

51% of Fundraisers Plan to Leave Their Jobs by 2021.

Here's What You Need to Know.

October 31, 2019



This is... Concerning.

**51% of Fundraisers Plan to Leave Their Jobs
by 2021, Says New Survey**



The Harris Poll

Harris Insights & Analytics LLC, A Stagwell Company



THE CHRONICLE OF
PHILANTHROPY



Instead of brushing it under the rug...

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'We're going to need a bigger rug or we're sunk.'



We're going to talk about it.



Mary Cahalane

Principal, Hands-On Fundraising

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/marycahalane/>

With more than 30 years of professional experience working in (and with) nonprofit organizations, Mary brings a wealth of knowledge, experience, and expertise to any conversation on the subject of “nonprofits.” Her “hands-on” approach is rooted in a commitment to the dual nature of fundraising: half art and half science; half philosophy and half paper cuts. Learn more about Mary on her website, www.mcahalane.com



Zach Shefska

Chief Operating Officer, MarketSmart

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/zachshefska/>

As Chief Operating Officer at MarketSmart, Zach Shefska leads a team dedicated to providing revolutionary software and services that help nonprofit organizations qualify, cultivate and prioritize their best opportunities for major and legacy giving. In his five years with MarketSmart, Zach has contributed to major initiatives like the [Major Gift Benchmark Study](#), [Fundraising Report Card's Open Benchmarks](#), and more.

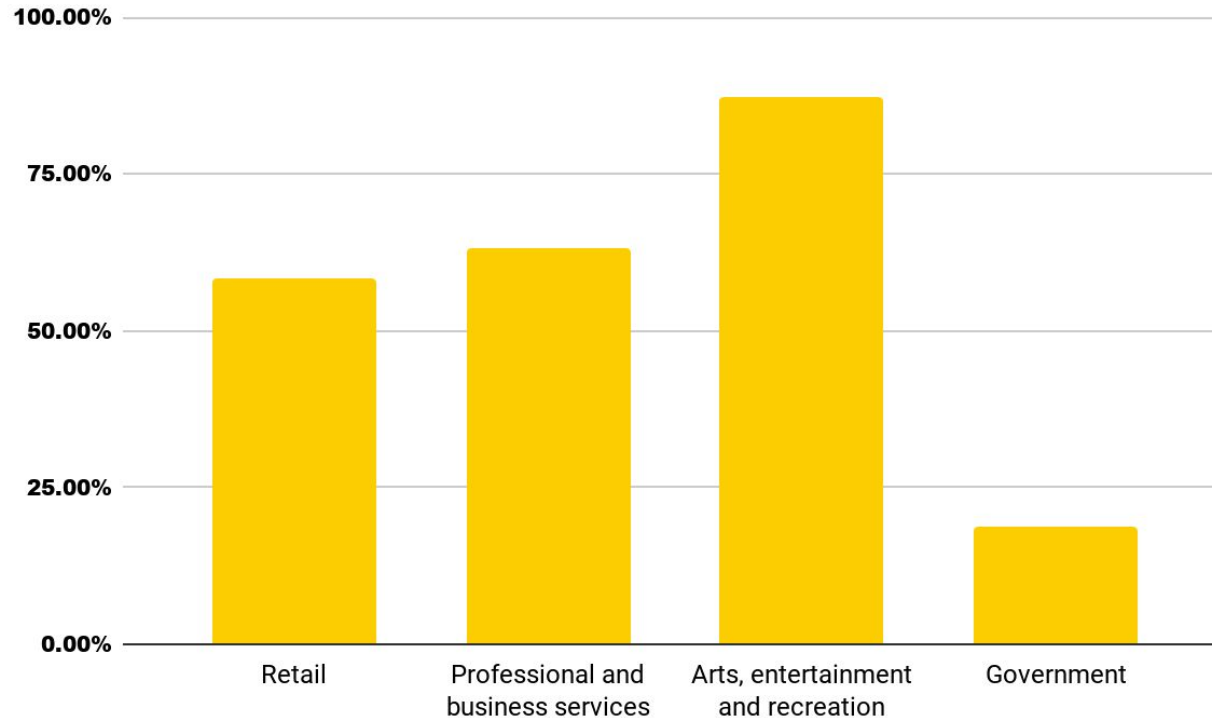


What we'll cover

1. A high-level overview of the Harris Poll survey results. We'll learn why fundraisers leave -- and what you can do about it.
2. The true cost of fundraiser turnover, and how you can calculate that at your shop.
3. Where there are “bright spots” from the survey, and what they mean for you.
4. Tactics you can employ to increase staff retention.



