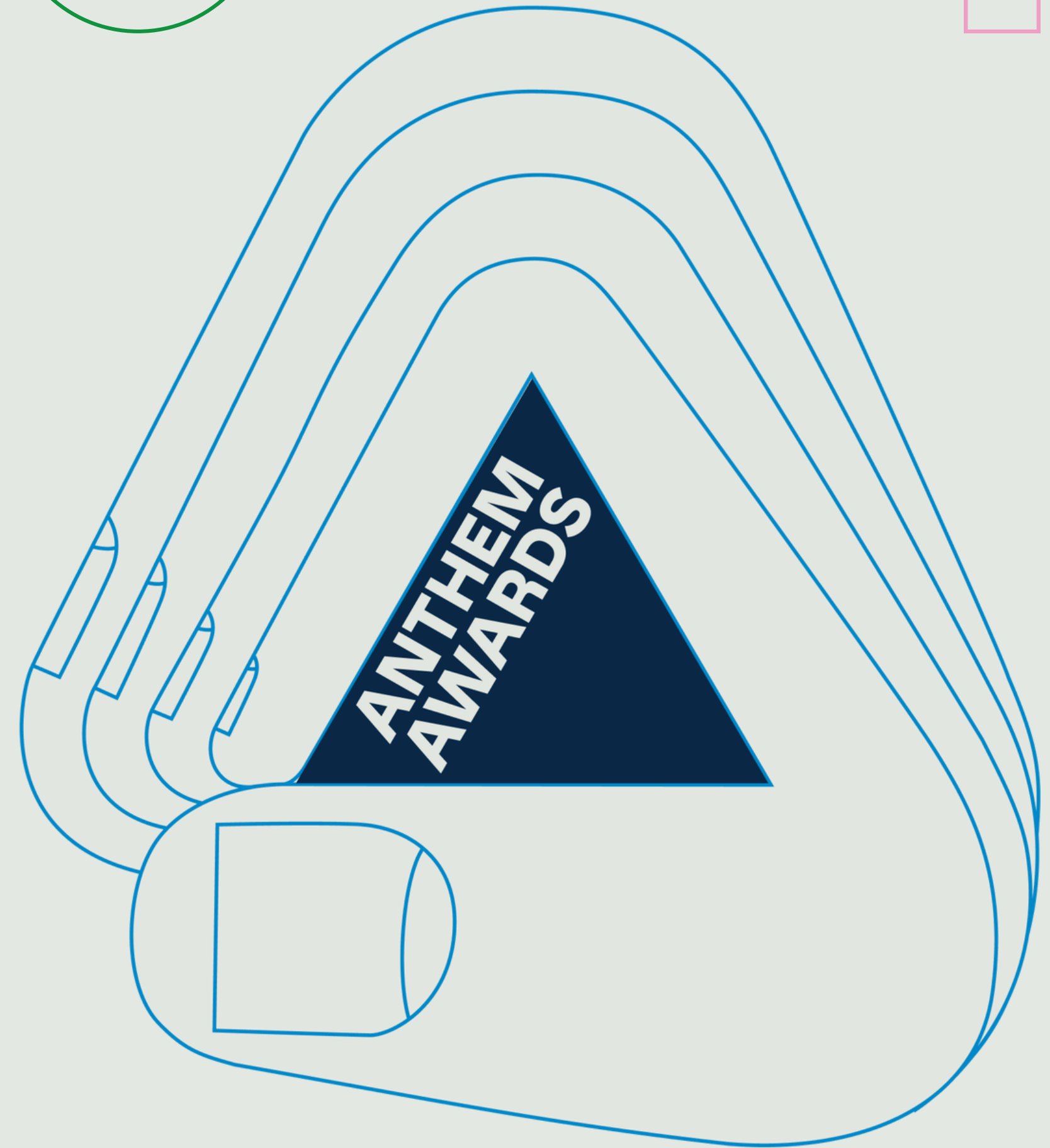


2024 Anthem Trend Report

# Elevate Your Impact

Exploring marketing insights that  
will drive your mission forward.

Last Chance to enter The Anthem Awards  
Extended Deadline **Friday, September 13th**  
[anthemawards.com](https://anthemawards.com)





# Table of Contents

## 03 Introduction

---

## 05 Chapter 1: A Pivotal Moment for Impact

---

## 09 Chapter 2: Find the Opportunities

10 Be Brave in Your Storytelling

14 Data is More Than Numbers on a Page

17 Meet Your Community Where They Are

21 Speak to an Audience of One

24 Lean Into Your Niche

29 Embrace Failure

---

## 32 Conclusions

---

## 34 About the Anthem Awards

# Opening Letter

Since 2021, the Anthem Awards has witnessed the growth of cross-sector initiatives for the greater good. From culturally competent tech innovations to unique impact marketing campaigns and smarter, data-driven fundraising.

A one-size-fits-all approach no longer works in this climate. Today's pressing sociopolitical and environmental issues require a multi-pronged approach—to forge change and elevate the impact your work is making.

The Anthem Awards were founded to amplify the work of people and companies who focused on changing the world. By recognizing that work, we have learned a few best practices from the work we've reviewed.

**So, this season, we've dedicated ourselves to helping our community elevate their efforts by sharing best-in-class approaches to impact marketing.**

Featuring insights from industry leaders in the impact space and tools, our report provides tactics you can use to develop your brand storytelling, build out your data strategies and more.

We hope you find this report helpful, and that the case studies inspire your future efforts.

