Donor Engagement Retargeting Guide

Transforming New Visitors Into Long Term Donors

JOURNITY

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In This Guide

Get to know us

Journity is the latest cloud-based software solution, and the first product of its kind developed specifically with nonprofit organizations in mind. Journity revolutionizes the way you think about your website by bringing you a way to connect with your digital audience on an individualized level. In this day and age, individuals expect personalized experiences. By using our friendly dashboard, you can go beyond simple website analytics to deliver messages to your website visitors in real-time, messages that resonate with individuals, because those messages are based on their own personal interests and behaviors.

Five Q, the company behind Journity, was founded on the principle of multiplying impact. That means at the heart of what we do is an unwavering desire to grow the missions of nonprofit organizations both across the US and worldwide through SEO, user experience, creative design, brand identity, email marketing, website development, and website personalization.

Chad Williams
Five Q CEO

Find us online

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What if every person who visited your website signed up for a newsletter, attended an event, volunteered and donated? Rapid growth and impact would be the result - simply because everyone who visited your site supported your cause in one way or another.

Doctors Without Borders, a nonprofit organization, noted a 17% increase in conversion rates for a monthly giving campaign by targeting one-time donors across several ad platforms like social media, news sites, and online games. They developed a strong digital fundraising strategy by segmenting their online audience into three groups: non-donors, one-time donors and monthly donors.

People who visited their site and didn't donate were later served ads requesting a donation. One-time donors saw an ad promoting the organization's monthly giving program within 14 days of their first donation and people who were already monthly donors were excluded from all ads.
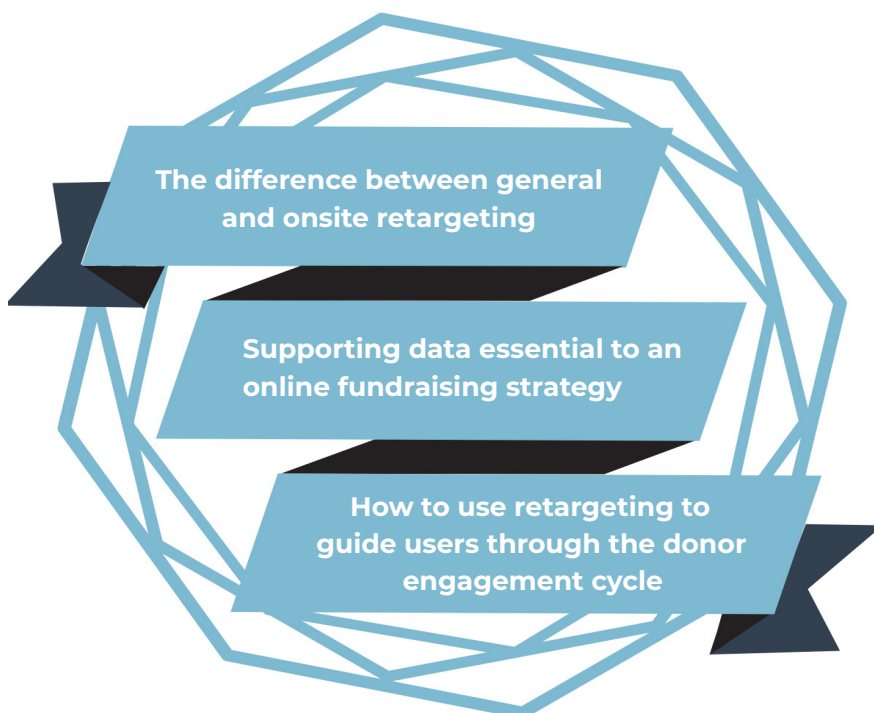
According to the M+R Benchmarks Study, only **"1.0% of nonprofit website visitors join an email list and 1.1% complete a donation."** This means roughly 99% of people who visit your website are not engaging with your organization!

So how do you convert website visitors into donors?

The answer is simple: **retargeting.** Retargeting is a way to invite people back to re-engage with your organization by serving them relevant ads over and over again. It's a simple solution for engaging your online audience and improving conversion rates.

While nonprofits are consistently increasing their digital ad spend, donor retention remains a challenge. Digital ads have a positive impact on donor acquisition and retargeting plays a major role.

99% of people who visit your website are not engaging with your organization!

