

EVERYTHING RESEARCH CAN TELL US ABOUT LEGACY GIVING IN 2018

A Literature Review

Foreword by Professor Russell James

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Foreword



It is wonderfully encouraging to read this review of research on legacy giving, and to know that it will be available for so many who can benefit from the work. Such a work is timely, significant, and much needed. Fundamentally, two things we know about legacy giving are that it is important, and it is different.

Legacy giving is important first because of the sheer amount of financial resources it generates for the vital work of charities. Beyond its current significance, the potential growth of legacy giving is dramatic. Upcoming demographic realities point to substantial growth in legacy giving in the coming years, even in the absence of improvement in our ability to encourage such gifts. But, when one realizes what a small percentage of the population engages in legacy giving – especially as compared to the larger share of people who make other types of charitable contributions – it is easy to see just how much more is possible in this area. This possibility of dramatic expansion starts with learning how legacy giving and legacy fundraising works. That starts with this excellent summary of what we know.

Legacy giving is important, but it is also different. The skills and processes for generating small contributions to a local charity are often far removed from those related to legacy giving. Talking about legacy giving can involve uncomfortable topics like death, wealth, and heirs. Legacy decisions are intimately related to deep personal factors such as one's values, identity, and life story. Consequently, even years of experience in other types of fundraising may provide little preparation for legacy fundraising. Understanding how legacy giving is different is an important first step, a step made much easier by this collection of knowledge on the topic.

My thanks and congratulations go to the authors of this much needed – and practically useful – contribution to this important field of study. I recommend its reading and its regular application in your work.

Russell James

Introduction



With legacy giving on the rise across the world, there is a significant opportunity for charitable organisations to engage their donors in a conversation about what they want to pass on to future generations. Yet so many say they lack the knowledge, tools and confidence to do that well.

At Legacy Voice we have a vision to inspire a million people to leave a gift to a charitable cause in their will or estate plan, and leave the world a better place. To do that, we aim to resource and support any organisation wanting to talk to their donors about legacy giving.

So we decided to commission a major literature review (a world's first actually) and asked some of the leading academics in fundraising to pull together everything that research can tell us about legacy giving.

The result is this in-depth report, compiled from more than 150 papers across fundraising, marketing, sociology, psychology and behavioural economics, available to anyone working in the not-for-profit sector free of charge.

In it you will find demographics on who leaves gifts in wills and estate plans, the main motivations and barriers to legacy giving, the influence of charity communications and the importance of stewardship in nurturing and converting legacy gifts.

Some of it might surprise you, like the evidence that younger donors can and do make excellent legacy prospects. Or that many of your best legacy prospects on your mailing file may be being mistaken for low value or lapsed donors.

Some of it might challenge you, like how legacy donors can be your most critical supporters and will scrutinise you to make sure you are fit to receive and take care of their gift.

But we hope most of it will inspire you, to see the potential in this form of giving, to have more conversations with your supporters and to become better, more donor-centred fundraisers as a result.

Of course, if you need any help putting this into action you know where to find us.

Ashley Rowthorn
Legacy Voice

About Legacy Voice

Legacy Voice is a specialist fundraising consultancy supporting charities and not-for-profit organisations around the world to grow their legacy giving income.

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Introduction

In the UK, the legacy marketplace is currently worth around £2.82 billion or 14% of charities' voluntary income. Here the average residuary legacy is worth £46,600 and the average pecuniary gift £3,300 (Legacy Foresight, 2017).

As well as being an important source of current income, the value of the legacy marketplace is anticipated to grow dramatically in forthcoming years. Many Western countries anticipate a rise in the number of deaths over forthcoming decades as the baby boom generation (i.e. those born immediately after the Second World War) begin to pass away. In the UK, Legacy Foresight (2014) have estimated that, largely because of the boomers passing, the legacy market will more than double to £5.16 billion by 2050 (in constant prices).

Despite the current and predicted future value of legacy giving, relatively few people leave gifts in their wills. In the UK, in 2016, 6% of descendants left legacy gifts (an increase from 4.6% of estates in 1997) according to Smeed and Ford (2017). In the US, James (2013) has found that just over 10% of over-55s with a will or trust have included a bequest. There are, however, encouraging signs that interest may be growing. In the UK, research from the legacy consortium Remember a Charity (Remember a Charity, n.d.) suggests that 35% of people would consider such a gift, whilst in the US, according to Krauser's (2007) analysis of two large giving data-sets, around a third of Americans don't currently have a charitable bequest but would be willing to consider one.

Although interest may be increasing, fundraisers still face the challenge of converting that interest to action. As James (2008) reminds us, without more effective legacy fundraising practice, 90 per cent of donor mortality will only result in lost current giving. In order to develop more effective practices, the sector needs to understand more about the legacy giving decision.

This research seeks to extend our understanding of the motives individuals might have for offering such gifts and to offer practical recommendations for fundraisers in respect of how they might both target appeals and tailor the nature of their communications message. This review of the academic literature as it relates to bequest giving examines what is known about will making, the general bequest motive and motives for leaving a charitable bequest. We review material from the domains of psychology, sociology, economics and marketing and examine both studies of bequest behaviour and broader studies in other domains that have the capacity to inform bequest fundraising practice.

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Will making

Will making

Given that will-making is inextricably linked to the giving of legacies, it's helpful to the legacy fundraiser to understand the drivers of, and barriers to, making a will.

However, we should add a caveat here: despite research into the general UK population showing that two-thirds don't have a will (Uren, 2014), research in the charity sector (Sargeant, et al., 2003) shows that 87.8% of typical charity donors already have wills (probably because they are typically older, wealthier and more socially minded than the general population). Therefore, promotions focused purely on trying to persuade existing donors to make their first wills are likely, for most charities, to prove ineffectual – although those that encourage donors to update their wills may have more relevance, especially since consumer research suggests that more than 60 per cent of people with wills have never updated them (Cancer Research UK, 2006).

One related issue to consider here is the proportion of the general population who eventually die intestate and whether increasing testacy might increase charitable giving, thus helping to make the case for public charitably-focused will-writing campaigns. It's surprisingly difficult to access accurate figures for intestacy rates, partly because it's not clear whether estates that don't require a grant of probate (e.g. small estates or those that pass to a survivor) are intestate or not. However, the Law Commission (2015) find that, on average, there are 63,503 intestate grants each year: around 13% of total deaths. Notably, intestate estates are considerably smaller than testate estates: median values are £56,000 versus £160,000 (Law Commission, 2015). Intestate people are also likely to be younger and less affluent than the general population, less likely to be married or have children and more likely to be from a minority ethnic background (Law Commission, 2015). On balance, these demographic characteristics suggest that, even if testate, these estates would probably be less likely than average to include a charitable legacy.

Returning to the writing of a will, a number of studies suggest that the predominant demographic characteristic that drives will-making is age. In their nationally representative study of Australian will-making, for example, Tilse et al (2016) found that age alone was able to accurately classify three-quarters of the sample as either a will-maker or not. Similarly, an analysis of evidence from Ireland by McGranahan (2006) found that of age, sex and marital status, only age had a statistically significant effect on the probability of writing a will. Although the likelihood of writing a will increases with age, the National Committee on Planned Giving (2001) found that the average age when first making a will in the US was 44. Therefore, people who are middle-aged and older – and for most organisations, this is likely to encompass the majority of their supporter base – are likely to be in a position to think about will making and thus bequest giving.



The link between socio-economic status and will making makes intuitive sense. In order to go to the expense and trouble of creating an estate plan, one has to feel that one has some wealth to pass on. Not surprisingly, therefore, the other key driver of planning appears to be wealth (Goetting & Martin, 2001; Banks, et al., 2004; McGranahan, 2006; Tilse, et al., 2016). McGranahan (2006) finds that a one percent increase in wealth increased the probability of having a will by seven percent. For not-for-profits, unsurprisingly, people with more significant assets may be better bequest prospects.

From Rowlingson's research, we can see that will-making appears to be driven primarily by an individual's life experiences, a finding reinforced by Palmer et al (2005) who identify that the most powerful drivers for will making are becoming a widow, being diagnosed with a terminal illness and interestingly, experiencing a positive change in assets, perhaps through buying a house.

Having considered who writes wills, we can also examine the evidence for what prompts the decision. In a series of four focus groups, Rowlingson (2004) identified a number of triggers for will-making:

1. Illness of the individual him- or her-self or the illness of a relative or friend
2. Death of a relative or friend
3. Difficulties associated with having to sort out the estate of a family member
4. Some form of family change, such as marriage, divorce, remarriage
5. Planning long-distance travel
6. Purchase of a house

People make wills at 3 major life events:

1. Changes to family
2. Changes to wealth
3. Changes to health



Unsurprisingly, given that plans have to be written in order for a legacy to be left, it also appears to be life-cycle events that predict the addition (and indeed the deletion) of charitable gifts.

James (2013) describes the events above as largely either mortality-related events or changes in family structure, and argues that they are an impetus to plan – and at the same time, to add a charitable gift – rather than an impetus to make charitable gifts per se. There are two implications of this for the fundraiser: firstly, they are unlikely to know when in a donor’s life these events are occurring, and secondly, even if they did, these events are often difficult or challenging, and not therefore an ideal time to ask about giving. Both implications would point to the importance of making the legacy message ubiquitous or adopting the ‘drip-drip’ approach to legacy marketing, so that when these events occur the charity is already top of mind.

Having discussed will-making specifically, we should note that in his analysis of data from the Health and Retirement Study, James (2013) notes, in the US context, a decline in the use of a will as the only estate planning document. The percentage of people transferring their assets via a trust is increasing, and James also finds that people may increasingly be using transfer on death designations, which, in some jurisdictions, may enable the transfer of the entire estate without the need for a will or a trust. He also points out that whilst it is possible to name charities in a non-probate transfer title designation, it is unknown how common this is. James’ analysis of deceased peoples’ records from the same study also shows that where wills were said to have existed, only a minority (38%) were actually probated. Some were never found, some weren’t needed (e.g. the estate was distributed through non-probate transfers or a trust), and in some cases the estate was too small. In contrast, 75% of cases of reported funded trusts during life resulted in the report of a funded trust after death. Non-profits in the US will therefore increasingly need to look beyond the will, encouraging supporters to include gifts in their other estate planning documentation.

