# DIGITAL PERSUASION

## HOW SOCIAL MEDIA
# MOTIVATES
# ACTION AND
## DRIVES SUPPORT
# FOR CAUSES

WAGGENER EDSTROM
WORLDWIDE

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

School *of* Continuing Studies
*Center for Social Impact Communication*

**In February 2004, Facebook debuted. Unknown to most observers at the time was that Facebook signaled the beginning of a paradigm shift in the way companies, organizations and people interact with each other and the world around them.**

In the years since, individuals have increasingly flocked to the site and to its social media brethren — including Twitter, YouTube, and more recently, Instagram and Pinterest — to build online identities for themselves and share the things they love (and the things they hate) with the people in their networks.

For many users, sharing and conversing about the causes and charities they care about is a big part of building an identity. Organizations have scrambled to harness this energy, and have also struggled to direct it in ways that will achieve meaningful impact.

Social media's empowerment of the individual voice presents a common challenge to every cause-minded organization, in that any individual can be an influencer today. But with countless impassioned voices talking and more joining the conversations each day, a question arises: What does influence truly mean?

Many recent studies have explored the effects of the digital revolution on the cause landscape. Some things we know include what incites people to support a cause, why people prefer one method of support to another, and how these choices make them feel. But within the general ranks of cause supporters exists a special breed: those who have the potential and the know-how to be true influencers.

In building our study, a great deal of consideration went into choosing the criteria for our desired respondents. We wanted people who are active cause supporters, and who are also active social media participants (not merely bystanders) — knowing that within this pool, there would be varying degrees of intersection between the two criteria. We asked them questions about influence both as a motivator and as an outcome, questions about how they make decisions to use that influence to sway others to support the causes they support, and questions about how those decisions make them feel.

The data reveal an increasingly rich, nuanced landscape of cause supporters with varying desires and intents — research that offers key insights for any organization or communicator looking to further engage these supporters in their cause. And while we segment our pool of influencers into four categories — referred to as Mainstreeters, Minimalists, Moderates and Maximizers — we have steadfastly avoided passing judgment. In truth, each of these groups can be extremely beneficial to a cause, as long as organizations know how to engage them — and keep them engaged.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# ABOUT THE SURVEY

Georgetown University's Center for Social Impact Communication and Waggener Edstrom Worldwide developed the study to gain a deeper understanding of perceptions, behavior and motivations for cause support (locally and globally) among digitally engaged American adults.

The survey was conducted online within the United States by Authentic Response on behalf of Waggener Edstrom from July 23 to Aug. 2, 2012, among 2,004 digitally engaged cause supporting adults, ages 18 and older. Specifically, qualified partic-

ipants were online or offline supporters of a charity or cause during the previous 12 months; moderate social media users (as defined by posting content, commenting or liking at least three times per week), and following at least one brand, company or organization on a social media platform. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. For additional data or information on the survey, please visit http://waggeneredstrom.com/what-we-do/social-innovation or http://csic.georgetown.edu.

## ABOUT THE CENTER FOR SOCIAL IMPACT COMMUNICATION

Georgetown University's Center for Social Impact Communication (CSIC) is the nation's leading educational resource on social impact communication. Launched in 2008 and housed in the award-winning graduate Division of Professional Communication, CSIC aims to elevate the discipline by pioneering industry standards in responsible communication practices and by educating and inspiring the professionals who

lead the way in creating positive social impact through their work. For more information, visit http://csic.georgetown.edu.

Twitter: @georgetowncsic

**GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY**
School *of* Continuing Studies
*Center for Social Impact Communication*

## ABOUT WAGGENER EDSTROM WORLDWIDE

Waggener Edstrom Worldwide (WE) is a global, integrated communications agency. For nearly 30 years the independently owned firm has developed strategic communications programs for innovative and world-changing clients, working to influence markets, inspire people and improve lives.

In the last few years, the agency was honored with countless awards for our creative and strategic work, among them WE was recognized as Global Technology Agency of the Year, Best Large Agency to Work For, Communications Agency of the Year and Technology Agency of the Decade.

The agency has more than 850 employees in 19 offices around the world, and its Global Alliance partners expand the agency's reach to more than 80 additional international markets. WE has five global practices:

brand strategy and marketing, healthcare, public affairs, technology and social innovation. To learn more, visit http://www.WaggenerEdstrom.com.

The Waggener Edstrom® mark, the Innovation Communications® mark and other marks used herein are registered or unregistered trademarks of Waggener Edstrom Worldwide Inc. in the United States and/or other countries. The names of actual companies and products mentioned herein may be the registered or unregistered trademarks of their respective owners. Unauthorized use is strictly prohibited.

Twitter: @waggeneredstrom

**WAGGENER EDSTROM**
WORLDWIDE

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# INSIGHT 1:
## SOCIAL CITIZENS CRAVE INFLUENCE

The desire to influence others is a key factor in cause support decisions — yet its full potential remains unrealized for most.
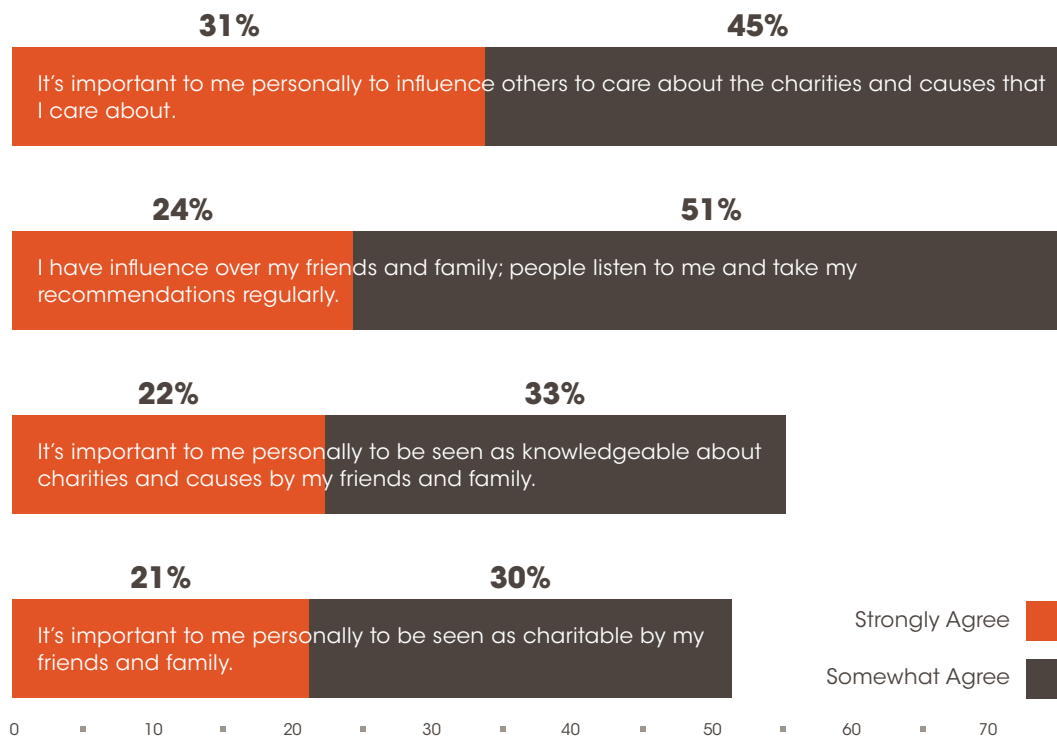
Among digitally engaged, charitable Americans today, the decision to visibly support a cause or social issue apparently has less to do with appearing knowledgeable or charitable to their peers, and more to do with influencing others to join them in their support of the cause. More than 3 in 4 respondents (76%) agree that it's important to them personally to influence others to care about the charities and causes that they care about. Just over half of respondents agree that it's important to them to be seen as knowledgeable about causes (55%), or to be seen by their peers as charitable (51%).

