

Norman Lear Center Media Impact Project

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Charitable Giving

in the media

Detailed Methodology

By Erica L. Rosenthal, Ph.D.; Adam Amel Rogers, M.C.M.; Emily B. Peterson, Ph.D.

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This report provides detailed methodology from the USC Annenberg Norman Lear Center's research on charitable giving in mass media. It is a supplement to the official report, which provides a streamlined look at the key findings, and the detailed findings report.

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Charitable Giving in the Media: Detailed Methodology



METHODOLOGY

CHARITABLE GIVING SURVEY

RECRUITMENT & DATA COLLECTION

Survey data were collected in two waves. Wave 1 was completed between April 2 and April 24, 2020. Wave 2 data were collected using a new set of participants approximately three months later, between July 9 and August 7, 2020. U.S. adult participants (aged 18 or older) were recruited by Cint, a third-party aggregator of market research panels, and the survey was administered online using the Qualtrics survey platform. Quotas were imposed for age, sex, race, and ethnicity according to United States Census estimates to approximate national-representativeness. The study was reviewed by the University of Southern California's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and deemed exempt.

To ensure high-quality responses, we included two attention check items — in which participants were directed to select a particular response — placed randomly in the survey. If participants did not correctly answer the attention check item, they were immediately redirected out of the survey. We then screened participants who completed the survey for additional low-quality indicators, including completing the survey too quickly (under 10 minutes), engaging in excessive straightlining (selecting the same response all the way down on "matrix table" items), or skipping large numbers of survey questions. In total, 460 participants in Wave 1 and 590 participants in Wave 2 were excluded from the study due to low-quality responses.

After removing low-quality responses, the final sample for Wave 1 was N = 2,584 and N = 2,505 for Wave 2. There were a few sociodemographic characteristics that differed significantly between the two waves, including the racial and ethnic breakdown of participants. Participants in Wave 1 were more likely to be white, while participants in Wave 2 were more likely to be Black/African American. Additionally, there were significantly more females in the Non-Giver group in Wave 2 than in Wave 1. These differences between Wave 1 and Wave 2 participants were controlled for in analysis that compared the two waves.

GIVING GROUP SEGMENTATION PROCEDURE

Participants across both waves were segmented into three giving groups based on their responses to two survey questions. In the first question, participants were asked how much money they had given in 2019. If they had not given any money, they were designated as a "Non-Giver." Those who had given at least \$1 in 2019 were further divided into two groups. We asked participants to indicate which of a paired set of statements came closest to how they

typically donate to charitable organizations. Participants had to *somewhat agree* or *strongly agree* with one side of the opposed statements. Responsive Givers consisted of participants who somewhat or strongly agreed that they were more likely to give in response to a sudden need or when asked by others. Planned Givers somewhat or strongly agreed that they were more likely to plan their giving ahead of time.



In both waves of data collection, there were slightly more Responsive Givers (38-39%) than Planned Givers (35%). There were significantly fewer Non-Givers (22-23%). A small percentage of respondents (4%) could not be classified into the typology because they said they "do not know" how much money they had given to charitable organizations in 2019.

	Total Participants	Planned Givers	Responsive Givers	Non-Givers	Excluded
Wave 1	2,584	899 (35%)	998 (39%)	572 (22%)	115 (4%)
Wave 2	2,505	886 (35%)	942 (38%)	565 (23%)	112 (4%)
Total	5,089	1,785	1,940	1,137	227

The three groups differed significantly in their sociodemographic profiles:



Planned Givers: Planned Givers said that they like to know ahead of time where their charitable dollars are going. A defining characteristic of this group was their relatively high income and level of formal education. They were also more likely than other groups to be male and religious, and skewed toward a conservative ideology.



Responsive Givers: Like Planned Givers, Responsive Givers donated money to a charitable organization in 2019. However, this group said that they were more likely to give in response to a need or an ask, rather than plan their giving. Responsive Givers were more likely to be female, younger, and slightly more politically liberal than the other groups.



Non-Givers: Non-Givers were distinguished by low income and perceived financial instability. They were less likely than Responsive and Planned Givers to have graduated from college and have children under the age of 18, and more likely to be politically independent.

