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W E B I N A R



# 2025 State of *Nonprofit Auctions*: Trends, Insights & Data from the Field

THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 2025



**Karrie Wozniak**  
CMO



**Sarah Sebastian**  
Director of Corporate Communications



# Let's Get Started!

If you could bid on any dream experience at a charity auction, sky's the limit, what would it be?



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# Meet Our Presenters



**Sarah Sebastian**

Director, Corporate Communications  
OneCause



**Karrie Wozniak**

CMO  
OneCause





# Agenda

01

Key Findings

02

Auction Trends

03

How to Use the Data

04

Rollout & Resources

# Let's Put This Debate to Rest...



[Name blurred] [Title blurred]

I very much appreciate this perspective and would offer a respectful “yes, and” to the conversation.

While I agree that events alone shouldn’t be the sole fundraising strategy, they can still be incredibly powerful tools for acquisition, retention, and long-term growth—if done right. The key is having the infrastructure to support them, and executing with intention, clarity, and a deep understanding of your audience.

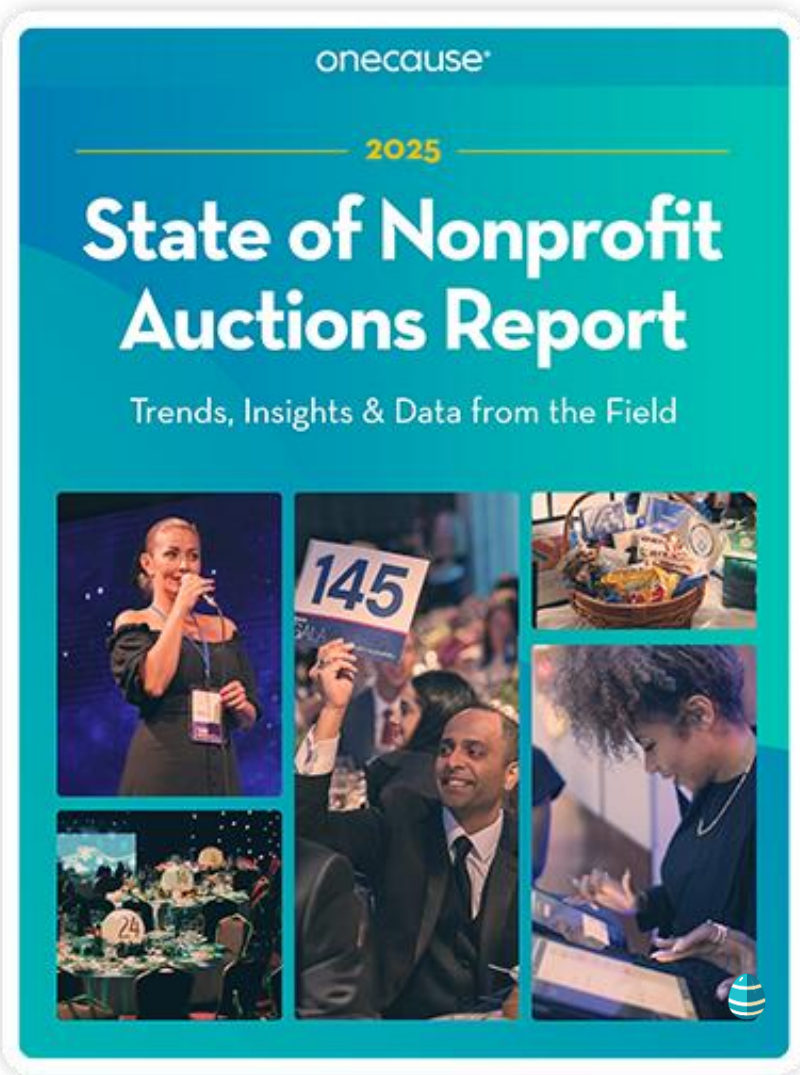
’s

Galas, in particular, remain relevant—not just for revenue generation, but for elevating an organization’s profile and cultivating new champions. Success comes when there’s a clear financial goal, a disciplined approach to expenses, and thoughtful attention to the guest and donor experience. Fundraising elements like a well-executed “raise the paddle” (especially with pre-committed leadership gifts) can be game-changers in the room, inspiring collective generosity and delivering real impact.

It’s not about whether we do events—but how we do them that matters most.

