

HOW TO
INCREASE
GIVING
WHEN YOU
ARE NOT
MEETING



SOLUTION GUIDE

LESSONS

FROM UNAVOIDABLE DIPS

If giving at your church has recently declined - or in many cases - dropped off the chart entirely, you should take some solace in the fact that it was unavoidable. Could it be mitigated? Yes, of course. Many churches have not been as adversely affected as some. But all churches, non-profits, and donation-based organizations are hit by the recent crisis.

While this might be the worst dip in donations your church has experienced in recent memory, it's probably not the only time you've seen a decline in giving.

Much of the information offered in this guide is useful not only for the present pandemic but also for any decreases in giving. All giving follows certain patterns that are disrupted by predictable behavior. The only real thing that changes is magnitude.

The recipe for giving includes three main ingredients: Availability, motivation, and return on investment (ROI). Understanding these three ingredients will help any ministry not only mitigate disastrous scenarios but also increase consistency and magnitude of giving in every season.

UNDERSTANDING

THE GIVING INGREDIENTS

To learn from previous unavoidable circumstances that have caused dips in giving, you have to view them in light of the three giving ingredients:

1. Availability (and accessibility):

This speaks to the amount of money that is present in a particular economy or individual bank account. It also speaks to the accessibility of those funds. For example, a rich person may have a lot of money, but it might not be available to donate because it's tied up in assets or spoken for in lavish lifestyle. In parallel, a normal person might have a fair amount of money available to donate, but it's not practically available if it is limited by accessibility, which could be caused by the lack of availability of payment methods. Put more simply: a person can only give if they have money available and a way to donate that money that is accessible.

2. Motivation:

This describes the "why" behind the giving. If a donor is properly motivated, they may devise plans to make more money available, and they might fight through limitations on accessibility. If they are not sufficiently motivated, they must have a lot of availability of funds and accessibility to donate those funds. Motivations range through a whole variety of things, all depending on each individual or organization and what they value. In church ministry, motivations are usually relegated to things such as Christian duty, benevolence, altruism and idealism, genuine generosity, a need to be seen as significant, and other similar motivations.

To understand what motivates people, we must also understand what stifles motivation. Two main factors that we currently see - and are almost always prevalent in stifled motivation - are lack of availability and fear. When people can't meet in person, accessibility decreases and fear increases. When people don't have a lot of money, they usually (but not always) give less. And when they are afraid for the future, they clamp down on the availability and accessibility of their existing funds. Enter a worldwide pandemic, and motivation is stunned. However, you'll see there are ways to push past fear and limits to increase giving.

3. Return on investment (ROI):

Linked to motivation, return on investment is important to donors. In a church setting, many donors would not openly admit, or even conscientiously identify, their own desire to see a certain ROI from their donations. Nonetheless, it exists. For most charitable people, the broadest description of an acceptable ROI is that they are "making a difference." They want to feel significant, worthwhile, and good. They want to see that what they have labored for is yielding good fruit. For some, the satisfaction of knowing they have been obedient to God and good stewards of His blessings is more than enough ROI for them. Those are your best donors. For others, they need to see tangible evidence that their money made a specific difference. For everyone in between, there is a range of desired ROIs that almost all have to do with a desire to have a positive impact.

When people can't meet in person, the accessibility to donate is diminished, the motivation to give is lowered, and they can't see the ROI because they're focused more on what's going on at home or at work. Thus, the current global pandemic is a recipe for giving disaster.


THE RECIPE TO INCREASE GIVING

Don't worry, there is hope and something you can do to increase giving.

This is how the three giving ingredients work together - and what you need to know if you want to cook up an increase in giving during this challenging time.

When financial availability is high, less motivation is required to inspire donors to give. When available funds are low, there needs to be: a) an increase in the accessibility of what money is available (e.g. make it easier to give), and/or b) more motivation to give.

The only way to increase motivation is to increase the realization of the ROI. Whether it's the knowledge that God is watching and is concerned with giving or it's sharing a public testimony of how, specifically, church funds were used to change the community, the need is the same.



*People want to know they are
getting a good return for their
investment in your church!*

If you desire to increase giving when money is tight, you have to:

1. **Make giving super easy:** increase accessibility to available funds
2. **Help people see that their giving matters:** describe the ROI
3. **Rally people to make a difference:** generate motivation and momentum

AVOID THE DIPS

You might find yourself in a situation where your first goal is to stop the bleeding - and to ensure you never get cut so deep again. Do these three things to mitigate the damage so you can position your church to start having a more robust conversation - which will lead to a healthy culture - surrounding giving.

1. Get a good online giving solution:

Like, yesterday! You might already have one but never use it. If you don't have one, you need to get one up and running immediately. You'll want one that allows for recurring giving, pledge campaigns (for fundraising), donor management tools (so they can be empowered to manage their giving easily), and many accessibility features such as mobile, text-to-give, and kiosks. Basically, you need to be able to accept online donations in ANY way that people want to give. Not only that but also you need to have a solution that is very intuitive and easy to use. If people are frustrated with using it, they just won't.

2. Make your giving solution widely available:

Talk about it on Sundays. Put a link front and center on your website. Text the link. Email about it. Let people have absolutely zero doubt that: a) you have an online giving solution, b) it's easy to use, and c) you really, really, really prefer that they use it instead of checks or cash.