MEASURES AND ANALYSIS

We asked participants across both survey waves about their behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs about charitable giving; their entertainment, news, and cultural preferences; and their attitudes and charitable responses in the context of COVID-19. In Wave 2, we included additional items to better capture attitudes and giving responses to the national reckoning over racial discrimination. We also expanded the entertainment and cultural profile categories to include items about sports, video games, podcasts, and music.

Data were downloaded from Qualtrics into SPSS v27 for analyses. After segmenting participants into the three giving groups, we compared the groups using descriptive statistics, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and chi-square analyses. Unless otherwise noted, analyses that test for differences between the groups combine Wave 1 and Wave 2 data for items included in both waves (N = 5,089).

For analyses comparing Wave 1 and Wave 2 participants, we controlled for demographic variables that were significantly different between the two waves using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). Findings are reported only when the differences between the two waves were significant (p<.05) after controlling for the demographic differences between the two waves.

Finally, we looked at overall associations between variables in the dataset using regression

 Hayes, A. F. (2017). Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach. Guilford Publications. analyses. We also used the SPSS PROCESS macro v3.5 developed by Andrew Hayes¹ to test whether associations were more pronounced for particular groups (moderation analyses).

CHARITABLE GIVING ON TELEVISION

DATA COLLECTION

We mined text data from TVEyes, a global TV search engine that includes closed captioning transcripts of programming and commercials on all national broadcast networks, every local TV market, and all basic cable TV programming — 916 stations in total.

In the formative phase, we used this database to monitor the frequencies of mentions of over 50 charitable giving keywords that derived from previous Media Lab research on charitable giving in online news. Based on the results of these tests, we then narrowed the list to 12 keywords that would provide a comprehensive picture of charitable giving on U.S. television. The final keywords were charity, **charities**, **charitable**, **donate**, **donation**, **donor**, **fundraiser**, **fundraising**, **"GivingTuesday**," **"Giving Pledge**," **philanthropist**, **and philanthropy**. Searches used word-stemming, which allowed for pluralization of the keywords.

Using these keywords, we utilized the TVEyes Saved Search API to generate the following data for each individual charitable giving mention:

- 1. Unique ID
- 2. Program name
- 3. City
- 4. State
- 5. Keyword
- 6. TV station
- 7. Viewership
- 8. Full text of mention (25-30 words surrounding the charitable giving mention)
- 9. Video link to full mention (active for 30 days after mention)

Data were collected using the same set of keywords in three separate 40-day periods: Giving Season (November 24, 2019 - January 2, 2020), a normative period (February 1, 2020 - March 11, 2020), and a COVID-19 period (April 27, 2020 - June 5, 2020). The normative period was selected for February in an attempt to capture a regular time period that was far enough away from the end of the year giving period and the COVID-19 period was added later on to see how the pandemic was impacting media coverage of charitable giving.

DATA CLEANING

To focus on English-language TV mentions with at least some viewers, all radio mentions, Spanish-language mentions, and television mentions with no viewership information or under 5,000 impressions were removed from the dataset. For the Giving Season and the normative period, all duplicate mentions were removed and the national viewership for each mention was retained. For example, a charitable giving reference on a show like Young Sheldon would appear in the dataset 210 times — once for each media market. Through this cleaning process, all but one mention would be removed, and this would count as one mention with the national viewership numbers that are provided by TVEyes. In the COVID-19 period, this process was conducted on all mentions with over 5 million impressions in order to identify the most viewed mentions. Mentions with under 5 million national impressions still contain accurate local viewership, but the mentions were not collapsed to reveal the national viewership. The COVID period is only compared with the other periods in impressions — the only comparisons requiring the number of individual mentions are made using COVID mentions with over 5 million impressions.

CONTENT CODING

For the Giving Season and normative periods, spreadsheets were submitted in batches of about 5,000 mentions to Mechanical Turk — a crowdsourcing marketplace for individual tasks — for human coders to identify the genre and topic for each reference. In the COVID period, analysis started with Lear Center staff review.