**Patricia McLoughlin**  
General Manager,  
The Anthem Awards

## Making Work That Leaves an Impact?

Enter The Anthem Awards. Learn more about the causes and projects we honor—and see where your work might fit [here](#).

The Extended Entry Deadline is **Friday, September 13, 2024.**

# Our Mission

## Inspire Our Community

The Anthem Awards mission is to inspire our community, and others to take action in their own ways. As you comb through, we hope you uncover a campaign or strategy that inspires you.

## Provide a New Framework

Our main goal is to inspire your team's approach and framework for creating impact-driven content. From leaning into your niche, to **embracing more creative executions**, this report offers new tactics to try.

## Share Tools for Storytelling

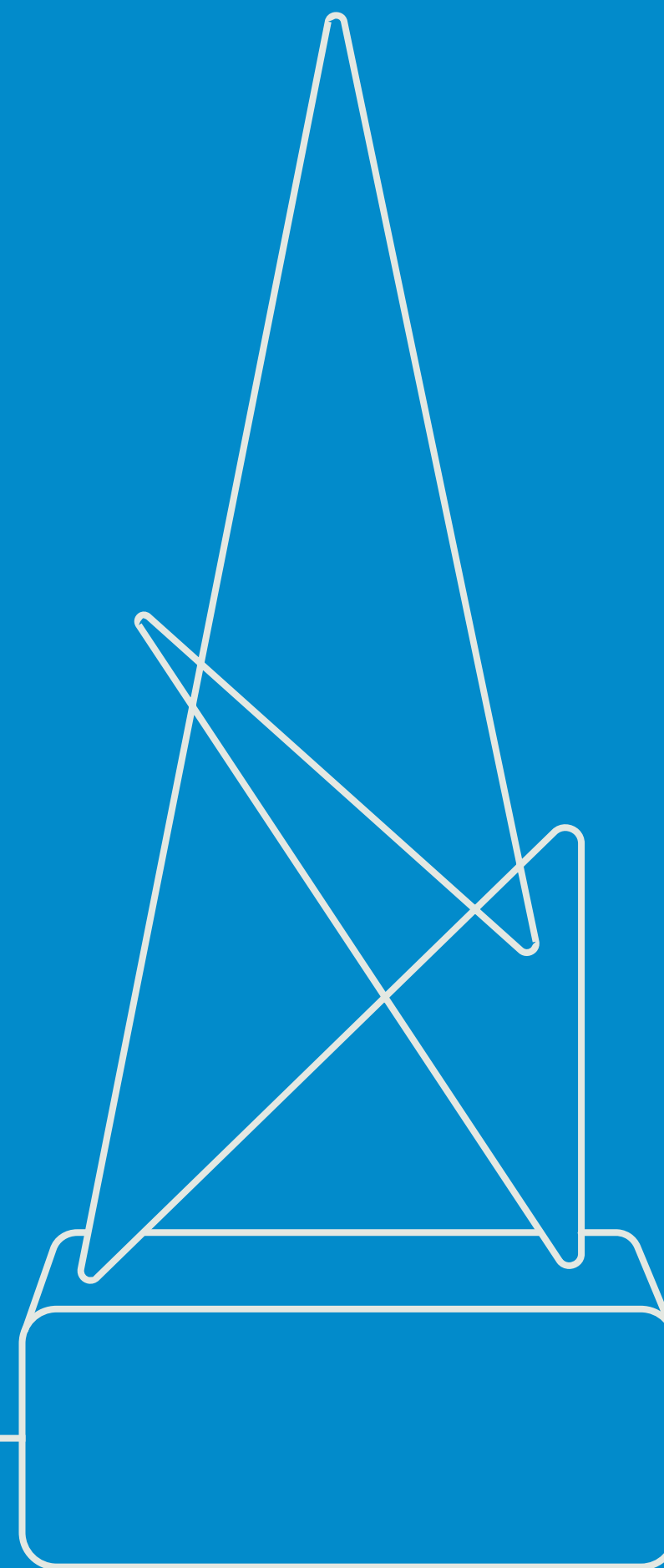
Understanding what "impact" means for your organization, will help you share it. Learn methods to bolster your story.



## Chapter 1

# A Pivotal Moment for Impact

Despite many positive developments in the impact sector, the industry is facing large challenges.



# The Rise of Greenhushing

Organizations are becoming bashful, not boastful, about their sustainability goals. Despite taking actions towards sustainability, many companies have actively decreased communicating their climate goals—according to South Pole’s Net Zero Report 2023/2024—for fear of backlash from both climate activists and climate deniers.

Honest assessment is the key to making meaningful change. This only occurs through full transparency from companies about the environmental impact of their products.



81% of surveyed companies feel communicating net zero is good for their bottom line, yet **44% find it more difficult than ever.**

Source: [South Pole’s Net Zero Report 2023/2024](#)

# DE&I Initiatives Under Attack

Four years after an industry-wide “racial reckoning,” DE&I programming is under attack. Post-2020 saw a swell in diverse hiring practices, prioritizing racial equity across all sectors.

Today we’re experiencing a swift backlash, with schools and universities facing the brunt. As of May 2024, more than 30 new anti-DE&I bills have been introduced across the US targeting initiatives at public colleges. The end of Affirmative Action was a signal of what was to come, and what we are up against as a sector.



Following a peak in 2020, DE&I-focused jobs have shrunk by **8% in 2024.**

*Source: “As DEI gets more divisive, companies are ditching their teams.” The Washington Post . February 18, 2024. Revelio Labs study via The Washington Post*

# Donors are Stretched Thin

A stalled economy and high inflation have left philanthropy slightly on the backburner. Immediately following the pandemic years, charitable giving in the US had grown by 1.9 percent between 2022-2023, reaching a total of \$557.16 billion, according to a Giving USA 2024 report. However that number has declined by 2.1% when adjusted for inflation.