This desire to amplify impact extends to the specific actions that respondents take on

social media to show their support for causes. Influencing others to take similar action is among the primary reasons that respondents both "Like" causes on Facebook, and share information or links about causes with their social networks.

But, although respondents seem to understand the importance of using their personal brands to secure others' support for their chosen causes, they still rank this well below more traditional means of support — such as volunteering or donating money — as the single best resource they can contribute to a cause. Time (37%) and money (36%) both significantly outpace influence (16%) when it comes to ranking the most important resource respondents can give.

## PERSONAL VALUES



| | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree |
|---|---|---|
| It's important to me personally to influence others to care about the charities and causes that I care about. | 31% | 45% |
| I have influence over my friends and family; people listen to me and take my recommendations regularly. | 24% | 51% |
| It's important to me personally to be seen as knowledgeable about charities and causes by my friends and family. | 22% | 33% |
| It's important to me personally to be seen as charitable by my friends and family. | 21% | 30% |

## MOTIVATIONS FOR SHARING CAUSE INFORMATION

**61%**
I am proud to be affiliated with the charity or cause.

**61%**
I want to influence others to support the charities that I support.

**58%**
It makes me feel like I am having an impact.

**41%**
I want people to know that the cause or issue has impacted me personally.

**29%**
The charity asks me to spread the word.

**25%**
I do not have the money to support the charity in other ways.

**18%**
I want to help the charity win an online contest/fundraising competition.

**NOTE:** *Percentages may sum to over 100% due to multiple responses.*

Which of the following reasons best describes why you choose to share information or links about charities or causes with your online social networks, such as Twitter followers or Facebook friends? Select all that apply.

*More than 3 in 4 respondents (76%) agree that it's important to them personally to influence others to care about the charities and causes that they care about.*

## MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE TO GIVE

**10%** My Skills

**16%** My Influence

**1%** Other

**36%** My Money

**37%** My Time

Which of the following do you feel is the most important resource you can give to a charity or cause?
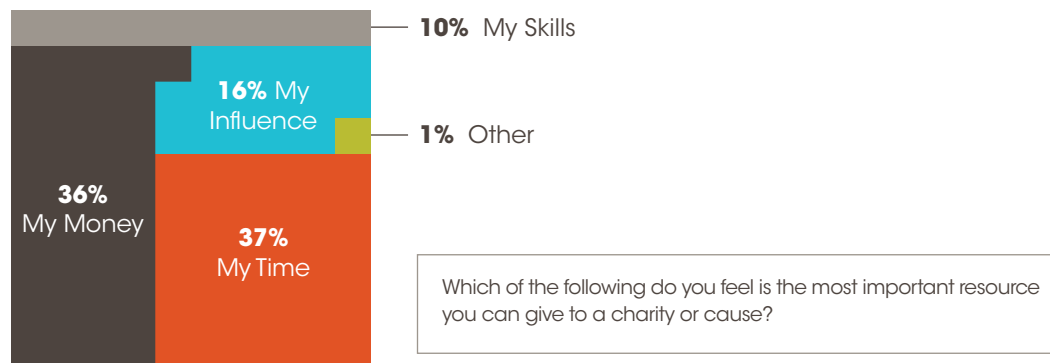
## INSIGHT 2:
## CAUSE CONVERSATION OCCURS PRIMARILY ON SOCIAL MEDIA – WHETHER SUPPORT IS ONLINE OR OFF

Social media gains traction as a go-to source for cause information — especially for global causes.

Perhaps signaling a significant departure from previous research, in which face-to-face interaction was still the primary mode of cause information exchange, survey respondents named social media as their top source of information about the causes they support. And it's interesting to note that this is true even for respondents who only support their chosen causes offline.

Among respondents who support causes online, 65 percent first hear about causes from friends or family they follow on social media. The next closest information sources for online supporters are online news sites and friends and family in person (tied at 28%). For offline only supporters, the list is strikingly similar — social media comes in at number one with 48 percent of respondents, followed by friends and family in person (33%), and online news sites, emails from organizations or companies and emails from friends and family (tied at 23%).

The importance of social media as a growing source of information is perhaps most evident in the global cause landscape.

Among survey respondents, social media campaigns (30%) are among the top reasons for supporting a global cause — second only to faith-based communities also supporting the cause (33%).

Respondents themselves recognize the role of social media in effectively getting the word out about both local and global causes. More than 8 in 10 (82%) agree that it's effective in getting more people talking about causes or issues. Fewer recognize its role in driving donations (55%) or compelling action — both online (50%) and offline (32%).

And what's the most effective platform in an organization or cause's arsenal? According to respondents, it's Facebook. A whopping 78 percent of respondents identified the popular social networking site as the most effective in getting the word out about a worthy cause or charity. Twitter (8%) and YouTube (5%) were a distant second and third, respectively. (See, 'Focus on Facebook,' p 10, for more platform-specific data.)

*82% of respondents agree that social media is effective in getting more people talking about causes or issues.*

**Digital Persuasion:** How social media motivates action and drives support for causes

## PRIMARY SOURCES OF CAUSE INFORMATION

**65%** **48%**
A friend or family member I follow on social media

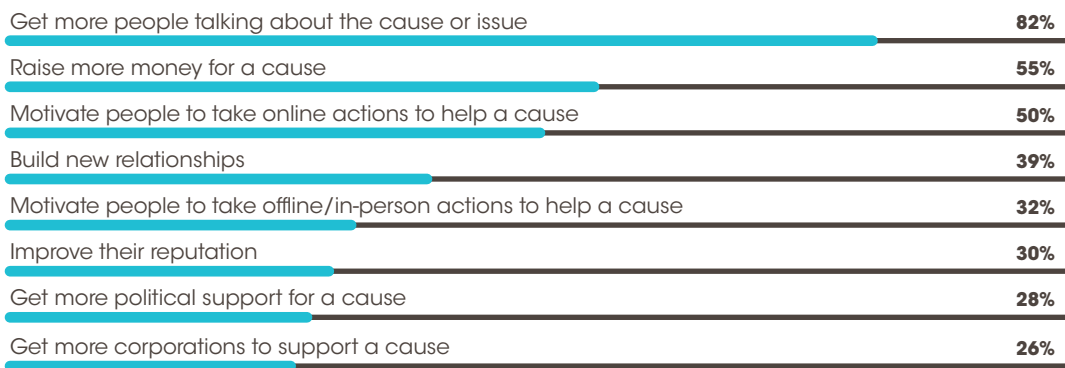**28%** **23%**
An online news site or magazine that featured an article about the charity or cause

**28%** **33%**
A friend or family member told me in person

**26%** **23%**
An email from an organization or company

**26%** **23%**
An email from a friend or family member

**22%** **22%**
A television news story about the charity or cause

**19%** **18%**
An organization or company website

SUPPORT ONLINE    SUPPORT OFFLINE

*Respondents can belong to more than one group*

**NOTE:** *Percentages may sum to over 100% due to multiple responses.*

Thinking about the charities and causes you support, in which of the following ways did you first hear about the causes? Please select all that apply.

## PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

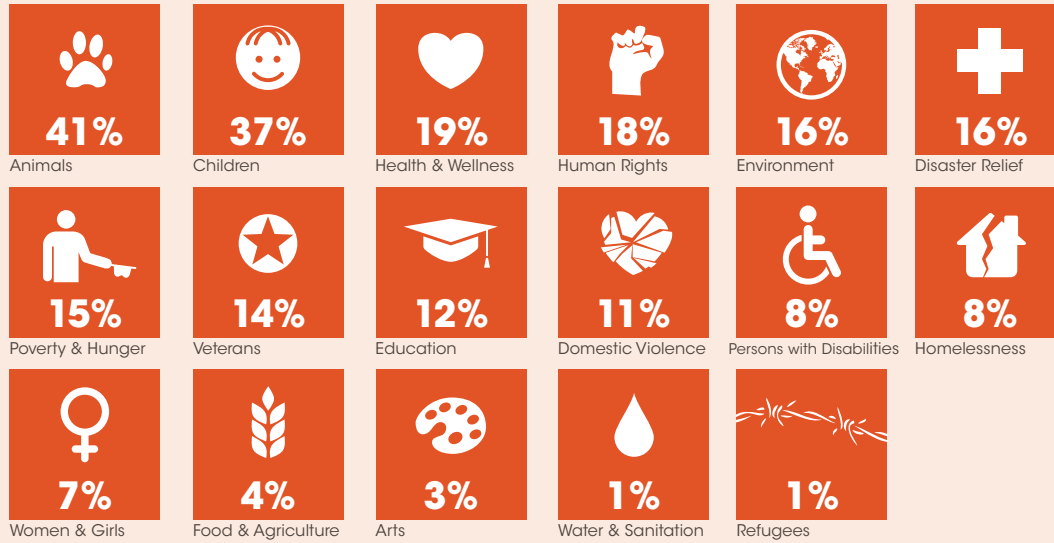| | |
|---|---|
| Get more people talking about the cause or issue | **82%** |
| Raise more money for a cause | **55%** |
| Motivate people to take online actions to help a cause | **50%** |
| Build new relationships | **39%** |
| Motivate people to take offline/in-person actions to help a cause | **32%** |
| Improve their reputation | **30%** |
| Get more political support for a cause | **28%** |
| Get more corporations to support a cause | **26%** |

In which of the following ways do you think supporting charities or social causes online through social media are effective? Please select all that apply.

## POPULAR CAUSES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

A major goal of many organizations and causes today is to spark conversation among social media supporters. So which causes are succeeding the most at this today?

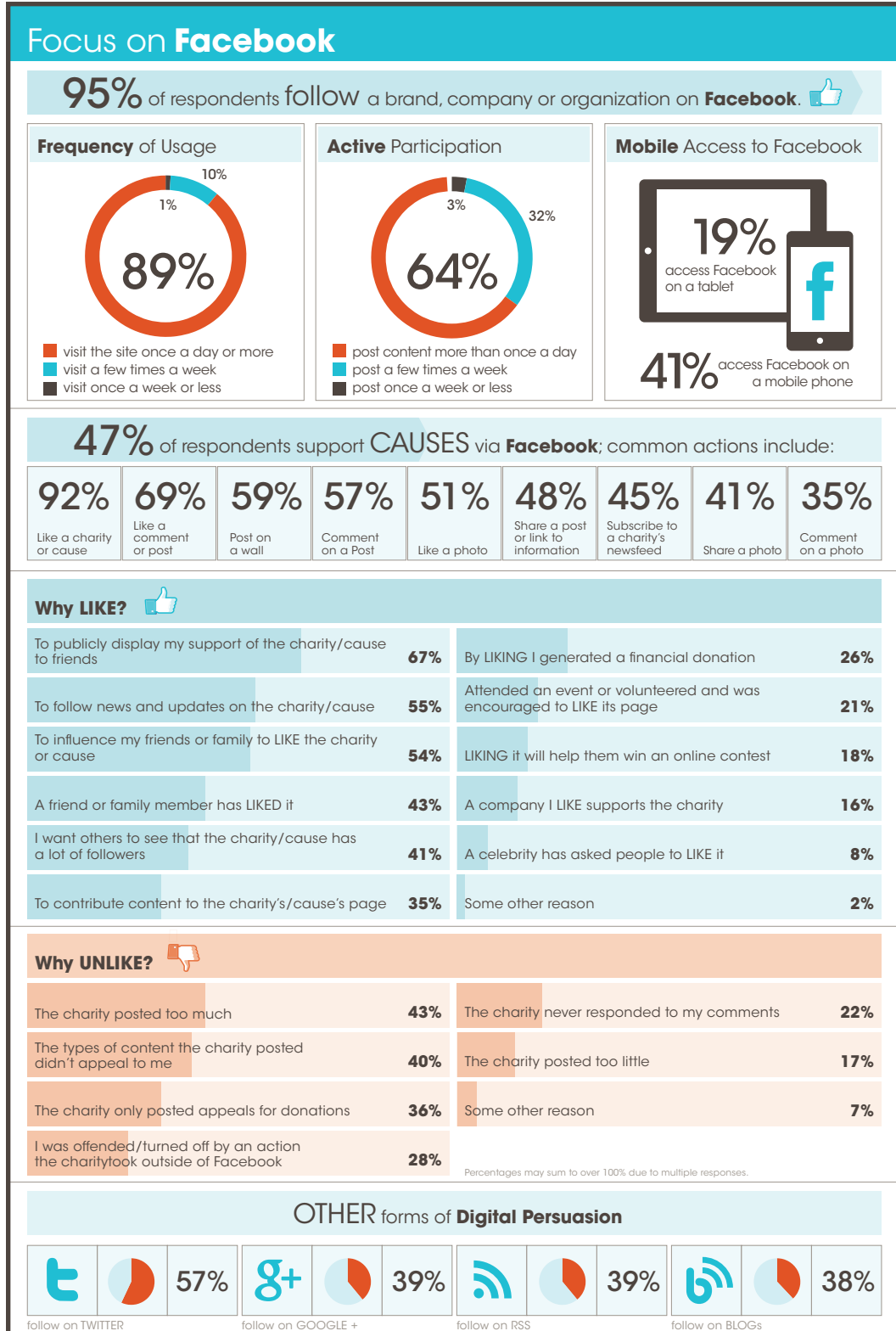| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **41%** Animals | **37%** Children | **19%** Health & Wellness | **18%** Human Rights | **16%** Environment | **16%** Disaster Relief |
| **15%** Poverty & Hunger | **14%** Veterans | **12%** Education | **11%** Domestic Violence | **8%** Persons with Disabilities | **8%** Homelessness |
| **7%** Women & Girls | **4%** Food & Agriculture | **3%** Arts | **1%** Water & Sanitation | **1%** Refugees | |

Which of the following causes or social issues do you see friends and family in your social networks posting or sharing about most often? Select up to three.