Life changes associated with the timing of adding a charitable plan

The last survey before death	0.2253
Becoming a widow/widower	0.2265
Being diagnosed with cancer	0.2497
Decline in self-reported health <small>(1pt on 1-5 scale)</small>	0.0496
Exiting/entering marriage	0.2062
Being diagnosed with heart problems	0.1675
Being diagnoses with a stroke	0.1647
First grandchild	0.1304
\$10k change in assets	0.0002
\$1k change in giving to charity	0.0012

Figure 1: Changes associated with adding a charitable plan (James, 2013)

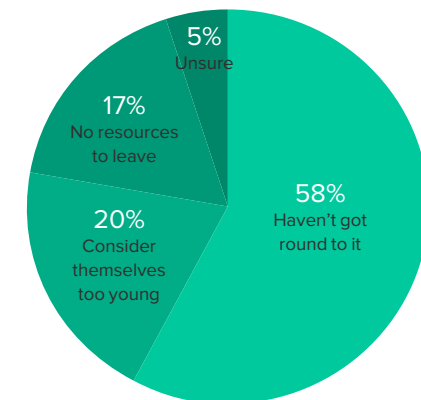
Barriers to will-making

The literature also highlights a number of potential barriers to will-making. In a large scale and representative survey of the UK public the main reason people give for not making a will is that they have not got around to it yet (given by 58% of those without wills). The second most common reason is that people consider themselves too young to make a will (20%) and 17% say they have no resources to leave (Rowlingson & McKay, 2005). Similar results were found in Brooker's (2007) representative survey of adults in England and Wales, where 42% hadn't got around to it, 30% had never thought about it and 15% said they were too young. Very few people raised the issues of lack of knowledge, cost or indecision over beneficiaries, suggesting that, ultimately, apathy may be the main disincentive. In this context, easily accessible charitable schemes may have a role in encouraging the making of a first will and potentially the addition of a charitable gift (which may perhaps be retained/grown over the course of a lifetime).

The psychology literature suggests that a further reason for failing to make a will is anxiety. While this does not typically appear in the results of public surveys, because of social desirability bias (i.e. many individuals would not want to admit to it), it is estimated to affect a significant proportion of the population. Individuals who have a high degree of death anxiety try to avoid discussing issues connected with death (Shaffer, 1970; Donovan, 1980), and indeed for some, considering mortality can result in a paralysing terror (Sligte, et al., 2013). Notably, as part of the British Social Attitudes Survey (2012) whilst 70% of people surveyed said they were comfortable talking about death, when it comes to planning for their death only 45% (and only 23% of over 75s) have discussed their end-of-life wishes.

It is interesting that this fear of death may often arise from the perceived failure not to have lived the way the individual hoped to have lived, or not to have achieved all that they would have wished (Fromm, 1947). This may have implications for the fundraiser, since facilitating conversations around the subject of legacy in its general sense can show donors how to find new meaning later in life.

How important is it to you to leave an inheritance?





Determinants of a General Bequest

The bequest motive

In this short section, we will address the motives for wanting to leave a general bequest (i.e. a bequest to family and friends). While not directly applicable to charitable bequests, the literature is interesting because it suggests that people who are actively motivated to leave a bequest behave in very particular ways – they reduce spending and actively save in order to have assets to pass on after death.

The economic evidence for the existence of a bequest motive (i.e. the desire to die with positive net worth) is mixed. Authors such as Chuma (1995), Menchik and David (1983) and Modigliani (1986) have all found evidence in support and concluded that individuals are motivated to leave a bequest, while Cosgrove (1989), Hurd (1987) and Kazarosian (1997) have found evidence that disputes this conclusion. A study by Kopczuk and Lupton (2007) provides convincing and perhaps conclusive evidence in support of the existence of a bequest motive and indicates that 75% of the population are motivated in this way. The authors calculate that these households spend, on average, 25% less on personal outlays than

the balance of the population. Of the net wealth that is estimated to be bequeathed by single households aged 70 and older, 53% is accounted for by a bequest motive.

Work by Palumbo (1999) suggests that assets can also be retained because of a precautionary motive (c.f. previous discussion around care costs). Chang (2004) argues that precautionary saving arises from uncertainty about the breadwinner's lifetime, especially where there are dependent children involved, and, as the hazards concerning the breadwinner's lifetime come into question and their health concerns present more of a risk, then precautionary savings increase. Therefore, when it comes to bequest decision-making, the dependent's age plays a vital role, as does the number of children who require expenditure, and lastly the breadwinner's own lifetime and health. Saving for uncertain medical expenses typically reduces current spending by around 7% (Palumbo, 1999). Since it is difficult to disentangle the precautionary motive from the bequest motive, it seems fair to conclude that the latter may depress current spending by around 18%.

The implications of this work for bequest fundraising are twofold.

Firstly, it appears that many individuals do actively want to leave a bequest at the end of their life and are motivated to save to achieve it.

Secondly, individuals who do seek to leave a bequest are likely to be spending significantly less during their lifetime. They may therefore appear as proportionately lower value givers on a database.

Of course, economists have put forward a variety of other explanations for bequests. Many simply regard any transfer at the end of an individual's life as evidence of excess savings made to provide insurance against life expectancy risk. In this sense bequests are seen as being accidental (Davies, 1981; Friedman & Warshawsky, 1990). Other writers talk of the 'strategic bequest' or 'exchange motive' (Bernheim, et al., 1985) where parents bequeath to gain attention from their children. This latter motive also has implications for charity marketing, since if individuals are indeed motivated by the notion of an exchange, this can be operationalised in terms of the package of benefits that might accrue from declaring oneself a 'pledger.' The balance of evidence suggests that a mixture of egoistic and exchange motives are in operation, with the former seemingly more prevalent than the latter.

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Motives for charitable bequest giving

The charitable bequest motive

We find that there is a series of reflections that a person undertakes before deciding to leave a charitable gift in their will or estate plan. They move from very emotional areas, when deciding on whether to leave a legacy gift, and to which cause areas. And become increasingly rational and practical, to confirm their decision, to decide which organisations to leave money to and of what value.

We have grouped these reflections into the following areas:

- Looking back - "What has been my life narrative?"
- Looking forwards - "What do I hope to pass on or be remembered by?"
- Social influence - "What are other people like me doing?"
- Organisational factors - "Which organisations can I trust to create a lasting legacy for me?"
- Tax - "How can I practically structure my gift to achieve the greatest impact?"

In the following chapter we unpack these areas in-depth, and explore how

Reasons Donors Make Planned Gifts

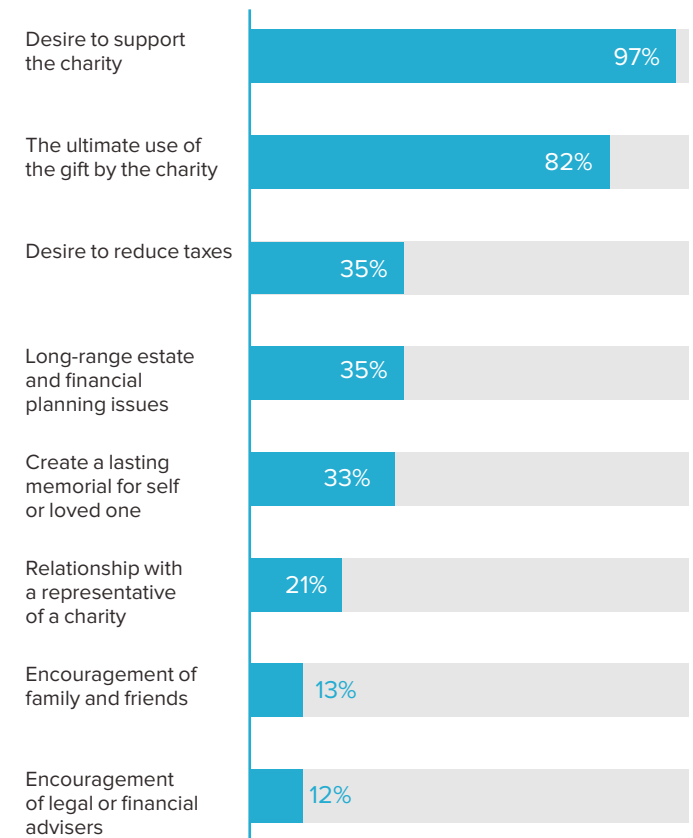
In the U.S., the National Committee on Planned Giving conducted research with a representative sample of 1579 households that had pledged a planned gift, asking donors explicitly what had motivated them to consider a charitable bequest or other form of 'planned' donation. The table below summarizes their findings and indicates that a genuine desire to support the charity was the critical factor reported in almost all cases. The desire to reduce taxes is cited by less than one third of participants as a contributory factor.

One of the most significant changes in donor motivation highlighted by the NCPG is the increasing influence of professional advisors. In 1992, when a similar study was conducted, only 4% of participants had indicated that a legal or financial adviser had suggested a bequest. In 2000 that figure had climbed to 21%, and perhaps by 2017 will have climbed yet higher.

'The job of the gift planner is (therefore) to help donors and charities connect in a meaningful way, so that they can realize their collective dream of a better tomorrow'

Dame Greene (2003)

Table 1: Reasons Donors Make Planned Gifts



Source: NCPG (2001)

Looking back

There is some evidence from the psychology literature to suggest that looking back over one's life – or life review – is a natural part of the ageing process and, with it, cognisance of approaching death. Butler (1963, p. 66) defines the life review as:

'a naturally occurring, universal mental process characterized by the progressive return to consciousness of past experiences, and, particularly, the resurgence of unresolved conflicts; simultaneously and normally, these revived experiences and conflicts can be surveyed and integrated. Presumably this process is prompted by the realization of approaching dissolution and death, and the inability to maintain one's sense of personal invulnerability.'

Butler argues that talking about the past can facilitate the life review process and that it is an important facet of ageing, helping the older person to find new meaning in the face of impending death. It becomes more frequent with age (Havighurst & Glasser, 1972) (Molinari & Reichlan, 1985) and can lead to reorganization and reintegration of personality, creating a sense of wisdom and serenity in old age: indeed, in some contexts it has been used as a therapeutic intervention (Haight, 1988). In the life review process people ask, 'what does my life stand for and what will be my legacy?' or ascribe meaning to their lives and work through uncomfortable issues (Subramaniam, et al., 2014).

This act of reminiscence can be very powerful for older people. Research has shown that those older adults who use their autobiographical memories reported higher rates of using those memories to direct their behaviour, to enhance social bonds, and to enhance a sense of self-continuity (Bluck, et al., 2010). It seems intuitive that thinking about a charitable legacy might form part of this broader process of legacy consideration.

Furthermore, sharing one's life memories with others is good for you - leading to positive benefits such as increased self-esteem, empathy, connectedness, intimacy, self-understanding and an enhanced meaning of life (Alea & Bluck, 2007). Charities might therefore be advised to encourage this memory disclosure from their donors, as potentially beneficial for them, as well as likely to stimulate thoughts of legacy giving.

This overarching theme of looking back over the course of one's life has also been explored in legacy-specific research. In a series of depth interviews with legacy givers, Routley and Sargeant (2015) find a link between the life experiences of UK donors, and their choice of charity bequest recipients. The quote below is typical:

'[In my will] there's the Youth Hostel Association, first of all . . . it's where my wife and I met . . . Then there's the Ramblers' Association. We've walked a lot with the local group. . . Then Help the Aged, I've got to help the aged, I am one . . . Then there's RNID [Royal National Institute for the Deaf] because I'm hard of

hearing . . . Then finally, the Cancer Research. My father died of cancer and so I have supported them ever since he died.' (George, male, 89)

The results of the study suggest the importance of offering the opportunity to leave a legacy to a variety of different organisational stakeholders whose lives may have been touched by a cause: donors would be an obvious group, but also potentially, volunteers, service users and their families, trustees and staff.

