



# TAKE 5. GIVE 5. SURVEY FINDINGS:

Guiding New Philanthropy  
in Greater Philadelphia

Executive Summary

February 2010

Presented by:



osirisgroup™

# Executive Summary

---

The idea for Generocity started with a simple question: is there a way of encouraging ordinary folks throughout Greater Philadelphia to get more involved in their communities, increase their charitable giving, and devote more time to volunteer activities?

After some initial review of trends in the philanthropic world and beyond, we quickly saw that, yes, with a smart design based on rigorous research, it was possible to create something new that could really move the needle on these issues.

We believe that “something” is an online publication dedicated to telling the stories of individuals, charities, nonprofits, schools and businesses in the region who are working to improve our communities. Couple that with a unique set of online tools and resources to make it easier for nonprofits to fundraise online, and help businesses and individuals find and support these causes and groups, and you’ve got a perfect partnership between inspiration and action.

The basic, underlying assumption that drove our early planning process is that people could be compelled to act by relevant information and by reducing barriers to locating and supporting local causes. As we thought through this unique online destination, we aggressively researched environmental trends and similar initiatives across the Web. This research led to three important trends that have served as an important foundation for us: cause journalism, citizen philanthropy and ethical consumerism.

By November 2009, we decided we had a basic outline of what we were trying to do and how we wanted to do it. Our next logical step was to test whether our assumptions and program design would be understood, accepted and used by Greater Philadelphia.

**The Incentive.** We decided to launch an online survey called “Take 5. Give 5.” Our goal was to gather the market research we need to help refine our plans for Generocity, but we also wanted to approach the survey in a way that reinforced the idea that we were different, innovative, and committed to helping nonprofits throughout the region.

To help signal all this, we built an incentive into the survey design. The purpose was to both drive response and get respondents thinking about localized, online microgiving and the potential that new philanthropic thinking could have for the region. The “Take 5. Give 5.” incentive offered each person who took five minutes to complete the survey the ability to designate any registered nonprofit in the region to receive a \$5 donation from Generocity.

In the end, this simple act helped inject an additional \$25,000 into a nonprofit community desperate for resources. A small gesture, we know, but we hope the region sees it as just a hint of what Generocity could bring to the region.

**Our Sample.** The incentive played a part in the strong response to the survey, but anecdotally we were repeatedly told that it had only marginal influence when people were choosing whether or not to participate. Key to overall participation was information; once people knew about the survey and what we were trying to do, they were overwhelmingly willing to take part.

That is why the promotional support we received from the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania, WHY?, NBC 10 and the Philadelphia Inquirer was so pivotal to our efforts. This get-the-word-out effort helped us exceed our participation goals. We originally sought 4,000

people to take our survey, and figured it would take at least two months to reach that goal. Turns out, more than 5,000 responded within one month.

People from throughout the five-county region—representing a wide range of community roles, including parents/guardians, young professionals, nonprofit leaders, business executives, teachers, students and members of faith-based organizations—took the time to complete our survey. Our sample also included large subsamples of both men and women, major race/ethnic groups (African American, Asian American, Hispanic and white), a wide age range, and diverse household incomes and educational levels.

It is important to note here—and we freely acknowledge—the limitations of our sample: it was a self-selected, non-randomized group; limited to those with Internet access; and may represent the opinions of those with a predilection for giving.

**Findings: Basic Values.** With all this in mind, we are quite encouraged by our survey findings. Our respondents told us in unambiguous terms there is an underreporting of stories about ordinary people doing extraordinary things to improve the lives of others; that microgiving in Greater Philadelphia can be impactful; that the choices we make about what we buy and who we work for are motivated, in part, by our personal values.

Some highlights of specific responses help tell this story:

- Nine out of ten (92%) of respondents agreed that not enough is being written about ordinary people in Greater Philadelphia who are doing compelling things to improve the lives of others, their communities, and the environment.
- Even more (96%) agreed or strongly agreed that donating money to causes, charities and nonprofits—no matter how small the amount—can make a difference.
- Eight out of ten (84%) reported that they would work for the company that is better known for its community involvement if given a choice between two comparable companies.
- Eight out of ten (81%) also said they would more likely buy a product that is tied to a cause, charity, or nonprofit over a similar product that is not. Most respondents regardless of their gender, race/ethnicity, or income share these four views.