*NOTE: Percentages may sum to over 100% due to multiple responses.*

## FOCUS ON FACEBOOK:
## HOW & WHY CAUSE SUPPORTERS ARE USING THE PLATFORM

Facebook is far and away the king when it comes to social media platforms used to engage with causes. Respondents rely on the platform as a means to not only get their daily fix of information and social interaction, but also to converse about causes and to influence others to join that conversation. A snapshot of their actions and motivations appears below.

## Focus on **Facebook**

**95%** of respondents follow a brand, company or organization on **Facebook**.

### Frequency of Usage

89%

10%
1%

- visit the site once a day or more
- visit a few times a week
- visit once a week or less

### Active Participation

64%

3%
32%

- post content more than once a day
- post a few times a week
- post once a week or less

### Mobile Access to Facebook

**19%** access Facebook on a tablet

**41%** access Facebook on a mobile phone

---

**47%** of respondents support CAUSES via **Facebook**; common actions include:

| 92% | 69% | 59% | 57% | 51% | 48% | 45% | 41% | 35% |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Like a charity or cause | Like a comment or post | Post on a wall | Comment on a Post | Like a photo | Share a post or link to information | Subscribe to a charity's newsfeed | Share a photo | Comment on a photo |

---

### Why LIKE?

| To publicly display my support of the charity/cause to friends | 67% | By LIKING I generated a financial donation | 26% |
|---|---|---|---|
| To follow news and updates on the charity/cause | 55% | Attended an event or volunteered and was encouraged to LIKE its page | 21% |
| To influence my friends or family to LIKE the charity or cause | 54% | LIKING it will help them win an online contest | 18% |
| A friend or family member has LIKED it | 43% | A company I LIKE supports the charity | 16% |
| I want others to see that the charity/cause has a lot of followers | 41% | A celebrity has asked people to LIKE it | 8% |
| To contribute content to the charity's/cause's page | 35% | Some other reason | 2% |

### Why UNLIKE?

| The charity posted too much | 43% | The charity never responded to my comments | 22% |
|---|---|---|---|
| The types of content the charity posted didn't appeal to me | 40% | The charity posted too little | 17% |
| The charity only posted appeals for donations | 36% | Some other reason | 7% |
| I was offended/turned off by an action the charity took outside of Facebook | 28% | | |

Percentages may sum to over 100% due to multiple responses.

---

### OTHER forms of **Digital Persuasion**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 57% | 39% | 39% | 38% |
| follow on TWITTER | follow on GOOGLE + | follow on RSS | follow on BLOGs |

## INSIGHT 3:
## PERCEPTIONS OF IMPACT DRIVE BEHAVIOR

More traditional types of offline engagement continue to engender the greatest feelings of personal impact — yet there's a tradeoff for the convenience of social media.

Among survey respondents, those who support causes in person or by donating money feel like they are making more of a difference than those who support causes through social media. While 6 in 10 (60%) strongly agree that supporting a charity or cause in person makes them feel like they are making a difference, and nearly half (47%) strongly agree that donating money does, only 3 in 10 strongly agree that supporting through social media makes them feel this way.

These feelings of making an impact are reflected in the types of supporting activities that respondents choose to undertake. Nearly a third of respondents (32%) only support their chosen causes offline. A mere 14 percent of respondents prefer to only support their chosen causes online, with 54 percent supporting both online and off.

Overall, the most popular ways that respondents engage with causes are donating money in person (51%), supporting online via Facebook (47%), and volunteering (46%). Understandably, this list varies quite significantly when the causes are separated into local or global. For local causes, the top ways in which respondents support

and show their support are volunteering (44%), donating money in person (40%), and supporting on social media (31%). For global causes, supporting on social media tops the list (38%), followed by mailing a donation (27%), and making a donation online or signing an online petition (tied at 25%).

Interestingly, despite any feelings of having less of an impact, more than half of respondents (54%) indicate they are more likely to support a cause through social media rather than offline. There seems to be somewhat of a willingness to trade impact for convenience among those surveyed. The primary reasons for choosing social media over offline engagement are being able to support a cause at a time that is more convenient (67%), and that it takes less time (64%). This theme of convenience is also echoed in the supporting actions people take on any given social platform; the least time-consuming activities (e.g., liking a page or content, signing a petition, following a cause on Twitter, watching a video) are the ones in which most people participate — forgoing the more time consuming options like creating content.

*More than half of respondents (54%) indicate they are more likely to support a cause through social media rather than offline.*
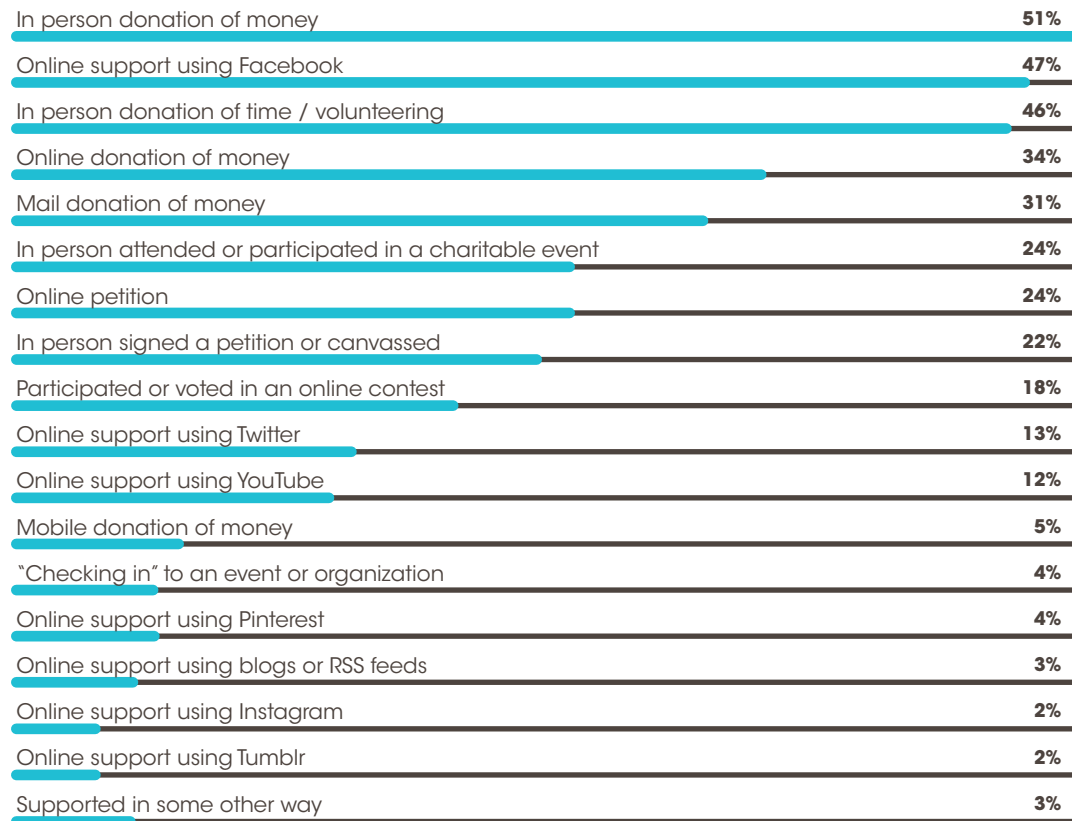
## MAKING A DIFFERENCE — ONLINE VERSUS OFFLINE

**60%** **34%**

Supporting a charity or cause in person makes me feel like I am making a difference.