In this guide you'll learn:

The difference between general and onsite retargeting

Supporting data essential to an online fundraising strategy

How to use retargeting to guide users through the donor engagement cycle

We've also included five retargeting tips, technology implications and a template to get you started.

What is Retargeting?

Retargeting allows you to direct ads to individual users based on actions they have taken on your website. For example, these individuals may have visited a specific page on your site, liked your Facebook Page, donated to a previous campaign, signed up for a newsletter, or interacted with your organization in the past.

In this guide you'll learn: Retargeting is a way to close sales (or donations) that didn't happen. It's a way to track people as they browse the web and serve them ads across various platforms that bring them back to your nonprofit's website. According to NPENGAGE, 50-70% of people that start filling out a form, abandon it. That means more than half of the people interested in donated, don't complete it.

Most people won't sign up or donate on the first visit. In fact, 98% of traffic doesn't convert.

Have you heard of the Rule of Seven? This rule claims that it takes an average of seven impressions of your brand to convert. Therefore, the more a person sees your brand, the more likely they are to convert.

Retargeting is an essential part of any digital fundraising strategy. It goes hand-in-hand with your SEO and content marketing efforts. These strategies drive people to your site, reengage visitors once they've left your site and encourage them to come back.

Retargeting takes time and several impressions to bring your audience back. Don't expect immediate results. It's a great way to remind people why they were interested in the first place. Additionally, smart targeting avoids cause fatigue and allows you to strategically pursue your online audience based on their behavior. Spend your digital dollars wisely and reach out effectively with retargeting.

Brief History on Retargeting

Retargeting has been around for a long time. In 1998, Google created a service called Boomerang that tracked visitors on your website and allowed you to run ads to bring those visitors back.

It wasn't until 2007 that retargeting started to gain traction in the e-commerce space. For example, it's been widely used for cart abandonment. Have you ever noticed the pair of shoes you put in your cart is now following you around the web and showing up in your inbox with an enticing discount? Retailers are pros when it comes to retargeting their customers based on the products they've viewed online.

In 2018, the use of retargeting among nonprofits has grown. Thanks to Facebook Custom Audiences, retargeting has taken off because you can easily target people on their social networks. Later in this guide, we discuss how retargeting your online audience will move visitors through the donor engagement cycle.

How does retargeting work?

Tracking codes, also known as "pixels", are placed on each individual visitor's web browser. The "cookie" (aka pixels) allows you to retarget and serve ads to people who have been on your site. Pixels, like the commonly used Facebook Pixel, also allow you to track people who visit your site and later retarget them on social platforms like Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

For example, a man visited the "Get Involved" page on your organization's website but didn't fill out a volunteer form. Later, while surfing the web or scrolling through his Facebook feed, you serve him an ad promoting your upcoming volunteer project.

These ads may appear as a display ad at the top of a web page (banner ad), within the body or as a sidebar. For example, here is an ad I was served while scrolling through my Facebook Newsfeed shortly after I visited Save the Children's website.

General Retargeting vs. On-Site Retargeting

General retargeting brings people back to your website through email and major ad channels like Facebook, Google AdWords, and Twitter; while on-site retargeting displays a personalized message to users on your site based on their unique behavior and interests.

Onsite retargeting services, like Journity, guide visitors through your website by inviting them deeper into your content through call-to-actions like "learn more", "listen live", "subscribe to our podcast", "get involved", "sign up", and "donate".

Creating highly relevant audience segments is the key to success for both types of retargeting. More on this next.

Putting it all together:
- SEO and keyword research bring people to your site
- General retargeting invites people back to your site
- Onsite retargeting guides visitors through your site, inviting them to engage with your content and accomplish a goal (like sign up for a newsletter or make a donation)

So retargeting is very handy, but what does this have to do with the Donor Engagement Cycle?

Retargeting for Donor Engagement

The role of retargeting is to turn new visitors into long-term partners. Retargeting enables you to create meaningful online interactions by knowing exactly who you're talking to, rather than asking complete strangers to fund your mission.

There are five stages in the Donor Engagement Cycle: inspire, connect, educate, ask and thank. Each of these stages is critical to effectively engage potential donors.