**Names have been blurred to protect the innocent... and the not-so-innocent.**

# Key Findings



01

Auction Attendees Have Strong Potential to Become Long-term Donors

02

Revenue from Nonprofit Auctions Indicates Significant Opportunity for Growth

03

The Right Auction Items Lead to Higher Engagement and Bidding Activity

04

Auction Technology is Crucial to Increasing Engagement – Especially with Younger Donors





# Auction Donors: An Overview



of social donors report  
participating in nonprofit  
auctions

On average these donors  
participated in

**1.91** live auctions

**1.72** silent auctions

in the last 12 months



**49%**

of auction donors  
gave more last year



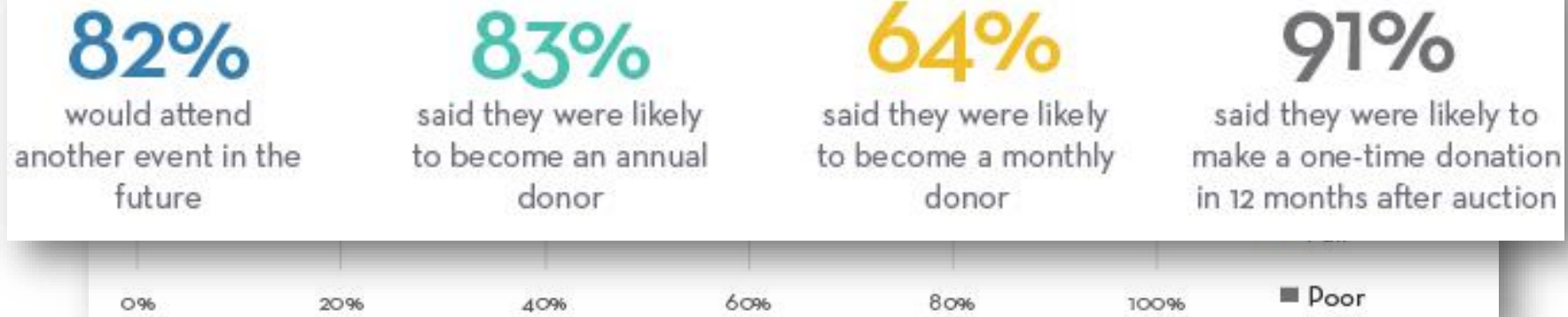
**\$529**

average donation  
from auction donors

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# Lifelong Donors, Not One-Time Bidders

## Auction Attendee Satisfaction with Last Auction



# Make it Easy, Make it Engaging

Make a donation during the event	76%	Indicate how you want to receive or pick up won items	57%
Register for the event	74%		
Attendees versus Nonprofit Professionals		Nonprofit professionals who said they think this is very easy for their attendees	Attendee ratings of "very easy"
Set a max bid on an item		66%	55%
Add and save your payment information		65%	56%
Place another bid after receiving an outbid notification		68%	59%
View a list of items you bid on		63%	54%
outbid notification			

How easy was it to do each of the following?  
Percent rated as "very easy."



# Make it Easy, Make it Engaging

<i>Testimonials from people benefiting from the organization's work</i>	63%
The silent auction	61%
The live auction	59%
The speakers	58%
Ability to socialize with other guests	58%
Hearing about the impact of your donation	54%
Live donation match opportunity	52%
Interactive activity or lessons	52%
The theme of the event	51%
Live entertainment (comedy, music, etc.)	51%
Viewing live results of a competition	50%
Ability to track the organization's progress towards fundraising goal	50%

Online posts leading up to the event	48%
Raffles	46%
Live comment/message feed	46%
Instant live recognition of donors	45%
Live viewing of a relevant documentary or film	45%
Interactive challenges or contests to join	44%
Happy hour	44%
A custom hashtag you could share in reference to the event	42%
Pre-recorded content/videos	39%
Casino-style games or games of chance	33%

How engaging was each of the following?  
Percent rated as “very engaging.”