The importance of life history to the legacy giving decision is also illustrated in ground-breaking research by James and O'Boyle (2014). Using fMRI technology to scan the brains of those contemplating bequest gifts, they find that two areas of the brain – the precuneus and the lingual gyrus – are activated when thinking about a charitable bequest, whilst increased activity in the lingual gyrus is associated with increased agreement with leaving a bequest. These areas of the brain are used in internal visualisation and are associated with taking an outside perspective on the self; James and O'Boyle hypothesise this may be because a charitable legacy is only activated at one's death. The two areas of the brain are also activated when older adults are shown photographs from throughout their lives: they are associated with vivid autobiographical memories. The authors therefore describe the process of leaving a legacy as analogous to creating the final chapter in one's visualised autobiography, and go on to discuss

the importance of helping potential legators to ‘paint a picture’ of the desired outcome of their giving, and to think of their goals as part of their autobiography.

In a similar vein, Sargeant and Hilton (2005) find that many legacy supporters are motivated by reciprocity, or the need to give something back, perhaps because their life has been touched by the cause or the organisation. They too discuss the importance of informing service users about legacy giving. Indeed, in some situations, leaving a bequest may be a way to facilitate a service user’s deeply-held need to reciprocate for care received: if they own an asset such as a house, they may be able to leave a legacy even if they can’t afford to make donations during their lifetime.

Also drawing on the principles of life experience, James (2015) found that offering people the opportunity to leave a bequest in memory of a loved one – particularly an ascendant such as a parent or grandparent – was particularly compelling. Measured on a 100-point scale, interest in a tribute bequest was 10 points higher than initial interest in leaving a traditional bequest gift to the same organisation. James points out that these results provide evidence of a potentially effective messaging strategy to overcome the feeling that one can’t leave a charitable bequest because of family need or expectations: a tribute bequest combines honouring a family member with supporting a charity. Interestingly, research from the UK also suggests a link between the

desire to remember a loved one and legacy giving. Legacy Foresight (2014) analysed data from 13 large UK charities and found that ‘warm’ In-Memory donors (donors with any previous transactional relationship, who make an identifiable In-Memory gift) are twice as likely to be legacy pledgers or prospects than other regular donors and give gift of higher value. Therefore, sensitively promoting the tribute legacy would seem like an appropriate route for charities to take.

The psychology literature sees individuals as having a strong need to ensure that their possessions, contributions or works do not die and that as an individual they may actually (albeit symbolically) live on in these works (Belk, et al., 1989; Gentry, et al., 1995; Unruh, 1983). Price et al (2000) add that:

‘Older consumers desire to bequeath meaning bundles, not merely ‘sentimental’ objects. We suggest that opportunities to convey the stories that make objects meaningful should be provided to older persons and empathetic recipients should take the time to learn and value the stories. Second, older persons can be helped to make satisfactory disposition decisions by working with them to preserve stories and resolve tactical decisions. Often guiding and sharing in the aspect of what gerontologists call ‘reminiscence’ would be helpful’

When looking back, legacy gifts say 3 important things about the donor:

1. This is a cause that has been an important part of my life, or a particular passion of mine. I want it to live on beyond my lifetime.
2. This charity has helped me greatly in life. I have a desire to pay back.
3. This charity or cause represents a person that was important to me. Help me remember a loved one.

This would provide further weight to the argument advanced earlier around charities providing their donors with the opportunity to share their stories, and, building on that principle, offering the opportunity to ensure that those stories are preserved.

The final motive to explore in this discussion of looking backwards is that of spite, or leaving one's money to the (traditional) cats' home in order to spite one's family, perhaps because of a perceived slight that may have occurred in the past, as demonstrated in the quote below:

'I've already decided who will get what. I'm keen that [X] and [Y] don't receive anything. I haven't seen them in thirty years. They're strangers to me, so I'd rather leave the money to something I care about.' (Sargeant, et al., 2006, p. 59)

There may, however, be fewer examples of vindictive disinheritance than commonly perceived: in a review of the available literature, O'Connor (1996) points out that it is estimated that fewer than 12 per cent of wills disinherit, and fewer than half of these are vindictive (someone may disinherit benevolently, for example, believing that other family members may need the money more).

In exploring the overall relevance of looking backwards to bequest fundraising several points can be made. Firstly, it would appear that charities could play a role in facilitating the naturally occurring life review process and encourage individuals to see their giving and the causes that interest them as part of that review. They may be facilitated to find meaning in their life through what they have achieved, either in their past relationship with the organization, or what they may now achieve as their life reaches its end. Charities could also seek to reassure donors that these memories would be preserved. Giving may thus be positioned as an expression of individual values and beliefs and an extension of self.

The notion of reminiscence is also key. Charities could also encourage their supporters to think about the connections with a cause that have formed an important part of their life stories. Bequest messages emphasizing the nature of the change that has taken place with the cause, the connections between the cause and its supporters, and what remains to be achieved in the future would also be likely to achieve higher levels of interest, attention and action. The research would also suggest that likely legacy audience would be those people for whom the charity, or its cause, has played an important role in their life history.

Bequest marketers could explore opportunities to allow individuals to tell their own stories and to supplement product introductions like interactive legacy writing books with additional storage, display and transfer products. With increasing numbers of older people online, digital and social media may provide a useful channel for this sharing to take place. In this way, the stories could be collected and potentially even disseminated by the organization. It may be the charities could, as part of this process, encourage conversation about legacy giving within a family or friendship group, enabling their donors to pass on an additional layer of meaning associated with their gift.

James' research also suggests that facilitating the ability to leave a legacy in memory of a loved one may increase the percentage of people who express interest in legacy giving. This could be as simple as asking donors face-to-face or via a form whether their legacy might memorialise someone else. It could also involve sharing in memory legacy case studies, and sensitively advising previous in memory givers of the ability to leave a legacy in memory of their loved one.

Looking forwards

As well as looking back over the course of their lives, potential legacy givers are also likely to be looking forwards, and considering what it is that they will leave following their deaths, both in terms of their assets and their wider legacy. In terms of assets specifically, Rowlingson and McKay (2005) have explored how motivated individuals at different life stages might be to leave an inheritance:

How important is it to you to leave an inheritance?

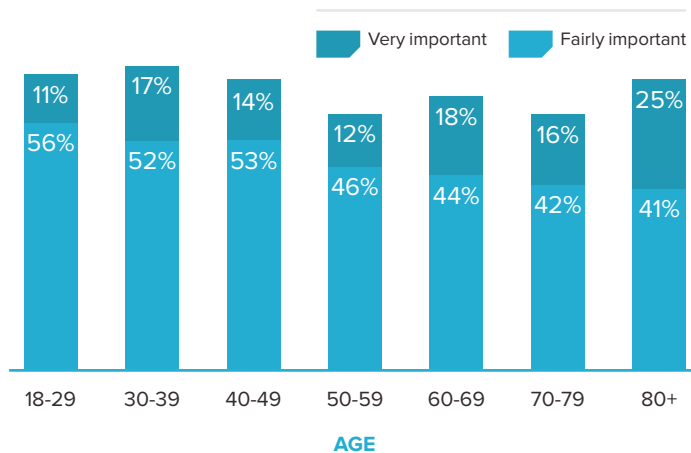
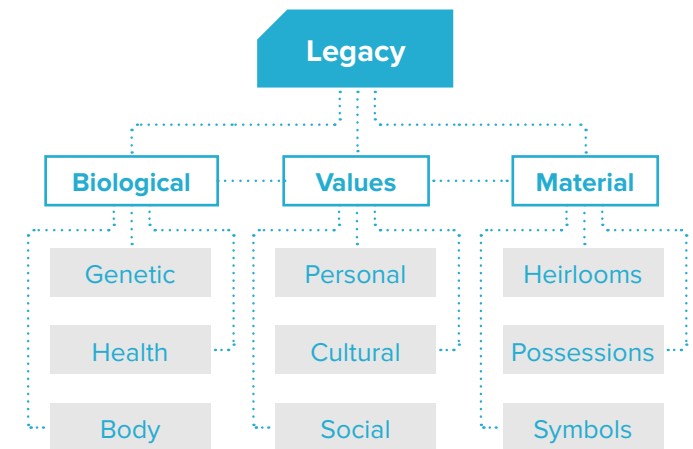


Figure 2: Importance of leaving an inheritance by age

Younger people regard the leaving of an inheritance as fairly important (possibly because they may stand to benefit from the generosity of others!), but as individuals hit their fifties their enthusiasm wanes. It is possible that at this age their children start to become independent and the minds of individuals turn to the issue of retirement. At this point, reality dawns and they become concerned about their standard of living in retirement, perhaps feeling that they will need the money themselves. Equally, they may feel that the years are passing them by and they want to enjoy life a little more than they had previously thought. As individuals age into their sixties and beyond, the percentage who view leaving an inheritance as “very important” climbs steadily. These differences can be taken into account in the targeting and content of communications.

Moving on from assets to consider the broader concept of legacy, Hunter and Rowles (2005) provide a useful framework for conceptualising how individuals view their legacy, in the broadest sense of the word. The ideas are represented graphically below:

Figure 3: Conceptualisation of Legacy



Source: Hunter, E.G. and Rowles, G.D. (2005) 'Leaving A Legacy: Toward A Typology,' Journal of Aging Studies, 19, 327-247. Reproduced with kind permission

In a series of in-depth interviews, the authors identified three overarching themes with respect to definition and transmission of legacy: biological legacy, material legacy and the legacy of values.

There are a number of insights from academia that suggest that we are motivated to leave something behind after our deaths – to live on in some way – and this is a need that intensifies as we get older. In a paper describing a series of interviews with older people about their cherished possessions, Curasi, Price and Arnould (2003, p. 372) describe the desire for immortality as one of ‘the strongest and least malleable of human motives shaping the later adult years’. Similarly, Rubinstein’s (1996) study of childless women found that feeling that there was no one to leave a bequest to, or no point in doing so, led to feelings of sadness or despair.

In the wider academic domain, generativity theory (McAdams & De St Aubin, 1992) also offers insights into the potential drivers behind legacy giving. Kotre (1996, p. 10) defines generativity as “a desire to invest one’s substance in forms of life and work that will outlive the self”. McAdams (1996) describes how, as adults move into middle age—a time that has been described as “highly generative” by McAdams et al. (1997) and Kotre

(1996)—it becomes increasingly important to develop an anticipated ending for their life story, which “ties together the beginning and middle to affirm unity, purpose and direction in life over time” (McAdams, 1996, p. 309).

“legacies involve both narcissism and selflessness . . . creating a bequest reflects the self, but because it occurs outside the self and fosters the nurturance of others, a bequest also represents an important degree of selflessness and caring.”
Rubinstein

Reinforcing the relevance of these findings to bequest giving, in their series of qualitative depth interviews Routley and Sargeant (2015) find that the contents of an estate can function as an extension of the giver. Strategic distribution of that estate can therefore achieve generativity: extending the self forward in time after bodily death, and providing the legator with a form of symbolic immortality. Through a bequest gift to charity, they argue, the donor can extend particular aspects of his or herself forward in time, making a statement about the experiences and people that shaped him or her, or the values that he or she holds, whilst also enabling communion with others through the act of giving.

