
Gen X 1965-1980	Email	Texts	Mail	Social Media
Baby Boomers 1946-1964	Mail	Email	Texts	Social Media

The key to low touch personalization: Multi-channel!

Multi-channel voice: Who is sharing?

- **Advancement team**
- **Parents, alums**
- **Students**
- **Faculty/staff**
- **Head of School**
- **Board of trustees**
- **Alum council**

Multi-channel messaging: What is being shared?

- **Page elements**
- **Their 'why'**
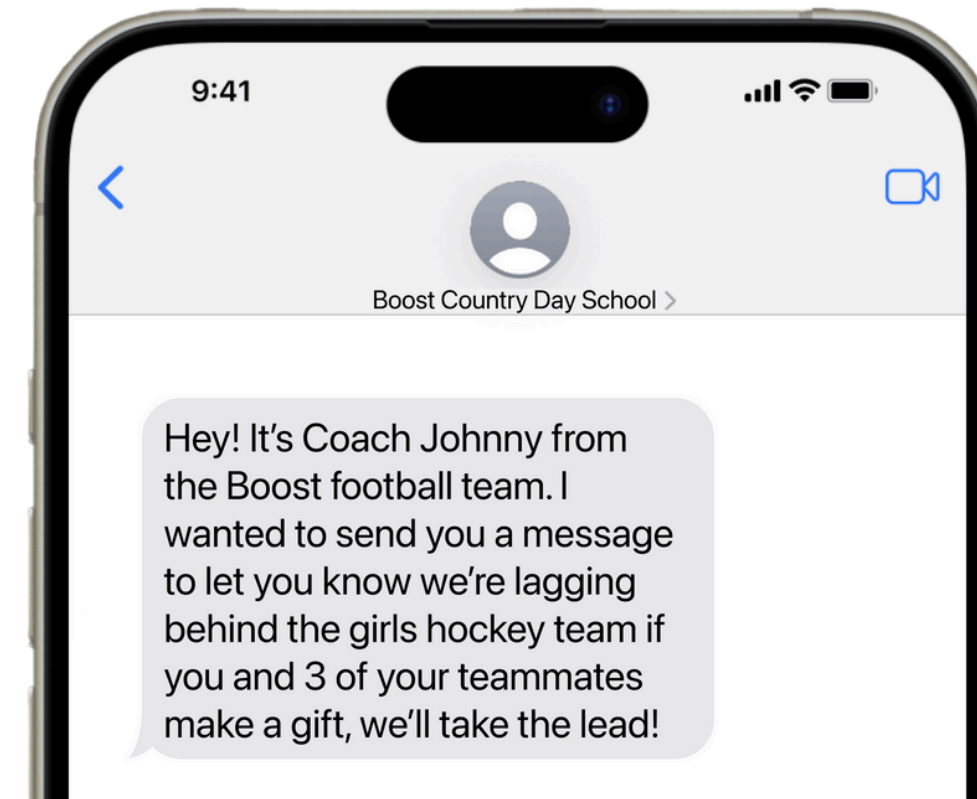- **Donor stories**
- **Class competitions**
- **Challenges**

Multi-channel comms: How is it being shared?

- **Email**
- **Text message**
- **WhatsApp**
- **Direct mail**
- **Social media**
- **In person**

Making Competition Visible in Real-Time

- **Your biggest advantage over "the noise" is that your donors know you and know your community.**

- **The simplest way to leverage that advantage is to embed friendly competition and familiar names into outreach.**

Embedding Engagement

Boost Country Day School >

Hey! It's Coach Johnny from the Boost football team. I wanted to send you a message to let you know we're lagging behind the girls hockey team if you and 3 of your teammates make a gift, we'll take the lead!

Help grads of the 90s rise in the leaderboard!

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Join Caitlin Woodward '95, Ryan Lopez '94, and Emma Browning '96 who have already made a gift

Make your Gift Today

When to Avoid Making Sends

- **Knowing when to make a send and avoid making a send is key to a comprehensive outreach strategy.**

- **On giving days in particular, you need to be agile and able to make strong custom sends without moving too quickly.**

- **The simplest way to do this is to have automatically updating "exclusion" lists.**

Automatic Donor Exclusion

Excluded from "Giving Tuesday Lapsed Donor" Email

Ryan Woodward
● Active

Total Donated
$3,750
$1,000 Live · $2,750 Online

Lori Reynolds
● Active

Total Donated
$1,050
$1,050 Live · $0 Online

Dylan Connors
● Active

Total Donated
$10,000
$0 Live · $10,000 Online

Iterating Quickly and Confidently

- **For major initiatives like Giving Days, Galas, and Reunion. Iteration is your biggest key to success.**

- **With each email you send, you're gathering more data about what works and what doesn't.**

- **Iterating with revenue/RSVP data is key to being able to optimize your outreach.**

Seeing the Stats you Need

This Giving Tuesday, Help Us Go Even Further for Our Students 💙

Dear [First Name],

This **Giving Tuesday**, we invite you to join our community at **Brookside Academy** in celebrating the spirit of generosity and making a meaningful impact in the lives of our students — including your own.

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Poll Time!

What do you see as the most important optimization point for your outreach?

BOOST MY SCHOOL

The only development comms platform built for K-12 schools.

Email | Text | QR Codes

Segment your Community

Embed Social Proof

Automatically Remove Donors

Track ROI

We build everything in Boost. Being able to manage our giving and events and launch our marketing campaigns all in one place will make the entire process much easier for us.

-Sara Wiese, Assistant Director of Advancement Events & Marketing at Nichols School

Q & A

- **What is the best timing for the annual fund mailing? - Lisa @ Goshen Friends School**

- **What is the best strategy to ensure that our prospects don't get messaging fatigue? - Monica @ Bayview Academy**

- **Is there a best time of day for social media posts? - Karen @ Rosary College Prep**

- **We're looking to focus on a single segment for an upcoming appeal, but do not want to deter others who want to contribute, how can we make this happen? - Kathleen @ Mount Saint Joseph Academy**

Q & A

- How can we better utilize appeals to bring back past donors? - Greg @ The Gordon School

- As a Catholic all girls college prep high school we are looking for a way to appeal to women owned businesses and women leaders in engineering, medicine and law. - Sr. Kemper @ Rosary College Prep