# Make it Appealing

87%

of nonprofits included live donation appeals during their auctions



65%

of auction pros said last appeal met or exceeded goal



62%

of auction attendees responded to a live appeal

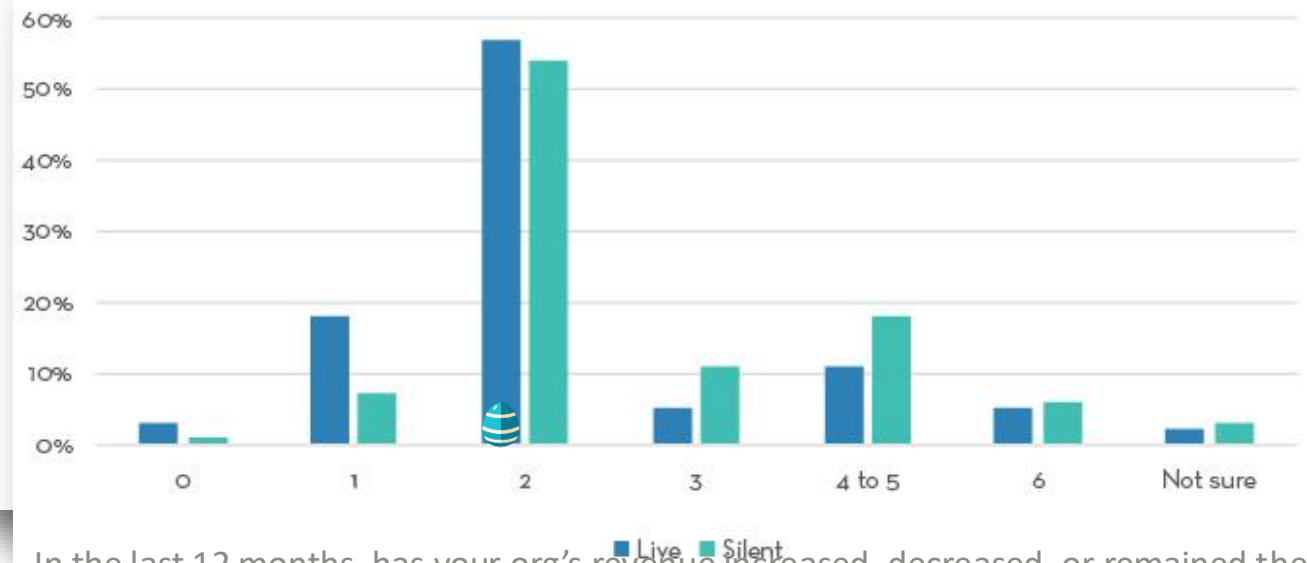






# Revenue Insights

- ✓ Engaging
- ✓ Consistent
- ✓ Dependable



In the last 12 months, has your org's revenue increased, decreased, or remained the same?

How many live auctions/ silent auctions has your org sponsored in the last 12 months?

In the NEXT 12 months, do you think your org's revenue will increase, decrease, or remain the same?