**47%** **45%**

Donating money to a charity or cause makes me feel like I am making a difference.

**31%** **47%**

Supporting a charity or cause through social media makes me feel like I am making a difference.

**24%** **30%**

I am more likely to support a charity or cause through social media rather than to support it through offline activities

Strongly Agree ▮
Somewhat Agree ▮

0    10    20    30    40    50    60    70    80    90

## WHY SOCIAL MEDIA RATHER THAN OFFLINE SUPPORT?

**67%**
I can do it at a time that is convenient for me.

**64%**
It takes less time.

**56%**
It gets the word out more quickly.

**53%**
I can more easily demonstrate my support to my family and friends.

**43%**
I like to be able to influence my friends/family to support the same charity or cause.

**NOTE:** Percentages may sum to over 100% due to multiple responses.

Which of the following reasons describe why you are more likely to support a charity or social cause through social media rather than to support it through offline activities? Select all that apply.

## COMMON TYPES OF SUPPORT

| | |
|---|---|
| In person donation of money | **51%** |
| Online support using Facebook | **47%** |
| In person donation of time / volunteering | **46%** |
| Online donation of money | **34%** |
| Mail donation of money | **31%** |
| In person attended or participated in a charitable event | **24%** |
| Online petition | **24%** |
| In person signed a petition or canvassed | **22%** |
| Participated or voted in an online contest | **18%** |
| Online support using Twitter | **13%** |
| Online support using YouTube | **12%** |
| Mobile donation of money | **5%** |
| "Checking in" to an event or organization | **4%** |
| Online support using Pinterest | **4%** |
| Online support using blogs or RSS feeds | **3%** |
| Online support using Instagram | **2%** |
| Online support using Tumblr | **2%** |
| Supported in some other way | **3%** |

In the past 12 months, in which of the following ways have you supported a charity or social cause? Select all that apply.

## INSIGHT 4:
## STORYTELLING ON SOCIAL MEDIA TURNS AWARENESS INTO ACTION

Among the digitally engaged, social media can indeed compel offline engagement, when prompted by good storytelling, multimedia and social norms — and accompanied by actually having time and money to give.

In response to the so-called "slacktivist" myth, survey data shows that social media can in fact motivate people to contribute to a cause beyond mere "likes" and clicks. More than half of survey respondents (55%) who engaged with causes via social media have been inspired to take further action. The most common actions taken include donating money (68%), volunteering (53%), donating personal items or food (52%), or attending or participating in an event (43%).

What motivates these further actions? Survey respondents indicated that stories are key; more than half (56%) agree they read a story on social media that made them want to

do more. Other drivers include online videos (41%) and photos (40%), along with seeing family and friends also taking further action (39%).

For the other 45 percent who have yet to take further action beyond social media, it appears that they're primarily limited not by any particular perceptions or beliefs of effectiveness or impact, but rather by a general lack of additional resources to give. Nearly 6 in 10 respondents (59%) agree that they don't have money to support the cause in other ways, while 45 percent say they don't have time to support the cause in other ways.

*More than half of survey respondents (55%) who engaged with causes via social media have been inspired to take further action.*

### COMMON ACTIONS TAKEN AFTER SOCIAL MEDIA SUPPORT

**68%** Donate money.

**53%** Volunteer.

**52%** Donate clothing, food or other personal items.

**43%** Attend/participate in a charitable event in my community.

**40%** Purchase a product to benefit the cause or charity.

**25%** Contact my political representatives by phone, mail or in person.

**15%** Organize an event in my community.

**2%** Some other way.

Which of the following actions did you take to support a charity or cause after engaging on social media? Select all that apply.

**NOTE:** *Percentages may sum to over 100% due to multiple responses.*

▶

## MOTIVATORS FOR FURTHER ACTION

| | |
|---|---:|
| I read a story on social media that made me want to do more | 56% |
| I watched an online video that made me want to do more | 41% |
| I saw a photo on social media that made me want to do more | 40% |
| My family and/or friends were also taking further action | 39% |
| I read or heard through social media about other people taking further action | 36% |
| I read or heard through the media about other people taking further action | 30% |
| There was an organized charitable event for me to participate in | 29% |
| Some other reason | 6% |

> Which of the following reasons best describes why you chose to take further action — beyond supporting the charity or cause on social media? Select all that apply.

❚❚

## MOTIVATORS FOR FURTHER INACTION

| | |
|---|---:|
| I don't have the money to support the cause in other ways | 59% |
| I don't have the time to support the cause in other ways | 45% |
| I have doubts about how my money will be used by the charity or cause | 17% |
| I feel I've done enough by supporting the cause on social media | 13% |
| I don't know how to support the cause in other ways | 9% |
| Some other reason | 7% |

> Which of the following reasons best describes why you chose not to take further action — beyond supporting the charity or cause on social media? Select all that apply.

**NOTE:** *Percentages may sum to over 100% due to multiple responses.*

## CAUSES THAT BENEFIT THE MOST FROM SOCIAL MEDIA

Are certain causes or issues more predisposed to successful social media engagement than others? Respondents have opinions about which types of causes can benefit the most via these platforms.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **37%** Children | **32%** Animals | **22%** Disaster Relief | **18%** Human Rights | **18%** Poverty & Hunger | **17%** Health & Wellness |
| **15%** Environment | **15%** Education | **13%** Domestic Violence | **12%** Veterans | **10%** Homelessness | **8%** Persons with Disabilities |
| **6%** Women & Girls | **5%** Food & Agriculture | **5%** Arts | **1%** Water & Sanitation | **2%** Refugees | |
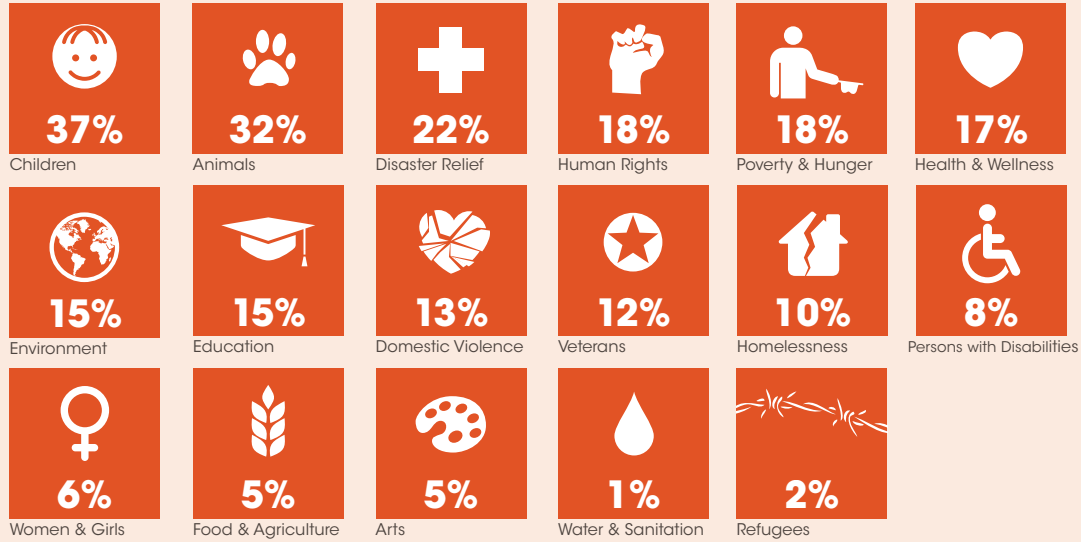
Which of the following causes or social issues do you feel can benefit the most when people support them through social media? Select up to 3.