## The Inflation Battle Is Far From Over

Services price gains all but rule out rate cuts in the near term.

May 16, 2024 at 12:00 AM EDT

Corporate giving totaled **\$36.55 billion** in **2023**, a 1.1% decline when adjusted for inflation.

*Giving USA 2024: The Annual Report on Philanthropy for the Year 2023*





## Chapter 2

# Find the Opportunities

There is still reason to be optimistic. Although impact work is difficult, it is more vital than ever.

We have identified six key insights that you can roll into the impact marketing you are working on.

**2.1** Be Brave in Your Storytelling

---

**2.2** Data is More Than Numbers on a Page

---

**2.3** Meet Your Community Where They Are

---

**2.4** Speak to an Audience of One

---

**2.5** Lean Into Your Niche

---

**2.6** Embrace Failure

## 2.1

# Be Brave in Your Storytelling

Effective storytelling is essential to impact work. Without crafting a narrative meaningfully and communicating your vision properly, your impact will be limited.

To tell your organization's story in a way that resonates, you must understand your audience. Approach your communication and social strategies with intentionality; **don't be afraid to be personal or shy away from hard truths.** Ensure that even if your viewer or listener is not directly impacted by an issue, your work helps them empathize and mobilize towards action.

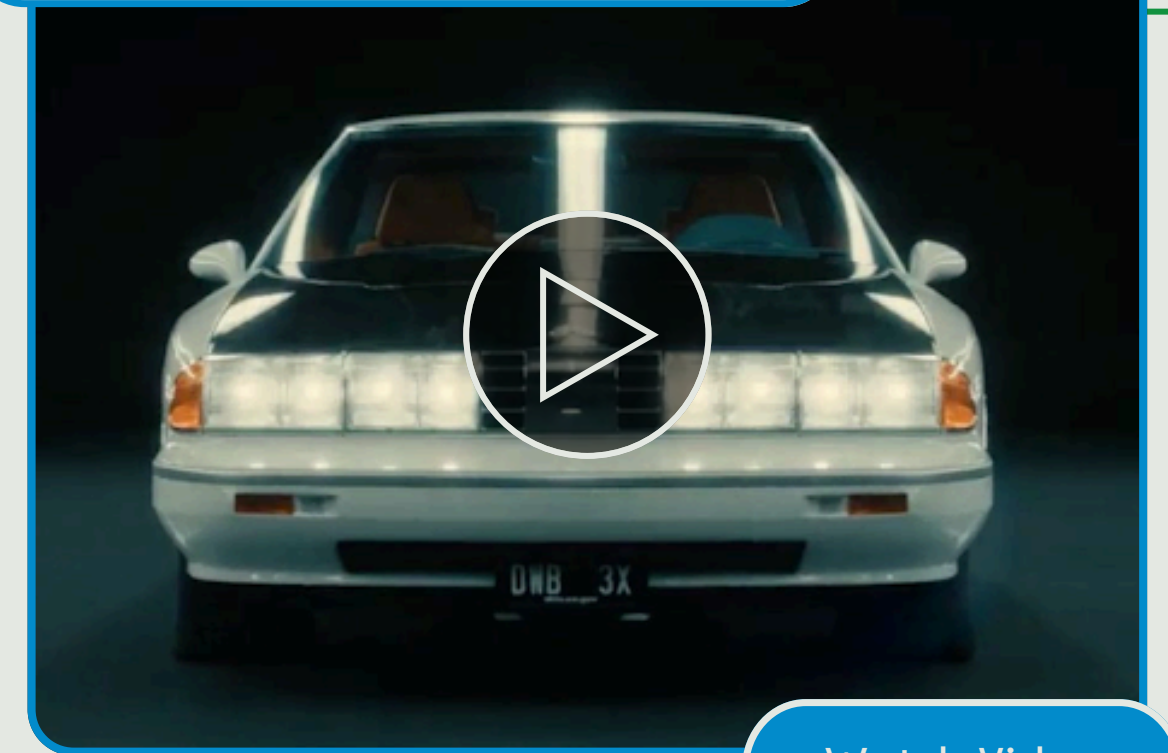


# Driving While Black

**Goodby, Silverstein & Partners** and **Critical Mass** partnered together in 2023 to create “Driving While Black” (DWB). This Anthem Winner brought to life the fear and violence Black people experience during the most common interaction with police: traffic stops. The agencies prototyped a car equipped with features to mitigate the double standards Black people face.

Well-crafted and poignant, this campaign shows the power of good storytelling to spark conversation—and meaningful change.

Photo Credit: Goodby, Silverstein & Partners and Critical Mass



[Watch Video](#)

## Result & Impact

- DWB received widespread press attention, including outlets AdAge, AdWeek, Muse, Driving, and industry publications.
- The project was applauded for sparking an overdue conversation of policing issues in a creative way.

# The Nocturnists' Post-Roe America

The Nocturnists are a community of healthcare workers who embrace humanity through storytelling. Their Anthem Award-winning podcast series, "Post-Roe America," documents how the US healthcare workforce has been impacted by the Dobbs decision –which rolled back protections on abortion access set forth by Roe vs Wade. The 7-part series features stories from providers across the American South, infusing empathy into their work.