# Bidding & Item Insights



**90%**

bid on items



**46%**

bid and won items



**67**

average number of  
items in auction



**5.36**

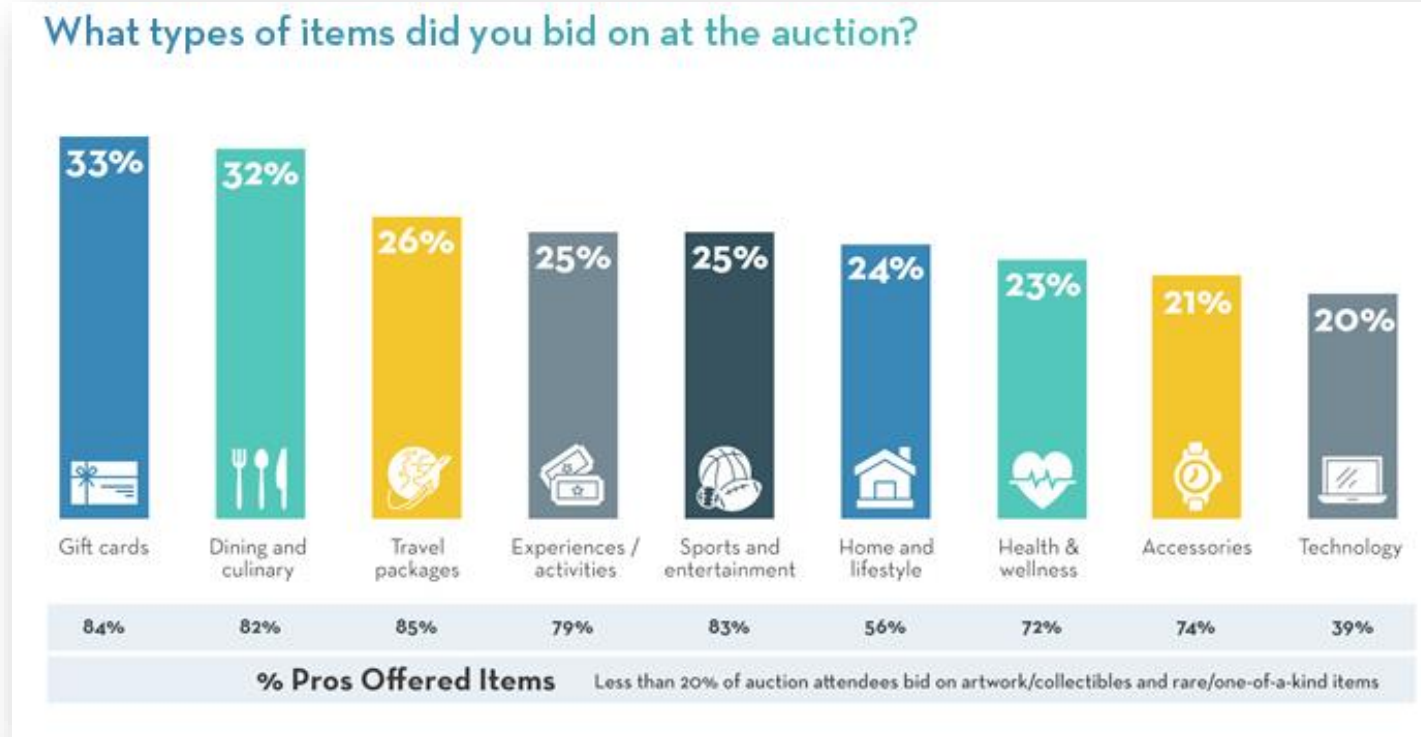
average bids per item



**134.5%**

% raised to item  
value average

# Bidding & Item Insights



## PRO TIP!

6 in 10 auction goers said it was important to be able to preview items before the auction/bidding opens.

# Measuring Success

## How organizations measure success

Meeting (or exceeding) fundraising goals 94%

Positive attendee feedback 74%

95% very / somewhat successful

43% very successful

100%

Overall, how successful was your organization's most recent auction?

Engagement on social media 25%

Acquisition of new volunteers to the organization 23%

Not sure/None of the above 3%

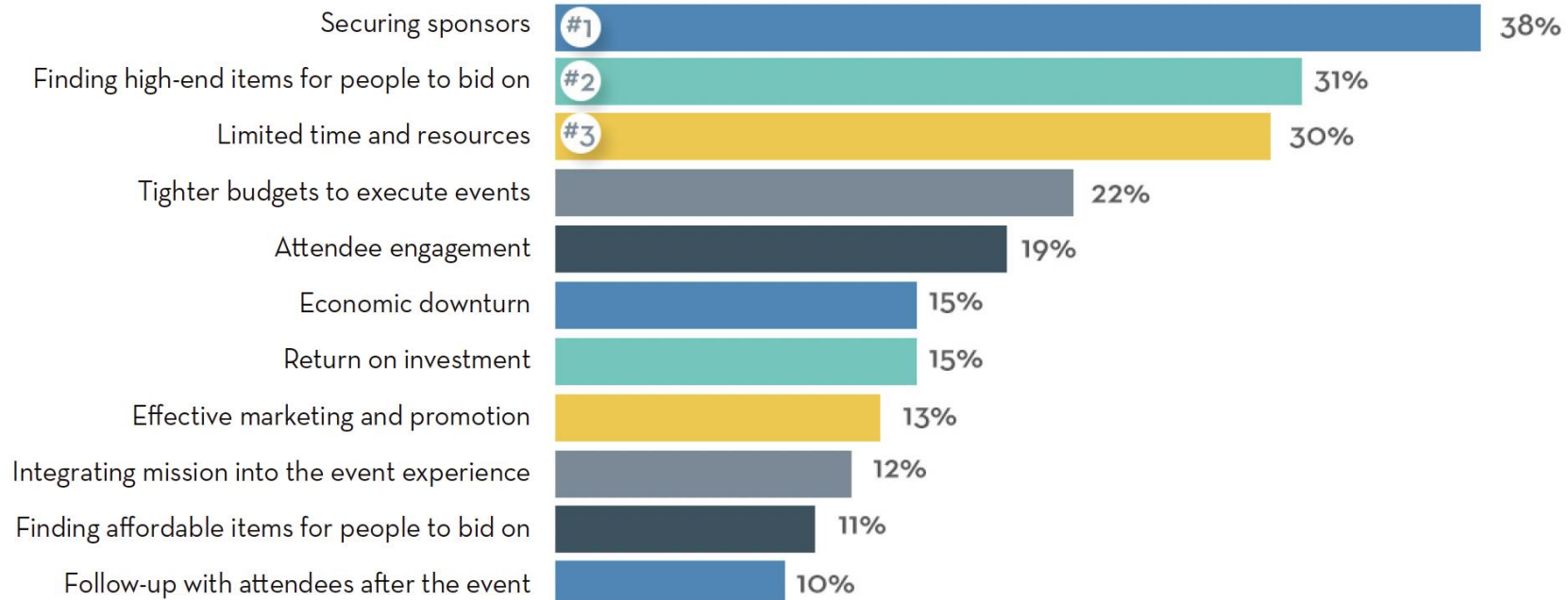
### PRO TIP!