1. **Inspire** newcomers with your mission
2. **Connect** with new leads
3. **Educate** your digital audience on what you do and how they can get involved
4. **Ask** them to join your cause by volunteering, sharing or donating
5. **Thank** visitors for their support

These stages can seem pretty daunting if you don't know where to start, but this is where the power of retargeting makes all the difference.
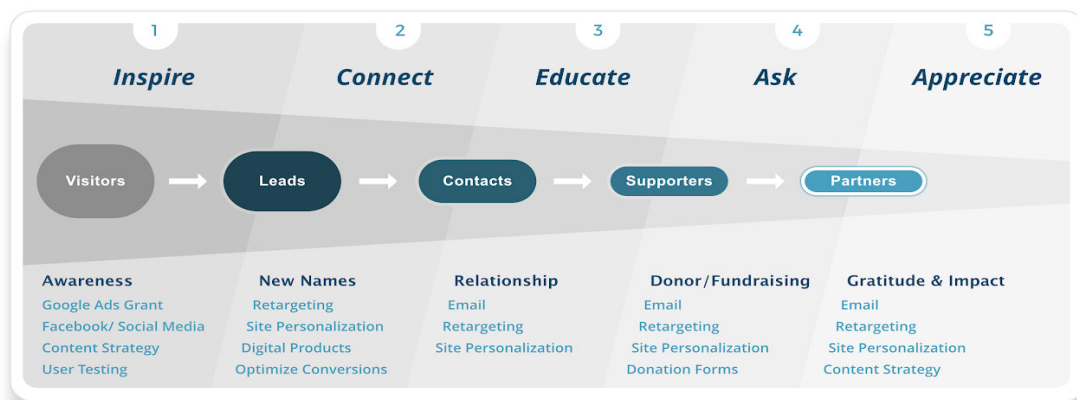
We break it down into five stages including audience characteristics, action steps, and key metrics.

Stage 1: Inspire

The "Inspire" stage addresses people who are unfamiliar with your mission and organization. First impressions are key! On average, almost 50% of people expect websites to load in two seconds or less. Recent research shows that people decide if they trust your brand in five milliseconds! That right, five milliseconds.

Therefore, present your most engaging content first, otherwise new visitors will bounce without understanding your mission. This can be achieved through compelling design and clear messaging that defines your values and impact. To effectively inspire these visitors, visual design is crucial. **According to the M+R Benchmarks Study, 10% of ad budgets are spent on awareness ads.**

Describe your success in terms of quality change. Impact stories are a great illustration. Create a brand narrative that people can relate to. Brand narratives consist of an impact story, how it happens, numerical significance and how donors help make it happen. Read more about brand narratives on our blog.

Goal: Quality first impressions through design and copy

Key Characteristics of Users in this Stage:
- Generally, a first-time visitor
- Looking for a cause they can connect with
- Short attention span
- Minimal effort and commitment

Action Items:
- Visual design is crucial to capture their attention
- Lead with compelling stories through a brand narrative
- Create engaging content through videos and social sites
- Offer a special welcome message exclusively for first-time visitors - using Journity!
- Interact in virtual communities where your target audience hangs out
- Retarget first-time website visitors through Facebook, Google AdWords, and Twitter
- Use email to retarget visitors who purchased a product (or cart abandon) on your site
- Connect via mobile through Facebook Messenger
- Invite visitors to conduct user testing for your site or a new online program

Key Metrics:
- Video views
- Social media likes
- Shares and follows
- Visits to your site

The action items listed above are essential first steps to long-term donor relationships. At this stage, people are looking for an emotional connection. Hold off on facts and figures for now. Focus on creating an affinity for your cause as the following stages invite people to be part of the impact.

Stage 2: Connect

In this stage, the audience has responded well to your awareness campaign and it's time to see if their values are aligned with your mission. Deepen the relationship by establishing a connection. This stage transforms visitors into leads.

Goal: Deepen the relationship and generate leads

Key Characteristics of Visitors in this Stage:
- Showed interest in your cause
- Willing to engage in your content and explore your website

- Responds well to lead magnets like free downloads, special reports, challenges, petitions, and surveys
- Minimal commitment

Action Items:
- Build out Custom Audiences on Facebook to target new website visitors
- Use retargeting through search ads like Google's RSLA
- Give visitors a reason to come back by offering a product discount, guide or bible study
- Invite users to "sign up" for a newsletter or "download" a recent report
- Use Journity to personalize your website for visitors based on their interests
- Ask visitors to sign up for a petition

Key Metrics:
- Emails collected
- Petition signatures
- Downloads
- Event registrations or attendees
- Conversions (or click-throughs) on Journity waypoints

The Connect stage typically includes getting permission to contact your audience directly by capturing a way to contact them. These forms of communication may take place through email, text, call or direct mail.

