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# Selling Stewardship

*The Marketing Lens to Get the  
Congregation on Board*

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**Stewardship Kaleidoscope 2023**

Minneapolis, Minnesota



# Agenda

Meet Your Presenter

An Overview of Marketing

Marketing as Communication

Foundational Principles

Technical Tools

Gaps

Idea Sharing for Your Next Chapter

**Hi! I'm Carson.**

**SK 2022 Presenter**

**Christian Education Director**

**Professional Communicator**

**Associate, Empress Consulting**



# The Background (or, why we're here)

**The what:** Stewardship campaigns often follow the same pattern. The committee labors for months to develop a theme, goal, and calendar; then, when it all comes together, ready to be published to the congregation, the response is dismal or discouraging.

**The why:** Successful stewardship has always been a reality as giving and tithing have been viewed as obligatory, but this is no longer the case in many churches, especially for those under 45, and in a multimedia world in which everything seems transactional, gifts must be earned, institutions are questioned, and attention must be competed to receive.

# What is marketing?

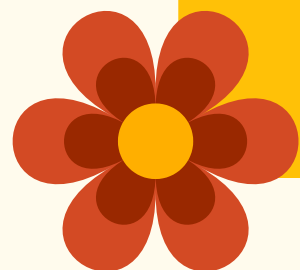


# What is marketing?



Let's just say, in its simplest form,  
how I sell something to you.

88%



of Americans have been influenced  
to purchase a product as a result of  
some kind of marketing.

93%



of Americans have found digital  
marketing more effective than print  
marketing in persuading them to give.



# What is marketing?



Let's just say, in its simplest form,  
how I sell something to you.



of A... enced  
to... re... ult of  
and of...



of A... tal  
mar... nt  
ma... suading... e.



# Why is marketing important?

## Do we really have to “sell” stewardship?



Internal marketing is real - the need for effective marketing does not just exist outside of our churches in the secular world.

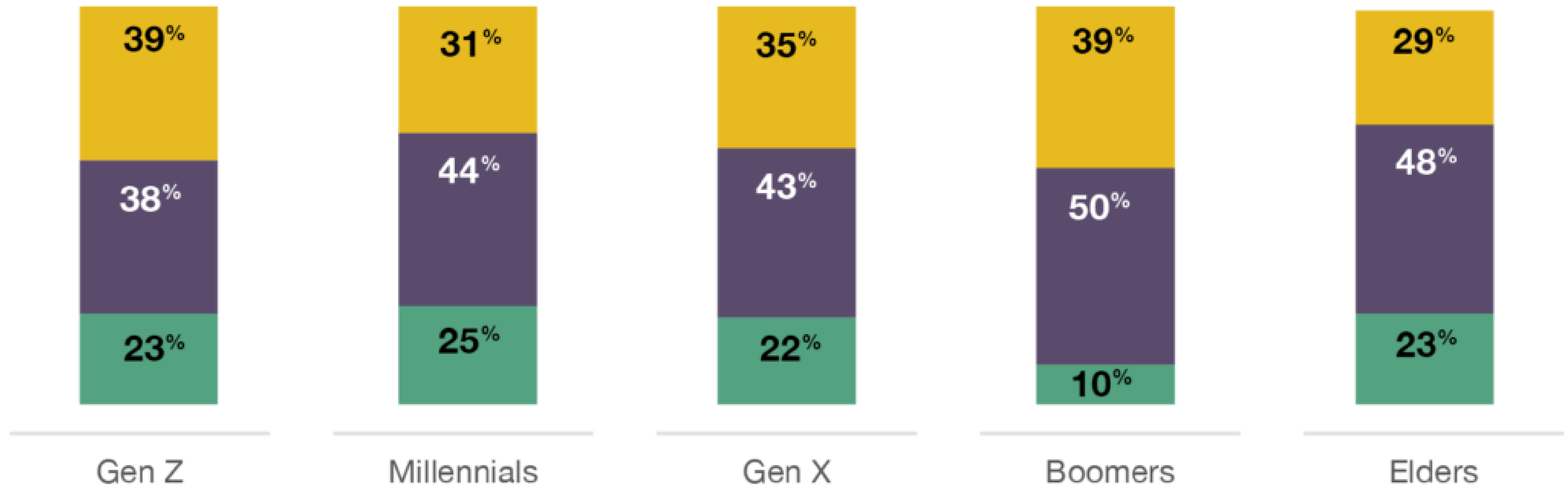
Often, our greatest resistance to “selling” stewardship is that we shouldn’t have to.

In a CT study, Gen Z affirmed that a “desire for authentic relationships stems from struggles with skepticism and hypocrisy in leadership”. This applies to *all* institutions.