Only 50% of nonprofits reported collecting feedback from attendees and donors, but 74% said positive feedback was viewed as part of auction success. Don't wait for donors to give you feedback – send out a post-event survey to learn what went well and what you can improve next time!



# Challenges

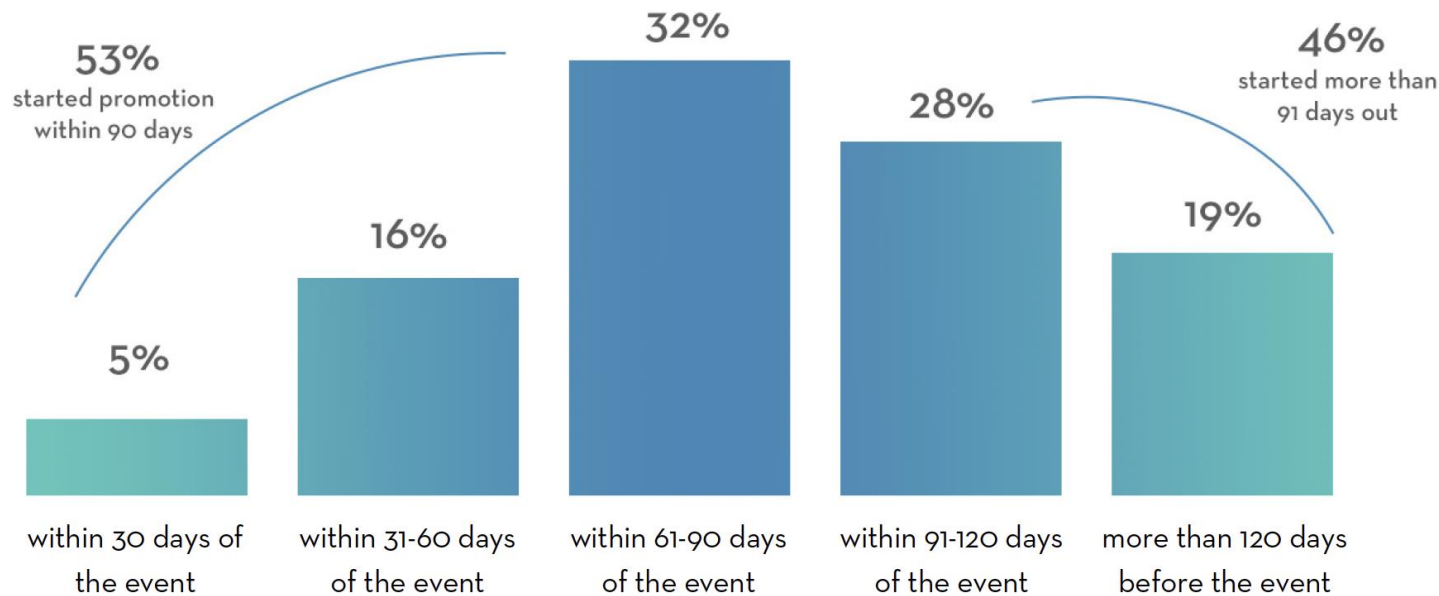
## Auction Challenges



Which of the following, if any, are the biggest challenges to achieving your organization's goals related to events where there are auctions? Pick up to 3.