Photo Credit: Illustration by Nicole Xu



[Listen to Podcast](#)

## Result & Impact

- The Nocturnists gained a 40% increase in downloads across their podcasts
- Countless testimonials from listeners who have been moved to action

A Word from Anthem Judges



“

When it comes to marketing, there's a common misconception that impact-driven strategies can't be engaging or imaginative. However, brands and organizations can effectively uphold their mission while embracing creative tactics by aligning their campaigns closely with their core values and objectives. This alignment ensures that creativity serves a purpose beyond just attracting attention—it reinforces the brand's commitment to making a meaningful impact.

—Janine Brady, Managing Director of Communications,  
Office of Eric Schmidt

# Data is More Than Numbers on a Page

**There is value in being creative with how you present and tell the story behind your data.** Consumers, investors and donors all want to understand where their dollars are going.

In this work, data is a constant—from informing decision making around programs to understanding your philanthropic footprint. It's vital to paint a picture of the community you're serving, creating transparency and highlighting an unseen issue.

**There is power in numbers.** Go beyond “good enough” to invest in your data story.



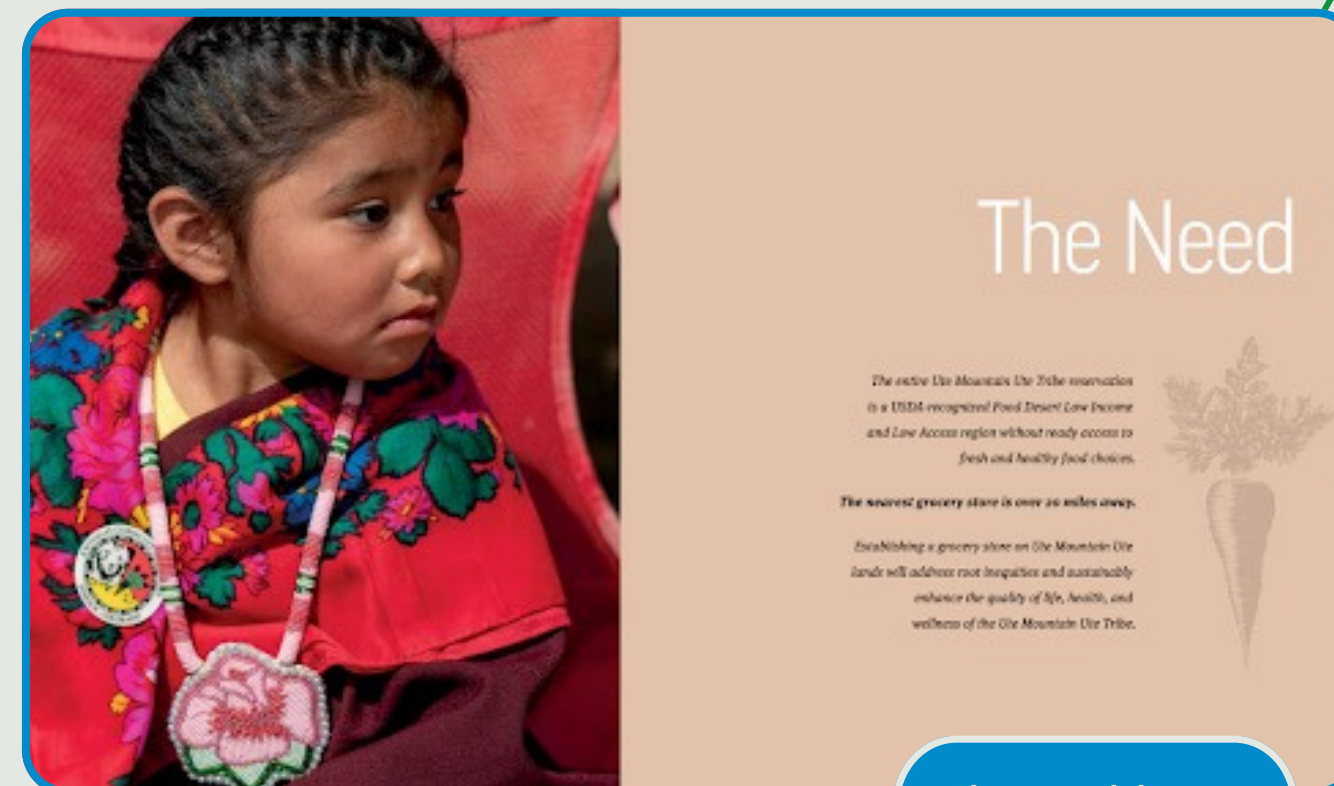
# UMUT Food Desert Fund Development Plan

The key to fundraising is being clear about your needs. Clarity comes from knowing your data. The **Ute Mountain Ute Tribe (UMUT)** is fundraising \$12 million for a proposed UMUT Grocery Store & Workforce Innovation Center, to provide healthy food and jobs to its 2,100 members—of whom, over 40% living below the poverty line.

With data collected through a feasibility study, UMUT's [Food Desert Fund Development Plan](#) paints a clear picture of what it means to live in a food desert—from food costs to life expectancy and more. Go beyond statistics to humanize your data.

## Result & Impact

- To date, over \$4.9 million in funding has been secured
- Food access point deployed to pilot a full-service market
- Donations secured by two major donors: the Economic Development Administration and Colorado Health Foundation



# Data.org's 'under / over' Campaign

Too often, marginalized groups are excluded from life-changing data and reporting. To create data equity, the under/over campaign raises awareness around the urgent need to include women and gender-diverse individuals in reporting.