**Findings: Demand & Alternatives.** We were also told there is a demand for the kinds of content and features Generocity will offer, and that there are currently no viable (or at least well-known) alternatives. These features included what we expect to be the backbone of Generocity's offerings: stories that inspire them to get more involved in their communities; a comprehensive directory of nonprofits; parent-friendly information that can be used to teach kids about the importance of giving back; and consumer information about what a company or product stands for.

A few specific examples:

- The majority of respondents (96%) said that they may use, will use, or will use and strongly encourage others to use a comprehensive and well-organized database of local causes, charities, and nonprofits, with a description of each, viewable by zip code and on a map.
- The majority of respondents (93%) said that they may use, will use, or will use and strongly encourage others to use a website that provides “how-to” information and advice from local experts on various topics about Greater Philadelphia's causes, charities, and nonprofits.

- The majority of respondents (92%) said that they may use, will use, or will use and strongly encourage others to use compelling stories and photography about people in the region who are doing things to improve the lives of others, their communities, and the environment.

Despite this apparent demand, there does not seem to be compelling existing alternatives. For instance, most respondents either do not know what website they'd visit (64%) or could not remember the domain name of the website they'd visit (10%) to read stories about people in the region who are doing compelling things to improve the lives of others, their communities, and the environment. And even for those who did list alternatives, there was no hint of a consensus. No single alternative came close to capturing even 1% of the total sample, and only a few were actually publications or websites that truly focused on the kinds of issues Generocity will. Most were general publications or websites like philly.com or even google.com.

One possible exception to this lack of alternative may be information on volunteer opportunities in the region. Half of the respondents were able to either cite a website they've used or said they knew of one. Among the most-often cited, several were websites that were either entirely dedicated to or gave prominent placement for information on volunteer opportunities. This tells us there may be partnership possibilities with existing local groups—such as Greater Philadelphia Cares and the United Way—which strive to offer easy ways to connect the public to volunteer opportunities.

**Planning for Success.** The results of this survey are being used to refine our planned functionality and to set baseline metrics for measuring our future impact. We are already starting to determine the ways we will gauge our overall success from data findings; this includes challenging ourselves to help increase, not only how much people give, but also to how many different groups they give. And we'd like to do this by encouraging and facilitating online microgiving, which seems to be in line with what people are already doing (only three respondents out of more than 5,000 reported not making any micro-donations, with the average smallest donation ranging from \$3 to \$18).

We realize this is a bold goal. More established websites like Charity Navigator and GuideStar, which provide databases of nonprofits (though with a national focus) were cited by less than one percent of our respondents when asked to name a website for finding and donating to causes, charities and nonprofits. We will also need to further explore to what extent people's somewhat greater reservation in using giving accounts and features, like personal dashboards, is sourced in their unfamiliarity with new Internet functionality, especially since younger (and presumably more Web-savvy) respondents reported higher likelihoods of usage.

And even with the stories that are at the heart of what we plan for Generocity, we know that it will take significant effort and smart partnerships to increase (from the current 23%) the number of people who say that among their top-three reasons for making an online donation was that they read something that inspired them. Since less than 1% of our respondents could name any single publication or website where they read this kind of content, we feel there is significant opportunity to increase this number..

Finally, we hope our nonprofit partners can use our survey findings to further develop their own plans for Internet-based philanthropy so they can more easily access new communities of supporters and revenue streams. The key take-away for them: what motivates our respondents to get engaged—more than any other driver—is the belief in a group’s mission. Second to this is actually feeling engaged and knowing that their donation is making a difference.

**Conclusion.** The findings of this survey have convinced us that we are on the right track with Generocity; that there is a demand for the kinds of content and features we will be offering that is not presently being fulfilled in Greater Philadelphia. It’s clear the region is open to innovative thinking when it comes to philanthropy, and we expect this interest to only grow as we get closer to the launch.

We look forward to a time in the not-too-distant future when Generocity makes it easier for everyone in Greater Philadelphia to live more generously.