Separation rate by industry, 2018



Why fundraisers leave



High pressure, low appreciation

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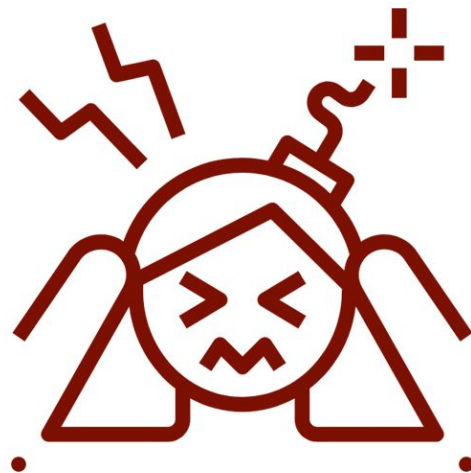
- Fundraisers are expected to produce miracles, or save their organizations



High pressure, low appreciation

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- 84% of fundraisers said they felt “tremendous pressure to succeed.”
- 55% said they “often feel unappreciated.”
- At the jobs they left most recently, they were likeliest to be **dissatisfied with their prospects for promotion (85%)** or a **lack of succession planning (83%)**.



Staff and board don't understand fundraising

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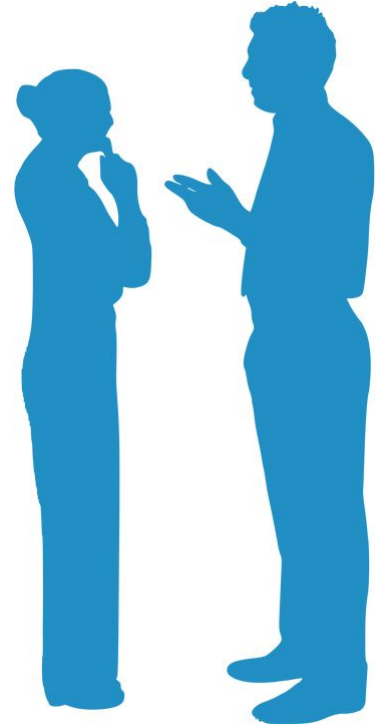
- Expectations are set by people who don't know what's involved



Staff and board don't understand fundraising

- Expectations are set by people who don't know what's involved
- **78% of fundraisers wished they had more time to spend meeting with supporters.**

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Tremendous pressure to succeed on tight timelines

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- Building a successful fundraising program takes time



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- Building a successful fundraising program takes time
- Fundraising involves different disciplines -- one person can rarely do them all well.
- **Unreasonable expectations will only result in failed fundraising and loss of fundraisers.**