3. Tell your people why it's better:

The first step to increase motivation to take advantage of your new-found accessibility is to explain why it matters. If you're reading this, there is a good chance you haven't been convinced that receiving online donations is better than checks or cash. After all, there is a fee. Who likes those? But how will your people care if you don't? I bet you care now. And so should they. When your people understand that online giving provides the convenience they want and the consistency that the church desperately needs, they'll be more likely to switch to a platform of giving that will produce long-term income opportunities for your church.

You will never have bullet-proof giving if you're primarily dependent on attendance-based donations in the form of cash and check.

AVAIL

THE OPPORTUNITIES

Let's now assume that you already had an online giving solution up and running (or you're about to) and you still got hit hard. It's not unlikely, considering the fact that many people have lost their jobs and are gripped by fear, affecting both ingredients of availability and motivation.

What you have to do, now that you have a robust online giving platform and your people know about it and why it's important, is to amplify the ROI that will increase motivation.

The most important thing you can do right now to increase giving is to provide value to your church family and community in ways that nobody else can.

When you prove to your people that the Church is still relevant, when you give them hope and encouragement, when you provide points of connection in a disparate and desperate situation, when you positively impact their family - you will be reminding them of just why the Church matters so much. When they know that, it will help them find the motivation they need to keep investing in the Church.

Here are some ways you can provide value to your people and your community:

- Start a check-up network. Assign leaders to call or text individuals and families.
- Create a space where people can post prayers and requests online.
- Send thank-you notes making a personal thanks and appeal to donors.
- Develop an online assimilation pathway ensuring new followers have a way to connect.
- Generate digital content. Make devotionals and encouraging images and videos.
- Take your kids' church online with videos, worship, and crafts.
- Share valuable resources such as inspiration and information with groups and teams.
- Stay on track with discipleship with the next steps disciples can take from home.
- Gather online in groups. Develop community and keep growing with group discussions.
- Focus on leadership development. Use extra time to mature and mobilize leaders.
- Stream worship services. Get your messages on social media and your website.
- Meet with youth online and play games or complete challenges remotely.
- Donate funds and volunteer hours to local crisis organizations and first responders.
- Provide assistance for families, schools, and local businesses in need.
- Offer childcare to first responders, medical professionals, and essential personnel.
- And generally stay connected and supportive.

It might be extra hard for you to do all - or even some - of these things because you're limited by circumstances and resources. And you might think, "We can't invest any money into any of this because we don't have much." However, when you find a way to push through your own fear and limitations to "be" the Church, people will respond. What's more, God will open people's hearts and minds to join with you in making a difference.

And even after all that, there is still more you must do...

In addition to providing value to your people and the community, you also have to connect the dots. That is, you have to highlight and celebrate all that God is doing in the midst of this turmoil. You might want to:

- Share testimonies of what God is doing in people's lives at your church.
- Highlight how the vision of your church is shining in the community during this time.
- Make and talk about plans for a big return to in-person gatherings.
- Launch a new, exciting initiative that will get people involved in whatever way they can.
- Pray with people, for people, and about people in your neighborhoods.

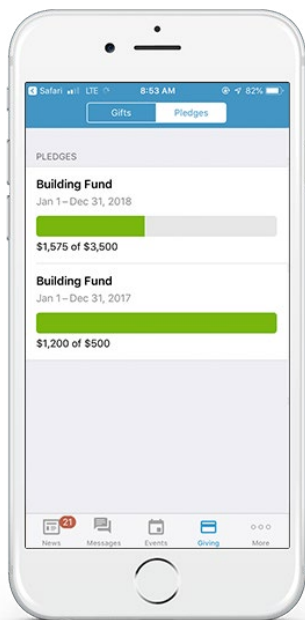
A SIMPLE SOLUTION

The solution to your financial woes is actually simple, even if it's a lot of hard work.

To create a culture of generosity, which will lead to an increase in giving, you must be willing to provide values-based motivation to **help people see that giving is an easy and very worthwhile investment in their lives, the community, and the Kingdom of God.**

An All-in-One Solution

Realm® offers a comprehensive suite of giving, communication, and church management tools that provide resources and options for everything we talked about in this guide. Realm helps with everything from casting vision and helping people stay connected and on track with communication tools to providing easy-to-use and full-featured online, mobile, and text giving solutions. With Realm, you can:



- Accept donations via a mobile device, text giving, web, and in-person.
- Generate reports to help people see and increase their giving.
- Give donors the power to manage their own giving preferences.
- Set up recurring giving, pledge campaigns, and special funds.
- Motivate and inspire your whole church with robust communication.
- Track giving and donor records to project and plan for finances.
- Keep people connected and on track with community engagement tools.
- And much more.

Realm is the perfect partner to help increase giving when you can't physically meet.



Realm provides solutions that will make your ministry and life easier. It is cutting-edge church management software that combines administration, accounting, and community into one system. It also connects your entire church and personalizes each person's involvement in your ministry.

We'd encourage you to explore all that Realm makes possible by taking a demo, walking through a self-guided tour, or speaking with an associate today!



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