

THE HUMAN SPONSORSHIP

BANK OF AMERICA 



How Bank of America redefined the purpose and value of corporate sponsorship.

When Bank of America became sponsor of the Boston Marathon, trust in banks was eroding. The collapse of SVB and scandals like FTX had shaken consumer confidence, and brand favorability was at its lowest point since 2020.

The Boston Marathon is famously tough—but the hardest way in is through charity. These runners commit to raising over \$10,000, and if they fall short, they cover the rest themselves. Their motivation is deeply personal—and they needed help.

Helping people is at the heart of our brand purpose: Achievement Made Possible. So we flipped our sponsorship. We donated ourselves, then used our platform to tell runners' stories, expand their reach, and help them meet their fundraising goals.

The results: \$71.9M raised for 164 charities—a 77% increase over the previous year. Donors credited the runners' stories as the reason they gave. Brand favorability rose 8%, reaching its highest level ever.

And the business followed. Revenue beat industry projections by \$190M that quarter.

By turning a sponsorship into something human and purpose-driven, we didn't just show up. We helped people move forward—and proved that real impact drives real growth.

CNN Business

Silicon Valley Bank collapses after failing to raise capital

The New York Times

Banking Turmoil: What We Know

Regulators trying to stem panic among customers shut down Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank within days.

Bloomberg

Boston Marathon Signs Decade-Long Sponsorship Deal With BofA



BANK OF AMERICA 

In 2023, economic turmoil was eroding how people felt about Banks.

Silicon Valley Bank collapsed. FTX unraveled. Crypto markets were in free fall. Trust in financial institutions was eroding. At the same time, inflation was rising fast, and people were feeling it in their daily lives.



J.D. Power: Consumers losing trust in big banks

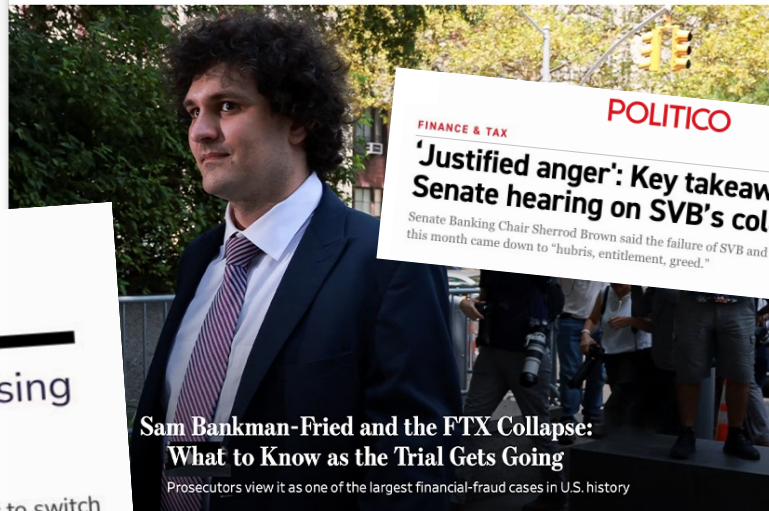
Thirteen percent of bank customers are likely to switch institutions in the next 12 months.

ECONOMICS

Few have confidence in financial institutions

Only 10% of adults have a great deal of confidence in the nation's banks and financial institutions, and most say the government is not doing enough to regulate the industry.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.



Sam Bankman-Fried and the FTX Collapse: What to Know as the Trial Gets Going

Prosecutors view it as one of the largest financial-fraud cases in U.S. history

FINANCE & TAX

POLITICO

'Justified anger': Key takeaways from Senate hearing on SVB's collapse

Senate Banking Chair Sherrod Brown said the failure of SVB and Signature Bank earlier this month came down to "hubris, entitlement, greed."

Bloomberg

Opinion

How Americans' Trust in Big Business Went From Bad to Worse

There was a time when the growing economy lifted everyone.
These days, only the rich seem to be rising.