The campaign showcases stories of individuals around the world who are collecting data to foster change. From improving maternal health access for African women to tracking gender-based violence throughout South America, Data.org is highlighting the need to put data in the hands of those who exist at the margins.



[Watch Video](#)

Bolster your data and gain a better understanding of your community with democratized resources like **Data.org**

## Result & Impact

- Nearly 5 million impressions garnered
- Over 7K page users and 8.5K page sessions with strong engagement
- 30 Social impact leaders attended their UNGA78 convening on gender data for climate progress



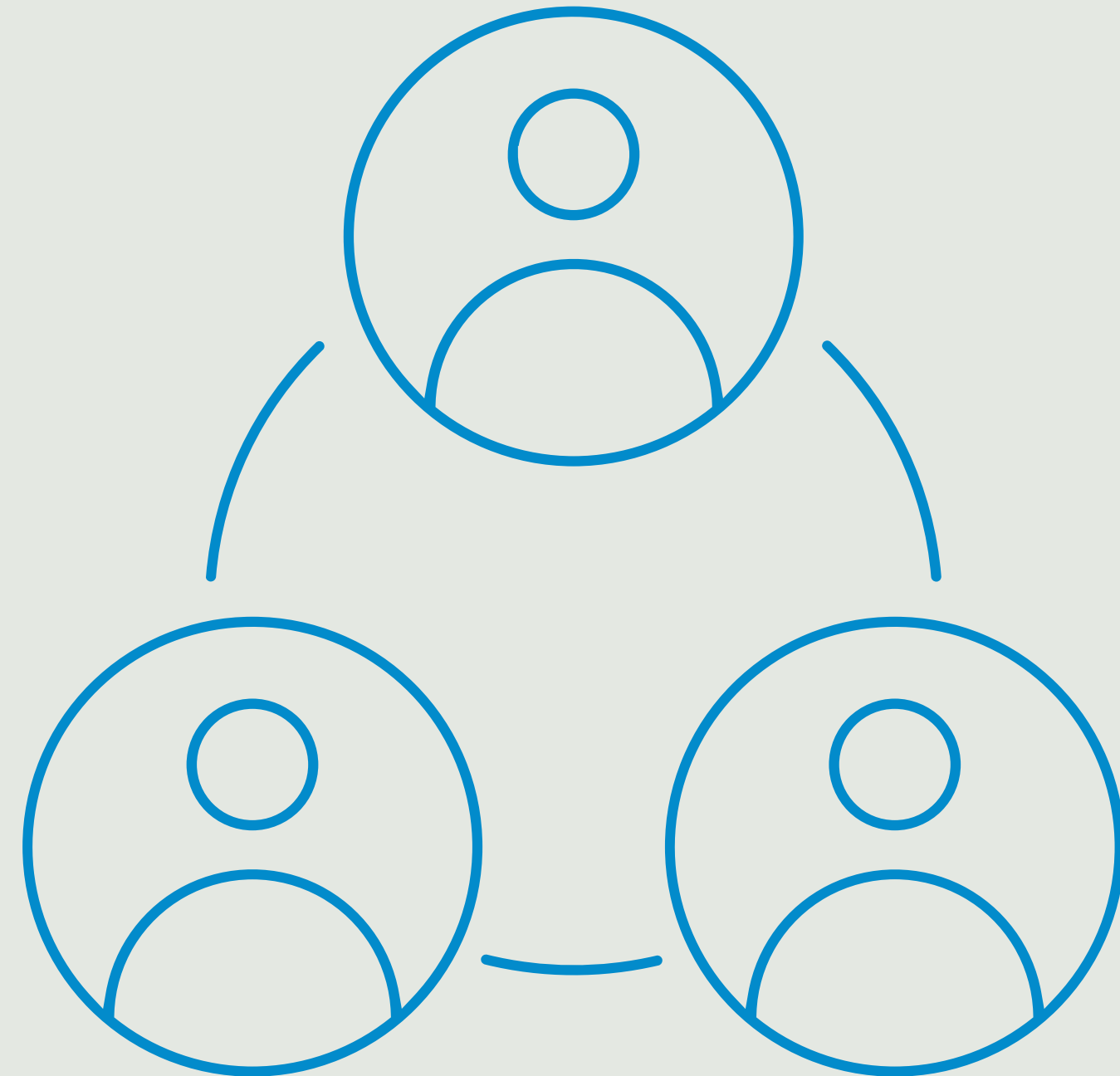


2.3

# Meet Your Community Where They Are

Meet your audience where they are, and speak their language. In today's competitive landscape, it can be difficult to draw attention online, let alone keep it.

**Make it easy for your target audience to engage with your work**—from hitting their core values to hitting the platforms where they reside. The willingness to build a campaign or execution that feels personalized can turn a passive supporter into an engaged volunteer.



A Word from Anthem Judges



“

With the wide range of existing and emerging new data collection tools popping up every day, leaders can be empowered to build a thoughtful data strategy to inform their organization’s mission. One caution however: every once in a while, it’s useful to take a step back and make sure that the data you are gathering is leading to actionable conclusions.

—Amy Enright, Partner & Co-Founder, Newton Street

## Rocket Fund & Let Your Inner Elton Out

Last year the **Elton John AIDS Foundation** announced their \$125 million Rocket Fund campaign to fight HIV/AIDS worldwide. To celebrate the launch and pride month, the team activated their community on social.

“Let Your Inner Elton Out” is a social campaign that raised awareness of the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS by encouraging participants to show up as their true selves—online and off. The campaign included a digital toolkit, to make participating easy and accessible.