# Spreading the Word

## Auction Promotion Timing

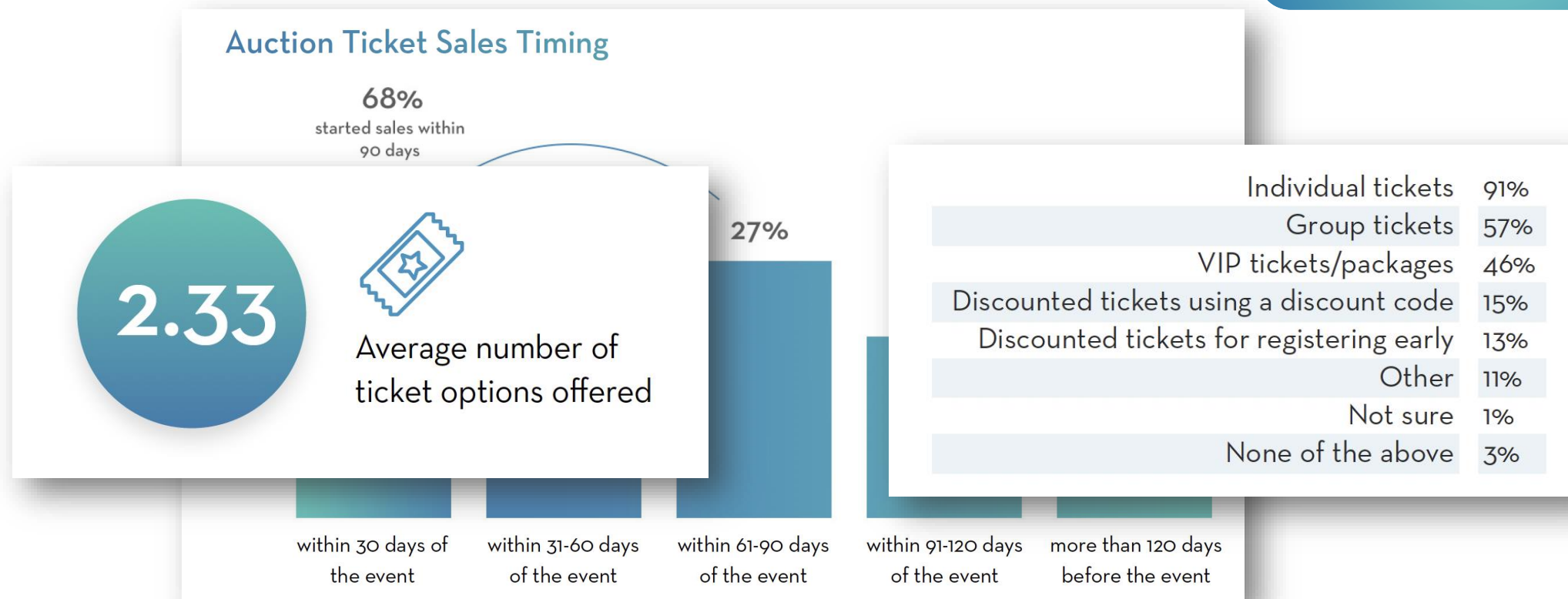


## Most Effective Promotion Channels

Email	84%
Organic social media	56%
Auction site	54%
Printed mailer	43%
Text message	37%
Paid social media	23%
Press releases	18%
Digital ads	18%
Videos	15%
Print ads	9%
Influencer marketing	4%

# Get Your Tickets!

Start ticket sales early to test ticket types & promos!



Thinking of your most recent auction, when did your organization start selling tickets?