The genre options were:

- 1. Commercial
- 2. News
- 3. Scripted Entertainment
- 4. Unscripted Entertainment
- 5. Sports

The topic options were:

- 1. Animals
- 2. Arts
- 3. Children
- 4. Community
- 5. Disaster
- 6. Education
- 7. Environment

- 8. Health
- 9. Human Rights
- 10. Politics
- 11. Poverty
- 12. Religion
- 13. Trust & Scams

Impressions refer to the number of views each charitable giving mention received, based on viewership data from TVEyes, a global TV search engine that monitors TV stations in all U.S. media markets. These data were then reviewed by Lear Center staff as a starting point to institute automated standards for identifying genre and topic for each reference.

The genre of each mention was individually coded by Lear Center staff as either commercial, news programming, scripted entertainment, sports programming, or unscripted entertainment.

Mechanical Turk results for topic identification were used as training data to inform sub-keywords to automate topic identification. This process was repeatedly refined as new sub-keywords were identified — especially based on new COVID and Black Lives Matter sub-keywords. Up to 30 sub-keywords were built into automation formulas to identify each topic. After the formulas identified topics, Lear Center staff randomly selected 5,000 mentions and reviewed the identified topics to ensure 100% accuracy.

We used Excel pivot tables to generate frequencies and analyze all data by period, keyword, genre, topic, and impressions.

CHARITABLE GIVING IN SCRIPTED ENTERTAINMENT

DATA COLLECTION AND CLEANING

To conduct a historical analysis of charitable giving depictions, we used the Norman Lear Center Script Database, which includes over 140,000 transcripts of scripted television episodes and films that were scraped from public repositories. Database content is identified by the calendar year in which it aired. In order to get a clear sense of how charitable giving has been depicted we set out to capture at least 10 years of data, including the most recent depictions from 2018 and 2019. The time frame for analysis was January 2008 through August 2019, which included over 87,000 transcripts.

We searched the database using the same 12 keywords from the television analysis (charity, charities, charitable, donate, donation, donor, fundraiser, fundraising, "GivingTuesday," "Giving Pledge," philanthropist, and philanthropy). Search results were exported as both PDFs and Excel spreadsheets with the content year, content type, episode number, and about 25 words around each charitable mention. Lear Center staff sifted through search results to remove all non-relevant mentions, like where the word "Charity" was mentioned as a character's name.

After cleaning the data, we were left with 25,627 unique mentions of charitable giving keywords in 15,392 film and TV episode transcripts.

IN-DEPTH CONTENT ANALYSIS SAMPLE

After identifying the overall sample of charitable giving mentions in scripted entertainment from 2008-2019, we narrowed this down to a smaller number of television episodes and films for in-depth analysis.

To qualify for inclusion in the in-depth sample, television episodes were required to have at least five charitable giving mentions and films needed to have at least three (in order to have enough films to analyze). These thresholds allowed for major charitable giving content to be analyzed, instead of fleeting mentions of giving keywords. Further, to ensure we analyzed content that a significant number of people had seen, television shows were required to average at least 1 million viewers per episode – according to data on each show's wikipedia page, which is provided by Nielsen — and films had to be released either in U.S. movie theaters or on Netflix. To prevent individual TV series from having an outsize influence on the sample, only three episodes with the most charitable giving mentions were included from 90210 and Damages (out of six episodes that qualified for the sample from both series). To focus on monetary charitable giving, we excluded content with only political donation or fundraiser storylines as well as those about organ (or blood, tissue, or reproductive) donation. After applying these criteria, the sample for the in-depth analysis included 170 pieces of content, including 139 episodes from 110 TV shows and 31 films.²

CODING PROCEDURE

We developed a detailed codebook to examine the context of charitable giving mentions.³ The codebook included episode related variables (show title, episode number, content year, genre), as well as variables related to charitable causes, charitable organizations, the characteristics of donors and beneficiaries, and charitable events and fundraisers. We also examined episode-level variables like sentiment toward giving, depicted motivation for giving.

Most items were analyzed at the episode level (N = 170). Certain items, like donor demographics, were analyzed only for those episodes that included an act of giving (N = 126). Fundraiser-related variables were analyzed only for those episodes with an event or fundraiser (N = 86). Nothing was analyzed at the individual character level. Character demographics were analyzed as episodes featuring at least one character with the specified demographic.

- 2. See Appendix A for the list of films and TV episodes.
- 3. See Appendix B for the codebook.

