Andrew Olsen: Hey, this is Andrew Olsen here with the Rainmaker Fundraising Podcast. I'm here with my good friend and co-host, Roy Jones. Hey, Roy, good afternoon.

Roy Jones: Hey, good afternoon. This is going to be a fun one. I, literally, at least every other week, I am part of a Bloomerang podcast of some kind. I think they're doing amazing work, amazing work in our space in training non-profit leaders. And I can't wait to spend some time with Steve today, it's going to be fun.

Andrew Olsen: Yeah. So we're super excited to have our good friend, Steve Shattuck here. Hey, Steve, welcome to the podcast. Thank you so much for being here.

Steven Shattuck: Sure. Thanks for having me.

Andrew Olsen: And I know you're at home while your wife's out raising money for her organization and I'm so glad that we locked you down for a little bit of time to talk about what organizations can do to manage their data to maximize revenue. Again, thanks for being here. Before we jump in, tell us a little bit about who you are and what Bloomerang does.

Steven Shattuck: Yeah.

Andrew Olsen: For like the 12 people who don't know who Bloomerang is.

Steven Shattuck: Well, it may be slightly more than that. But yeah, like Roy said, we do a great webinar series. That was really kind and I would just say that I don't really deserve much credit for it because it's all about the speakers. You've been on, Andrew, we've had some really awesome people on every single week. I think now we're over 300 presentations that we've done. Almost every single week we do a webinar. It's interesting, that's the one thing that Bloomerang is really known for and I think sometimes we're known more for that than our actual software, the product that we sell, which is a donor database. So if you're interested in that, check it out. We got a lot of happy customers. But, yeah, we love educating the sector, we love just spreading knowledge either from us or from really smart people, we usually get smarter people there that are not us. We just want to help the sector.

Roy Jones: [crosstalk 00:02:03] non-profits in the sector are using the database?

Steven Shattuck: I think it's over five thousand now.

Roy Jones: Wow.

Steven Shattuck: Yeah, we're adding a lot every month. And people seem to like it. We're getting daily reviews from people saying that they love it. So, yeah, it's really fun.

Andrew Olsen: I feel like I see you everywhere. As the Chief Engagement Officer for Bloomerang, you're doing the podcast or the webinar series, you're doing the organization's blog, and then I just feel like I see you at industry events, conferences. So you oversee all of that work, right?

Steven Shattuck: Yeah, they like to kick me out of the office as often as possible. Yeah, I'm on the road. I was in Cincinnati for board retreat a couple days ago and I was in Chicago the day before that, Memphis, South Bend, yeah. I try to get out there and share a lot of the research and knowledge that we kind of discovered either through our customers or some of the partnerships we have. We're really closely aligned with the Fundraising Effectiveness Project. We collaborate with DonorPerfect and Neon even though they're competitors, we still really like them. And we share a lot of research out there of what our customers are doing in terms of retaining donors and we just want to help everybody. So we love spreading the word about all that good stuff.

Andrew Olsen: Awesome. Let's get right into it then. The idea of how we can better manage our data to maximize revenue brings me to first question. We were talking about this off the air before we jumped in but so often, I think, guys like Roy and myself, we show up at an organization when something's broken, right?

Steven Shattuck: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Andrew Olsen: And so I'm curious to hear from your experience with the five thousand clients that you guys have and probably others that you've had experience with, what are some of the biggest challenges that you see around how organizations are managing data right now or maybe not managing it? [crosstalk 00:04:12] I should say it.

Steven Shattuck: Well, you asked me about success stories or people that are doing it right, and what I see at least from the Bloomerang little cohort of a sector is the people that have really high retention rates, which is a really good indicator that they're doing something right, is they are segmenting their data. And I know it's kind of a buzz word and I know there's a gazillion blogs and webinars about it but, it's for good reason that there's a lot of talk about it, it's because when we move away from having just one big bucket of donors that is our database and communicating to them all the same way and move away from that into let's put people into smaller groupings, people that maybe have similar frequencies of donation, maybe similar reasons for giving, maybe similar persona types, we are communicating to those people differently. That's when we get higher response rate and higher retention rates from those people.