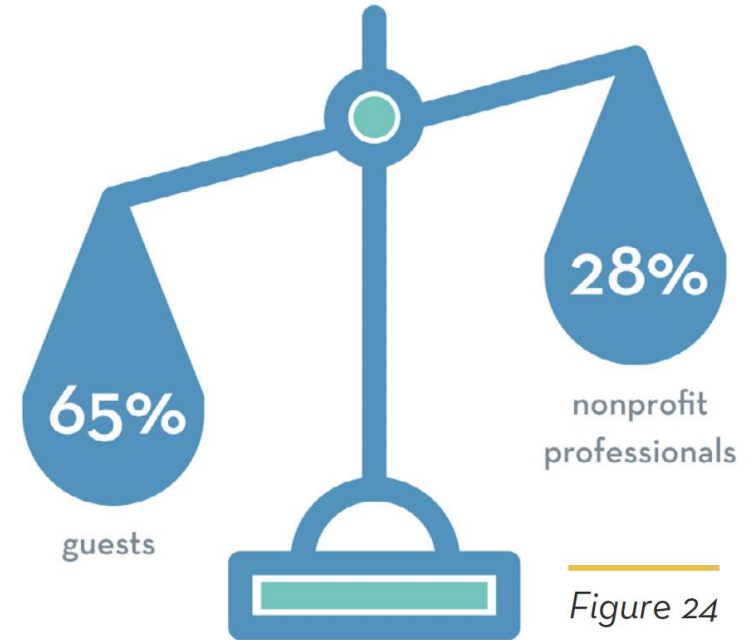


# Tech Matters



of auction attendees  
placed bids via  
mobile devices

*Figure 23*



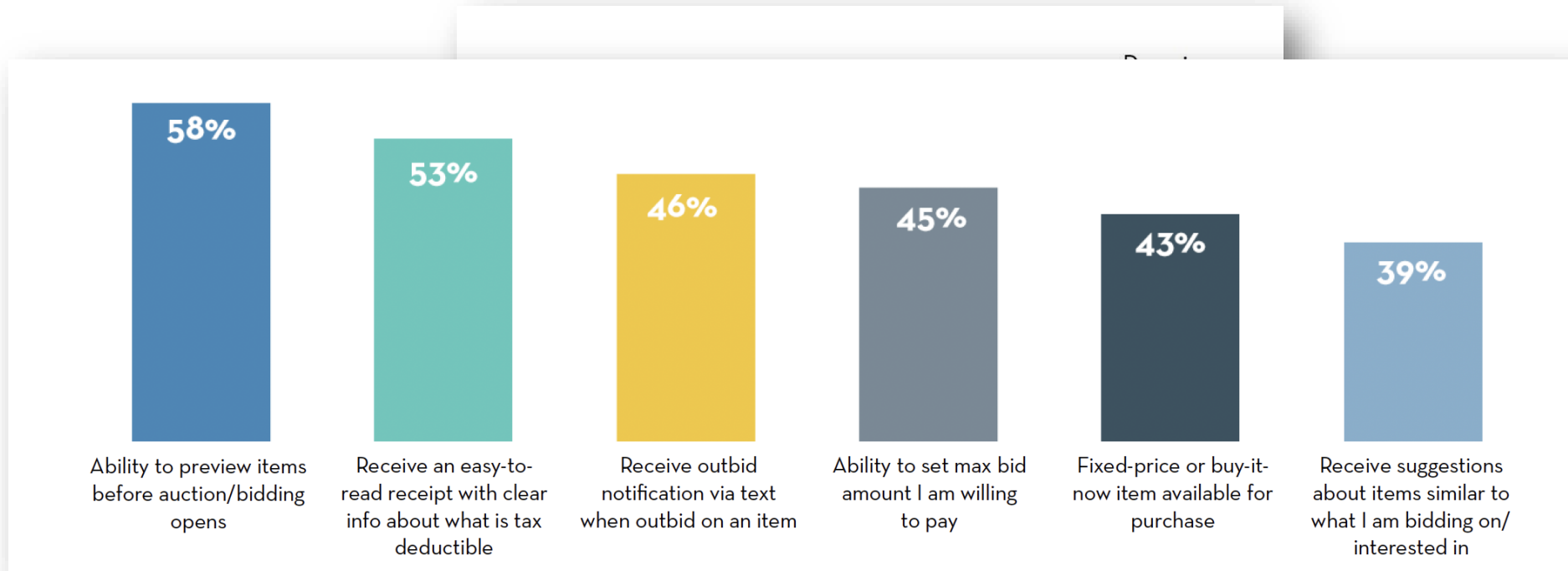
*Figure 24*

Percent of auction guests versus percent of pros  
who said downloading an app to bid was  
required at their auction.

## **PRO TIP!**

Select an auction software that makes it easy to place bids on a mobile device without the confusion or hassle of having to download an auction app.

# Feature Focus : By Generation



Auction features highly rated as "very important," by generation.