*NOTE: Percentages may sum to over 100% due to multiple responses.*

## INSIGHT 5:
## ONLINE SKEPTICISM THREATENS TO BE A DIGITAL ROADBLOCK

Respondents' skepticism of online causes reinforces the need for credible, trustworthy Web presences.

One of the major factors in respondents' decisions to support a cause online or not continues to be questions of privacy and fraudulent campaigns. More than half of respondents (53%) report feeling reluctant to support a cause online at one time or another, and the top reason for this reluctance is feeling like they have to share too much of their personal information. Open-ended responses surfaced consistent themes of distrust ("I can't trust that funds are actually going to the intended parties;" "I don't know enough about it and am afraid it might be a scam"), and a lack of information ("I'm unsure of what exactly I'm supporting").

And online skepticism and distrust can do more than inhibit online support — survey data shows that offline behavior can actually be affected as well. Of the survey respondents who have chosen not to support a cause beyond social media, nearly 1 in 5 (17%) agree that they've opted not to take further action because they have doubts about how their money will be used by the charity or cause.

Interestingly, most respondents reported that the first thing they do after watching an appealing video about a cause is search for more information about it online. In an era in which a video campaign like KONY 2012 can drive billions of eyeballs to a cause's website in a matter of weeks, this reinforces the need to build trustworthy, transparent Web presences that can demonstrate credibility to savvy information-seekers.

*Nearly 1 in 5 (17%) agree that they've opted not to take further action because they have doubts about how their money will be used by the charity or cause.*

## PRIMARY REASONS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA RELUCTANCE

| | |
|---|---|
| I feel like I have to share too much of my personal information | **34%** |
| It's more satisfying or rewarding to support a charity or cause in person | **26%** |
| I feel I've already done enough if I've supported the charity offline/in person | **13%** |
| I don't feel that my online support helps the cause accomplish anything | **13%** |
| I don't feel that the charity needs online support as much as offline | **11%** |
| My friends and family all support charities and causes in person | **9%** |
| I don't want people to know that I support it | **6%** |
| It's not easy to find links to the charity's social networking accounts | **6%** |
| I don't regularly log on to Facebook, Twitter or other social networks | **4%** |
| I don't have regular access to a computer or smart phone | **3%** |
| Some other reason | **23%** |

I have been reluctant to support a charity or cause online because: Select all that apply.

**NOTE:** *Percentages may sum to over 100% due to multiple responses.*

## COMMON ACTIONS AFTER WATCHING AN ONLINE CAUSE VIDEO

| | |
|---|---|
| Search for more information on the cause or charity online | **56%** |
| Share the video with friends or family by posting it on your social networking profiles | **41%** |
| Like the charity or cause on Facebook or follow on Twitter | **34%** |
| Donate money to the charity or cause | **34%** |
| Share the video with friends or family by sending them a personal email | **33%** |
| Sign an online petition | **31%** |
| Encourage friends or family to donate to the charity or cause | **28%** |
| Look for opportunities to volunteer for the charity or cause | **23%** |
| Post a comment on the video | **14%** |
| Organize a fundraiser for the charity or cause | **7%** |
| Other | **1%** |

Which of the following actions are you most likely to take after watching an appealing or interesting video about a charity or social cause? Select all that apply.

**NOTE:** *Percentages may sum to over 100% due to multiple responses.*

# CAUSE INFLUENCER SEGMENTS

Among survey respondents, four distinct categories of supporters emerged (based on reported behavior, demographics and attitudes about using social media to support causes). Understanding these groups, what motivates them, and where and how to reach them is crucial in any organization or cause's quest to deepen engagement.

# MAINSTREETER

Representing the largest group of respondents at 40 percent, Mainstreeters — while active on social media — only support causes via offline actions like donating (in person or via mail), volunteering or attending events. Because they like to see the impact of their efforts firsthand, they tend to support more local causes than global causes.

When it comes to learning about the causes they ultimately support, they rely on the trusted opinions of those closest to them, regardless of channel. Friends and/or family on social media, in person or via email rank near the top of the ways in which they first learn about causes.

Mainstreeters want to have influence over friends and family. Yet, fewer report actually feeling like

they can deliver this influence. This influence gap is an opportunity for calls-to-action that emphasize how they can complement their already deep involvement with actions that will spread the word about the impact they're having and inspire others to join them. And because their potential influence is rooted in genuine involvement in the cause, they are an ideal — if somewhat untapped — pool of ambassadors for your cause.

Not surprisingly, this group is the most skeptical of online support; more than half have been reluctant to support a cause online at one time or another. The roots of their reluctance are distrust, privacy concerns, and that it's more satisfying to support a cause in person.

## DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENTIATORS

Tend to be **a bit older** than the average respondent, with 50% being age 45 or older.

Highest percentage of retired respondents, at 13%.

**Parents (65%)** and grandparents (26%).

On the **lower end of the income spectrum**, with 39% of respondents between $35K and $75K.
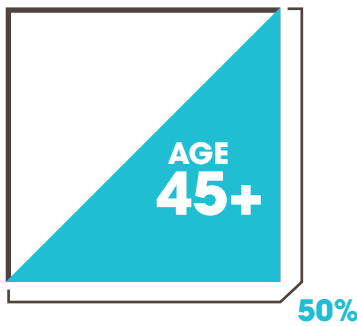
AGE
**45+**

**50%**

## HOW & WHAT CAUSES THEY SUPPORT

On average, they support **4 local causes** and **3 global causes.**

They **average 2 types of offline support**. The most common are donating money in person (59%), volunteering (50%), mailing a donation (30%) and attending an event (14%).

**59%**
DONATING MONEY IN PERSON

**50%**
VOLUNTEER
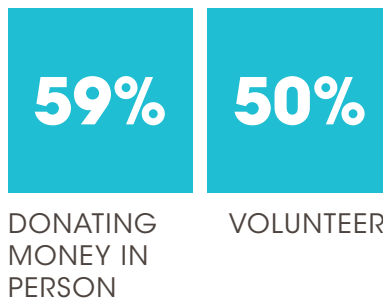
## CAUSE PROCESSING CUES

**PEOPLE-DRIVEN**
First learn about the causes they support from friends/family on social media (33%), friends/family in person (25%), TV news stories (11%), and emails from family/friends (11%).

## INFLUENCE STYLE

**ASPIRING TO INSPIRE**
73% agree that influencing others to support the causes they support is important to them.

68% report that they have influence over friends and family.

# 68%

REPORT HAVING INFLUENCE OVER THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

## SOCIAL SKEPTICISM?

**56%** have been r**eluctant to support a cause online** at one time or another.

**Common reasons** for their reluctance include:

- I feel like I have to **share too much** of my **personal information (34%).**
- It's more satisfying or rewarding to support a charity or cause in person (33%).