Steven Shattuck: The number one thing we tell our customers is, "You've got a database," whether you're using Bloomerang or you're using DonorPerfect or whoever you're using, Raiser's Edge, we don't care. We tell them, "You should be segmenting these people into audiences and communicating to them differently rather than just taking this kind of one-size all approach to the people in your list or in your database. We don't want to just send the same list [crosstalk 00:05:44], yeah, yeah.

Roy Jones: A couple of examples of the kind of segmentation you're thinking about? Is it [inaudible 00:05:50] frequency dollar amount or talk to me about that.

Steven Shattuck: So, one thing I really like is reasons for giving. We encourage the people that listen to us to be curious about their donors especially on the first-time donor side. First-time donor retention is so low, I think it's around 20% according to the recent data. And I think one of the main reasons is we don't ask people or gather feedback of why they gave, what's the connection to the cause, why are they passionate about what we do because you can have two donors in your system who look similar. They both gave $50, they both live in our community, they're both first-time donors, they both gave online, maybe they even have similar demographic information but if you go a step deeper and ask them, "Hey, what moved you to donate today? Why are you interested in protecting the forests here in Indianapolis?" And you get maybe two different reasons that may lead you to communicate to those people much differently than you would have if you had just taken that base information that you got from the transaction.

Roy Jones: Wow. So you're taking it, not just by source code but then in the welcome kit process-

Steven Shattuck: Yeah, absolutely.

Roy Jones: You're really trying to survey and hone in on the motivation.

Steven Shattuck: And you don't have to be super invasive about it. It could be something as simple as after someone donates the online donation form disappears and they get sent to that thank you page or that confirmation page, maybe just a quick link on that page or even a form that they can fill out right there that says, "Hey, Steven, thanks so much for your donation. We can't wait to put it to good use. By the way, we'd love to know more about you. What motivated you to donate today?" Let's say you're a Alzheimer's Association, you may get one person say, "Oh wow, my grandmother passed away from Alzheimer's and I experienced first-hand what that's like and I want to help the cause," versus someone who maybe saw a billboard or an ad or radio spot and they don't necessarily have that personal connection but they were still motivated to give.

Steven Shattuck: You may want to communicate to those people differently than that other person even though they gave the same amount through the same channel. I think that motivation information can be really, really useful in our database as a data point that we can base different segmented communications off of.

Roy Jones: Wow, interesting. Wow.

Steven Shattuck: And we have a customer that is a public school foundation up in the Finger Lakes of New York and she has this segmentation matrix that is so awesome and so detailed but that makes total sense and they raise a lot of money. So they're a public school foundation so they're communicating to students, former students, parents of students, parents of former students, grandparents of students, grandparents of former students, and then slicing all those personas by the things you said before, frequency and recency and gift amount and reasons for giving and those things. She has a very, it looks like a complicated segment, but everything that they send to each of those audiences is very intentional, it's personalized, it's textualized for the type of person that they are versus just sending that one appeal to the entire list and hoping that it's compelling for somebody and not going to be compelling for most-

Andrew Olsen: Of course, I'm sitting here thinking, "Man, do I have the manpower to pull that off?"

Steven Shattuck: Yeah.

Andrew Olsen: But I see it's a much more donor centric approach, isn't it?

Steven Shattuck: Absolutely. And the good thing is is that I think the technology has really caught up to enabling in a way that's not overwhelming for the user. If you're using a database product that's not Excel and not just an email system, you should be able to create these segments pretty easily. And then I think the challenge is customizing that content. It is a lot of work but I think it pays dividends more than maybe some of the things that we spend a lot of time on that we don't even think twice about and maybe the ROI isn't there as much as it would be if we did take these very donor centric approaches to what we're doing.

Andrew Olsen: I want to pick at that a little bit.

Steven Shattuck: Yeah.