Stage 3: Educate

In this stage, show people where they fit into the mission. Your goal is to turn new leads into qualified contacts. Use content to reinforce the impact donors have through their partnership with your organization. Your leads should be able to see themselves as part of the stories you tell.

On average, **it takes seven brand interactions before users make a decision.** This type of campaign needs to emphasize your values and communicate how people can be part of the impact. Educational content is a great way to help your audience become familiar with your work.

To build an 'educate' strategy, start by determining the preferred method of content consumption. Once people are inspired, they want to act, so do not miss this opportunity. Personalization pays off when it comes to educating and engaging your audience once they make it back to your nonprofit's website.

Goal: Prospective donors see themselves as part of the solution, ultimately transforming leads into qualified contacts (educated visitors and prospective donors)

Key Characteristics of Visitors in this Stage:
- Have an affinity for your cause
- Have interacted with your ads
- Have visited your site multiple times
- Curious about the next steps to get involved

These campaigns should only go to highly segmented lists and can be heavier on the information side as they are being directed to people who are already on board with your mission.

Action Items:
- Use retargeting ads to promote content focused on need and impact

- Offer "micro" engagement opportunities
    - Sign up for volunteer project
    - Attend an event
    - Share a social media post
    - Invite to join a virtual or live event
- Personalize opportunities to engage
    - Use geolocation to invite to local events
    - Use tagged segments - great for online activity
        - "Share to help us spread the word"
        - "Join our Facebook study group"
    - Use content affinity (offered by Journity)
        - Track content people are interested in
        - Segment groups to show them more info related to their interests
- Encourage visitors to help you edit an upcoming report or collect data
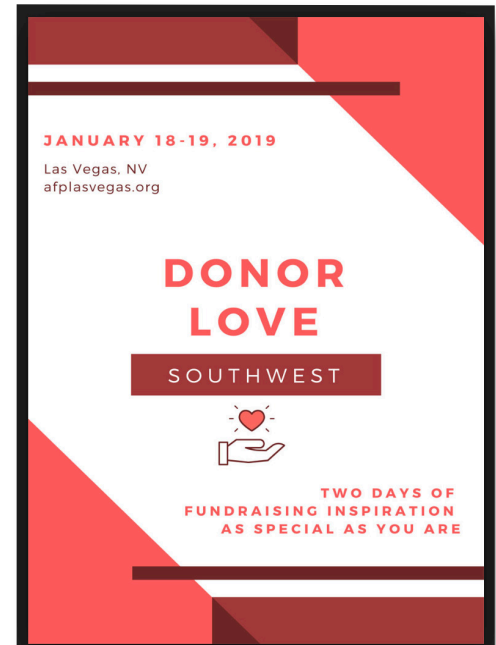
Key Metrics:
These campaigns are typically email or retargeting specific campaigns.
- Email open rate
- Ad click-throughs
- Engagement scores
- Content affinity

Personalized retargeting, both offsite and onsite, inspire your audience to take action!

This example from Revive Our Hearts educates and engages their audience. It clearly explains the "what" and "why" then offers readers the option to participate. Why should I care? What does it mean to be a true woman of God?
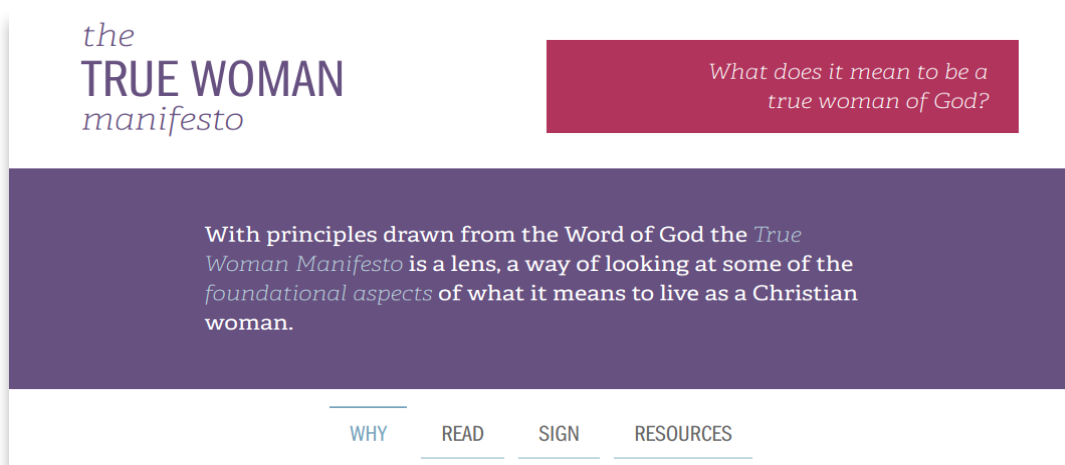
It provides an easy way for the audience to get involved. It's a minimal commitment, yet gets users to engage and align with the mission of Revive Our Hearts. ROH offers visitors the next step by sharing resources, ultimately moving participants to the next step of the donor engagement cycle.