25. See Appendix B for the results of the full reliability analysis.

26. Rosenthal, E.L., Rogers,
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CODER TRAINING AND RELIABILITY TESTING

Ten graduate and undergraduate students from the University of Southern California and two members of the research team coded the in-depth sample between August and September 2020. The coding period followed a onemonth training period that included several rounds of testing and refining the codebook.

In the middle of coder training, a preliminary sample of 17 episodes (10% of episodes) was double-coded to measure inter-rater reliability. Codebook items that achieved high reliability continued on unchanged in the training process. The training process was further refined to better train coders on codebook items that had borderline or poor reliability. A second round of reliability analysis was calculated on an additional 10% of episodes after coding was complete. For variables that exhibited ... the variable is not included in the report. For variables that exhibited borderline (none to slight agreement) or inadequate reliability (fair to moderate agreement), the variable is not included in the report.²⁵

Research highlights and detailed findings can be found in separate reports.^{26 27}

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LIST OF TV EPISODES AND FILMS FOR IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

FILM EPISODES

TITLE	YEAR
#REALITYHIGH	2017
A Most Wanted Man	2014
Annie	2014
Arthur	2011
Bad Santa 2	2016
Barbershop: The Next Cut	2016
Blind Side, The	2009
Bohemian Rhapsody	2018
Bruno	2009
Bruno & Boots: Go Jump in the Pool	2016
Christmas Inheritance	2017
Dear White People	2014
Fifty Shades Darker	2017
Fifty Shades of Black	2016
Foxcatcher	2014
Hannah Montana: The Movie	2009
Heaven Is for Real	2014
House Bunny, The	2008
Invictus	2009
Jingle All the Way 2	2014
Mission: Impossible - Fallout	2018
Monte Carlo	2011

TITLE	YEAR
Saw VI	2009
Sex Таре	2014
Spotlight	2015
Step Up 2 The Streets	2008
Terminator Salvation	2009
The Accountant	2016
The Help	2011
Toy Story 3	2010
Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps	2010

TV EPISODES

TITLE	YEAR	SEASON	EPISODE
30 Rock	2008	3	15
90210	2011	4	16
90210	2011	4	19
90210	2012	5	13
A.N.T. Farm	2013	3	11
A.N.T. Farm	2011	1	2
A.N.T. Farm	2012	2	8
American Dad	2013	10	4
American Dad	2016	11	8
American Housewife	2017	2	8
Austin and Ally	2012	2	4
Austin and Ally	2013	3	8
Billions	2018	3	4
Black Lightning	2019	2	5
Black-ish	2016	3	10
Black-ish	2017	4	8
Blindspot	2016	2	17
Blue Bloods	2012	3	13
Blue Bloods	2018	9	13
Bob's Burgers	2019	9	21
Bojack Horseman	2015	2	8
Bosch	2015	2	9
Breaking Bad	2009	2	13
Brooklyn Nine-Nine	2017	5	6
Brothers & Sisters	2008	3	8
Bucket & Skinner's Epic Adventures	2011	1	10
Bull	2016	1	17
Bunk'd	2018	4	6

TITLE	YEAR	SEASON	EPISODE
Burn Notice	2010	4	4
Carmen Sandiego	2019	1	8
Catastrophe	2018	4	1
Chicago Med	2018	4	5
Chicago Med	2018	4	6
Cold Case	2008	6	13
Coop and Cami Ask the World	2018	1	8
CSI: NY	2008	5	15
Damages	2009	3	11
Damages	2011	5	8
Damages	2009	3	12
Difficult People	2016	2	2
Dog with a Blog	2014	3	21
Elementary	2015	4	14
Franklin and Bash	2011	1	3
God Friended Me	2018	1	4
Gossip Girl	2010	4	21
Gotham	2014	1	20
Greek	2009	3	6
Greek	2010	4	8
Grown-ish	2019	2	16
Happy Endings	2012	2	9
Hawaii Five-O	2011	2	6
House of Cards	2016	4	11
House, M.D.	2010	7	14
House, M.D.	2010	7	10
How I Met Your Mother	2010	6	12
iCarly	2009	2	21
Insecure	2016	1	7
Insecure	2016	1	6
It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia	2015	11	2