Andrew Olsen: I'd be curious, because in the say direct mail world, there are some tipping points. If you've got a couple of dozen donors that fit a certain criteria, it's probably not worth it to create a unique kit that you mail those people because you're never going to get the kind of return that you need. But certainly, digitally, it's a whole different landscape. I'm curious to know from your experience, are there typical tipping points where you say, "Okay, don't even spend the time to do this unless you have X number of records on the file," how do you counsel organizations on that?

Steven Shattuck: Yeah, I think you said it. I think that it's got a scale. And everyone's probably different. But I think that there is probably an amount of records or maybe even amount of segments that may not be worth it necessarily and I think that's something that you should test. We haven't even really talked about testing yet. That can be something maybe you experiment with so you decline that sweet spot so that you know we've got three segments, should we add a fourth? Why don't we try it and see if it really moved the needle? And if it didn't, that's fine, we found that ceiling. But finding that ceiling is part of this and it's something that you should be experimenting with so that you can make these decisions and not put all that work into it for zero dividends or a little bit of lift from it.

Andrew Olsen: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. I want to switch a little bit and talk a little bit about the person who sits in the seat at a non-profit as kind of a database administrator. What I've seen over time, and it's changing a little bit it feels like at least, but for a long time when I'd walk into an organization the person who was chiefly in charge of maintaining the integrity of a CRM and really stewarding the organization's biggest asset. Oftentimes, it was like, "Well, yeah, this is so-and-so's nephew or cousin," or "we found this person and they'll learn the system." Give us the argument for why organizations should professionalize that role and what the value is of having someone who really understands the tools and how data works.

Steven Shattuck: It's a killer. You said it, it is one of the most, if not the most, important asset of the organization. And we find that to be the same answer when we're talking to people. It's someone that, you said it's the person who wants to own the database the least, they sort of get assigned it and they don't want to do it. And when you consider the high turnover rates in our sector, that can be something that is just really, really hard to overcome if that person leaves and they're not utilizing that asset. Another issue that arises is you've got to train a new person, you've got to onboard them into the system, and if there wasn't maybe documentation of how that previous person was using the system, that's even worse. I like your idea of professionalizing it but I would also recommend maybe a third approach, which is to open up the system to a lot of people in the organization and know that there are a lot of people that may disagree with this or may push back on it but I'll kind of make the case for it.

Steven Shattuck: This is the repository of all this information of our supporters and if you have multiple people maybe out in the field, maybe they're putting on events, maybe they're simply communicating to donors one-on-one. I think you want all those people to be able to go into the database immediately or very soon after that interaction and record all those notes so that you have the most updated information rather than you have a donor meeting or you have a donor interaction, you go back to the office, you maybe write it down or scribble it down or email it to that database person, and they put it into the system and if something is maybe lost in translation or if it doesn't get put in, that could be potentially embarrassing down the road when you have a second interaction with that donor. You don't want to ask that person the same questions that they got asked before or maybe say something embarrassing so what we recommend is have a very rigorous and documented standard operating procedure for the database that everyone on the organization is trained on and then open it up.

Steven Shattuck: Protect yourself from that turnover so that multiple people are familiar with the software and if you lose someone there's redundancies and you don't lose that one single person that is in charge of the database. And then you are also able to collect information, pull it up on your iPhone, log into the database, put in those notes, and not have anything missed, not miss any of that crucial information that you may have collected that other people in your organization didn't see.

Andrew Olsen: It's so interesting you say that. Do you know Jason Lewis?

Steven Shattuck: Yeah.

Andrew Olsen: He's really fond of saying, "You can either scale your fundraising or you can maintain control," right?

Steven Shattuck: Right.

Andrew Olsen: In order to scale, you have to be willing to give up some control and I think this is a perfect example of it because so many organizations say, "Nope, we're going to have one person that inputs data," right?

Steven Shattuck: Right.