Note: This is a critical step because people often want to engage deeper, but don't know how until you show them the next steps.

Stage 4: Ask

At this stage, people have been inspired by your mission, are educated on the need, and aware of how to get involved. Now it's time to up the level of engagement by asking your audience to support your organization. Picking the right moment to "ask" is essential. Check out Blackbaud's recent white paper on "Create Your Advocacy Fundraising Moment" for a detailed explanation.

For the purposes of this guide, we'll show you how website personalization and retargeting can up your game during the "ask" stage. Timing is key. Personalization is crucial. Delivery is essential.

After users have engaged with your content and are educated on your mission, ask them to take the next step in supporting your cause, whether it be volunteering for your next project or financially supporting an upcoming campaign. This could be a seasonal ask, such as #GivingTuesday or year-end fundraising. The "ask" may be need-based, such as providing Thanksgiving meals. It may also be related to a broader social movement like elections. Nonetheless, it should be timely in the donor engagment cycle and related directly to your mission.

According to the Millennial Impact Report, nearly a quarter of millennials donated to organizations after the election because it was a polarizing moment in our nation's history. Almost half of them (41%) gave for the first time. Respond to broader social movements for a timely opportunity to raise donations.

Personalization is crucial to conversion. Personalize your "ask" based on what you know about the audience group. What content are they most interested in? Do they spend more time on web pages about volunteer opportunities, a new initiative or donation campaigns? Are they more likely to financially support your organization or attend an event?

Create a strategy driven by the data you have collected throughout the engagement cycle. Retarget people who have visited high priority pages like "Get Involved" and "Donate". You're more likely to convert educated users to donors when your ask is personalized.

Thoughtful delivery and follow-through is essential to closing the deal. The process of signing up to volunteer, registering for an event or donating should be a simple, quick and user-friendly. Don't overcomplicate it. Use Journity to accept donations and sign ups directly and hassle free. The fewer clicks, the better.

Goal: Turn qualified contacts into supporters

Key Characteristics of Users in this Stage:
  • Highly engaged users
      • Journity's engagement scores are a good indicator
      • They've been inspired in stage 1, connected in stage 2, and educated in stage 3.

- Have completed 1 or more micro-engagement opportunities
- Visit your website often

Action Items:
- Provide the logical next steps to get involved
  - Timely (seasonal or organizational needs)
  - Supported by data collected over time
  - Directly related to your mission
- Typically "ask" campaigns are communicated through email, retargeting ads, donation forms on landing pages and onsite messaging (like Journity)

Key Metrics:
- Volunteer sign-ups
- Donations completed
- Donor abandonment retargeting ad conversions peer to peer fundraising campaigns

According to the M+R Benchmarks Study, the majority of ad dollars are spent retargeting users who abandon donation pages, promoting emergency-response efforts through display ads and social media posts directed at the organization's Facebook followers.

Stage 5: Appreciate

This is your prime opportunity to turn supporters into long-term partners. In this stage, people have volunteered, donated or raised money for your organization. It is critical to let them know how much they are appreciated and reinforce that their support has real impact.

Donor retention rates are hovering at a mere 45.5%, according to 2018 Fundraising Effectiveness Study. First-time donors require special engagement plans to keep them actively involved with your organization. Use retargeting strategies to thank supporters and encourage their continued support of your mission.