TITLE	YEAR	SEASON	EPISODE
Jane the Virgin	2016	3	13
Kim's Convenience	2017	2	9
Law & Order	2008	19	14
Law & Order Special Victims Unit	2017	19	16
Law & Order: Los Angeles	2010	1	19
Lethal Weapon	2016	1	11
Letterkenny	2017	2	2
Little Mosque on the Prairie	2011	5	7
Lopez	2016	1	6
Lucifer	2017	2	15
Madam Secretary	2016	3	6
Major Crimes	2014	3	14
Man with a Plan	2016	1	4
Medium	2008	4	8
Melrose Place	2009	1	17
My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic	2014	5	24
My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic	2013	4	14
My Name is Earl	2008	4	13
NCIS	2013	11	17
NCIS	2013	11	15
NCIS New Orleans	2015	2	17
New Amsterdam	2018	1	6
New Girl	2011	1	17
Numb3rs	2008	4	5
Numb3rs	2008	4	18
Parenthood	2014	5	3
Parenthood	2014	5	4
Parks and Recreation	2013	5	15
Parks and Recreation	2010	2	22
Person of Interest	2011	1	10
Person of Interest	2012	2	10

TITLE	YEAR	SEASON	EPISODE
Phineas and Ferb	2008	2	18
Phineas and Ferb	2011	4	24
Psych	2011	6	13
Pushing Daisies	2008	2	7
Rizzoli and Isles	2013	4	4
Rosewood	2016	2	7
Rosewood	2015	1	7
Royal Pains	2015	7	4
Rules of Engagement	2010	4	6
Santa Clarita Diet	2017	1	6
Schitt's Creek	2015	1	12
Sean Saves The World	2013	1	10
South Park	2015	19	5
South Park	2016	20	5
Speechless	2017	2	3
Speechless	2017	2	12
Steven Universe	2016	4	18
Succession	2018	1	4
Suits	2018	8	6
Superstore	2015	1	3
Switched at Birth	2011	1	4
Teen Wolf	2015	5	17
The Amazing World of Gumball	2012	3	9
The Amazing World of Gumball	2012	3	28
The Amazing World of Gumball	2013	4	6
The Big C	2012	3	7
The Blacklist	2016	4	13
The Bold Type	2017	1	3
The Boondocks	2008	4	10
The Cleveland Show	2010	2	9
The Goldbergs	2018	6	23

TITLE	YEAR	SEASON	EPISODE
The Leftovers	2015	2	6
The Mentalist	2010	3	19
The Mindy Project	2014	3	1
The New Adventures of Old Christine	2010	5	15
The New Normal	2012	1	17
The Office (US)	2013	9	2
The Philanthropist	2009	1	6
The Resident	2019	2	22
The Ricky Gervais Show	2012	3	2
The Royals	2015	1	4
The Royals	2017	3	7
The Tudors	2010	4	9
Those Who Can't	2018	3	4
Two and a Half Men	2009	7	14
Veep	2017	6	3
White Collar	2011	3	6
White Collar	2014	6	4
Young Sheldon	2018	2	21

APPENDIX B: CONTENT ANALYSIS CODEBOOK AND RELIABILITY

Interrater reliability (Cohen's Kappa) and percent agreement values are shown after each item in the format "[Cohen's Kappa / Percent Agreement]." A Kappa value above .60 is considered acceptable. Because of the low base rates on many of the coded variables (very few YES responses), reliability can be extremely low even when the percent agreement between the coders is high. This is because they are largely agreeing on the absence of the characteristic in question. Variables with unacceptable (less than .20) reliability are highlighted in red and those with borderline reliability (.21-.60) are highlighted in yellow. Items with unacceptable reliability were either not reported on or were re-examined on an individual basis to verify the accuracy of what was reported on.