Andrew Olsen: Maybe you can view a record but you have to go through 19 steps and 3 reams of business rules to get something input to the database and that kind of commanding control structure just really makes it tough to improve on the fly and like you said to make sure that you don't have a single point of failure who when they leave, you're crippled for the next 60 days until you hire and train somebody.

Steven Shattuck: And maybe longer. We've had people that want to buy Bloomerang who their current database, it's gone under utilized for years, not just days or months, and they're paying for it and they're also not utilizing those data insights. I totally agree with Jason. He said it in 10 words where I said it in 500 so I love the way you put it through him but I think so. And I think that levels of user permissions so that you maybe don't get yourself into trouble but there's also some mistrust. It seems weird to me that we would not trust our employees to use this system and only place that trust into that one person. Sometimes it's not just about the training and the expertise, a lot of times it's trust like, "Oh, I don't want that person to be able to see what that person gave or I don't want them to be able to mess anything up."

Steven Shattuck: And my thing is you should trust your employees but you should also create those parameters and that standard documentation so that everyone is putting data into the system the same way. Are we going to spell out street or are we going to say st., like those kinds of things. I know it's mundane. I know it seems really boring but I think the alternative like you said is to lose a lot of time and lose a lot of money in the process.

Andrew Olsen: Yeah. So something else that you sort of touched on when you were answering earlier that organizations might be looking to Bloomerang and their current CRM is under utilized. I find that in so many conversations I have, an organization will come and say, "We're going to do a database conversion because this system doesn't work for us."

Steven Shattuck: Right.

Andrew Olsen: It's hard for me to conceive a situation with the tools that are on the market these days where a CRM platform whether it's a Bloomerang or a Raiser's Edge or a DonorPerfect, whatever "won't work for them." It's almost always, at least in my opinion, a lack of training and a lack of application. But talk to us, I feel like that's a prevalent thing. Am I crazy?

Steven Shattuck: No, I agree. We hear that a lot and oftentimes I think one of the reasons why people like Bloomerang and you may see this in some of the online reviews is we've talked people out of buying Bloomerang. We'll sit down with a person, we'll hear what you just said, Andrew, and we will pull on that thread because we don't someone to switch if they have a system that is usable for them and can work for them. If it truly can't, if there's something that they need or if maybe there's other aspects of the company that are not providing them good service, those are good reasons to switch. I've talked to people at events who say, "We're using Raiser's Edge and it's working great, [inaudible 00:19:27] it's working great." I say, "That's great. We're not going to bug you but if you've got something, look at it for a few minutes and see if you can maybe salvage that investment."

Steven Shattuck: I think one of the reasons you hear that, Andrew, is maybe it's the person who bought that software is no longer at the company and that next person up inherited it and they simply don't understand, like you said, they didn't go through the training, they didn't vet all the systems, and they got this thing sitting there that they don't really know how to use. Not to talk ourselves out of business, but I would make sure you at least look at that and see if it'll work for you because there's a lot of really good systems out there that all do really interesting things that I can think that'll be helpful. It goes back to turnover. I think so many of these issues have a stem from that high turnover rate and it kind of leaves us to make bad decisions that cost our organizations a lot of missed opportunities and a lot of time.

Roy Jones: Steve, that brings to mind so often, and turnover certainly impacts this, but I have found over the last, believe it or not, almost 40 years working with non-profits and I've gone through database conversions five or six times, painful times that I can remember. But so often the pain is a result of not beginning with the end in mind, not doing the right vision casting on the front end about how the organization intends to grow, and making room and capacity for that. Talk about that in your process when you onboard a new client.

Steven Shattuck: We really try to do more than just a data conversion. We try to do a full implementation. The data conversion is, I think, just table steaks. It's how you set up the database for the future that's really going to make people successful. You said it, garbage data in is garbage data out and it just sort of snowballs and compounds and can put you in a really bad space. What is that we are going to track on the constituent's profile? What information is meaningful to us? Are we creating those fields or capturing that data? And are we being consistent with it? And then what are we looking at, I think the reporting piece I think is really important. We spend a lot of time with the customers helping them set up those reports that are meaningful to them, who are people that are alumni, who are people that are maybe in danger of lapsing, who are the new donors that we want to make sure we steward and we give a really good introduction to the organization through.