# 56%

HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO SUPPORT A CAUSE ONLINE

## THE PATH TO FURTHER ENGAGEMENT

Help them understand the role they can play in influencing others; define it for them and **give them tangible ways to help** out.

**Show them the impact** of their influence — updating the number of supporters or donations generated by their outreach, and what those donations have done.

Equip them to tell your organization's story to others — they have seen the impact firsthand and can be **excellent ambassadors if given the right tools.**

**Gain their trust by being completely transparent** about how and what their support is contributing to.

# MINIMALIST

Representing the smallest group of respondents at fewer than 15%, Minimalists support only their chosen causes online — most often, on Facebook — by donating online, or by signing an online petition. They attribute their choices in cause support to a lack of time and money, and primarily act out of convenience. Not surprisingly, they're also the least likely to have taken further action beyond supporting on social media.

This group looks online to get much of its cause-related information — but what they look for is legitimacy, not necessarily third party endorsements. They're much more willing to look at a company or organization's own channels (emails, websites) rather than trusted, potentially unbiased information. If it looks and feels credible, that's enough for them.

Minimalists place a premium on their own influence, ranking it among the top resources they can give to a cause. But, when it comes down to it, they're actually among the least influential groups — most likely because the actions they take on social media to support causes are driven by convenience, apathy and a relative lack of money/time, rather than by a conscious effort to influence others.

It's no surprise that Minimalists are the least wary of online support; only 39% have been reluctant to support a cause online at one time or another. The roots of any reluctance are primarily concerns over privacy and having to share too much personal information.

There's a very short window for capturing a Minimalist's attention. This group is among the most willing to "unlike" a cause — which could quickly sever their only ties to the cause/organization, since roughly half never go beyond a "like" to begin with.

## DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENTIATORS

This group has the highest proportion of single (37%) and unemployed (15%) respondents.

Among the lowest incomes of respondents; nearly 1 in 4 (23%) of Minimalists make less than $25K a year, and 59% make less than $50K a year.

Average ages are 25-44.
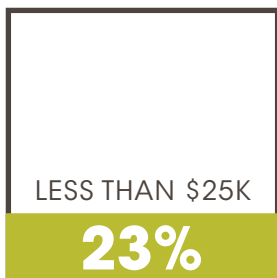
LESS THAN $50K

**59%**

LESS THAN $25K

**23%**

## HOW & WHAT CAUSES THEY SUPPORT

On average, they support **4 local causes** and **3 global causes.**

They average 2 types of online support. The most common are **supporting via Facebook (57%), donating money online (46%),** signing an online petition (28%), and voting in an online contest (17%).

**57%**

**46%**

SUPPORTING VIA FACEBOOK

DONATING MONEY ONLINE
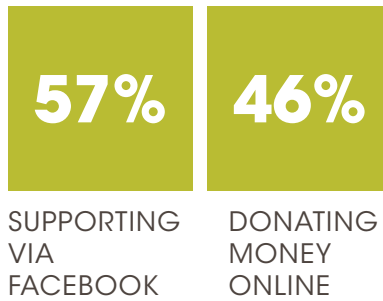
## CAUSE PROCESSING CUES

**LEGITIMACY**
**First learn about** the causes they support **from friends/family on social media (45%),** online news sites (20%), emails from organizations or companies (19%), being asked by the charity or cause to support it online (17%), and organization's or company's websites (14%).
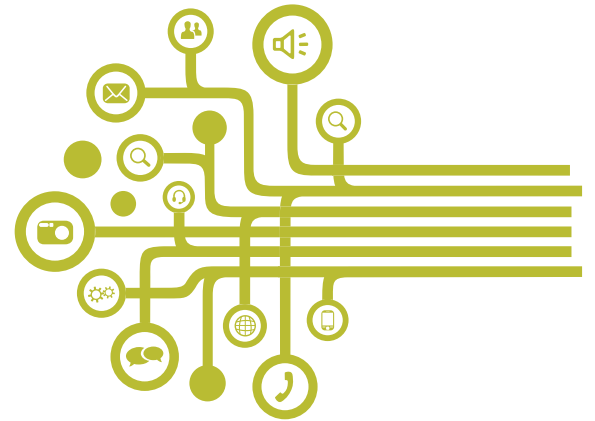
## INFLUENCE STYLE

**CONVENIENTLY INFLATED**
34% say that **"my influence" is the most valuable resource they can give** to a cause, second only to money at 35%.

66% report that they have influence over friends and family, among the lowest of the four segments.

# 66%

REPORT HAVING INFLUENCE OVER THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

## SOCIAL SKEPTICISM?

**39%** have been reluctant to support a cause online at one time or another.

**Common reasons** for their reluctance include:

• I feel like I have to share **too much of my personal information** (33%).

# 39%

HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO SUPPORT A CAUSE ONLINE

## THE PATH TO FURTHER ENGAGEMENT

Given the small window of time you have to capture this group's attention, make sure that your **website and social media platforms are credible**, consistent sources of information.

Tell your story in a way that quickly conveys the most important information (since **lack of knowledge** about a cause is **more of a barrier to action** for Minimalists).

**Strive for consistent updates** that keep this group in your organization's orbit while they gain the financial resources and/or time to support your cause in other ways.

**Thank them** for the social media contributions they are able to make, and **reinforce the impact that their influence is having** on your cause.

# MODERATE

Nearly a third of respondents fall into the category of Moderates — individuals who balance offline and online support of both global and local causes. They tend to be middle-of-the-road when it comes to length and depth of involvement; picture the values of a Mainstreeter with more of a willingness to share and support online — and more of an understanding of the benefits of doing so.

Moderates primarily hear about the causes they support through people, whether online or offline. But in addition, they also look to credible, trusted online sources — like online news sites. Third party validation seems to be more of an issue here than with Minimalists.

True to their balanced nature, Moderates value having influence over their friends and families, and in general, act accordingly to their desires. Second only to Maximizers in their reported abilities to influence others, Moderates can deliver because of their integrated approach to supporting the causes they care about. They'll donate to or volunteer for your cause, but also talk about it on Facebook. They're choosier in their online channels than Maximizers, but this may actually boost their credibility in the eyes of their friends and family.

Moderates share a healthy skepticism of online cause support with their Mainstreeter peers; more than half have been reluctant to support a cause online at one time or another. The roots of their reluctance are primarily centered on privacy concerns, fear of scams and distrust.

A majority of Moderates have taken offline action after supporting via social media. In addition to compelling stories, a particular linchpin in driving offline action for this group seems to be seeing friends and family also taking action.

## DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENTIATORS

Moderates span the **broadest age range**; the average age is evenly split between 25-44, and 45 and older.

On the **higher end of the income spectrum,** with average incomes between $35K and $100K.

Also on the **higher end of the education spectrum,** with nearly half (45%) possessing a 4-year degree or higher.

**Highly connected** via smartphones (52%) and, increasingly, via tablets (29%).
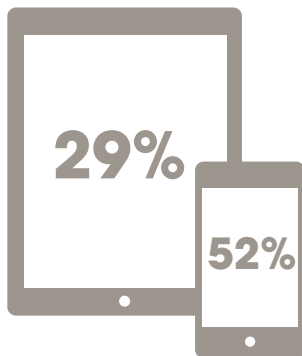
**29%**

**52%**

## HOW & WHAT CAUSES THEY SUPPORT

On average, they support **4 local causes** and **3 global causes.**

They average 2 types of offline support, and 1 type of online support. The most common activities are supporting via Facebook (61%), donating money in person (43%), donating money online (42%), volunteering (39%), and mailing a donation (31%).