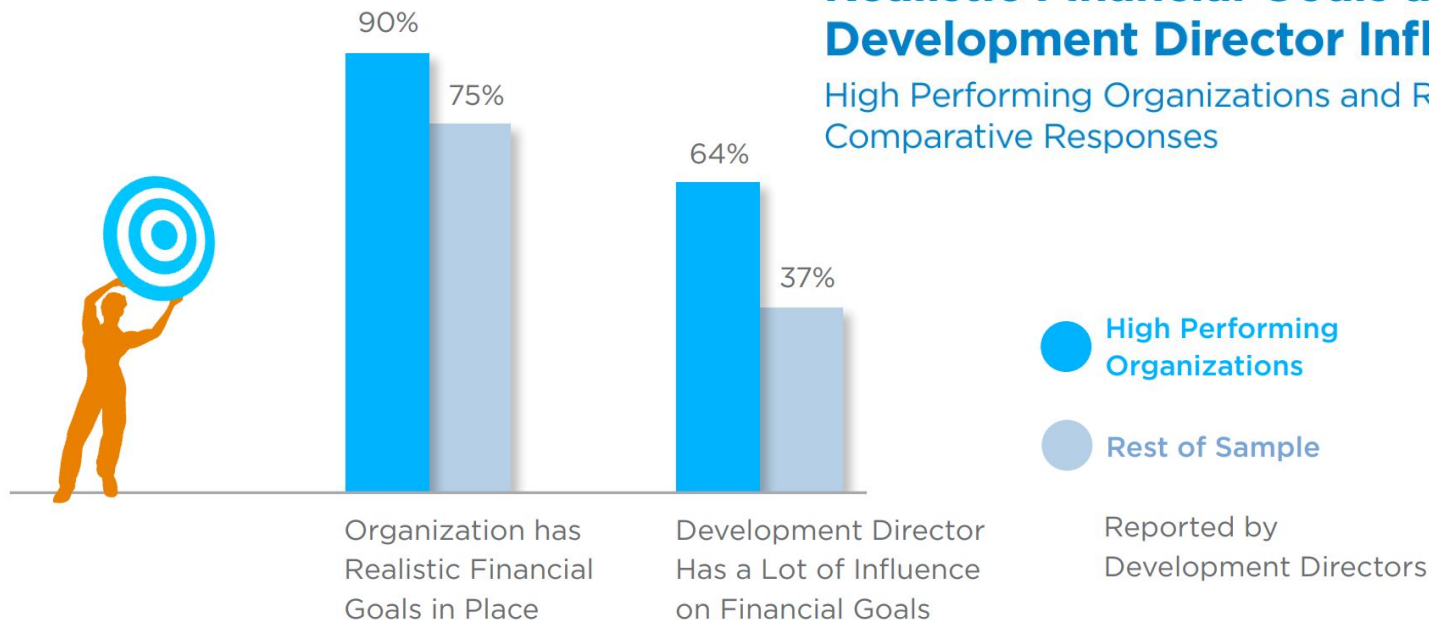


Tremendous pressure to succeed on tight timelines

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Realistic Financial Goals and Development Director Influence

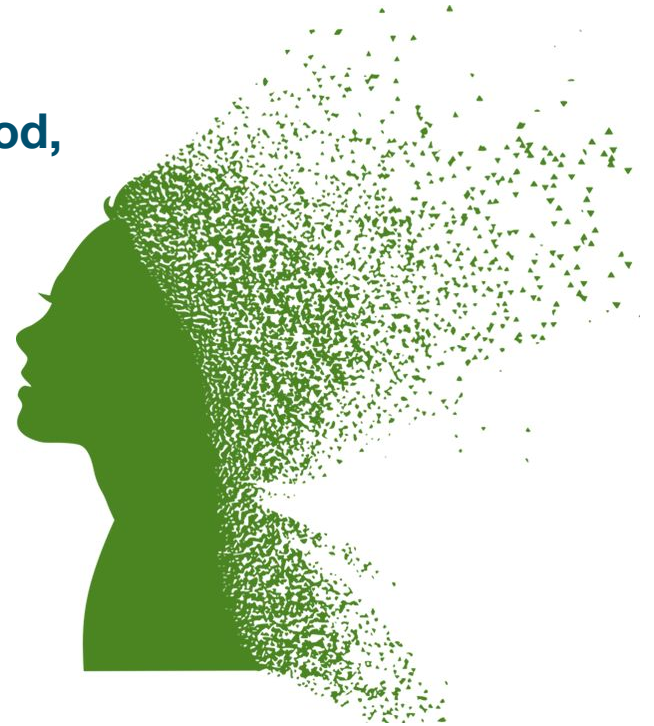
High Performing Organizations and Rest of Sample Comparative Responses



Lack of trust

- Fundraisers are often out of the office (and should be). But when their job isn't understood, this can cause problems.

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- Fundraisers expertise is not respected.
- **Fundraisers are blocked from developing strong ties with board members and other volunteers.**



Lack of trust

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Lack of investment in fundraisers and fundraising

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- Poor salaries and poor schedules
- No organizational investment in continuing education.
- No donor management system, or a cheap one
- No willingness to spend money in order to raise money



Lack of investment in fundraisers and fundraising

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Each additional form of training is associated with an additional \$37K of income.

- **61%** of people who left fundraising jobs say they were dissatisfied with their access to leadership training.
- **34%** of current fundraisers are dissatisfied with their access to leadership training.



No organizational culture of philanthropy

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- Fundraisers are left on their own to build relationships and raise money.
- **36%** of fundraisers said they were dissatisfied with the support they got from their boards.
- **29%** said they were dissatisfied with the help received from the CEO.



Poor management and communication

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- Fundraisers are not “in the loop” and often play catch-up with important news.
- Fundraisers are not consulted on important staffing decisions
- The CEO does not view the CDO as a partner, but an employee.



What does it really cost?