Steven Shattuck: I think that piece is really critical, not just moving the data from the one system to the other and then just maintaining the status quo but what are we really going to be looking at in this database that'll make someone successful? I totally agree with your assessment there.

Andrew Olsen: Talk to me, you touched on it, the kinds of reports that your five thousand plus customers are asking for. What metrics [crosstalk 00:22:57] day?

Steven Shattuck: I like really weird reports. Actually, I gave a presentation on Tuesday on really bonkers, off the wall reports that you should be looking at. And there are the standards. There's your LIBON and your SIBON report and your overdue pledges, I think is a good report to be looking at if you have those because that's just free money sitting out there. New donors, I think that maybe every week or maybe even every day if you don't have too high of a gift volume, just looking at who are the donors that gave to us for the first time and maybe giving them some special attention if you the bandwidth for that. I would recommend that you make bandwidth for that because the retention rates there are really low and you may have actually spent more to acquire that donor than they actually gave to you. But beyond that, one of my favorites is out of town donors. If you are a hyper local organization, if your organization-

Andrew Olsen: As are most non-profits in the U.S., right?

Steven Shattuck: Yeah, absolutely.

Andrew Olsen: [crosstalk 00:24:04] non-profits [inaudible 00:24:06] a million and a half of them are regional charities.

Steven Shattuck: Yeah, absolutely. You're serving maybe a city or a county or a county area. And if you have donors who don't live in that service offering area, that's sort of weird. They're not necessarily benefiting from the services you provide and so I encourage that to everyone who will listen to me. I just actually shout that to people on the street who I walk by but who may or may not be fundraisers but I give to an organization that is located in the town I grew up. And they did a really good job stewarding me and getting to know me, asking those questions like I mentioned in the meeting like, "Hey, Steven, you don't live here. Why are you donating to us? You live in Indiana and we're in Massachusetts. Why are you donating to us? That's kind of weird." And I'm able to tell my story, "Well, I grew up here and I wanted to give back to you guys."

Steven Shattuck: And that's a really strong signal if you have a donor that is giving back because they maybe used to receive services from you or maybe they want to make sure that that community that they grew up in still is a viable place or a beautiful place or whatever it is that you do. I think that's an easy report that you could run maybe every once in a while and it's not going to be a ton of people. It's probably going to be a couple of people a year but those people, I think, are awesome prospects for maybe things like plan giving or request marketing especially if they have all those other signals that denote a good request prospect. They might want to leave you something to continue that legacy. So, out of town donors I really like and I think that'll help you maybe uncover some of those former service recipients.

Steven Shattuck: Volunteers, of course, are great but one thing that we've seen from customers is if you're an organization that relies on frequent corporate volunteer visits, of course thank the volunteers but also zero in on that person that maybe organizes that trip, the person that maybe goes to their HR department and asked permission to ask employees, their coworkers to send a big group to that non-profit to go and volunteer for the day. That person really likes you, they may not necessarily have the capacity to give a lot of money but they want a lot of people to help the organization. That peer to peer fundraiser is another example. I think sometimes we get really caught up with this peer to peer program or Facebook or whatever, they're not giving us the contact information of the donors. Let's put a spotlight on that fundraiser, that person who creates the fundraiser and is getting those people to donate, that person should really get a majority of the attention if you can't reach out to all those other people.

Steven Shattuck: So other things like looking for upgrades, are we reporting on donors who are increasing their gifts year over year or maybe month by month if they're a monthly donor. You might want to give those people some extra attention but it goes back to the segmentation, making sure that you're not treating everyone the same because there are so many different types of donors in your system but you got to look for them and look for those weird signals that may show a high level of affinity and love for you that maybe the dollar amount doesn't necessarily broadcast as much.