With the stakes at their highest, Bank of America became the presenting sponsor of the Boston Marathon.

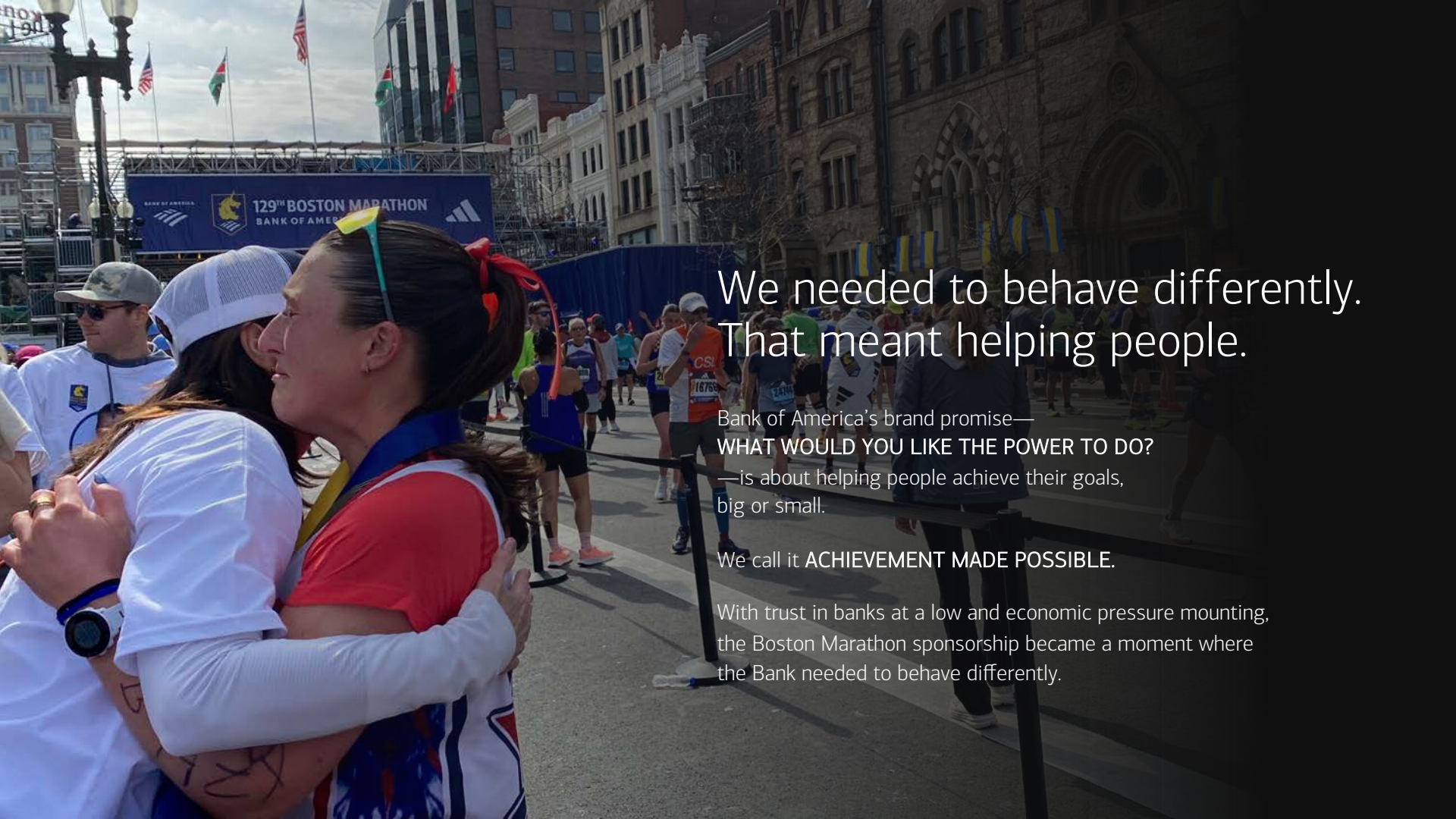
The Boston Marathon was a perfect branding play for Bank of America: elite athletes, high visibility, global prestige. As the world's oldest and most respected marathon, it attracts only the fastest runners.