HELP END AIDS FOR ALL



★ LET YOUR INNER ELTON OUT ★

[Read More](#)

Let Your Inner Elton Out and [explore their toolkit.](#)

## Result & Impact

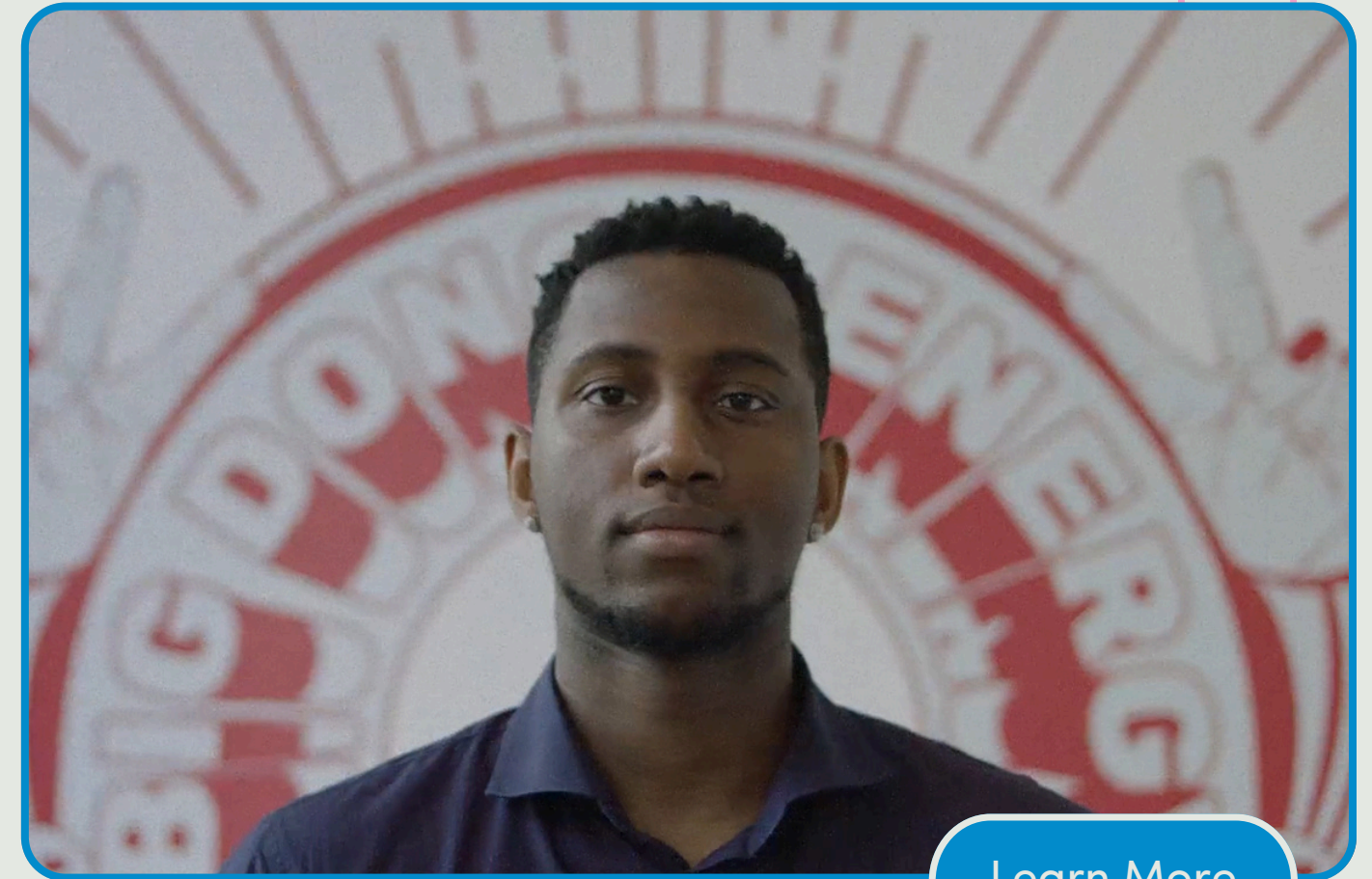
- More than \$90 million raised
- Over 6.8 billion media impressions garnered
- More than 58K engagements across social media

4TH ANNUAL  
ANTHEM  
AWARDS

## Getting GenZ to Bleed for Limited Edition Merch

After 37,000 blooddrives were cancelled during the pandemic, the world was faced with a global blood shortage, and there was a need for younger donors. To grow their Gen Z community, the American Red Cross partnered with creative agency MONO to launch Drop For Drop™.

They offered Gen Z limited-edition merch from streetwear designers in exchange for giving blood. Step outside of your usual executions; move your mission forward by tapping into your community wants and needs.



[Learn More](#)

### Result & Impact

- 3 blood drives
- Blood donations to save 1,000 lives
- 84% of participants were brand-new donors
- Organic reach of 20.5 million impressions

2.4

# Speak to an Audience of One

To attract audiences to your mission, don't underestimate the strength in tapping into a smaller audience. Think "who do I want this project to directly touch?"

While a broad focus can work, **creating work that touches a small, yet influential group of people can yield a large impact.** Being personal and poignant drives action—whether that is a donation or adding to cart.



More Insights

# 85%

of Gen Z believe a brand's association or support for a social issue or cause has a positive impact on their overall impression of that brand.

*Source: What Gen Z Wants: Brands & Social Impact by DoSomething Strategic. February 2024.*



## Rare Beauty

Launched by Selena Gomez, Rare Beauty is a brand that goes beyond the product. Their team is destigmatizing mental health, and providing resources to anyone who is struggling.