As in our discussion of life review, there is evidence to suggest that generativity is a positive experience for the donor. Villar (2012) states that generativity gives older adults concrete and meaningful goals to ‘keep the core of the self-functioning’. Furthermore, generativity also encourages successful ageing and interaction on a social level. Villar (2012) argues that successful ageing cannot be attained by oneself: it relies on social variables and the success of the communities in which older people operate and are involved in. Finally, generativity in old age is also linked to enhanced personal development, especially as it is widely understood as an achievement to accomplish higher levels of maturity and personal growth (Villar, 2012). Thus, the experience of thinking about a legacy gift, and considering what one will leave behind may well ultimately be a beneficial experience to the donor.

These are important themes for us to remember as fundraisers: we might imagine that because bequests are given after death, they are a self-less gift. However, research suggests that the self, and its continuation forwards in time, plays a vital role in bequest giving. We need to be able to recognise its importance therefore both in how we solicit bequest gifts and steward bequest donors, helping donors to see how their gift will enable

some part of themselves to continue long into the future – and at the same time, help them to meet deeply-held identity goals. As the academic Paul Schervish eloquently puts it, ‘it is not the absence of self that motivates charitable giving, but the presence of self’ (Schervish, 2008).

Symbolic immortality also plays an important role within Terror Management Theory (TMT) (Solomon, et al., 1991). TMT examines how people manage the knowledge of their own mortality. In brief summary, Solomon et al find that, when first confronted with thoughts of death, people engage their proximal defences – they push the thoughts away or remove them from their consciousness, for example, by exaggerating how healthy or robust they are. For bequest fundraisers, this desire to push away any thought of death might partly explain why relatively few of the many people who give to charity during their lifetime leave legacies: perhaps they want to engage as little as possible with death-related planning.

However, TMT states that, despite our efforts to remove them, death-related thoughts may continue to hover on the fringes of consciousness, and thus, we have a second layer of defence against mortality – distal defence – or the desire to achieve a form of symbolic immortality. In order to achieve this sense of symbolic immortality, we need to firstly have faith in our cultural worldview,

and secondly, a sense of self-esteem. According to Pyszczynski, Greenberg and Solomon (2000), our cultural worldviews provide meaning, standards for what is valuable and the promise of symbolic immortality if we live up to those standards. Believing in and living up to those standards provides us with a sense of self-esteem. This theory is strongly supported by research: enabling someone to increase their self-esteem or bolster their cultural worldview makes them less prone to anxiety; and, vice-versa, sensitising people to death makes them seek to bolster their self-esteem or faith in their worldview. Pyszczynski et al (2000) describe this as being a person of value in a world of meaning and go on to say that:

Being a person of value in a world of meaning provides the hope of literal immortality to those people whose worldview promises some form of afterlife and provides the hope of symbolic immortality to even those whose worldview eschews an afterlife
(Pyszczynski, et al., 2000, p. 157)

Again, as the analysis above would suggest, there is evidence that leaving a legacy, in its broadest sense, and potentially, a charitable legacy in particular, can be beneficial to the giver. Sligte et al (2013), for example, find that leaving a legacy can overcome the negative effects of mortality salience on creativity. It could be that experiencing mortality salience leads to a sharpening

of ones’ perceived goals and needs, and as creative products and ideas can long outlive their conceiver and have a profound impact on society, this lessens the anxiety surrounding death. Leaving a legacy that one knows will carry on long after death can cause one to feel existentially reassured and validated within one’s own social groups.

Terror management theory potentially has much to offer bequest fundraisers. Firstly, our charities are likely to be institutions that will live on after the deaths of our supporters. Therefore, stressing the longevity of the organisation and its long-term plans for the future may help supporters to achieve a sense of symbolic immortality through identification with it (Sargeant & Shang, 2008). Secondly, fundraisers could potentially seek to enhance supporters’ cultural worldviews – for example, through stressing the shared values and goals of organisation and supporters, and making clear that supporting charity through a legacy gift is admired by society in general. They can also stress the impact of a supporters’ gift, showing them how they will make a difference and steward them in a way that emphasises that they are a person of value, helping to bolster their sense of self-esteem. As in our discussion of generativity, through promoting bequest giving, fundraisers can help their supporters to achieve a reassuring sense of symbolic immortality.

Linked to the principle of Terror Management Theory, particularly the sense of connection with others, is the theme of identification. As referred to briefly above, Sargeant and Shang (2008) explored the role of identification in legacy giving through a focus group study. They found two different forms of identification amongst legacy donors: community and identification with the non-profit itself through shared values. They argue that identification can be developed in a number of ways: naturally over time e.g. as one becomes socialised into a community, through the distinctiveness of a group (where it is easier for a bond to develop) or through one's self concept being based around the same values as the focal group. They point out that identification may go some way to alleviating death fears: identification with an organisation can boost self-esteem because of the organisation's enduring nature.

Given the importance of symbolic immortality discussed above, we might hypothesise that offering physical memorials could be offer significant value for donors. However, qualitative research with donors (Routley, 2011) suggested that the picture was a little more subtle. Donors comments suggested that certain forms of overly ostentatious remembrance (such as a name plaque on a building) appear – at least in British culture – to give out the opposite message to that intended, positioning the donor not as a selfless, giving individual, but as egotistical or not having made sufficient impact on the world to be remembered on their own merits, as the comments below illustrate:

It always makes me laugh my head off when you go into places like, let me think of somewhere... like...British Museum. You know the new central court – there's all these names of people who have given. I thought 'for God's sake, how insecure must they feel that they've got to have their name on the wall? Who's going to read it? Nobody knows it'... I think it must mean that people are deeply insecure, or they're showing off, or, you know, it just seems pointless, it really does.

Female, 62, married

Respondents did, however, tend to approve other forms of remembrance such as tree planting or a book of remembrance. For example, the same respondent above, who disliked names on a wall, commented favourably on names in bricks:

As you come from the car park you go onto a brick walkway...it leads into the [National Sculpture Park], and people bought bricks, they've actually got their names on bricks...There's something quite nice about that, nobody's ever going to notice your name, but you're part of it. You're not just something on the wall, that didn't need to be there: those bricks need to be there.

Female, 62, married

The differences between the two were subtle. The latter appeared to position the donor as one of a community of givers rather than as a self-aggrandising individual, and interestingly, did not give particular prominence to any one name. Indeed, in some cases it was unlikely that a particular name would be seen at all. It would only be the donor who would be aware of it during their lifetime, offering an internal sense of satisfaction rather than external approbation. Choosing a form of communal memorial or recognition might therefore be appropriate for those charities looking to recognise their legacy donors.

More than any form of post-death memorial, however, Routley's (2011) respondents appreciated the idea of recognition, or, perhaps more appropriately, feedback whilst alive. The idea of events where one could see the impact of the organisation's work were particularly welcomed; seeing the work whilst one was alive appeared to reassure respondents that one's gift would make a similar impact after one's death.

Humour

Having discussed how symbolic immortality can help us to become more comfortable with death, one other way we might be able to feel like we can defeat death is through humour. Thinking about mortality is likely to be stressful for most people, and, according to Long and Greenwood (2013) humour has long been recognised as a coping mechanism in difficult circumstances. Consider for example the different ways in which we talk about death: kicking the bucket, pushing up daisies, shuffling off the mortal coil, all of which have humorous undertones.

As well as providing a coping mechanism, humour might also enable a sense that the ego can triumph over death. Freud in his 1928 essay, Humour, describes a criminal being led to the gallows on a Monday, joking, as he is led out, that the week is beginning well (Freud, 1928). Freud tells us that humour is about 'the triumph of narcissism, the victorious assertion of the ego's invulnerability': it can help us therefore to feel that we can defeat death. The humour of the criminal being led to the gallows is 'not resigned. It is rebellious'. Rebellious humour has been used by several organisations in their bequest marketing. Obviously, however, the line between humour and bad taste is both narrow and subjective, so humour needs to be used with caution in bequest marketing campaigns!

Social influence

We have discussed a number of very personal motives so far. However, the will writing procedure is a sociological process and likely to be affected by the culture and social norms in which a legator lives.

As Blumenthal (2006, p. 966) points out, this has been the case from the earliest days of the will:

In the Roman Republic, the execution of a will was widely considered an intensely personal expression even though it had to conform to an elaborate set of formal requirements. Indeed, the will was regarded as ‘a vessel of truth’, providing a final accounting of the testator’s likes and dislikes and revealing the essence of his character. Yet as free as individual testators supposedly were to distribute their estates as they wished, they rarely defied social expectations.

Two thousand years later, wills still rarely defy social expectations. In Western nations at least, legators often follow a similar pattern, leaving their estate to their spouse, who will then pass it to their children in equal shares (Finch & Mason 2000 ; Menchik & David 1983 ; O’Dwyer 2001).

Research is increasingly demonstrating the importance of social information and adherence to social norms in the legacy giving decision. The importance of these norms may be related to the importance of bolstering the cultural worldview when confronted with thoughts of mortality as covered in our preceding discussion of terror management theory. The theory of reasoned action might also offer some insights: the theory says that we draw on the views of others when making decisions about unfamiliar situations – and for most people, making a will will be unfamiliar. Indeed, Konkoly and Perloff (1990, p. 93) in their study of students’ intention of bequeathing money to their alma mater, found that attitude towards the behaviour and subjective norm (or beliefs about the views that important others hold) made approximately equal contributions to the variance in intention to bequeath money to the college.

Of course, further work would be warranted to test the theory of reasoned action with older adults as one might argue that subjective norms would be more of an influence on the young than the old. It is interesting to note, however, that there is evidence in the psychology literature that older people do depend on others to make complex decisions, so perceived norms may well be an

issue (Cicirelli, 1998). We also know that older adults are more accepting of negative events and are guided more by general norms and principles (Blanchard-Fields, 1997; Labouview-Vief, 1997).

It should also be noted that work by Warburton and Terry (2000) concluded that ‘individuals are influenced not only by the perceived views of others, but also by the behaviour of others.’ Thus, in seeking to persuade charities would need to provide evidence of societal norms and demonstrate practical instances where individuals have taken favourable decisions. Arguably, rather than encouraging individuals to leave a charitable bequest, the debate needs to be moved forward to a focus on which organizations they will leave a bequest to.