Just behaving like any other sponsor
wouldn't have been enough.

Most sponsors use moments like the Boston Marathon to plaster logos and feed customer pipelines. But the stakes were too high. We wouldn't have stood out.



We needed to behave differently.
That meant helping people.

Bank of America's brand promise—
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE THE POWER TO DO?
—is about helping people achieve their goals,
big or small.

We call it **ACHIEVEMENT MADE POSSIBLE.**

With trust in banks at a low and economic pressure mounting,
the Boston Marathon sponsorship became a moment where
the Bank needed to behave differently.

At the Boston Marathon,
there's a group of runners
that aren't talked about.
Charity Runners.

Running fast enough to qualify for the Boston Marathon is hard. But there's an even harder way in: running for charity.

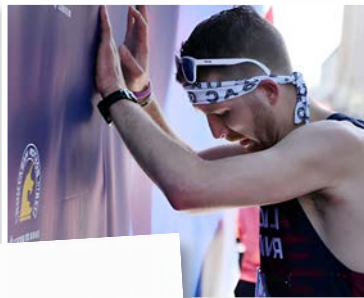
They aren't there to set records. They are there to raise money for the causes they care deeply about.



AND THEY NEED OUR HELP

Just 10% of the field takes this path. These runners commit to **RAISING \$10,000** or more—and if they fall short, they pay the rest themselves. No safety net. No guarantees. Just the risk of debt for the chance to do something meaningful.

But they do it anyway. Because they're not chasing personal records—they're running for a cause. For someone they lost. For something they believe in.



Medium

Will Selling Grandma's Silver Get Me to the Boston Marathon Start Line?

Charity starts at home — by selling its contents



128TH BOSTON MARATHON[®]

OFFICIAL CHARITY APPLICATION

Don't Dream Big! Boston Marathon Team Application
Due to Boston Marathon – Monday, April 15, 2024

Submit by mail to:

Don't Dream Big!

Attention: Dream Big! Marathon Team

Highland Circle, Suite 203, Needham, MA 02494

Submit by e-mail to: info@dream-big.org

Thank you for your interest in running the Boston Marathon[®] with Dream Big! This year's goal is to raise on average a **minimum of \$10,000 per runner**. Set your own goal — and give your fundraising plan careful and serious consideration, as this is a commitment.

Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis! All pages of the application must be completed and submitted by mail and applications will continue to be accepted until all spots are full. Once accepted, you will be charged the credit card provided below a \$45 non-refundable application fee. Fill out any section if necessary. Questions? We're here to help! Email us at info@dream-big.org. Also: You may be contacted to discuss your application. All information you provide will be kept confidential.