- Less than 0: no agreement
- 0.01-0.20: none to slight agreement
- 0.21-0.40: fair agreement
- 0.41-0.60: moderate agreement
- 0.61-0.80: substantial agreement
- 0.81-1.00: almost perfect agreement

EPISODE INFORMATION

- TV series or movie name [1.00/100]
- Episode season and episode number [1.00/100]
- Content year [1.00/100]
- Genre [1.00/100]
- Drama sub-genre [1.00/100]
- Storyline prominence [.25/79]
- Is charitable giving depicted as central to the storyline, or incidental? [.76/94]

CAUSES

- What are the specific charitable causes or issues mentioned? (open-ended) [NA/NA]
- Physical distance of the beneficiaries of the giving?
 - · Local [.70/91]
 - International [.78/85]
- Who does the storyline focus on primarily? [.56/74]
- Thematic or episodic framing?

- Focus on individual [.57/85]
- Focus on systems [.64/94]
- Is the cause talked about in terms of gains or losses?
 - Gains [.38/74]
 - Losses [-.15/74]

ORGANIZATIONS

- Is a specific charitable organization mentioned? [.84/94]
- Do any of the mentioned charitable organizations exist in real life? [.83/94]
- Describe the organizational representatives. (open-ended) [NA/NA]
- Is there any mention of overhead? [1.00/100]

GIVING

- Is there an act of giving in the episode? [.64/85]
- Race of donors?
 - Black [1.00/1.00]
 - Latinx [.79/97]
 - Asian or Pacific Islander [.65/97]
 - White [.82/91]
- Age of donors?
 - · Under 18 [.79/97]
 - ° 18-30 [1.00/100]
 - ° 31-50 [.88/94]
 - · 51+ [.91/97]
- Socioeconomic status of donors?
 - ° Rich [.87/94]
 - Middle [.87/94]
 - Poor [1.00/100]
- Is there giving done by a main character? [.71/85]
- What sort of entity is depicted as giving?
 - Corporation [1.00/100]
 - · Telethon [1.00/100]
 - Foundation [-.04/91]
 - Public Figure [.72/94]
 - Individual [.61/82]
 - Group of Individuals [.84/97]
 - Crowdfunding [1.00/100]
- What is being given?
 - Time [.60/.88]
 - · Money [.75/.88]

- Food [1.00/100]
- Blood or Organs [1.00/100]
- Religious Tithing [1.00/100]
- Other Goods [.82/91]
- What is the venue for giving?
 - Fundraising Event [.80/94]
 - · School [.63/94]
 - Home [.80/94]
 - Workplace [.87/97]
 - Religious Venue [1.00/100]
 - Other [.82/91]
- Is an online donation platform depicted? [.64/94]
- What motivations for giving occur in the episode?
 - Selfless [.76/88]
 - Self-interest [.64/82]
- What giving intent occurs in the episode?
 - **Planned [.53/88]**
 - Responsive [.77/88]
- Does a giver explicitly express empathy toward those affected by the cause? [.67/88]
- Does the giver express satisfaction, regret, or guilt?
 - Satisfaction [.61/85]
 - · Regret [.61/85]
 - Guilt [1.00/100]

BENEFICIARIES

- Are any beneficiaries of charity shown on screen? [.66/85]
- Race of beneficiaries?
 - Black [1.00/100]
 - · Latinx [1.00/100]
 - Asian of Pacific Islander [1.00/100]
 - White [.21/85]
- Ages of beneficiaries?
 - Under 18 [.68/91]
 - ° 18-30 [1.00/100]
 - ° 31-50 [.79/97]
 - ° <mark>51+ [.46/74]</mark>
- Socioeconomic status of beneficiaries?
 - Rich [1.00/100]
 - Middle [.47/94]
 - Poor [1.00/100]
- Do the beneficiaries get to tell their story at all? [.62/91]

EVENTS/FUNDRAISERS

- Is a charitable event/fundraiser depicted? [1.00/100]
- What is the venue for the fundraiser? [.57/68]
- What is the racial composition of event attendees? [.68/79]
- What is the gender composition of event attendees? [.61/76]
- How are people attending the event dressed? [.72/82]
- Include any information about any dollar amounts mentioned in terms of amount raised or asked for (open-ended). [NA/NA]

EPISODE OVERALL

- Overall sentiment toward charitable giving in the episode? [.63/82]
- Charity corruption shown? [.77/91]
- Fake charity shown? [.77/91]
- Celebrity mentioned? [.55/76]
- Impact of a charitable gift shown? [.64/94]