Inspired by Gomez's personal journey, the Rare Beauty Instagram is filled with self-love affirmations and reminders to community members that they're not alone. Their Rare Impact Fund doubles down on this mission, securing funding for mental health-focused organizations.



[Learn More](#)

## Result & Impact

- \$12 million raised for the Rare Impact Fund
- 8.93 million impressions on their mental health resources
- Nearly 450,000 people engaged with this content

2.5

# Lean Into Your Niche

There is something that makes every organization or company doing impact work unique. When ideating, consider what program, approach, person, or aspect to your brand makes your work special.

What you conclude can inform imaginative impact strategies that push creative boundaries, and drive results.





A Word from Anthem Judges



“

I always suggest to be outcomes oriented, be concerned most for what is the goal of the campaign and what is the Impact we are seeking. This is a lot more difficult than the creative aspects, which are critical as well, but always as a result of great strategy.

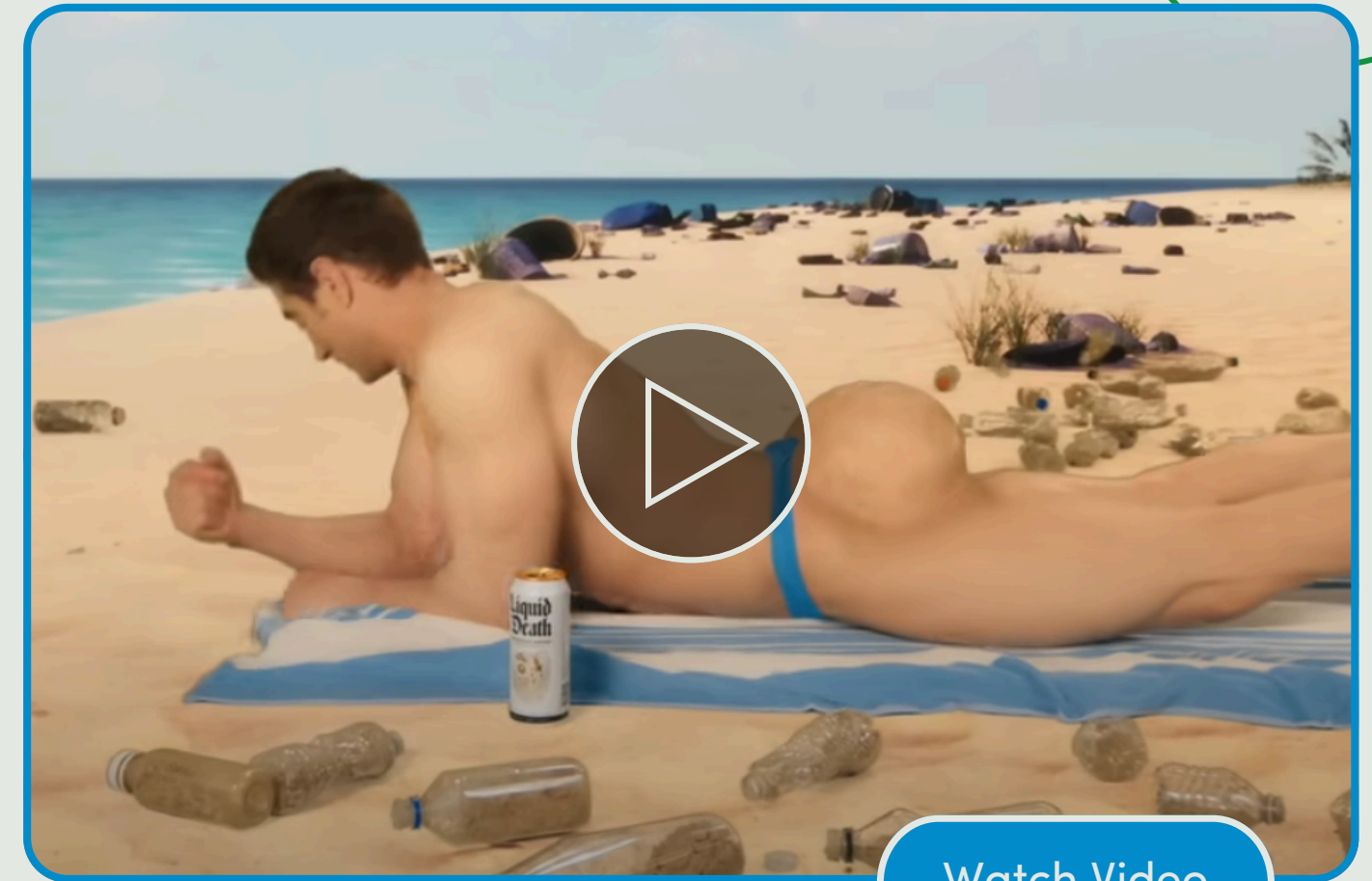
—Miguel Castro, Head of Global Media Partnerships,  
Gates Foundation

## Case Study

# Liquid Death Recycled Plastic Surgery Center

Canned water company **Liquid Death** was born from a niche insight: musicians often drink water out of beer cans or energy drinks, staying hydrated while “looking cool.”

Quirky and witty is in Liquid Death’s DNA. They embraced their roots to wage a campaign against plastic bottle pollution titled Liquid Death Recycled Plastic Surgery Center. The fake clinic turns plastic bottles into the perfect cosmetic surgery filler. The results were big brand awareness for a non-plastic option.