**61%**

**42%**

SUPPORTING VIA FACEBOOK

DONATING MONEY ONLINE
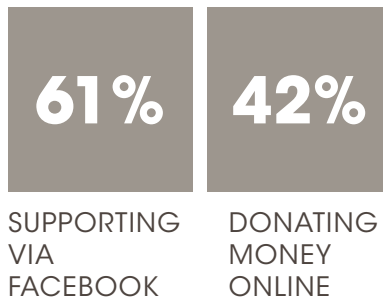
## CAUSE PROCESSING CUES

**PEOPLE AND CREDIBLE, TRUSTED ONLINE SOURCES** first learn about the causes they support from friends/family on social media (55%), friends/family in person (21%), online news sites (19%), and emails from family/friends (18%).

## INFLUENCE STYLE

**Selectively Grounded**
75% agree that influencing others to support the causes they support is important to them.

78% report that they have influence over friends and family.

## 78%

REPORT HAVING INFLUENCE OVER THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

## SOCIAL SKEPTICISM?

More than half (53%) have been reluctant to support a cause online at one time or another.

**Common reasons** for their reluctance include:

- I feel like I have to share **too much of my personal information** (34%).
- Other (open-ended answers included themes of **lack of trust, fear of scams, and lack of transparency**) (31%).
- It's **more satisfying** or rewarding to support a charity or cause **in person** (21%)

## 53%

HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO SUPPORT A CAUSE ONLINE

## THE PATH TO FURTHER ENGAGEMENT

Moderates have natural credibility because of their offline engagement with the causes they care about. **Encourage** them to see the **upside of their influence** — and remind them of **how to exert this influence** using social media.

Take advantage of where they get their social cues — their friends/family — especially when compelling offline action. Build the visibility of social norms into your campaigns, so that Moderates can see how many other people are participating. **They want to conform.**

**Ask them to do more online!** Unlike Minimalists, they have the time to commit to more extensive organizing, sharing, etc.

When you're mentioned in the media, **encourage** Moderates **to share** this **on their social networks** — hopefully influencing like-minded Moderates who look to friends and third parties for their cause information.

# MAXIMIZER

Maximizers are a relatively rare breed, as only around 17% of respondents fall into this category. But if you have a Maximizer in your midst, you'll know it — and appreciate it. Maximizers go all out to support the causes they care about — online, offline and everything in between. On average, they support a whopping 12 causes (nearly double every other group), and it's split evenly among local and global issues.

Members of this group consume any and all media, and get cause information from all sources — people, news, organizations, etc. They crave knowledge, and consider themselves to be more knowledgeable than the average American on both local and global causes.

For Maximizers, having influence is not only important — they can deliver on it. Nearly 1 in 5 (21%) name influence as the most important thing they can give to a cause — showing that they are, at the very least, beginning to value the role of influence relative to other resources. And unlike Minimalists,

for whom supporting via social media is a matter of convenience and necessity, for Maximizers it is a conscious decision. Influence for them is intentional — not an accidental byproduct of resource constraints.

Somewhat surprisingly, Maximizers are among the most skeptical of online support for causes. Nearly a third say that supporting global causes online doesn't make much of a difference, and more than half (55%) have been reluctant at one point or another to support a cause online. But unlike for the other groups where this reluctance stems from distrust or being fearful of scams, for Maximiz-

ers it's more about not agreeing with the mission. They know the power they wield via social media, and only want to use it for causes they agree with completely.

At first glance, it may seem like a Maximizer's attention and resources are too fractured and s/he can't possibly make an impact when spread so thin. However, they're actually most likely to rate themselves as involved/very involved in supporting the causes they care about (62%), and have been involved in supporting their chosen causes the longest.

## DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENTIATORS

Maximizers are, on average, the **youngest group** — with average ages between 18 and 34. Yet, they're also the **highest educated** (50% have a 4-year degree or higher, including 19% with post-grad or professional degrees), and among the highest earners (with a sizeable 21% earning more than $100K).

Not surprisingly, this group also contains the **highest percentage of students,** at 9%.

**Hyper connected** via smartphone (64%) and tablet (41%).

Possess the most **global ties** — 22% were either born outside the U.S. or have parents/grandparents living outside the U.S.

**50%**
4 YEAR DEGREE
POST-GRAD OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE **19%**
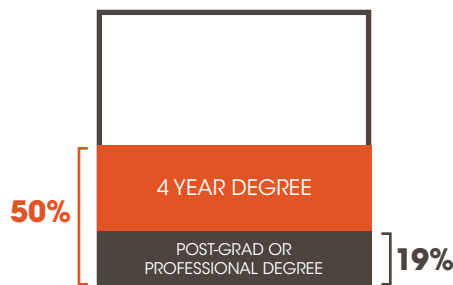
## HOW & WHAT CAUSES THEY SUPPORT

On average, they support **6 local** causes and **6 global** causes.

They average **3 types of offline support,** and **5 types of online support.** The most common are supporting via Facebook (93%), signing an online petition (72%), donating money in person (69%), donating money online (68%), voting in an online contest (66%), and volunteering (63%).

**6**
LOCAL

**6**
GLOBAL

## CAUSE PROCESSING CUES

**ANY AND ALL MEDIA**
First learn about the causes they support from friends/family on social media (72%), online news sites (47%), friends/family in person (46%), emails from organizations or companies (44%), and emails from family/friends (44%), TV news stories (40%), and online videos (40%).

**72%**
FROM FRIENDS/FAMILY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

## INFLUENCE STYLE

**INTENT ON IMPACTING**
21% believe that "my influence" is the most important resource they can give to a charity.

87% feel it's important to them personally to **influence others** to care about the charities and causes they care about.

**85% report having influence** over their friends and family.

# 85%

REPORT HAVING INFLUENCE OVER THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

## SOCIAL SKEPTICISM?

More than half (55%) have been **reluctant** at one point or another **to support a cause online.**

**Common reasons** for their reluctance include:

- I feel like I have to share too much of my personal information (35%).
- Other (open-ended answers included themes of not agreeing with the orgnization's mission, fear of scams, and lack of transparency) (25%).
- It's more satisfying or rewarding to support a charity or cause in person (23%).

# 55%

HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO SUPPORT A CAUSE ONLINE

## THE PATH TO FURTHER ENGAGEMENT

Feed their cravings for knowledge and engagement with a steady stream of **compelling content and stories** that they can share with their networks — and make sure you're present on multiple channels, just like they are.

Empower them to play their natural **role as influencers,** by naming them social media ambassadors for your cause or organization. Give them a title and responsibilities, and they'll deliver.

Make sure that your online presences are **as consistent as possible** — both visually and in messaging — since this group checks its sources thoroughly and will notice (and share!) if something's not right.

**Video is key** for this group, as well — both in learning about causes and in compelling offline actions. Make sure you not only create diverse calls-to-action, but also deliver them in diverse (but integrated) ways that the hyper engaged can consume quickly.

**Recognize them** for the impact they're having on your cause/organization, and make the recognition something that can be shared with their online networks.