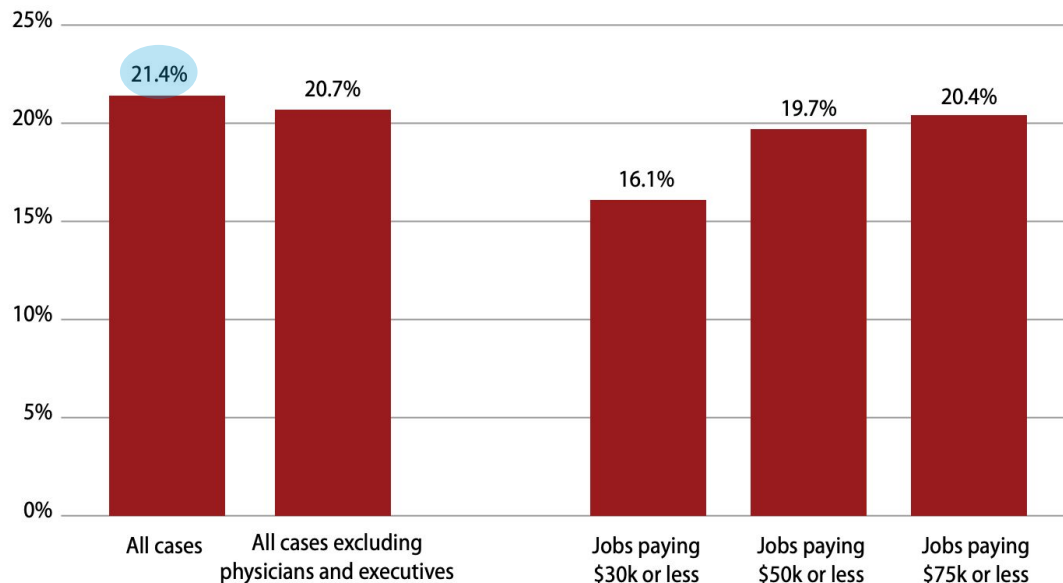
What does it really cost?



FIGURE 1

Replacing employees is costly for companies' bottom line

The cost of turnover is remarkably consistent across jobs at different pay levels, except the very highest-paid jobs, 1992 to 2007



What does it really cost?



Very highly paid jobs and those at the senior or executive levels tend to have disproportionately high turnover costs as a percentage of salary (up to 213 per-cent), which skews the data upwards.



What does it really cost?



- Other industry reports, suggest that 33% of salary is reasonable benchmark for the cost of employee turnover.
- Payscale.com suggests an average salary of ~\$69,000.
- It costs an organization ~**\$23,000** each time they lose a front-line fundraiser.

United States / Job / Major Gifts Officer

Average Major Gifts Officer Salary

\$68,564

Avg. Salary

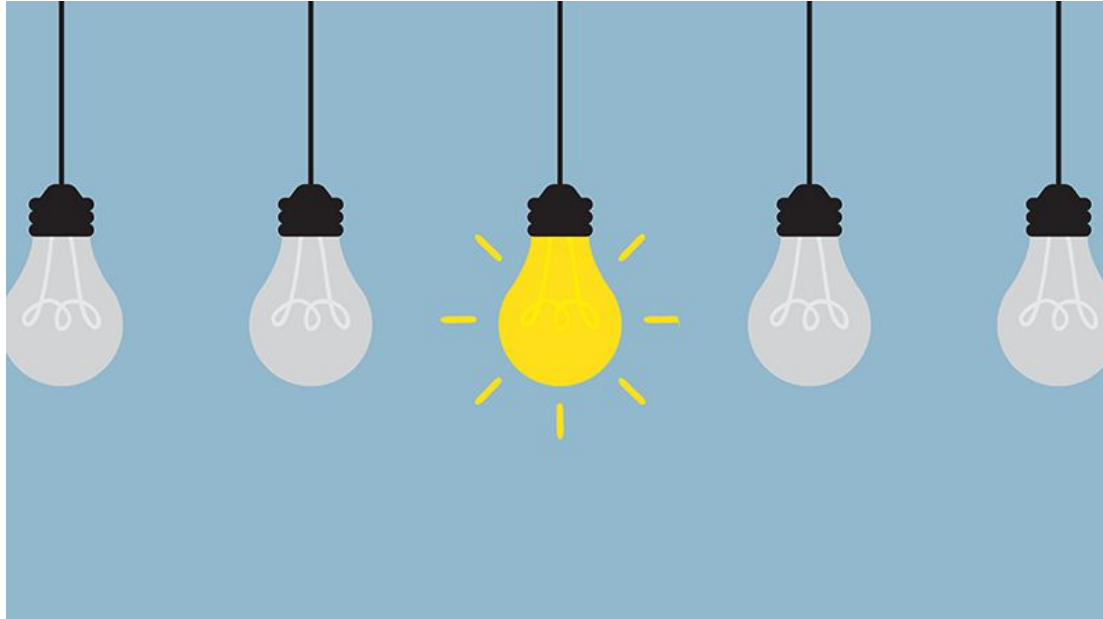
[Show Hourly Rate](#)