# Generally, would you say that society is becoming more generous, less generous or staying about the same?

- More generous
- Staying about the same
- Less generous



Barna's *A New Era of Giving* (Aug. 2023) Part of the *State of Generosity* Series

n=2,016 U.S. adults, November 12–19, 2021.

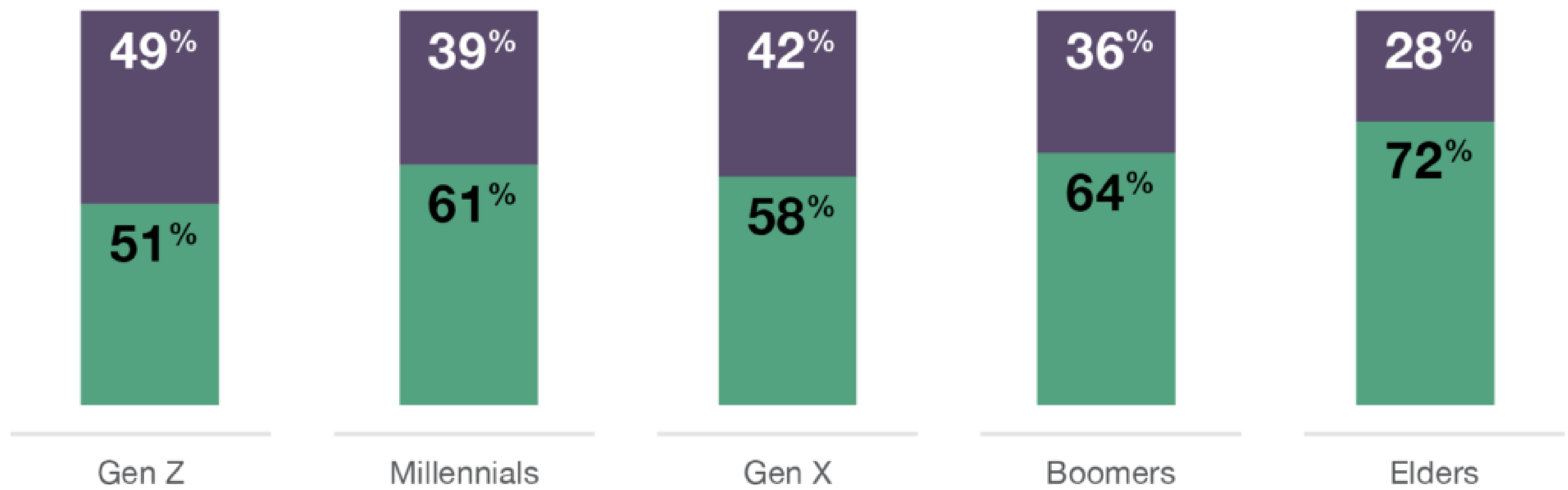




## Reports of Charitable Giving Increase with Age

We'd like to ask about your generous giving. As of today in 2021, have you donated any money to charitable organizations, including churches or houses of worship?

● Yes ● No



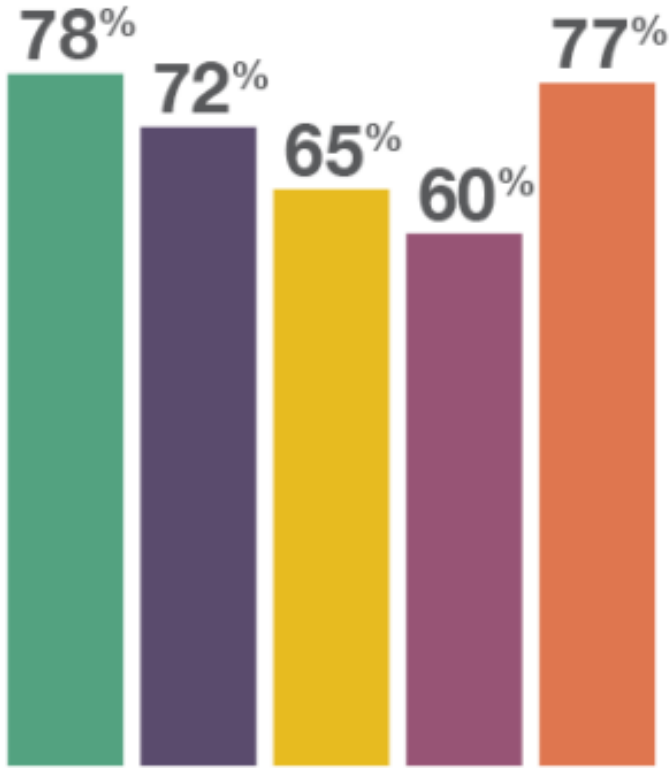
Barna's *A New Era of Giving* (Aug. 2023)  
Part of the *State of Generosity* Series