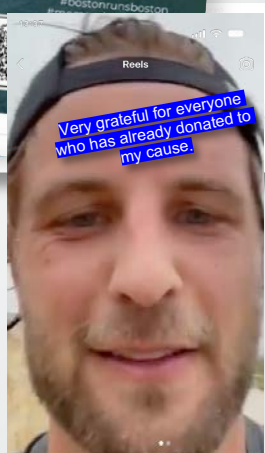
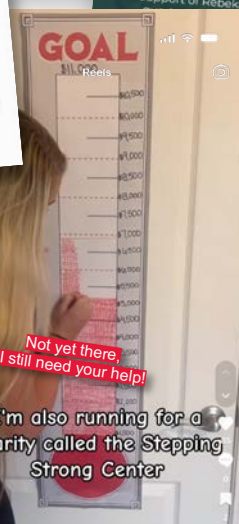
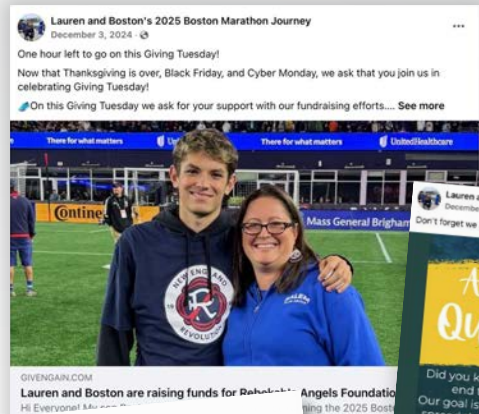
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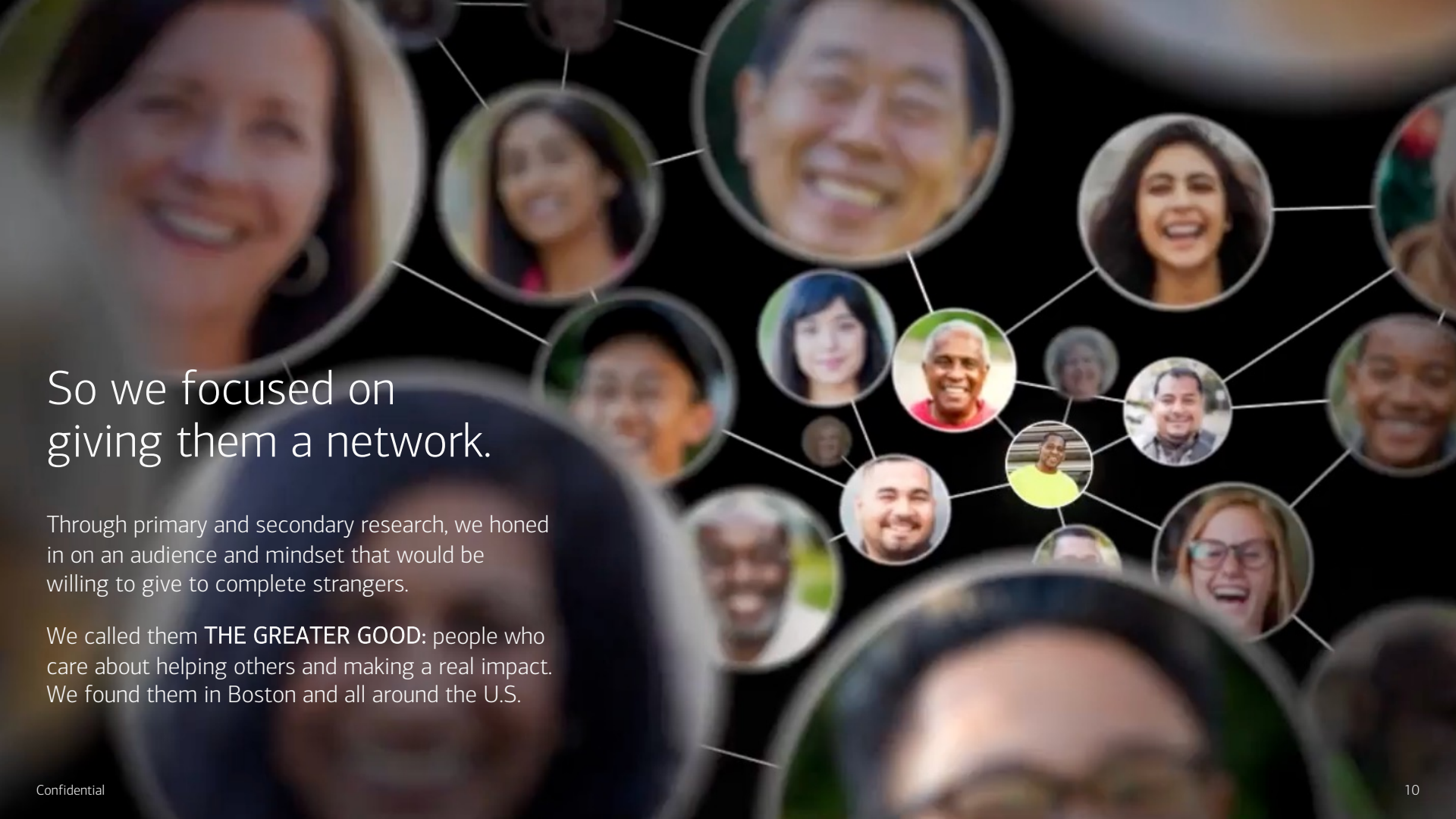
THE PROBLEM

They had the passion
but not the reach.