\$2,936
BONUS

\$50
PROFIT SHARING



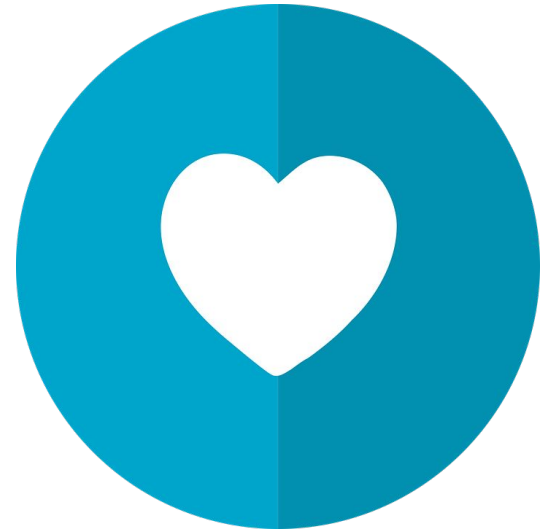
Bright spots in the survey



Fundraisers are driven by mission



- Fundraisers need to feel a connection with the mission -- and they do.
- **93%** of survey participants said they couldn't work for a charity if they didn't have a strong connection to the cause.



Fundraisers are happy with their travel schedules



- **92%** are happy with their travel schedule.



But flexibility matters



- Many fundraisers are happy with their organization's flexibility around family and childcare



Fundraisers are satisfied with the level of independence



- **83%** are satisfied with their level of independence in their jobs.



Fundraisers are happy with their volunteers



- **83%** said they're happy with their relationship with their charity's volunteers (excluding board members).



What can you do?



What can you do?



- Trust your staff



What can you do?



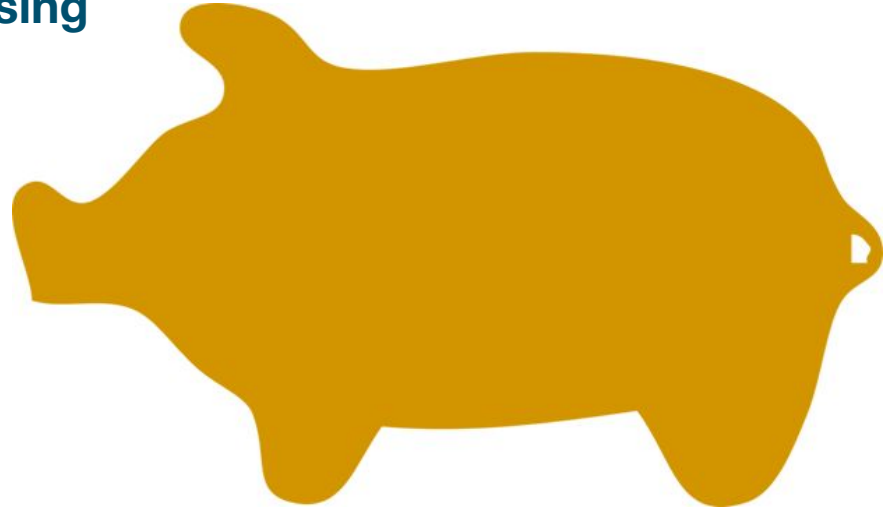
- Trust your staff
- **Respect work-life balance**



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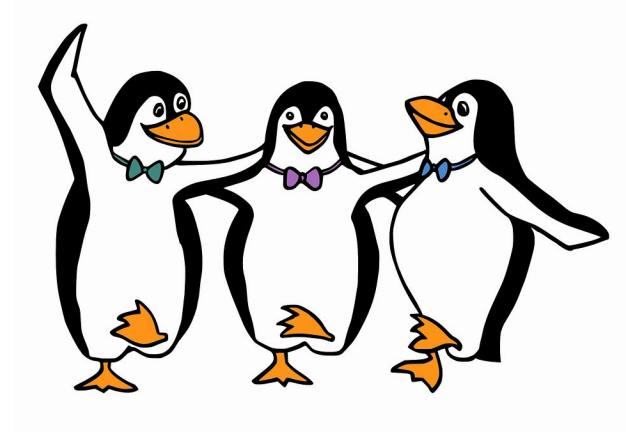
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- **Build a real culture of philanthropy that includes all staff and board**



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- Build a real culture of philanthropy that includes all staff and board
- **Be sure your fundraiser's authority matches her responsibilities.**



What can you do?



- Trust your staff
- Respect work-life balance
- Invest in fundraisers and fundraising
- Build a real culture of philanthropy that includes all staff and board
- Be sure your fundraiser's authority matches her responsibilities.
- **Don't expect miracles**





Mary Cahalane

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