

GiveWell 2020 marketing plan overview

Summary

Marketing is new for GiveWell. We hired our first marketing lead in November 2019.

This year, we're focused on four main areas:

- Paid advertising
- Donor research
- Site improvements
- Performance measurement

Overall, we expect this work to move \$1.5 million additional in 2020.

We don't plan to add many full-time staff to the marketing team this year. We plan to rely on vendors to provide additional capacity.

Paid advertising

Our goal is to build a paid marketing operation that directs significantly more money to GiveWell and our recommendations than we spend.

This year, we're moving towards this by (a) continuing to assess how much we can successfully invest in podcasts, the channel that has worked in the past and (b) get early indications of our potential ability to move money via new channels.

- **Advertising where we expect a high return.** We successfully advertised on podcasts in 2019. We spent \$180K and tracked ~\$571K from new donors in 2019. We plan to spend \$540k in giving season 2020 and aim to return \$890k in first-year donations.¹
- **Experimental advertising.** We plan to test (a) podcast advertising outside of giving season and (b) other advertising channels (e.g., Facebook, search, retargeting², YouTube) to see if they yield reasonable returns. We currently expect to spend \$400k and return \$200k in first-year donations. The results of these experiments will dictate which channels we spend more on in the future.

¹ Based on past experience, we roughly estimate that approximately 90% of dollars given in year 1 recur in future years. For example, if donors give \$100 in year 1, we roughly estimate that they will continue to give \$90 in each subsequent year.

² This article explains what retargeting is: <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/retargeting-campaigns-beginner-guide>.

Research

We are conducting research with existing donors and non-donors to better understand how they view GiveWell, our website, and how they make their charitable giving decisions. This research will help shape our messaging, lead to site improvements, and help with our long-term strategic positioning. We have linked the documents below. So far, this research has not surprised us but has helped us prioritize changes.

Completed Research

- Customer satisfaction survey [Redacted]
- Donor deeper research [Redacted]
- User experience (i.e., visiting the website for the first time) research

Future Research Projects

- Non-donors - June
- Positioning - July
- Additional UX - July

Site improvements

Using the above, we plan to make improvements to the GiveWell website to increase visitors' ability to understand what we do, why they should trust our research/process, and lead more potential donors to make donations to GiveWell. We aim to make improvements that increase the amount of money we receive by \$250,000 in 2020.

Performance measurement

We have a reasonable, though suboptimal, ability to measure the performance of our marketing work. We don't have high-quality estimates for what it costs us to acquire a new donor via paid marketing, nor do we have high-quality estimates of the amount a donor is likely to give over time. Knowing these values will provide a way to determine the right amount of money to spend on marketing to maximize donations.

A note on team building

Our marketing team currently consists of a VP of Marketing, a Head of Growth, a Marketing Associate and a Technical Project Manager. We plan to mostly use vendors and consultants to meet our needs until we're confident we should hire full-time staff.

We may hire some additional staff in 2020, but we are most likely to hire new staff once we determine which channels we are most likely to invest in in 2021 and beyond.