



## Get Out The Give This Holiday Season With GivingTuesday

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Fenton and GivingTuesday Communication Team, Jan 1, 2013

**Summary:** 2013 Silver Anvil Award of Excellence Winner — Events and Observances (Seven or Fewer Days) — Nonprofit Organizations

Black Friday and Cyber Monday have long spurred deal-seeking consumers to buy, buy, buy as the holidays approach. But another key holiday focus — giving back — had happened quietly. The leaders behind #GivingTuesday wanted to create an official holiday giving season launch to encourage smarter and more giving. #GivingTuesday's collaborative communication strategy resulted in 247 media placements and attracted more than 2,500 partners by its inaugural Nov. 27, 2012, celebration. And Americans came together to give back too: there was a 53% increase in online charitable donations over the same Tuesday in 2011.

Events and observances (seven or fewer days) includes programs or events scheduled for one to seven consecutive days (not including planning and preparation). Events may include commemorations, observances, openings, celebrations or other special activities, and must occur within a time span of one week. The nonprofit subcategory is specifically intended for health and welfare organizations, as well as educational and cultural institutions not included in other subcategories.

### Full Text: **PROGRAM SUMMARY**

The holiday season has long been heralded as the year's busiest shopping season. Black Friday and Cyber Monday spur deal-seeking consumers to buy, buy, buy as the holidays approach. But another key focus of the holiday season — giving to those in need — happened quietly, without the focused kickoff that Black Friday and Cyber Monday provide to retailers. So leaders at 92nd Street Y and the UN Foundation gathered influencers and partners to create an official holiday *giving* season launch that would encourage discussion and action around smarter giving and prompt people to give more. But this big idea, #GivingTuesday, had to cut through holiday marketing clutter to prove its worth, draw support and inspire giving. A collaborative communication strategy mirrored the movement's overall goal: bring together nonprofits, businesses, community groups and individuals to create a giving kickoff that benefits all. By the inaugural celebration (Nov. 27), we secured 247 earned media placements, including: *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, NPR, *USA Today*, *The Washington Post*, CNN Newsroom, and *The Wall Street Journal*, and attracted more than 2,500 partners. But the real story is how Americans came together to give back: #GivingTuesday resulted in a 53% increase in online charitable donations over the Tuesday after Thanksgiving in 2011.

### **RESEARCH**

We conducted secondary research to establish the need for and potential of #GivingTuesday. According to [Giving USA](#), Americans gave more than \$298.42 billion to their favorite causes in 2011, up 4% from \$286.91 billion in 2010. Yet, while donations have increased, total dollars donated still have not rebounded to match 2007 pre-recession levels. When adjusted for inflation, the 2011 giving increase is considered to be flat at .9%. The [Chronicle of Philanthropy](#)

showed that charitable deductions in 2008 (most recent year for which this figure is available) represented, on average, 4.7% of household income, or \$2,564/household. [Alicia Schatteman](#), professor of nonprofit management at Northern Illinois University, has stated that giving as a percentage of GDP has remained relatively flat since the 1960s, at about 2%. But despite this lack of growth year-over-year, Americans value charity: the [2011 Charities Aid Foundation's World Giving Index](#) ranked Americans as the most generous people on earth.

Contrastingly, the retail sector, buoyed by Black Friday and Cyber Monday, has seen holiday sales increase, on average, 3.5% annually for the last decade. For 2012, the [National Retail Federation](#) predicted holiday sales to increase 4.1% over 2011, to \$586.1 billion. Showing the stagnation of charitable donations even as retail spending has ballooned formed the foundation of the #GivingTuesday story and established a baseline for how the movement could inspire giving.

## PLANNING

Philanthropy leaders worried that #GivingTuesday could be all talk and no action, garnering plenty of lip service but failing to increase donations and volunteerism. The communication team faced the challenge of not only educating a skeptical and distracted public about the unproven idea of #GivingTuesday, but also of convincing them to open their wallets one more time for #GivingTuesday. Our objectives were to:

- Position #GivingTuesday as the official kickoff to the holiday giving season.
- Increase awareness of and partnership in #GivingTuesday among individuals, businesses, nonprofit organizations, thought leaders and policymakers.
- Drive charitable donations on Nov. 27 and throughout the holiday season.

