

“Planned Giving” vs. “Gift Planning”

The Argument is Over.

By Viken Mikaelian

Ask yourself: Do you close a gift plan or do you close a planned gift?

It's a decades-old dispute over which term, “Planned Giving” or “Gift Planning,” gives you the edge when reaching out to your prospects.

A few nonprofits have migrated to Gift Planning because it sounds more “sophisticated.” Others argue that Planned Giving has been around too long and it's time for something “new.” And some “feel” it makes better sense and sounds better.

This Is All Just Theory.

“Sophistication” is in the eye of the beholder. “New” doesn't necessarily mean “better.” And beware those vague intuitive “feelings.”

So let's get practical, not philosophical. Ask yourself: do you close a “gift plan,” or do you close a “planned gift?” The answer is obvious.

Although neither term is well recognized by the lay public, after decades of education by AFP, PPP,

NACGP, AHP, CASE, et al., the term Planned Giving is finally getting some traction.

So this is no time for nonprofits to force the whole familiarization process back to square one by trying to introduce something “new” — and obscure. If you want to make communication a priority, don't start by fostering confusion.

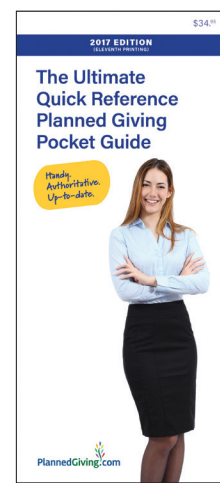
Gift Planning? Macy's Does It.

When I ask strangers if they know what Planned Giving means, I get a “yes,” a “no,” or a “tell me.”

When I ask what Gift Planning means, I get a question back such as “Isn't that what Macy's does?”

The answer is “yes.” Retailers have their gift planning departments, too. Just Google the term Gift Planning around the time of any big holiday such as Mother's Day or Christmas, and you will end up with “paid adver-

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tisement” results from Target, Macy’s, and other retail gift providers.

That is, Gift Planning is not a “pure” search term – it has other attributes and definitions recognized by other industries. All of which distracts from the meaning you want to focus on.

Google Picks Planned Giving

When we look at Google’s own metrics about the use of these terms, it’s clear which term wins.

Exhibit A: The words Gift Planning are out-searched 2-to-1 nationally by the words Planned Giving. If you take the Gift Planning search term error into account, it is like to be much higher. See footnote. Even in Cambridge, MA, where academic institutions prefer to use Gift Planning, the search rate for that term is vanishingly small. So if you believe in search engine optimization (SEO) for your

planned giving website, Planned Giving is a better choice.

Exhibit B: Google has scanned over 20 million books for its digital library. When you plot a graph of how often the terms we’re discussing are used in all those books, Gift Planning is again vanishingly small compared to Planned Giving.

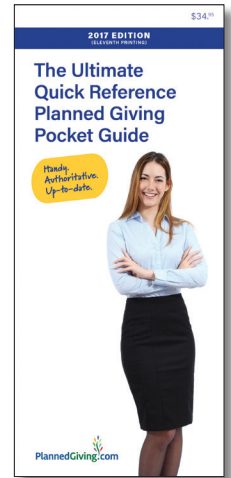
This is not theory.

This is actual use. Please see the following exhibits.

If you believe in search engine optimization (SEO) for your planned giving website, take a look at Exhibit A, which charts number of searches. Frequency of use in print: Exhibit B compares how many times Gift Planning versus Planned Giving appear in Google’s 20-million-volume digital library of scanned books.

For best viewing, please print these pages. If possible, print in color.