53% of donors who leave an organization do so because of poor communication, such as not being thanked for their donation.
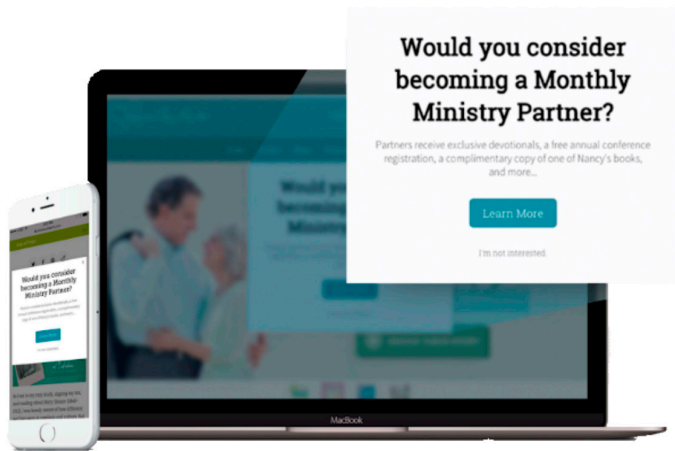
Goal: Transform supporters into engaged life-long partners

Key Characteristics of Users in this Stage:
- Passionate about your cause
- Volunteered with your organization

- Donated money to one or more of your fundraising campaigns
- Engaged and interested in long-term support
- Shares and supports your organization via social media

Action Items:
- Thank supporters with an onsite personalized message or email
- Be specific in your personalized thank you
- Thank supporters across multiple channels
- Use onsite messaging, social ads, email, and direct mail to show the impact of their gift
- Re-engage supporters through impact and need-based content
- Set up retargeting ads to invite supports to get involved at a deeper level, such as join a monthly giving program or volunteer for your next project

Key Metrics:
- Conversions from one-time donors to monthly donors
- Volunteers regularly scheduling their time
- Repeat peer to peer fundraising campaigns
- Family, friends and business referrals

Your online audience plays a pivotal role in your overall impact. Without thoughtful and strategic retargeting, you risk losing valuable individuals who care about your cause. It is critical that this communication happens in a personal and meaningful way. Be sure to show appreciation in both private and public communications.

So, consider the five stages of donor engagement, and use our tips on building effective retargeting strategies - **your donor retention rates will thank you!** Most of all, remember that personalization goes a long way when cultivating long-term support. Journity is a great platform, made specifically for nonprofits, to get started with onsite personalization and retargeting!

5 Tips for Retargeting

1. Create highly relevant audience segments

Segment your audience into groups based on how they explore your site, what pages they visit, social engagement and what stage they're at in the donor engagement cycle. The key to good retargeting is connecting the right segments to the right message at the right time.

2. Utilize your conversion/donor funnel

Your conversion funnel will drive how you set up retargeting campaigns. Think through what goals you have for each segment and how you want to guide them through your engagement cycle. This will help you determine content and what actions you want visitors to take.

4. Optimize landing pages

Minimize the number of steps a visitor has to take to sign up, download, volunteer and donate. Make the process as user-friendly as possible. This will help you increase conversion rates and prevent donors from bouncing because of unnecessary barriers.

3. Avoid banner fatigue

Strive to continually provide fresh and relevant visual design. This will capture the attention of your audience and help your visitors avoid banner fatigue. Use captivating design, imagery, color and copy. Then, test - test - test. Pick the top performers and push more of your budget to ads that drive conversions.

5. Test Continually

Don't set up your retargeting campaigns and walk away. It takes time to build successful retargeting campaigns. Run A/B tests to see which call-to-actions, visuals, colors and copy perform best.

Conclusion

The truth is, most visitors won't convert on their first visit. It's up to you to bring them back to your site, engage with your content and clearly lay out the next step. While it may feel overwhelming, there are several tools and resources to get you started. Retargeting enhances the donor experience, helps you allocate advertising dollars where they count and increases overall digital fundraising.

Save the Children, an organization providing children with a healthy start, education, and protection from harm, achieved 4 times more donations and lowered cost per donor by a whopping 76% using retargeting. By focusing on people who had previously donated, the organization surpassed their goal by serving ads to the right audience at the right time.

There are several different ways to retarget your audience segments - through URLs, social followers, past/current donor groups and onsite personalization with Journity. We provide the tools and strategy to help your team effectively reach your audience and build lasting relationships.

We'd love to help you make the most of retargeting with Journity! Schedule a demo with our fundraising pros or get started today with a free version of Journity!

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