RaiseTell

Using the Donor Magic Number Dashboard

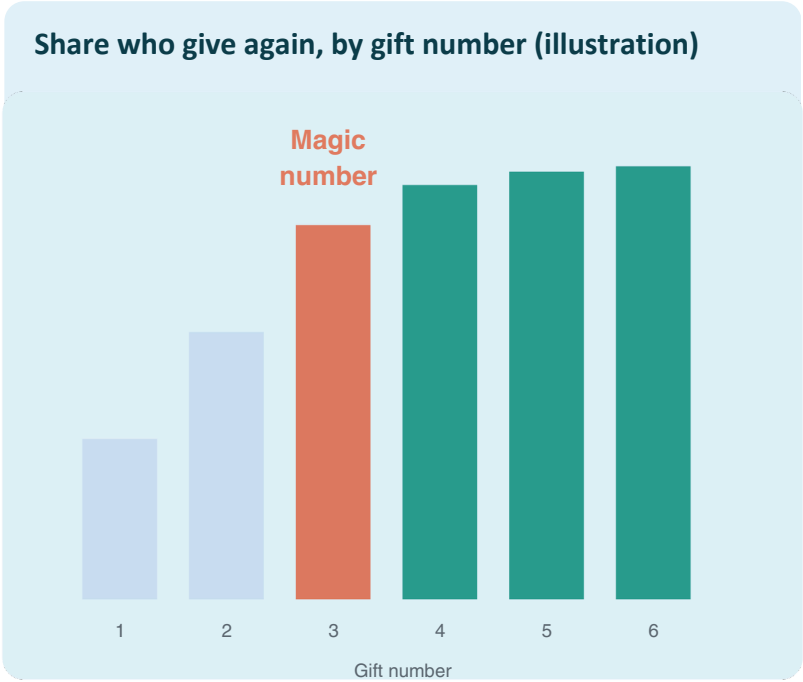
The gift at which your donors start behaving like committed supporters–and the newer donors to steward toward it now

Dashboard 297 · QX289 - QX294

The gift where a donor becomes a supporter

At some gift, donors stop thinking of themselves as someone who gave and start thinking of themselves as a supporter. In the data, the share who give again climbs with each early gift, then levels off. That gift is your magic number.

- Every donor's gifts are put in order; pledge payments aren't double counted.
- Segment = the donor's giving level in their FIRST fiscal year, using your own thresholds.



How the number is found

Climb the ladder

Starting at gift 2, keep climbing while each extra gift still lifts the share who give again by a meaningful step. The last gift that does is the magic number.

Check the value

A second rule asks whether lifetime giving also steps up at the same gift.

Rate the confidence

Strong when both rules agree; Moderate when the value rule lands one gift away.

Why not just the biggest jump? That would always be gift 2 -the leap from a first to a second gift is large everywhere. The second gift matters mainly because it leads to the next one; the ladder looks past it to where retention settles.

What each tab shows

Overview

The magic number for all donors and each segment, confidence, retention before and at it, value from it onward, and what it's worth.

How to Read

Plain-language guide to the method, every number and how to act on it.

Evidence

The gift-by-gift ladder of retention and lifetime value, with charts. Pick a segment at the top.

Opportunity

Added giving per new-donor class if 5, 10 or 15 points more reach it, and how each class is progressing.

Speed & Pattern

Did getting there quickly, or rising, mixed, flat or falling gifts, lead to more giving? Plain verdicts.

Onboarding Pipeline

Living donors short of the magic number with a gift in the last 24 months: who to steward now.

The View tabs hold each query's full output, for checking a number or exporting.

Reading the value and pattern numbers

Three ways to read value

Median

the conservative floor -half of donors gave at least this

75th percentile

what a solidly good donor does, without a few very large gifts

Average

the right lens for sizing a whole stream of new donors, which always includes a few future major donors

Speed groups

How many of the gifts up to the magic number came in the first fiscal year: all of them, 2+ then the rest later, or one then the rest later.

Gift-amount patterns

Increasing, Mixed (up and down), Flat (within 15%) or Decreasing on the way there. Each tab ends with a plain-language verdict.

Make it your onboarding finish line

Set the goal

Make reaching the magic number the finish line of your new donor onboarding program.

Work the pipeline monthly

Active donors first, then At risk; within each, donors one gift short first.

Personal touch

Donors with a Decreasing gift pattern get a personal contact.

Time the second gift

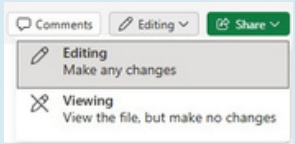
Use the speed findings to decide how hard to push for a second gift in year one.

Share the case

Show leadership the opportunityestimates to justify stewardship investment.

Look by segment: on the Evidence and Speed & Pattern tabs, theyellow boxatthe top (cell B4)switches between All,Top, Middle and Bottom. The magic number can differ by segment.

Switch to Editing first. The segment dropdowns don't work in Viewing mode - change it at the top right of the Excel ribbon.



Read it carefully, then measure

Watch-outs

- Averages run well above medians because of a few very large givers -and that's realistic. Nearly every new-donor stream includes a few who become large donors, whether they start small or grow capacity over time, so the average is a fair estimate of a class's future value. Show the median as the floor.
- Reaching the magic number marks higher value; it doesn't prove the gift causes later giving.
- Recent classes marked Still maturing will rise - judge trends on full-history classes.

Measures of success

Classes reaching it
a rising share of each new donor class reaching the magic number

Added giving
actual added giving compared with the Opportunity estimates