[Watch Video](#)

## Result & Impact

- Increase in Liquid Death’s revenue from \$100 million to \$263 million
- Valuation of \$1.4 billion hit in March 2024



**28%**

Cumulative  
Growth Over  
A 5-year Period  
For Companies  
Utilizing An ESG  
Focused Brand

Source: McKinsey and  
NielsenIQ Consumer  
Sentiment Survey, 2023.

**70%**

Want to know  
how the brands  
they support  
are addressing  
social and  
environmental  
issues

Source: Markstein and Certus  
Insights Study, 2019

**46%**

Pay Close  
Attention To  
Social and  
Environmental  
Efforts When  
Making Purchase  
Decisions

Source: Markstein and Certus  
Insights Study, 2019

## Tony's Chocolonely

The mission of Tony's Chocolonely is to make all chocolate 100% exploitation-free. In Ghana and Ivory Coast, 1.56 million children are working in illegal circumstances and 30.000 people are victims of forced labor.

They are forward with their mission, including information about their impact directly on their wrappers. The company, less than 20 years old, has made waves demonstrating that chocolate supply chains can be created in a way that minimizes harm.



[Learn More](#)

## Result & Impact

- 8,672,000 kg of chocolate sold
- 8,921 cocoa farmers earning direct income
- 9.2% of retail price of bars going directly to farmers

2.6

# Embrace Failure

Failure is intimidating. But oftentimes it is inevitable.

The impact space has historically played it safe, but that can only bring your mission so far. Do not let the idea of failure hold you back, but if by chance you do fail- use that experience to learn and grow for the next time.

---

**“It’s fine to celebrate success but it is more important to heed the lessons of failure.”**

–Bill Gates, Chair, The Gates Foundation



# Acumen Failing Forward Report

Venture philanthropy firm Acumen is working to break the cycle of poverty globally. Through early-stage investments, they fund startups that are tackling issues around energy, agriculture, workforce, education and healthcare.

**There is risk to investing in unproven markets**—only 25% are creating impact while also providing a financial return on investment. The Failing Forward Report analyzes their less successful investments, and publicly shares the lessons learned that others can take into their own work.



[Read More](#)

## Result & Impact

- We need engines, not cogs
- There is duty and danger in “doing it all”
- Everyone needs to row in the same direction
- Form follows function

# #TurnOffThePlasticTap

Benjamin Von Wong is a multidisciplinary artist and activist who is focused on amplifying positive impact. Ahead of the United Nations' gathering of 1,500 delegates in Nairobi, Kenya to discuss environmental solutions, Von Wong created the Giant Plastic Tap. The installation uses plastic trash found in Kibera to demand corporations to #TurnOffThePlasticTap.

The bold execution transformed into a symbol for the environmental movement, inspiring action in both Kenya and abroad. Von Wong takes many risks with his work and doesn't let the thought of failure get in his way.



[Explore the Work](#)

## Result & Impact

- Exhibition recreated in 10 cities
- Over \$100,000 raised for the Human Needs Project
- Featured in the United Nations Plastics Report

# Conclusions

Use a multi-pronged approach in your work to make the maximum impact. Take a lesson from us.

## Be Brave in Your Storytelling

Don't hold back for others. You are doing this work to create change, and that is something to embrace.

## Data is More Than Numbers on a Page

In today's environment, it is imperative to back up your claims with data. Quantitative and qualitative data are also vital for decision-making, fundraising, and marketing communications.

## Meet Your Community Where They Are

Go to where your audience resides. Find ways to engage them in a way that gets them excited to share your message.

## Speak to An Audience of One

Make your audience feel special. Communicate with people in a way that makes them feel valued, seen and pivotal to your work.

## Lean Into Your Niche

Be your authentic self, and lean into your niche. It's what makes your organization special; authenticity resonates.

## Embrace Failure

Take risks. It's the best way to make a splash, tell important stories, and grow your mission.



# Tools to Help You Measure Your Impact

The Internet is ripe with resources that can help you tell the story of your work—from management to measurement. We've asked our community to round up a few.

[MuckRack](#)

**MUCK RACK**

A media database with coverage analysis

[Meltwater](#)



Social listening and consumer intelligence software

[AKAS](#)



International audience strategy and impact consultancy

[Focal Data](#)



Quantitative research platform with an AI companion

[Asana](#)



Workflow management platform for your team

# About the Anthem Awards

The Anthem Award is the largest and most comprehensive social impact award, accepting work across five areas of impact work including: **Awareness, Fundraising, Community Engagement, Product, Innovation & Service and Team & Internal Initiatives** for seven causes: **Diversity Equity & Inclusion, Education Art & Culture, Health, Human & Civil Rights, Humanitarian Action & Services, Responsible Technology, and Sustainability Climate & Environment.**

By amplifying the voices that spark global change, we're defining a new benchmark for impact work to inspire others to take action in their own communities.

Learn more about Anthem Awards categories [here](#).

**4TH ANNUAL ANTHEM AWARDS**

Enter the 4th Annual Anthem Awards.

Extended Entry Deadline is Friday, September 13, 2024

Last chance to submit at [anthemawards.com](https://anthemawards.com)

# Follow Us



[AnthemAwards.com](https://AnthemAwards.com)



[The Anthem Awards](https://www.facebook.com/TheAnthemAwards)



[The Anthem Awards](https://www.linkedin.com/company/TheAnthemAwards)



[@anthemawards](https://www.instagram.com/@anthemawards)



[patricia@anthemawards.com](mailto:patricia@anthemawards.com)