Andrew Olsen: To stay with this, broadly speaking for a minute, sort of in the area of reporting and analytics and how organizations use that information, have you seen anything change in the last three to five years with respect to how C-suite executives interact with reporting and has demand increased? What's changed in that area?

Steven Shattuck: Yeah, I think demand has increased. One thing we're seeing is that more and more people are talking about trends in giving, falling donor retention rates or stagnant donor retention rates is probably a better way to put it. I think more people are getting hands on and I also think that the accessibility of the technology is helping. There are a lot of really good systems that anyone can log into at any given time, and I'm not just talking about Bloomerang, but there are a lot of other ones where even in ED with minimal technical expertise or a board member can go in and look at those reports versus having to run complicated queries and the things that maybe those systems before the turn of the century required. Cloud-based application, I know it's almost 2020 and it seems like that's sort of a given but there are still some systems that aren't on the Cloud and the people that are able to login from any computer, any mobile device rather than having it be on one dedicated machine in the office, I think is really good for the sector.

Steven Shattuck: And mobile, the fact that you can pull up these things on your phone, right after having a donor visit, being able to put in all your notes from that visit right on your phone and it populates the profile, that's great. In a lot of ways, I think it's kind of a golden age for fundraising in terms of the technology that's available to us, just great.

Andrew Olsen: Yeah. I'm not going to name names of the organization where or database provider but when I was on the client side I worked in an organization that literally the system was on one machine in the office and in order to make it work to get any reporting out of it, we actually had a full-time sequel programmer on the payroll. And so to see what the options are today and how democratized the access is, is really exciting to me and I hope that fundraisers are using it more frequently and more effectively because of those reasons.

Steven Shattuck: That brings with it a lot of challenges making sure that we're all using the system in the same way, and I can't stress enough, I know I've already said it a couple of times, but having that documented plan or road map for how we're going to use it will really keep you out of trouble. And we have some people that, not very often, but every once in a while someone will say, "Well, we don't want a Cloud based system. That doesn't seem secure." And so there's still a little bit of that out there and we say, "Well, if a tornado hits your building and hits that one computer, if we have a power outage or a flood or a theft like that's all your data." You said it, democratization.

Andrew Olsen: If somebody walks away with your shoebox full of data-

Steven Shattuck: Yeah, your index cards. [crosstalk 00:30:53] get paper records that you have to convert which is always kind of fun and we're happy to help those people.

Andrew Olsen: One of the things that I think is exciting about how you guys at Bloomerang approach the database and what sort of integrations you have. A lot of people talk about integrating [inaudible 00:31:14] data. I love that you guys have integrated with DonorSearch and their data. Talk to us a little bit about why you guys chose to partner with them and what the value is to organizations of looking at that level of data.

Steven Shattuck: Yeah, I love DonorSearch. They're awesome. They're kind of like us, they're kind of philosophically aligned, kind of a similar size and we really hit it off with them. And they're awesome. They put out a lot of really great research of what kind of capacity signals you should be looking for and what really denotes someone that has likelihood to give to you. But I think it goes back to the segmentation. You want to give people as much information about their donors as possible so that they can make really good decisions about how they communicate or maybe how they approach those people.

Steven Shattuck: One thing we do is you can run a well-screening on any donor right from Bloomerang but if you don't have a DonorSearch subscription, which you should all get because it's so worth the money and it's not really that much money per year, is we will pull that information onto the constituent's profile and show you a score which is basically like a thermometer score from cold to on fire really more of how much capacity that person has and we look at the likelihood that they will donate to organizations like yours based on previous giving to other organizations that are maybe similar to yours or operate within the same cause type. And then other things like do they own a lot of real estate? Do they give to political campaigns? Do they serve as a foundation trustee? We'll pull all that information and wrangle all that data and make a suggestion to you.