Fenton and the #GivingTuesday leadership team saw a unique opportunity to use the attention focused on Black Friday and Cyber Monday to underscore the lack of a kickoff for the giving season. Limited by budget and bandwidth, we worked with key partners to uncover strong #GivingTuesday initiatives that could grab reporters' interest and developed a collaborative work plan that leveraged partners' communication teams to expand our ability to reach and respond to media and used social media to help partners and influencers take ownership of the movement by sharing ideas, spreading the word and planning their own #GivingTuesday activities.

## EXECUTION

### *Media Outreach*

- Launched #GivingTuesday with an inclusive media roll out to top-tier consumer and nonprofit reporters.
- After launch, tailored pitches for reporters covering key sectors like philanthropy, retail, small businesses and social media by highlighting #GivingTuesday partners with strong initiatives.
- Supplemented Fenton's outreach by empowering #GivingTuesday partners with a communication toolkit, which provided key messages, a sample news release and media outreach instructions.

### *Social Media Communication*

- Established movement's name using hashtag in all references to underscore #GivingTuesday's collaborative nature and encourage sharing.
- Used Facebook and Twitter to keep supporters updated, generate discussion and attract new supporters.
- Developed a team of social media ambassadors, who attended regular Google Hangouts, where they heard directly from #GivingTuesday founders and partners, and

discussed ways to bring the movement to life in their own communities.

## EVALUATION

### **Position #GivingTuesday as the official kickoff to the holiday giving season.**

- We reached a wide cross-section of the American public, securing 247 placements about #GivingTuesday by Nov. 27 and nearly 320 media placements by Dec. 6, 2012, including: *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, NPR, *USA Today*, *The Washington Post*, CNN Newsroom, CNN.com, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Christian Science Monitor*.
- Placements were overwhelmingly positive and nearly all described #GivingTuesday as a kickoff to the holiday giving season.

### **Increase awareness of and partnership in #GivingTuesday among individuals, businesses, nonprofit organizations, thought leaders and policymakers.**

- As of Oct. 28, when the major feature appeared in *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, #GivingTuesday had 400 partners. On Nov. 15, when the *USA Today* placement appeared, the movement had 800 partners. By the inaugural celebration on Nov. 27, the movement had more than 2,500 official partners in all 50 states.
- More than 50 million people worldwide spread the word about #GivingTuesday – resulting in milestone trending on Twitter. Endorsements from the White House, Bill Gates, and Guy Kawasaki expanded online reach and proved that influencers and policy makers supported the movement. Mayors of Chicago, Philadelphia and New York showed their support for #GivingTuesday with official proclamations.

### **Drive charitable donations on Nov. 27 and throughout the holiday season.**

Several #GivingTuesday partners and outside organizations tracked giving results on Nov. 27 and beyond.

- Blackbaud, which processes online donations for thousands of charities, processed \$10 million in online donations on Nov. 27, a 53% increase over the Tuesday after Thanksgiving in 2011.
- Network for Good, which processes online charitable donations, reported that donations made to its 8,700 clients increased 155% on Nov. 27 over the same day in 2011, and that donations increased 42% over the same week in 2011. Increased donations continued the week of Dec. 2, up 13% from the same week year prior.
- Pennsylvania SPCA, a small nonprofit, used #GivingTuesday to kick-start online holiday giving, raising more than \$15,000, including \$10,150 in online donations and a \$5,000 donation match from board members, making #GivingTuesday the organization's highest-ever online donation day.
- Microsoft's #GivingTuesday initiative, on GiveForYouth.org, raised over \$115K to support over 100 GlobalGiving microprojects. Web traffic on GiveforYouth.org spiked 1,500% on Nov. 27 from visitors in 88 countries. Microsoft matched donations up to \$100,000, resulting in a total of \$215K raised.
- Panthera Foundation raised more than \$600K, including more than 450 individual donations that amounted to over \$300K, approximately 40% of which were made by new or lapsed donors. A donation match from Recanati Kaplan Foundation resulted in a total of more than \$600K raised.