The power of social norms in legacy giving specifically was illustrated by a research collaboration between the Cabinet Office, Remember a Charity and Co-Operative Legal Services. The three worked together to test different ways of asking a question about charitable bequests when people called up to write a will via a telephone will-writing service (Cabinet Office, n.d.). In the control group, no questions were asked about legacy giving, but 5% of will-writers raised the subject pro-actively with the solicitor. The second group were asked 'would you like to leave a charitable gift in your will' which increased participation to 11%. The final group were asked 'Many of our customers like to leave a gift to charity in their will. Are there any charitable causes that you're passionate about?'. In this final group, 15% of people chose to include a legacy. The social norm/passion prompt also increased the average gift: people in the control group included an average gift of £3300, whilst those in the social norm/passion group gave an average of £6661. (Positive results for the phrase 'Many people like to leave a gift to charity in their will' were also found by James (2016)). Notably, however, in follow-up research (Sanders, et al., 2016), the team found that the effect of a social norm question was only positive for individuals who were writing their first will. The research suggests not only the power of asking the bequest giving question of supporters, but also the power of asking the question in the right way, and, drawing on the second set of findings, to the right people.

Also in the domain of social information, James and Routley (2016) tested sharing the stories of living and deceased legacy pledgers with potential legacy donors. They found that all groups exposed to the stories reported significantly greater interest in leaving a legacy, relative to their initial interest in making a lifetime gift than did the control group. In addition, they found that living donor stories were consistently more effective than deceased donor stories at increasing the relative interest in making a bequest gift, which they suggest may be because of participants' aversion to reminders of their own mortality. The research suggests that fundraisers should focus on gathering and sharing the stories of those people who may have promised to leave bequests in the future.

In apparent contrast to the Cabinet Office and James and Routley (2016) findings, however, Shang, Routley and Corbett (2015) found that, in the context of telephone legacy fundraising, minority (i.e. one third of supporters haven't made a will) and declining (i.e. fewer people leaving a legacy) social information encouraged both legacy consideration and intention. The findings seem to point to the same underlying psychological motivation: a phenomenon called Bystander Effect (Darley & Latane, 1968). Researchers found that when people think there is a need for them to help and yet others haven't helped yet, they are more likely to stand up to their responsibility and help. What this research suggests is that if fundraisers

directly prime people's perception about the need for them to help, we may obtain the same effect as what we obtained by priming "minority" and "declining" social information.

The difference between the studies may also be explained by different perceptions at different levels of decision making: when people are thinking about leaving a legacy to charities, then they may be influenced by whether or not this is a normal thing to do; however, when they're deciding which specific charities to support, then they may be influenced by the perceived need for them to help that particular organisation, although further research would be necessary to clarify this.

These studies show that social information can be a powerful tool in influencing bequest decision making. Whilst more research in this area would be valuable to fundraisers, for the moment, we should be aware that social information is often a tool that legacy fundraisers use uncritically e.g. by sharing statements like two-thirds of people haven't made a will. We should be conscious of the power of these social statements, and test them carefully in our bequest solicitations so as not to inadvertently depress legacy response.

Organisational factors

As Sargeant et al (2006) point out, in their study of nonprofit giving behaviour, the organisational factors of performance, professionalism and communications have been recognised as motivators for general charitable donations.

Sargeant et al (2006) posit that organisational performance and communications drive a donor's trust in charitable organisations, which in turn drives their level of commitment, and therefore their giving behaviour. Trust may be especially important in the legacy giving decision; as Dobrof and Moody (1996) and Pharoah and Harrow (2009) point out, a legator must trust the recipient of their legacy to carry out their wishes, when they are no longer alive to supervise the disposal of their assets.

Connected to the issue of trust, US and UK legacy pledgers appear to be particularly concerned about organisational performance and responsiveness. They are also concerned with the quality of communications they receive (Sargeant & Hilton, 2005; Sargeant, et al., 2006) and program quality (Sargeant & Shang, 2008).

Indeed, many legacy pledgers appear to undertake an extended information search when selecting recipients, occasionally even deliberately testing the organisation to gauge their responsiveness (Sargeant, et al., 2006).

For the majority of donors, the only mechanism for judging a charity's professionalism is the communications they receive from the organisation. Sargeant et al (2006) find that pledgers will only consider leaving a legacy to an organisation whose communications strategy they had long regarded as appropriate, and that communications received just before making the bequest decision were examined in particular depth.

Other related effects examined in the literature include supporter loyalty (defined as supporters' affective attachment and devotion to their organisation) which has been shown to have a small influence on bequest intention (Wymer & Rundle-Thiele, 2016), and engagement (defined as integration into the organisation's environment), or more specifically, lack thereof which was cited as a reason for not giving a legacy (McGill, et al., 2009).

Linked to these findings, Routley (2011) finds that believing that an organisation spends its money wisely is particularly important to legacy giving. Indeed, respondents in qualitative interviews reflected on how money received from a will would be applied not only by charities but by personal beneficiaries, suggesting that the perception that gifts will be spent wisely is important when making bequest giving decisions, regardless of category of beneficiary. The assurance that money given to charities, or indeed, other beneficiaries through a legacy will be spent well enables a donor's gift, and hence the donor, to have an impact on the world that they have left behind. Conversely the perception that money will be wasted could be seen as squandering a donor's life's work, and, combined with the perception that what we have is what we are (Feldman, 1952), squandering their very essence, and, ultimately, denying them one form of symbolic immortality.

Tax

One more pragmatic motivation we should examine before moving on is taxation. In the UK, although there are several allowances available (including for charitable giving), generally, estates pay tax at 40 per cent on wealth over the nil-rate band of £325,000 (HMRC, 2017). However, only around 4 per cent of deaths result in any inheritance tax liability (National Statistics, 2017). In the US, the federal estate tax of 40% impacts on estates worth over \$5.49 million (although President Trump has vowed to repeal it) (Wood, 2017). Several states also have their own estate taxes.

In 2012, the UK government introduced an inheritance discount of 10% for estates where 10% or more was given to charity (HMRC, 2017). Data from National Statistics shows that 1558 estates benefited from the reduction in 2014-15: around 6.7% of estates liable to IHT, a reduction from 9.3% in 2014-15. These estates were able to reduce their tax liabilities by around £33 million, up from £28 million in 2013-14 (National Statistics, 2017). Indeed, the United Kingdom is one country of nine Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries which entirely exempts charitable bequests from substantial inheritance tax rates and is one of three

DAC countries that as no limit on the amount of donation that is eligible for charitable tax incentives (Roodman & Standley, 2006). It has been recognised that those countries with low ceilings, like in Denmark, Norway, and New Zealand, see a reduced number of donations (Roodman & Standley, 2006), as a low ceiling may restrict total giving of the high-income population of that country. In looking at tax incentives, it would appear that the UK is doing better than other DAC counterparts in making it desirable and economically efficient to leave a bequest upon death.

The avoidance of tax is frequently mentioned as a motive for bequest giving. Indeed, a plethora of analyses have been performed on the effect of estate tax deductibility on charitable bequests (Boskin, 1976), (Feldstein, 1976) (McNees, 1973). The most complete study (Boskin, 1976) indicates that the elasticity of charitable bequests with respect to the after-tax cost of contributing is about -1.0, whilst Sanders and Smith (2014) report on a number of papers which estimate price elasticities of bequest giving of between -1.7 and -2.5. This result suggests that a fall in estate tax rates will increase the cost of charitable

bequests and reduce their popularity. Indeed, work by David Joulfaian suggests that charitable bequests may eventually decline by about 12% in the absence of an estate tax. This potential decline is supported by research from Knaplund (2009), Brunetti (2005) and Clotfeller (2002).

The work of Barthold and Plotnick (1984) yields additional insight. Using probate data they find that higher tax rates appear to raise the likelihood of leaving a charitable bequest, but have no effect on the size of the bequest. In the UK, Sanders and Smith (2014) find that estate tax eligibility increases the proportion of people leaving money to charity by 14.5 percentage points whilst Atkinson, Backus and Micklewright (2009) note a particular rise in legacy giving around the inheritance tax threshold.

It should be noted, however, that there are some who argue that repealing the estate tax would ultimately help philanthropy as the rich and their heirs would have more after-tax and after-bequest-to-heirs wealth to give to charities (Rooney & Tempel, 2001; Schervish, 2000).

We might, however, question why inheritance tax would have an impact on giving, when it is not a tax that will impact on individuals whilst they are alive. Qualitative research can offer us some insights into this issue. In their analysis of bequest pledger focus group data, Sargeant and Shang (2008) found that tax avoidance was a motivation for a number of bequest pledgers who believed their money would be better spent by not-for-profits than the government. Similarly, Routley (2011) reports interviewees feeling a sense of mistrust of the government, and a feeling amongst many older respondents that they, or their loved ones, had been let down by government provisions. Also in the general arena of the emotional implications of taxation, authors such as Munnell (2003) have pointed out that the inheritance tax affects bequest giving by sending a signal to potential donors of the state's implicit disapproval of large bequests left to heirs.

Given then that inheritance tax appears to be particularly disliked, why do estates still pay it when there are strategies available to avoid or minimise it e.g. making inter vivos gifts (i.e. lifetime gifts) to relatives, so that the inheritance tax burden would be reduced? Interestingly:

‘even among elderly households with net worth of several million dollars, the probability of making inter vivos gifts is less than 50%. This finding raises the question of why households do not take advantage of readily available estate tax avoidance strategies.’ Porteba (2001, p. 238).

In the United States it appears historically that nearly two thirds of the elderly for whom estate tax loomed as a potential burden did not make transfers that would have substantially reduced their estate taxes and increased the net-of-tax bequest received by their heirs. While Cooper (1979) and others have argued that estate tax is a voluntary tax, it appears that for some reason a substantial group of potential estate tax payers is not taking action to avoid the tax. This may be because of ignorance of the issues, or it may be by design. An increasing number of economists now believe that some individuals have an active desire to die with positive net worth for entirely egoistic reasons.

The available data strongly supports their position (Kuehlwein, 1994; Willhelm, 1996; Laitner & Juster, 1996). Many individuals appear to gain utility from the amount they bequeath, rather than from the amount their heirs can actually consume (Blinder, 1974; Hurd, 1989), the so called altruistic motive.

Again, there are implications for nonprofit marketing in the sense that nonprofits could use a discussion of inheritance issues as the basis for a dialogue, raising the spectre of tax and reminding individuals that a charitable donation would reduce the ultimate burden. This would deal with the issue of ignorance. The second implication of this work is that some individuals would see their estate as a facet of the totality of their being and thus equate it with self-worth.

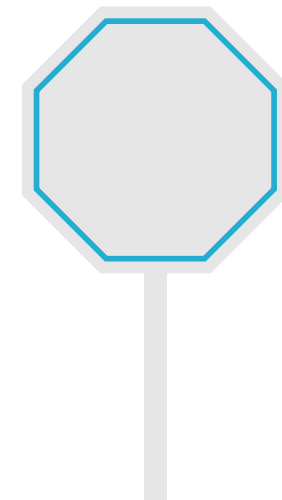
The egoistic motive may therefore be exploited in any charitable solicitation, emphasizing what specific difference the individual himself/herself would be capable of achieving. The key here is that the difference must be tailored to activate the egoistic dimension. The solicitation must refer to them, not the charity. Appropriate recognition, perhaps both pre- and post-mortem would also be essential for donors motivated in this way.

Other barriers to legacy giving

In their focus group study of legacy giving, Sargeant et al (2006) identified a number of other potential barriers to legacy giving, not identified elsewhere in this review, including:

- Inconvenience of what is perceived to be a complex process
- Insensitive marketing
- Insufficient funds to make a difference. (The potential costs and complexity of making a will means that donors have to be sure that their gift will make a difference.)