Steven Shattuck: And just wealth is not enough to say this person is a good prospect for us, we need to layer on all those other things, previous engagement with your organization, maybe giving to other organizations like yours. But just knowing that information will guide your efforts, I think that's probably the best way to answer your question, Andrew. If you've got a donor that has high capacity and they've only been giving maybe $100 a year to you, maybe we should up that amount that we're asking that person, maybe we should consider them as a multi-year pledge to a capital campaign versus someone that we should conversely maybe segment out of those larger asks or those larger campaigns and maybe move them into more modest monthly giving or see if we can get them to become a volunteer or maybe a peer to peer fundraiser. It all comes down to giving the user the fundraiser some insight so they can make better decisions on the approach they take with individual donors.

Andrew Olsen: Yeah, that's interesting. It really is. That really is the art form of what we do. I think my philanthropic content, not just wealth.

Steven Shattuck: Yeah, absolutely. The wealth is only a piece of that pie. We would have people ask us and I've been at events asking us, "We want to find the rich people in our city." I'm like, "Well, why do you want to do that? Let's talk about that for a minute." It's good to know that information but a rich stranger is not necessarily going to be a really good prospect for you. But if you find a current donor or a current supporter that has high capacity that maybe you didn't know about, that's useful because you might want to upgrade their gift or ask for a higher dollar amount or some other mode of giving that you weren't asking for before. It's all really useful. The more information you have, the more guided your efforts are going to be.

Andrew Olsen: It's like the old joke you're sitting around a boardroom and somebody says, "Well, all we have to do is write a letter to Oprah-

Steven Shattuck: Or Bill Gates.

Andrew Olsen: Or can we call Bill Gates? And unfortunately it actually happens.

Steven Shattuck: It does.

Andrew Olsen: When there are people sitting there on the file who have given a dozen gifts, who probably have the capacity to give a six figure gift or even maybe a seven figure gift that we're asking for $20 because that's what we've always asked for and that's what they've always given.

Steven Shattuck: It gets the attention. When those things happen, it hits the news. Like that librarian who was a modest middle-class earner passed away and left five million dollars to this local animal shelter and I think that kind of worms its way into our brains like we just got to find the rich people because maybe they'll leave us money. What doesn't get the attention is someone building a robust profile of a donor, seeing that they could give more, reaching out to them, getting that upgrade even if it's a small amount but over the lifetime of that giving that can mean thousands of dollars for that organization. That doesn't get the attention but that can be very powerful for the organization that pulls those things off.

Andrew Olsen: Yeah. We have just a few minutes left. I want to take us to a question that's not at all what I would consider a hot topic or a [crosstalk 00:36:45] topic to talk about but I think it costs organizations millions of dollars a year across the country. Talk to us about the importance of data hygiene and how our organizations should think about that.

Steven Shattuck: I'll tell a story that I think will be useful. We had a customer who invested in some data hygiene and what they invested in was a couple of data services that you can buy separately and I think you should all buy these things if you're listening but if you use Bloomerang we actually will do this for you for free, but they bought a NCOA, which is probably going to be familiar to most of the listeners. That's updating the addresses in your file so making sure that the mail you're sending out gets delivered, it doesn't get to someone who has moved. And then the other one, which I'm really passionate about, is a curious subject but it's a deceased suppression processing. So this will tell you if any of the people in your database have passed away and you can do a lot of things with that information. You can stop mailing those people if they were a single member of a household but if they had members of the household you can do some very interesting stewardship with those people.

Steven Shattuck: So what this customer did is they ran the deceased suppression and they updated all their data with people that had passed away. And anyone that had a surviving household member that they had information on, they sent a condolence note to that person. So they sent a simple card handwritten inside, "Hey, Steven, we are so sorry to hear that your wife passed away," your partner, your spouse, whatever the case was. And one person wrote back, I believe it was the husband of the donor that had passed away the wife, which is typical. It's usually the female of the family in that opposite sex relationship who handles the donation side of the finances. And the husband wrote back and said, "Wow. I had no idea that we were even giving to you." And they included a big check, one-time check, and the response to the condolence note and then they also kept that record of gift going.