# Recommendations

01

Offer a Wide Variety of Items at Price Points Everyone Can Afford

02

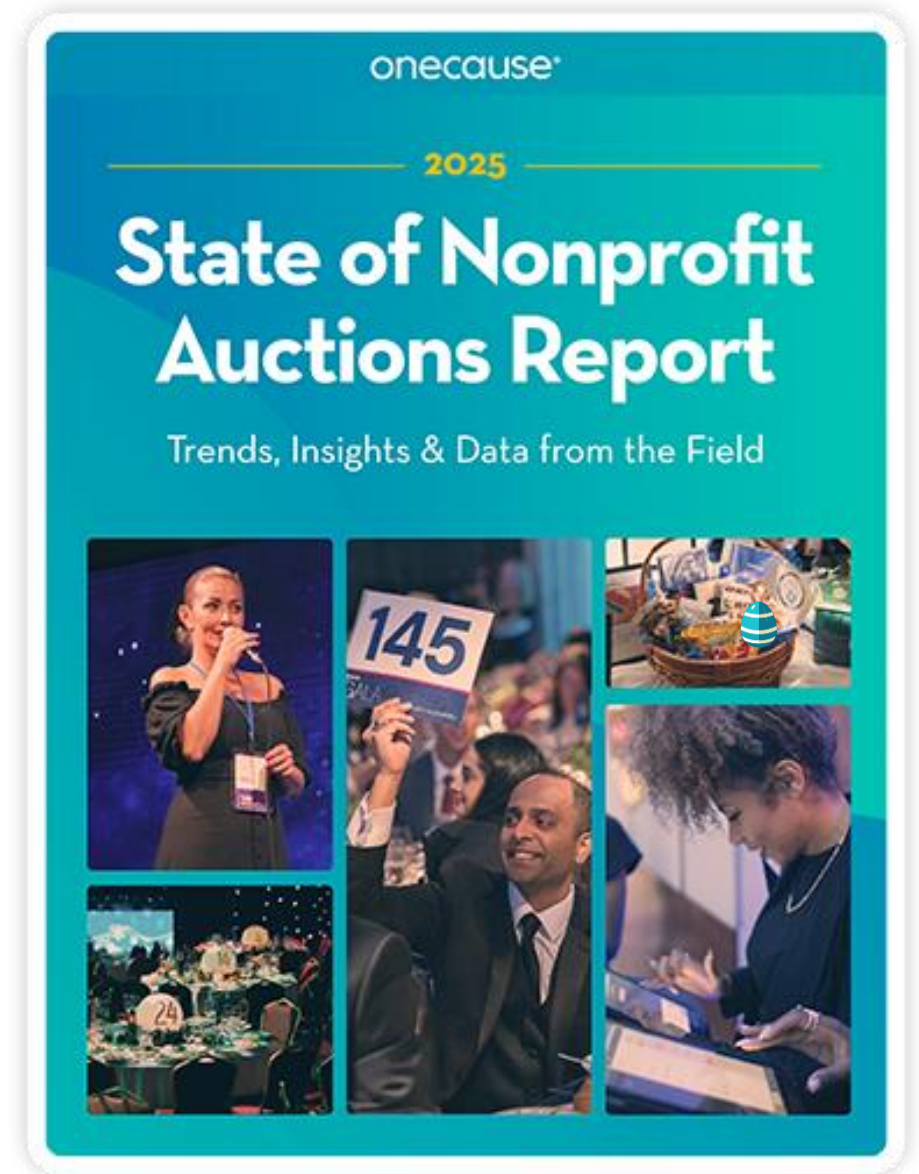
Streamline Logistics with Seamless Check-In and Checkout

03

Highlight Digital Tools to Attract and Engage Younger Generations

04

Close the Gap Between Perception and Reality







# Recommendations

05

Leverage Testimonials to Deepen Engagement

06

Implement Early Engagement Tactics

07

Leverage Fixed-Price or Buy-it-Now Items for Immediate Participation

08

Utilize AI to Simplify Auction Preparation and Execution

# DATA NUGGETS



- ▶ 82% of auction donors would attend another event, 83% are likely to become annual donors, 64% are likely to become monthly donors.
- ▶ 49% of auction donors gave more last year & average donation was \$529
- ▶ 40% of nonprofits said auctions make up 10% or more of their revenue.
- ▶ 77% of nonprofits reported consistent or increased auction revenue in last year.
- ▶ Over a third of attendees placed bids via mobile devices.
- ▶ Average of 67 items per auction with 5.36 bids per item; items sold at 134.5% of item value.
- ▶ 6 in 10 guests want the ability to preview items.
- ▶ Younger generations want outbid notifications (65%), fixed-price & buy-it-now items (61%), and automatic item recommendations (59%).

# Access to Full Findings



DOWNLOAD  
2025 STATE OF NONPROFIT AUCTIONS

<https://www.onecause.com/ebook/2025-state-of-nonprofit-auctions-report/>



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VP Product Strategy  
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**Steve Lausch**  
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