We will go on to explore the impact of having children on the likelihood of leaving a legacy – however, we should note here that family need – or family expectation – is also a potentially significant barrier.





Profile of Charitable Bequest Pledgers

Profile of Charitable Bequest Pledgers

The following section will concentrate on the demographic variables which correlate with leaving a gift in a will.

Age

In the United States, the data collected by the National Committee on Planned Giving suggests that charitable bequests are not only an old person's project. In a large-scale survey, more than two out of five individuals setting up gifts to charity in their wills, were found to be under 55. The age data is reported in Table 2.

Table 2: Percentage of charitable bequest donors

Age	%
18-34	3
35-44	14
45-54	26
55-64	22
65-74	20
75+	15

Source: NCPG (2001) Planned Giving in the United States, National Committee on Planned Giving, Indianapolis, Indiana.

The average age when most donors made a will was found to be 44, while the age at first bequest is 49. In this snapshot survey, whilst only 31% were found never to have revised their wills, nearly 75% were found never to revise their charitable bequests. Among those that had, most increased the amount of the bequest. Fewer than one in ten were found to have decreased the amount and this was most common on the lowest income group (\$35,000 or less). The most common reason for changing the amount of the bequest was a change in assets.

This apparent argument for approaching donors at a younger age is also supported by McGranahan (2000), who finds the wills written further in advance of death are also more likely to include donations to charity. Each additional month between writing and proving of the will increases the probability of giving by 0.1%. It therefore appears that those with more time to think about their distribution are more likely to include a charitable gift.

It may be, however, that legacy pledgers in the UK are a little older than their US counterparts – perhaps because of differences in fundraising practice. In their study of UK charity Help the Aged's legacy pledgers, Cole et al (2005) find that pledgers to that organisation are typically aged between 50 and 59, whilst Sargeant and Hilton's (2005) study of pledgers to five major national UK charities, recommends that charities should target individuals in their mid- to late-sixties. Data from Smeed and Ford (2017) finds that typically, charitable legators sign their last wills at 77 and die at 84.

However, findings on age in general are problematised somewhat by the later findings of James and Baker (2015). They analyse Australian probate records and data from a longitudinal US survey representative of the population aged over 50 and find that:

- (1) Over three-fourths of bequest dollars (AUD) transferred to charity were from wills signed at age 80 years or older (Australia).
- (2) The majority of probated wills with a charitable recipient were signed within 5 years of death (Australia).
- (3) The majority of decedents making charitable estate transfers had no charity in their estate plan at some point within 5 years of death (USA).

Contrary to the NCPG study, they also find that wills were subject to change – indeed, the average ten-year retention rate for a charitable plan in their study was only 55.5%. James (2013) also points out that the tendency to give and volunteer drops in the last years of life. In the last survey prior to death, barely half of estate donors were making any lifetime gifts – the very point at which many of them are making decisions about their estate plans. However, although gifts might be unstable, there is also evidence to suggest that charitable gifts added earlier tend to be of higher value (James, 2013). In this analysis, the 18% of people who reported having a gift throughout their participation in the study gave 37% of charitable dollars.

As James and Baker (2015) point out, although people may include a legacy in earlier wills, ultimately, it's the final will – often signed towards the end of life – that will determine the distribution of the estate. For fundraisers therefore, James' results suggest that although people begin to add bequests to their wills from middle-age onwards, in order to retain those gifts for the long-term, charities will need to invest in excellent stewardship.

Particularly, however, James and Baker's (2015) work illustrates that there is benefit in continuing to talk to donors about giving as they age. The results may also imply that a) older lapsed donors and volunteers may be interested in legacy giving, even if they don't want to continue their lifetime support, and b) considering the number of people who may leave a legacy without

informing the charity (only 40% will 'pledge' according to Sargeant et al (2003)), there may be value to maintaining a relationship with specific segments of donors who no longer give, particularly perhaps those who are older and might have a history of supporting the charity for a number of years. Rather than necessarily being treated like the mass of lapsed donors – for example, by attempting to pro-actively reactivate them – these donors may appreciate a bespoke, stewardship-focused approach. However, charities should consider that these audiences may be more vulnerable than other groups of donors due to age or illness and ensure that any legacy fundraising is conducted sensitively and appropriately.

Gender

The majority of studies suggest that women are more likely to leave legacies than men (Sargeant & Hilton, 2005; Sargeant, et al., 2003; Sargeant, et al., 2006). The most reliable source of who, ultimately, leaves legacies is probate data and Atkinson et al (2009), in their analysis of UK probate data from August 2007 to July 2008, found, firstly, that women are more likely to die testate than men (87.8 per cent versus 82 per cent) and that there was a gender difference in testate estates with 14 per cent of men including a legacy, versus 18 per cent of women. Men also appeared to give in a different way, being less likely to make absolute (rather than conditional) bequests: 64 per cent of men left absolute bequests, as opposed to 78 per cent of women.

However, we should note that both genders may be equally likely to intend to leave a legacy. Kou et al (2009) examined data from eight US regional giving studies and found that, overall, gender was not a statistically significant predictor of the intent to leave a charitable legacy, after controlling for other factors such as income and marital status. It is likely therefore that it is women's greater longevity that leads to their increased generosity, with the first to die spouse – statistically, likely to be the man in male/female couples – leaving everything to his partner, who may then make a charitable gift.

Religiosity

McGranahan (2000) found that religious belief indicated a higher propensity for legacy giving. McGranahan's findings are corroborated by those of Barthold and Plotnick (1984), who, in their study of probate data from large Connecticut estates from the 1930s and 40s, found that a stated religious preference had a large positive effect on charitable legacies. Similarly, both James (2009) and Kou et al (2009) find a link between more frequent attendance at religious services and an increased likelihood of having a charitable estate plan.

Children

NCPG (2001) find that over 80% of bequest donors (or more accurately – pledgers) have no children under 18 living at home. This is a finding reinforced by the work of Sargeant et al (2003) and James (2009) who, in a longitudinal study of seniors, concludes that childless individuals are five times more likely to include a charitable dimension in their will than those with grandchildren.

McGranahan (2000) found that the number of children and the number of other relatives/friends, were predictors of charitable giving. He also found that testators who gave more to individuals outside their immediate families were more likely to give charitable bequests. It is interesting to note that this again conflicts with an altruistic perspective on bequest giving. Instead it suggests that testators may be motivated by the desire to garner the approval and approbation of others, particularly non-relatives, when deciding how to divide their estates. It appears that people giving charitable bequests are concerned with how they will be remembered.

Interestingly, Auten and Joulfaian (1996) have also shown that the income of children affects the amount that parents contribute to charity. Their results indicate a positive elasticity of up to 0.14 for contributions by parents with respect to the income of children, implying that where children are better off, parents are likely to increase charitable giving.

Wealth

Evidence suggests that as wealth increases, so does the likelihood of leaving a charitable gift, and, according to Atkinson, Backus and Micklewright (2009), so does the likelihood of that being an absolute (rather than a conditional) gift. Similarly, James (2009) found that individuals with a will had a higher socio-economic status than individuals without a will, and those with a will with a charitable component had a higher socio-economic status than those with a will without a charitable gift.

This is also evident when analysing estate data. In the UK, Pharoah and Harrow (2009) found that as estate size increases so does the proportion of estates with charitable bequests:

Table 3: Estate values and charitable bequests

Estate value	%
Up to £250,000	14%
£250,001 - £500,000	27%
£500,001 - £1m	25%
Over £1m	38%

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Figures for 2004
(Pharoah and Harrow 2009:9)

As Pharoah and Harrow demonstrate, the proportion of estates over £1 million which include a charitable bequest is more than double that of estates worth up to £250,000.

As estates grow larger, so it appears, does the proportion which is left to charity. Analysis of US federal tax returns in 2003 shows that charities received 5 per cent of the value of smaller estates, 17 per cent of estates valued at \$10 million to \$20 million, and 32 per cent of estates with a value of more than \$20 million. Further, 43 per cent of the total amount bequeathed to charities – according to 2003 tax files – came from 1.1 per cent of all estates (Schervish, et al., 2006, p. 12).

Where estates went in 2003

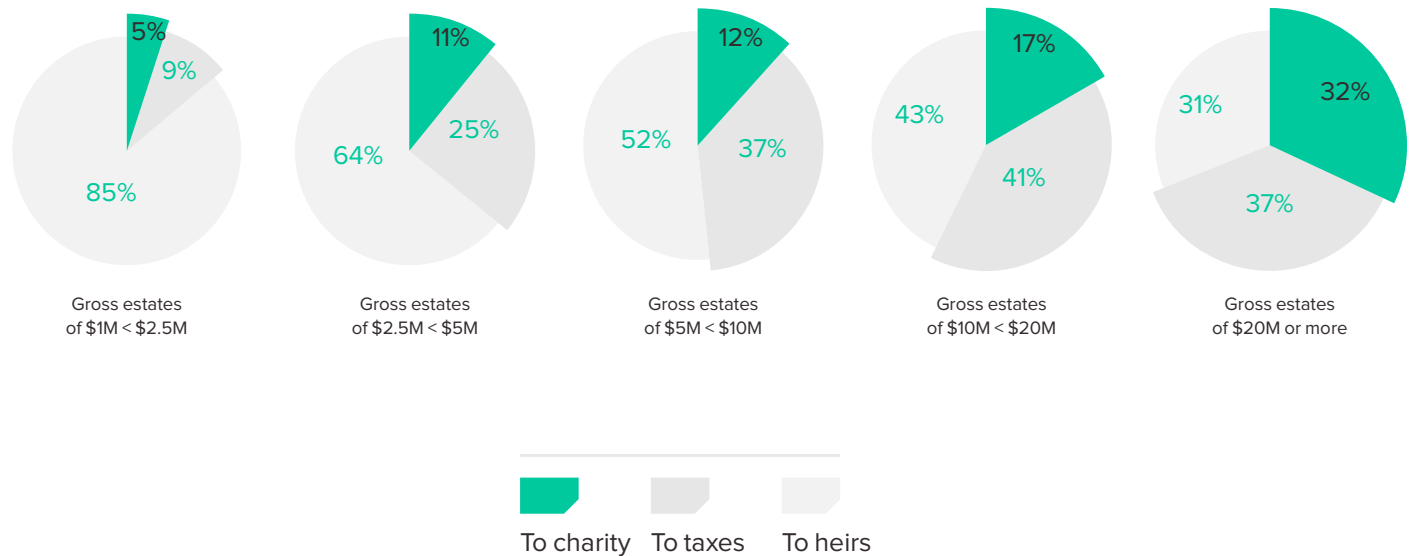


Figure 5: Where estates went in 2003 (Schervish et al 2006:13)

Will-making appears to be driven primarily by an individual's life experiences

Interestingly, however, Backus et al (2012) find that gifts in larger estates are more likely to be pecuniary or cash gifts – although they point out that they didn't analyse amounts, so perhaps in the case of large estates, these gifts would be larger than average.

