

# “Planned Giving” vs. “Gift Planning”

## The Argument is Over.

by Viken Mikaelian

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.”

**Ask yourself:** So let's get practical, not philosophical.  
**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, NCPG/PPP, AHP, CASE, et al., the term Planned Giving is finally getting some traction.

**This is no time for nonprofits to force the whole familiarization process back to square one by introducing something “new.”**

### 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 advertisement” 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

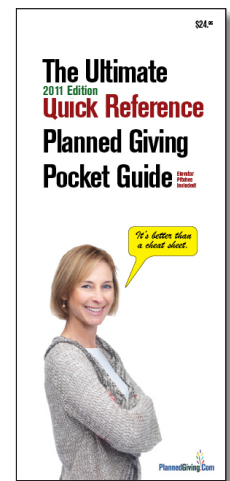
When we look at Google's own metrics about the use of these terms, it's clear which term wins.

**Exhibit A:** The words Gift Planning are out-searched 100-to-1 nationally by the words Planned Giving. 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 13 million books for its digital library. When you plot a graph of how often the terms we're discussing are used, Gift Planning is again *vanishingly small* compared to Planned Giving. Planned Giving is by far the popular and preferred choice.

This is not theory. This is actual use. Please see exhibits on next page.

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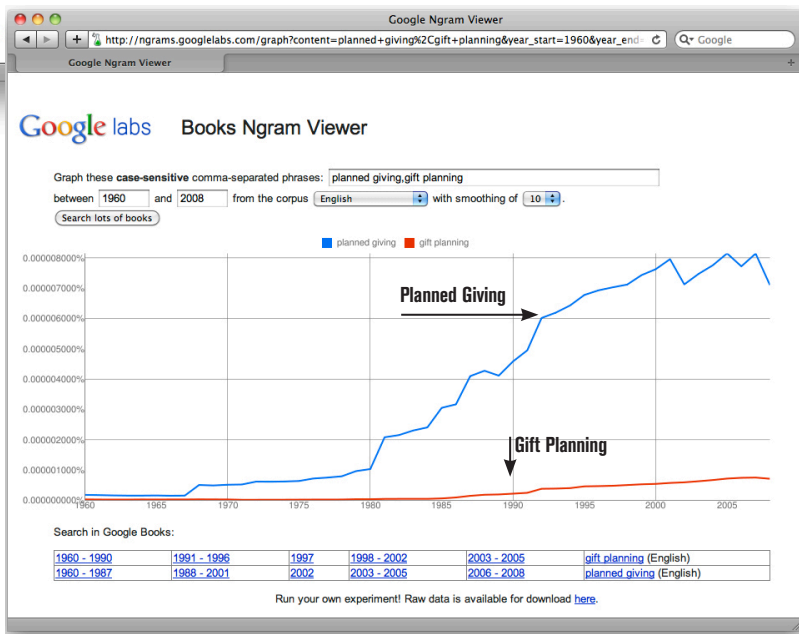
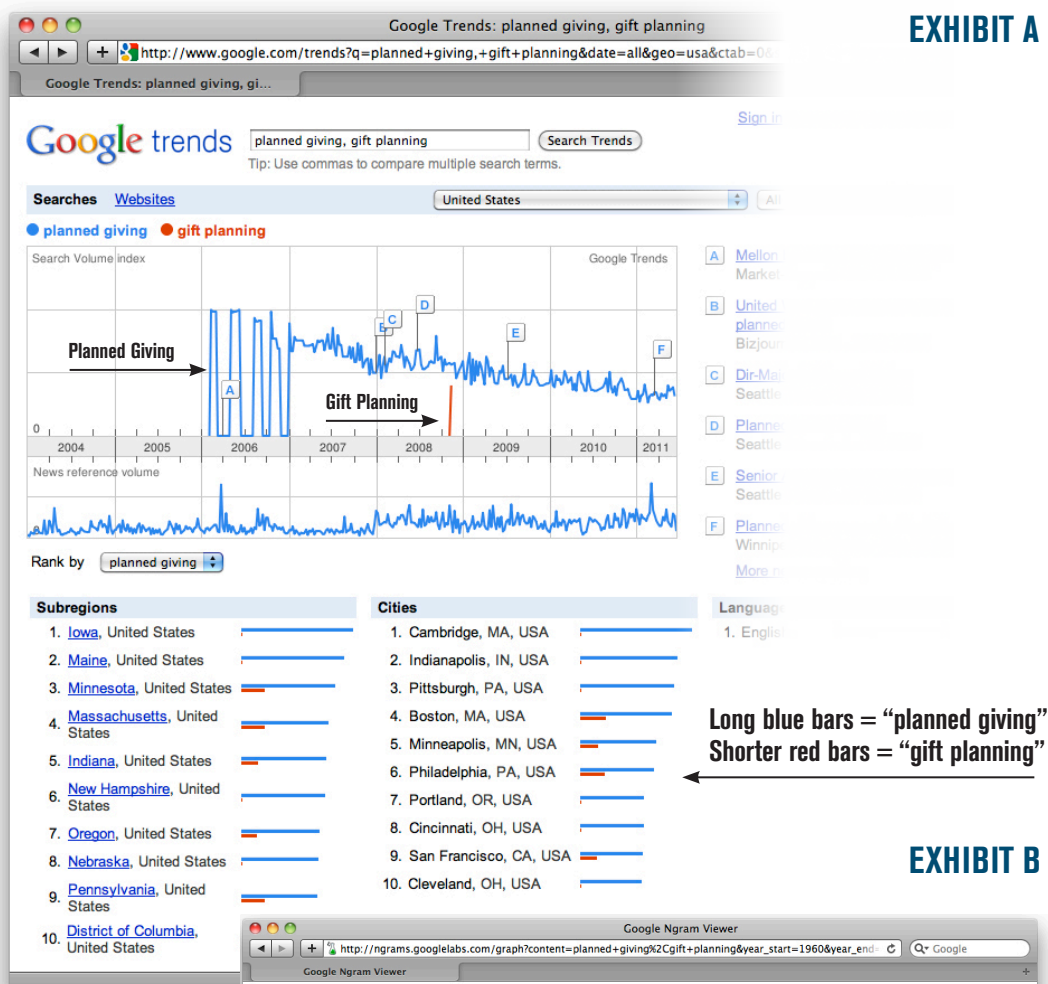
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Every fundraiser needs this planned giving pocket guide.

Over...

# Google Report: “Planned Giving” vs. “Gift Planning”

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 13-million-volume digital library of scanned books.



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Let’s improve and succeed *together*.

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