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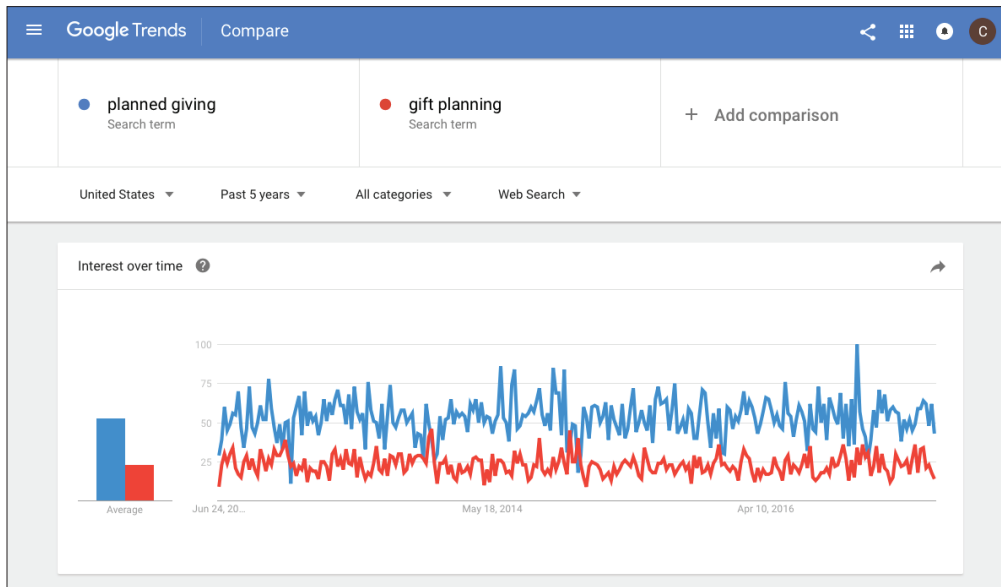
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Exhibit A — Online



I hope you found this white paper stimulating and useful.

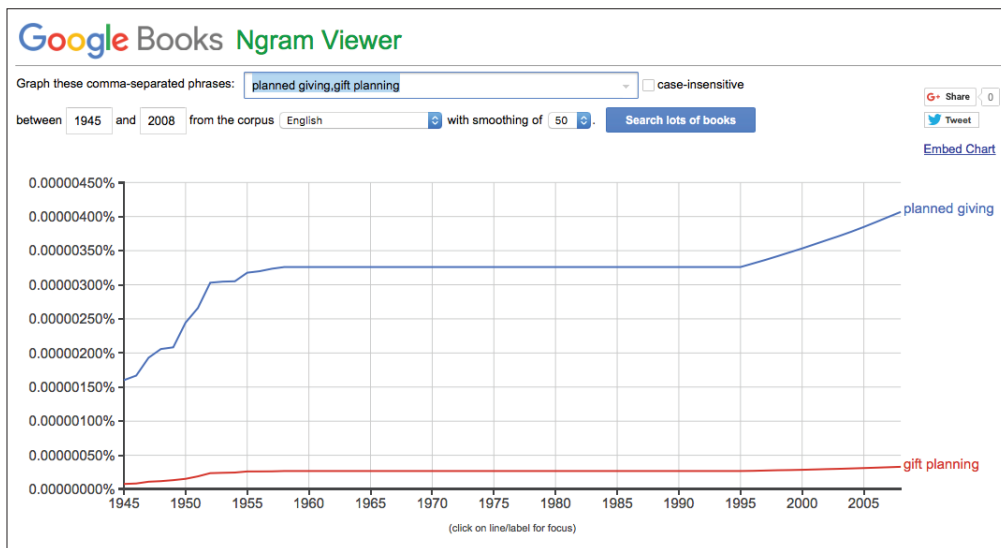
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Contact me. Let me know how you're doing. And let me know how I'm doing.

Let's improve and succeed together.

Viken Mikaelian
 Founder
 PlannedGiving.com

Exhibit B — Books



Red (lower bar) = Gift Planning

The gift planning figure is misleading because it is also Googled by other parties who are in the catering business, party planning business, weddings, etc. So it is very likely to be much lower.

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