They also point out a difference in the causes chosen in larger estates, although they point out that the wealthy tend to add additional causes over those chosen by the less well-off:

Table 4: Causes by estate size

Cause	% of a charitable bequest to the case			Ratio of 4 to 3
	All estates	<£40k	<£500k	
Animal	24.9	25	24.2	1.0
Cancer research	22.8	21.7	22.7	1.0
Hospices/hospitals	25.4	22.5	27.1	1.2
Medical research	17.1	14.6	19	1.3
Religious	7.6	6.8	9	1.3
Worship	26.4	20.9	31.3	1.5
Physical disability	14.8	12.2	19.4	1.6
Family issues	0.3	0.3	0.4	1.6
Child welfare	9.9	7.8	13.4	1.7
Mental health	3.5	2.7	4.7	1.7
Rescue services	11.7	8.5	15.2	1.8
Nursing/care	20.3	14.8	28.4	1.9
Ages	6.9	5.6	11.2	2.0
Overseas aid	8.9	5.9	12.4	2.1
Services	6.3	4.3	9.8	2.3
Human Rights	1.8	1.1	3.2	3.0
Other	6.4	3.6	11.2	3.1
Environment	4.6	2.2	7.5	3.4
Culture	6.6	3.1	12.6	4.0
Education	3.7	1.8	8.6	4.7

Table 5: income profile of bequest donors

Income (\$)	%
Under 20k	11
20-34,999	12
35-49,999	13
50-74,999	22
75-99,999	14
100-124,999	12
125-149,999	5
150-174,999	4
175+	8
Median income	\$60,400
Mean income	\$75,900

Source: NCPG (2001) Planned Giving in the United States, National Committee on Planned Giving, Indianapolis, Indiana

In the UK, Sargeant and Hilton (2005) and Sargeant et al (2003) find that pledgers' household income is significantly smaller than that of the general supporter base, although Sargeant et al (2003) find that the median donated by pledgers and non-pledgers is similar. This may be linked to age, with many legacy donors likely to be living on a fixed income. Therefore, legacy donors, whilst they might own significant assets, might not have access to significant liquid resources, and thus might not necessarily appear as the largest donors in a charity's database.

Others

James' (2009) finding that individuals with higher level of self-reported health were more likely to bequeath; perhaps those individuals who feel that death is a more distant reality have more time to plan and consider their legacy giving. It may also be that these individuals feel that there is less likelihood of needing their estate whilst alive in order to fund long-term care.

Chang et al (1999) found that the longer the length of residence at one address, the more likely an individual would be to leave a legacy, possibly because living in the same area for a significant period of time could engender a feeling of community and care for others. Strangely, however, this only held true for individuals who had lived at a single address for ten years or fewer; tenure of over ten years reduced the individual's propensity to bequeath.

Chang et al (1999) also found that non-white racial minorities were less likely to bequeath than white Americans. Similarly, James (James, 2009) finds a lower likelihood of bequeathing amongst black and Hispanic groups, but finds no significant difference between ethnic groups amongst respondents with an estate plan. James' finding suggests that the estate planning process may be a barrier to giving in this way, not the concept of giving through a will per se. These findings from the US are echoed by the UK findings of Brooker (2007) who finds that whilst 39 per cent of white respondents have a will, only 12 per cent of black/minority ethnic (BME) respondents do. The lack of will making in the BME community could be at least partly explained by the demographic differences between different ethnic groups. However, it could also be of interest to undertake further qualitative research amongst different ethnic groups to understand more about the legacy giving motivations of different cultures, particularly given that a number of first-generation immigrants may be approaching legacy giving age.

A large graphic element consisting of two overlapping yellow shapes. One is a triangle pointing upwards from the bottom-left corner, and the other is a trapezoidal shape extending from the bottom-left towards the right, partially overlapping the first shape. The text 'Legacy Comms' is positioned to the right of these shapes.

Legacy Comms

Legacy communications

There is relatively limited research on the efficacy of legacy communications. A survey of pledgers and supporters who had received a legacy ask, carried out in conjunction with several large charities (Sargeant, et al., 2003) showed that 76.5% of supporters said it was appropriate to ask for a legacy, although only 42.7% said that they would notify the charities concerned of their gift. Notably, 31.4% said they would expect some recognition for their legacy gift.

The same study asked pledgers to rate the various routes via which they may be asked for a legacy, with the channels being scored as below:

Table 6: Legacy communications

Communication route	Mean score
Mail	4.02
Telephone	1.51
Personal visit	1.54
Presentation to a group of supporters	3.18
Press advertising	3.67
TV advertising	3.38
Promotion via solicitors	2.46
Promotions via financial advisors	2.42

Data from the NCPG suggests that nonprofits are doing a better job of getting the word out about bequests. In 1992, only 5% of participants said they had learned about charitable bequests through a nonprofit group's published materials. In 2000 that percentage had climbed to 34%. The detail of how donors first learned about bequest gift options is provided in Table 7.

Interestingly, a UK survey (Sargeant, et al., 2003) found that a similar percentage (33.3%) had been prompted by a communication from a charity. Other prompts included being a service user (20.5%), solicitor/advisor (4.8%), and advice from a friend (3%) or relative (3%) or other – a broad range of personal motives – at 58.3%.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that response to legacy communications is relatively low: around 1% to direct mail appeals. This may be driven by death avoidance. James (2016) points out that the traditional legacy communications remind donors of death, and suggests using donor surveys that open with a non-legacy question to collect legacy intention. He also suggests that specific questions might be asked to prime people with a legacy mindset. In a study of this principle, he asked three sets of biasing questions based around 1) 'legacy' (in the broadest sense of the word) e.g. "Please rate the importance to you of the following" regarding "Being a good example for the next generation", 2) 'life' e.g. "At what age did you first begin to think about the

Table 7: How donors learned about gift options

Source	2000 (%)	1992 (%)
The charity through its published materials	34	5
A legal or financial adviser	21	4
Family or friends	20	8
A speaker at a financial planning seminar	8	n/a
General knowledge/self	7	7
Another donor	6	n/a
Other	6	n/a
Don't know	9	n/a

Source: NCPG (2001) Planned Giving in the United States, National Committee on Planned Giving, Indianapolis, Indiana

importance of conserving the natural environment?" and 3) 'family' e.g. "Were there any family members in your life who were particularly influential in shaping your views on the importance of nature conservation?". He finds that, individually, none of the question functions as a 'magic bullet', but that in combination they can increase intention to make a bequest.

Literature on the use of charity communications to solicit bequest gifts is otherwise scant. Only a small number of papers have addressed the issue, with authors such as Dame Greene (2003) suggesting that communications effort should be targeted primarily at long active donors, volunteers, staff, vendors, contractors and service providers. Where the organization has an active board, the author suggests that they should be involved in the process and actively solicit others to participate in a 'member-get-member' effort.

Work has also focused on the impact of communications and in particular, development communications. Dame Greene (2003) after a 15-year study of records at a large national nonprofit with a mailing programme of 1 million concluded that:

- a) Donors who received a letter directly asking them for a bequest were 17 times more likely to give a bequest than donors who were not asked.
- b) Donors who were asked and thanked gave twice as much as those who were not thanked.
- c) Those who were cultivated (notes, letters, visits etc.) after the thank-you gave three to four times as much.
- d) Fewer than 1 donor in 14 had informed the charity that they have named them as a beneficiary in their will.

Despite the importance of communication, data from the NCPG (NCGP, 2001) reveals that only 25% of donors who had informed a charity of their bequest intention experienced being treated any differently as a consequence. As, as previously discussed, Sargeant et al (2006) conclude that bequest pledgers place a greater emphasis on the quality of service they receive, this would seem to be a critical deficiency.

Other writers such as Crawford and Hartwick (2001) focus on the utility of planned giving or bequest societies. They argue that such organizations provide four clear benefits:

- a) They provide a forum for the charity to express appreciation to its members
- b) They serve as an incentive for non-members to make similar plans
- c) Since most estate plans can be changed at any time before the donor dies, a planned giving society can provide a regular reminder to donors of the importance of their future gifts
- d) They can bring members closer to the charity and may provide the opportunity to ask for current gifts

In the view of the authors, club members should receive:

- a) A membership gift for all new members. Something not expensive but tied in some way to the charity's work. There is support for this in the wider literature and such gifts are genuinely effective at building commitment if they are linked to the nature of the cause.
- b) An annual event – perhaps a tour of a facility or a talk by researchers. In the view of the authors these must be exclusive so that only members are invited. They further advocate that after the event its success is advertised in the general newsletter to encourage others to do what is necessary to join next year.
- c) Special newsletters and communications can be used to make members feel like insiders. If there is a special piece of news or a news release, mail a copy to members as soon as possible.
- d) Birthday and holiday cards. The authors make the point that for a number of bequest pledgers this may be the only card they receive. They also argue that holiday cards may work better than Christmas cards as if they are sent in the New Year they have a greater likelihood of standing out.

The need for different language in legacy giving versus lifetime giving

When deciding on language to use in marketing communication, fundraisers should be conscious that supporters thinking about bequest giving are thinking in terms of a much longer timescale than those who are thinking about making a gift in the present. Sargeant and Shang (2008), in the same series of focus groups with donors described above, found that the language of lifetime and legacy giving was different, paralleling findings from the field of temporal decision making, and the wider field of construal level theory (which, as above, analyses time and other forms of distance). Their findings on language are detailed below:

Abstract versus concrete

When making decisions about the present, individuals prefer to think in terms of concrete information. Asking for a one-time donation by indicating what a donation at specific levels will buy is therefore a good strategy to adopt. Telling a donor that £20 will buy a tent or immunize two children would be an example of a concrete appeal. When making decisions about the future, individuals prefer to think in the abstract and will thus pay more attention to the general approach that would be taken to providing aid. This general approach should play to the abstract values of the organization—for example, compassion in international relief, human respect and dignity in health and welfare provision, and so on. All of these themes work better in soliciting legacies than talking about specific and immediate needs.

Superordinate versus subordinate

In focusing on the present, informing people about the mechanics of how an organization is achieving its goals would be the optimal strategy. For a hospice, talking to donors about the medications, the number of beds, the number of nurses, and so forth would all be appropriate. These are the nuts and bolts that allow a hospice to pursue its mission. In persuading individuals to leave a bequest, however, research suggests that stressing the superordinate, or what the successful achievement

of the mission will deliver, would be a better approach. Promotional messages stressing the organization's ability to improve the quality of the end-of-life experience and the support provided for families would therefore be more appropriate. Why is more important for the future focus than how.

Decontextualized versus contextualized

Giving in the present can be bolstered by focusing on the organization and the help it is providing now to beneficiaries. The rationale offered for support is very much set within the context of the organization. We can help X number of beneficiaries touching their lives in the following ways.... For bequests, the organization should give consideration to illustrating why the work of the organization is of broader social significance.