Steven Shattuck: Now I'm not saying that you're hitting these people up for money but it is a really nice stewardship piece. If you do nothing else but stop mailing those people because those surviving household members, they don't want to get mail that is delivered to their loved one that has passed away. That is a really tangible super high ROI. The savings alone on the postage will probably pay for the service itself but taking care of those things, making sure that your addresses are getting updated, that you're comparing it to death records, that's what that deceased suppression will do but then also making sure that you're following those guidelines of entering data and that you're avoiding duplicates and that you have addresses that are standardized so that the mail will get to them. It's so critical.

Steven Shattuck: You can have all the great things that we've been talking about throughout the hour but without the data hygiene, no one's going to get your stuff. You're going to be sending to people that have moved, that have passed away, that their email address has changed. And you can do these things for email addresses, you can do them for phone numbers. I think it's really worth the investment on at least an annual basis to do these things. We will do an NCOA and a deceased suppression daily for you if you're a Bloomerang customer and it's totally included in the pricing so you always have the most up to date information. But if you're not a Bloomerang user, please invest in those things. There are tons of providers across America.

Andrew Olsen: And we're talking like pennies a record for each of those things, right?

Steven Shattuck: Absolutely. And if you want the bulk mailing rate through the U.S. Postal Service, I think that they require an annual NCOA. Don't quote me on that-

Andrew Olsen: They require it every, I believe, it's 90 days now.

Steven Shattuck: Oh wow, okay. That probably breaks even. You guys do it more often where you said?

Andrew Olsen: Yeah. People are often surprised. You asked the post office and other folks, the population in the U.S., literally 20% of our database-

Steven Shattuck: They move.

Andrew Olsen: Moves every year. So if you're not staying on top of that, in five years you don't have a database.

Steven Shattuck: No, absolutely. They're all churning out and your mail is undeliverable to them. It's so, so critical. And I know that the database itself is a big investment and it seems like another thing to spend money on and another thing to put in the budget but really important because you can be collecting all this information but it becomes out of date literally the next day in some cases. I'm glad you brought it up, Andrew, because I think it's a really important thing to invest in for sure.

Andrew Olsen: Yeah. No, again, I think it's not the new, shiny object but most organizations that may be the thing that drives the greatest amount of revenue for them in the short-term.

Steven Shattuck: Absolutely.

Andrew Olsen: Yeah. Well, hey man, I really appreciate you being here. I think we covered some great ground and got some great insights. Folks want to reach out to you and get in touch with you to learn more, to talk about how they can become a Bloomerang customer, or maybe to talk about what your favorite beverage is during a podcast. I'm going to let them figure that out. How do they get in touch with you?

Steven Shattuck: Well, I'm pretty accessible. You probably weren't surprising to hear that but I'm on Twitter @StevenShattuck. I'm usually posting a lot of silliness and weird gifs and stuff but I'll also talk to you about fundraising. I would check out the Bloomerang webinar series. Just go to Bloomerang.co and click on freebies, you'll find our webinar series. It's almost every single week. I think we do 48 or 49 sessions a year. We bring on awesome guests, you don't have to listen to me anymore. You'll hear me for about three minutes and I introduce someone way smarter than me like Andrew, he's been on the series. We cover really cool topics. It's totally free. It's not some weird trick to get you to buy Bloomerang. We just really like to do it. But if you do want to buy Bloomerang or at least see what we have to offer, just hit our website.

Steven Shattuck: There's a video demo of the software so you can see that that is my voice again, so you have to hear me for another half hour but I'll give you a tour of the system. And you can look at that, you don't have to get hounded by a salesperson to get a look at the system. I would check that out if you're curious about us.

Andrew Olsen: I am actually a Bloomerang referral partner so I'll put in the show notes if anybody is interested in looking at Bloomerang. If you want to go through that link, it'll get you a nice little discount [crosstalk 00:43:42] forward with Steven and the Bloomerang team.

Steven Shattuck: We love the discounts.

Andrew Olsen: I think most everybody does. Hey, man, appreciate you being here. Thanks so much.

Steven Shattuck: Sure. Thanks for having me.

Roy Jones: Thank you, Steven.