*n=2,016 U.S. adults, November 12–19, 2021.*  
*Due to the dates of data collection, general population research does not reflect 2021 end-of-year giving.*

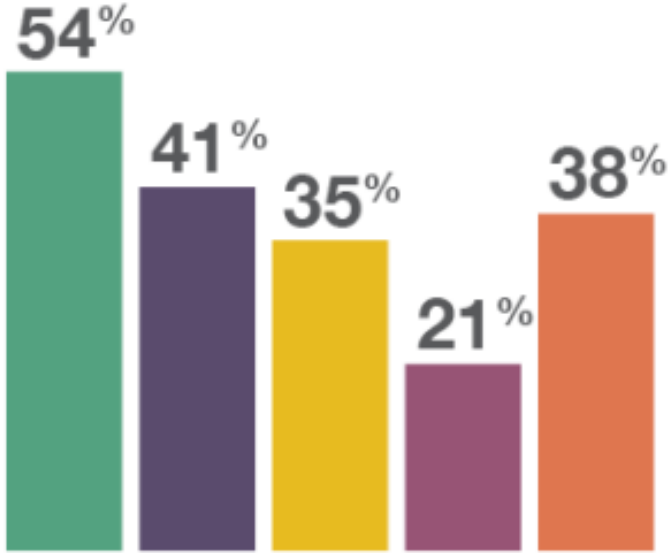


# In the past three months, have you ... ?

● Gen Z ● Millennials ● Gen X ● Boomers ● Elders



Planned or evaluated your finances



Volunteered your time to an organization

n=2,016 U.S. adults, November 12-19, 2021.

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# What does your marketing look like?



# The Foundational Principle of Church Giving in a Post-COVID World:

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**Support must be earned;  
it cannot be expected.**



So, how do we do marketing?

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**All marketing is communication!**



# 1

## Communication must be clear.

Action	Result
Identify and clearly understand campaign principles, goals, and objectives.	The stewardship team and leadership are on the same page.
Develop a strategy for plainly and meaningfully communicating these things.	The congregation understands,
Never assume knowledge!	You don't inadvertently forsake gifts from those with limited financial understanding.
Never expect even what's plainly obvious.	The congregation is informed about church needs and how they'll be addressed, instead of expected to know about them.



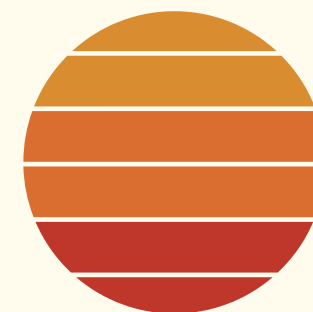
2

# Communication must be tangible.

Action	Result
Think critically about how your church will best respond in this particular moment.	The stewardship team and leadership are on the same page.
Remember that “tangible” doesn’t necessarily mean “physical” - but it does mean “present”.	Home visits, digital marketing, and one-on-one stewardship are each prioritized.



**grammarly**



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# 3

## Communication must be genuine.

Action	Result
Present a buy-in and ROI for your campaign (the “Ticket to Titanic”) dilemma.	The congregation understands the stakes and is invested in the outcome.
Ensure the stewardship and leadership teams are invested personally.	The campaign purpose is communicated on a more intimate level.
Answer this question: <i>why is stewardship necessary in our church?</i>	As long as your answer isn’t “because we do it every year”, you’ll find an effective talking point.
Be careful not to become too secular.	We remember that we’re Christians!





# 4

## Communication must be strategic.

Action	Result
Develop a marketing timeline, including follow up.	Your campaign does not drag on, for the committee or for the congregation.
Make your stewardship campaign an immersive experience.	People discuss “the stewardship campaign” and “VBS” in the same sentence.
Remember high school: logos, ethos, pathos.	The campaign does not get boring.
Be intentional about who speaks for you.	It can’t always be the pastor, and maybe it shouldn’t always be the stewardship chair.



# 5

## Communication must be personal.

Action	Result
Make it your own.	The congregation champions your individuality.
Mean what you say.	You won't tell people things such as "every little bit helps" if you don't truly believe it.
Celebrate givers of all levels, individually and corporately.	People feel valued and respected.
Consider why non-profit competition is effective.	We transition away from our "the church has earned it" mentality.
Engage unconventional perspectives.	Be unconventionally surprised.



# Some communication gaps

Self-sabotage

Unintentional isolation

The banality of boredom

Getting too secular or corporate

Not saying “thank you”

The “money” ink blot

Repetitiveness

Self-sabotage

Where  
now?



# Thank you!



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