For example, sticking with the hospice example, the rationale could be stated, "Society has a duty to provide the best terminal care it can," "Our loved ones might one day benefit from palliative care," "No one should be allowed to suffer unnecessarily," and so on. Rather than talk about the immediate benefits of patient care per se, the benefit to the local community and the wider society should be emphasized.

Promotion of Primary values

Legacies can also be stimulated by appealing to a donor's sense of self and, in particular, their moral identity. As individuals, we all have an "ideal" moral identity, which is our desire to become a compassionate, caring, kind, friendly, honest, generous, fair, and helpful person (Shang & Reed, 2008). When thinking about the future, people focus more on what they ideally would like to become than on who they think they are now. As a consequence, it is more important to appeal to people's ideal self-definitions than to their actual selves (Kivetz & Taylor, 2007).

Ideal moral identity

When thinking about the future, individuals are more focused on who they would like to be than on who they are. That being the case, fundraisers can assist donors in achieving their ideal by suggesting that leaving a legacy will help them become more caring, compassionate, and so on. They can do this by using some of these words to describe others who have already made the decision to leave a gift. Many charities use case studies of existing legacy pledgers or of celebrated individuals who have already left a legacy to the organization.

Seeding these cases with the moral words listed earlier or seeding the solicitation with these words can greatly increase the efficacy of the communication. So, phrases such as the following would be effective:

Caring donors like you. . . .
Elsie's generous gift has helped us to. . . .
Through the kind support of donors like. . . .

Shang and Reed's work suggests that this approach would be particularly effective with female donors, who are the critical bequest audience.

Structured versus unstructured

Finally, in seeking to promote take-up of bequests, non-profits should think through their long-term mission for the organization. Whereas annual appeals can be undertaken in a relatively unstructured way, focusing on the most immediate and pressing of needs, appeals for legacies need to articulate a longer-term and more coherent plan for what the organization is trying to achieve.

There are two further findings from the research on temporal decision making that are of relevance here. First, emotion discounts faster than logic. When people make decisions about the future, they pay more attention to the logic underlying their decisions. As a consequence, although charities might use messages that evoke an emotion in their donors, for this emotion to offer utility in prompting a bequest, donors need to be encouraged to think through the logic of why they experience that emotion.

Second, when thinking about the future, messages about wellbeing tend to work better than messages about the prevention of suffering (Mogilner, et al., 2008). Organizations working in the field of international aid, for example, would therefore be advised to focus on the positive difference their work has made and will make in communities around the world. This approach will be more effective at soliciting bequests than messages emphasizing how people will suffer if the gift isn't forthcoming.

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Decision Making by Older People


Decision making by older people

Having now examined the factors determining bequests and charitable bequests, we conclude this report by examining a facet of research largely untapped by fundraisers. We explore the psychology and sociology of ageing and examine a range of ideas that have resonance for legacy fundraising.

Other work in the realm of sociology has explored the critical importance of social networks and how these contribute to an older person's sense of self-worth, security and social competence (Conner, et al., 1979). Social networks are seen as providing socio-emotional aid in the form of social interaction and activity (Thoits, 1982). Additionally, social interaction during old age provides role supports that are necessary for a positive self-concept. Positive self-concept in turn, is associated with greater life satisfaction (Lemon, et al., 1972).

Research in gerontology indicates that some forms of social interaction are more attractive to older people than others. Numerous studies suggest that interaction with immediate family and close relatives is one of the most rewarding activities to the older adult (Cole, 1985). Indeed, it may be possible in bequest fundraising to position the bequest in the context of family interactions. Certainly 'make a will' messages may be predicated on this dimension. Gerontologists have also determined that older people lose roles and activities and that they attempt to replace these with new ones that are more accessible (Graney & Graney, 1974). Similarly, Caplow's (1982) (1984) investigation of the gift-giving ritual discovered that more distant relatives are brought into gift giving exchanges as closer ones move off or die. Thus, for many older people, social contacts with fundraisers, social interaction experiences through social activities, the honouring of donors, or volunteer work (or, in the case of legacy fundraising, membership of a society) may substitute for previous relationships of a more intimate nature. This is significant because Mathur (1996) finds support for social interaction resulting from gift giving being positively related to gift giving behaviour.

Bequest fundraisers could therefore look to enhance ways in which the organization interacts with potential (or actual) bequest pledgers and recognize the need for social interaction that many elderly persons may have. They could also seek to build the bond of attachment, since attachment theory tells us that such bonds become increasingly important in later life and can provide a vital form of psychological protection in times of stress. (e.g. I may have a heart problem, but I'm still a really good grandparent). Charities could also play a role through the identification of an individual as a highly valued donor or legacy pledger.

A decorative graphic consisting of two overlapping teal triangles. One triangle is positioned on the left side of the page, pointing towards the top right. The second triangle is positioned below the first, pointing towards the bottom right. The two triangles overlap in the center, creating a darker teal shape.

A legacy model

The decision to leave a charitable legacy

The sections above summarise the current state of knowledge vis a vis legacy giving. We have attempted to bring together the key findings into the model below. The model represents our current understanding of the legacy giving decision. However, it should be pointed out that the model is a hypothetical one: further research would be needed to explore the precise nature and order of the decision-making process represented here.

We theorise that the desire to make a will is driven by a combination of demographic factors, external events and internal desires; however, it may be moderated by apathy and anxiety about the will-making process, or, indeed, engaging with a death-related process.

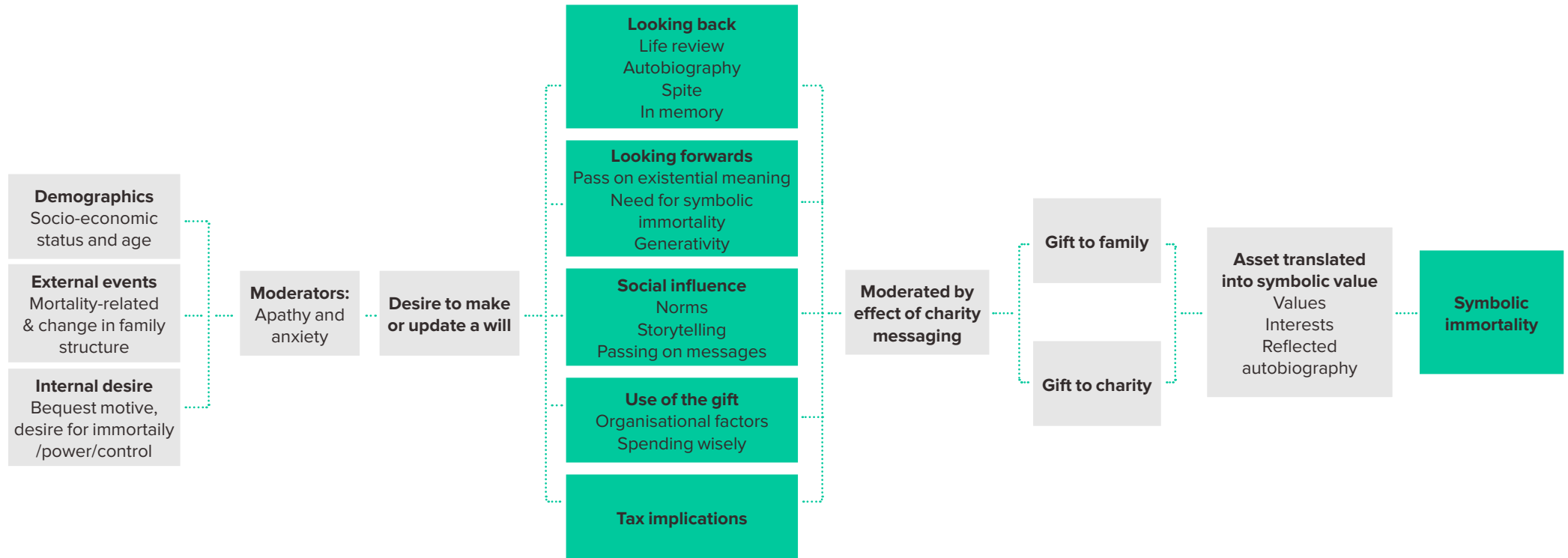
As the legator makes their distribution decisions, we believe they are likely to engage in a range of reflections involving looking back over their life, and looking forward past its anticipated end. They are also likely to contemplate others' actions, the ultimate use of their gift by beneficiaries and the tax implications of their giving. These reflections are, we believe, likely to be influenced by charity messaging.

Based on these reflections, the legator will make decisions about the distribution of their assets to charities and family members. These physical assets will eventually be transformed from having economic to symbolic value; ultimately, helping to confer symbolic immortality on their owner.

Overall, however, what this review tells us is that, although we have a relatively good understanding of who leaves legacies, and why they leave them, we know relatively little about the detail of the specific process that legacy donors go through, and the series of the decisions that they take: the how and the when of legacy giving. Without that knowledge, our ability as charities to add value to that process is limited. The next section explores what further research could tell us about donor decision making.

Table 6:

A legacy model



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Areas for future research

Given that we understand relatively little about the decision-making process, in the table below we attempt to break down the legacy giving decision into a series of inter-linked decisions that a donor will make. We then identify areas in which we could improve our understanding of the decision, and, specifically the NGO role in the process:

Key relevant decisions	Decision to make or update a will	Decision how to write a will	Decision as to beneficiaries	Decision as to how to allocate physical objects and monetary assets between beneficiaries Decision as to what legacy to leave e.g. cash, share of an estate	Decision to leave a charitable legacy specifically	Decision to leave a legacy to "charity", cause and brand	Decision as to what one owns/has power to distribute	Negotiation between joint will makers
Improving overall understanding	Are the drivers for planning different for those who are making versus updating wills?	How do people decide which option to use e.g. solicitor, will-writer, online?	How do people select possible beneficiaries?	How do people trade-off between the needs of various beneficiaries when allocating their gifts?	In which order are decisions made e.g. will people already decided to leave a gift before writing a will or is it typically stimulated during the process?	How do donors make their decision at the various levels e.g. do they start from a specific brand they would like to support or from the idea of supporting charity in general? What is the donor's "object of love" i.e. are they attached to the charity sector, particular causes, specific brands or others (staff, beneficiaries)?	How do people, and perhaps, particularly those in a relationship understand/negotiate what is theirs to leave?	Given that many wills are mirror-wills, how do couples (and perhaps wider families) negotiate the leaving of legacies?
Improving understanding of NGO role	Does communication from NGOs have a role to play in driving will making? Do charitable will making schemes drive will making amongst those who would not otherwise have made/updated their will and/or included a charitable gift?	Is one option more effective than another in stimulating charitable gifts? Is one option more appropriate than another for the charitable will maker?	Can charities up-weight their importance in donors' minds, and what are the ethics of this?	Can charities up-weight their importance in donors' minds, and what are the ethics of this? Can charities influence the type of legacy which is left, and what are the ethics of this?	Ultimately, what role do charity communications play in stimulating legacy giving (both in terms of individual charities and cross-sector initiatives)?	What role do charity communications play in donors choosing specific causes or charity brands?		How do charities best support and encourage joint/family decision making? How do charities best steward donors in the context of wider relationships?

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