

4 Silent Auction Facts to Start a Bidding War

A nonprofit auction takes considerable work and volunteer hours. Wouldn't it be nice to be more strategic with your planning?

We've got those insights for you—and then some!
Our team analyzed over

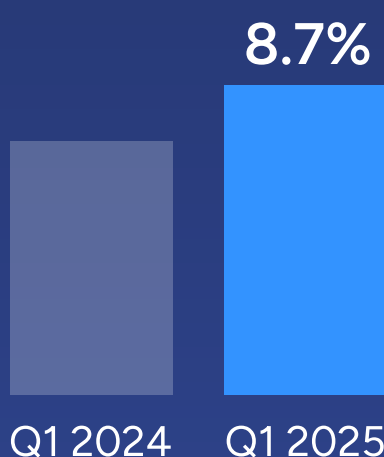
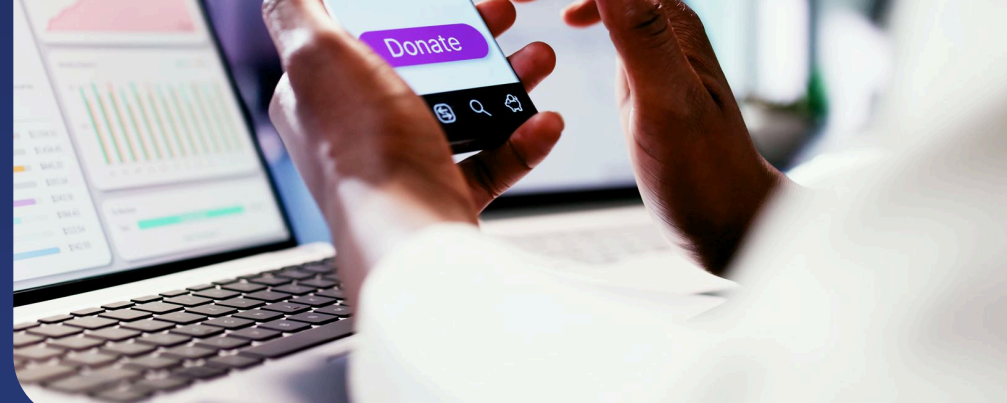
521,600

lines of GiveSmart silent and live auction data from nearly 4,300 organizations. From this data, we're sharing how your auctions can make a big impact on your mission.

\$958,318 MORE

was raised via auctions from the first quarter of 2025 compared to the same timeframe in 2024.

Despite slightly (0.3%) fewer auction items and packages sold from January to March (Q1) of 2025 compared to 2024, auctions raised overall MORE money in Q1 2025.



Auction items also had an 8.7% higher median fair market value* (FMV) in Q1 2025 than in Q1 2024.

Corporations, small businesses, individuals, and volunteers are still giving items that are valuable and of interest to your donors. And donors are still buying them!

*The median FMV is the dollar amount that separates the higher half from the lower half of the auction sales data.



You can start raising money well before your auction by [including tickets for a golden ticket raffle](#) in your event ticket order form. Doing so will also help you get your donors' information on file sooner!

The median fair market value* (FMV) for GiveSmart auctions was

\$125 in Q1 2025

Too many options can overwhelm your guests. Consider what packaging some lower-priced auction items together might do for your auction revenue.

Finding the sweet spot of the number of packages per guest, raising your median FMV, can encourage bidding and drive revenue.

The top 0.1%

In looking at THE top 0.1% of bid-getting items in 2024 and early 2025, the highest performing by category were:

Category	Average Number of Bids
Pets	128
Travel and Experiences	101
Wine and Dine	94

In looking at THE top 0.1% by selling price in 2024 and early 2025, the tippy top by sales were:

Category	Average Sales Price
Sports and Hobbies	\$4,947.40
Priceless and Donate	\$2,940.50
Arts and Entertainment	\$2,275.60

Make sure you have a variety of items in your auction, by category. Not all of your guests will be interested in high-value packages, but think strategically about some of your more prized items in terms of starting bid or FMV. Starting too low can cost you!

AUCTION BEST PRACTICE

Have you tried offering items for donation in your auction?

Guests often plan what they will spend at your gala or golf outing before your event. They then may lose an auction item or miss out on the raffle.

Giving donors the opportunity to cover part of your power bill, art supplies for your students, plants for your facility, or other tangible things can inspire generous giving!



Thirty Loads of Laundry



Boxed Lunches for 1 Week



One Night of Rest



Stock Grab & Go Fridge for 1 Week

Organizations raised

17.7%

of the overall 2024 auction revenue in April.

No one is suggesting you tack on an entirely new gala or move your date if your organization is already having success with auctions. But if you are in the initial stages of planning your auction or are looking to host an additional online one, consider the spring or fall.

Keeping these insights in mind can help make a difference in your auction success. Not only can you make more informed item requests, but you can try to avoid items that may not sell.

About GiveSmart

GiveSmart is a mobile bidding, fundraising, event management, and donor management software. Our mission is to help nonprofits, schools, foundations, and associations reach their fundraising goals while creating an engaging, exciting, and easy giving experience for their donors. All. Year. Round. GiveSmart has helped our partners raise over \$11 billion.



To speak directly with a fundraising expert about GiveSmart's comprehensive fundraising and auction features, visit givesmart.com/demo or call 800-667-8075.

Nonprofit organization-reported data was pulled from GiveSmart from auctions occurring in 2024 and Q1 2025.

Please consult local and state guidelines when offering alcohol, raffles, and other regulated items or games.

About Momentive Software

Momentive Software amplifies the impact of over 30,000 purpose-driven organizations in over 30 countries. Mission-driven organizations and associations rely on Momentive's cloud-based software and services to solve their most critical challenges: engage the people they serve, simplify operations, and grow revenue. Learn more at momentivesoftware.com.