Raising \$10,000 is incredibly challenging.
Most charity runners start with friends and
family—but that only gets them so far.

Their networks are only so large.





So we focused on
giving them a network.

Through primary and secondary research, we honed in on an audience and mindset that would be willing to give to complete strangers.

We called them **THE GREATER GOOD**: people who care about helping others and making a real impact. We found them in Boston and all around the U.S.



THE BREAKTHROUGH

People Don't Give to Charities.
They Give to People.

This was our aha moment.

Donors want to feel a connection.

Not to the organization, but to the individual behind the effort.

So we shifted the focus:

From charity names to the faces, voices, and reasons behind each run.

Abstract missions don't move wallets. Human stories do.



THE HUMAN SPONSORSHIP

BANK OF AMERICA 

From Corporate Sponsor to Human Sponsor.

We didn't just put our name on the race—we put our support behind the runners that needed our help. We shifted from brand visibility to human visibility. Our role became clear:

Act as a network expander. A storyteller. A connector. We used our platform to connect people to people—amplifying the personal stories that inspire action.



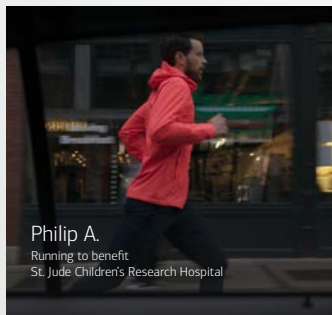
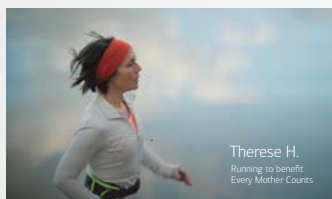
Bank of America turned their entire sponsorship of the Boston Marathon® into a spotlight to tell the personal stories of charity runners.

Utilizing the platform of an iconic event, Bank of America leveraged their marketing, network, and global reach to amplify each charity runners' ability to fundraise.

Every dollar of Bank's marketing budget and every logo went toward our donation engine.

Tell the Story

We turned individual runners into powerful narratives—centered on emotion, humanity, and purpose.



Expand the Network

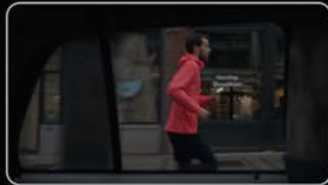
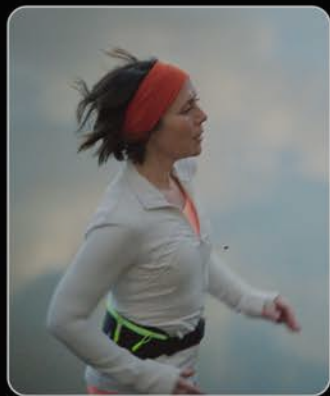
We used the sponsorship to break past runners' personal networks and bring their stories to a national stage.



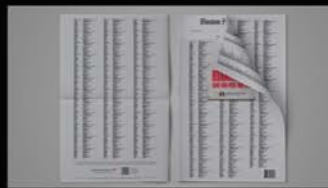
Fuel the Fundraising

We turned attention into action—giving people compelling reasons and clear ways to support the cause.





BLANKETING BOSTON & REACHING DONORS NATIONWIDE



At the 2024 Boston Marathon, The Human Sponsorship drove a record-setting donation success.

\$71.9M

total philanthropic impact

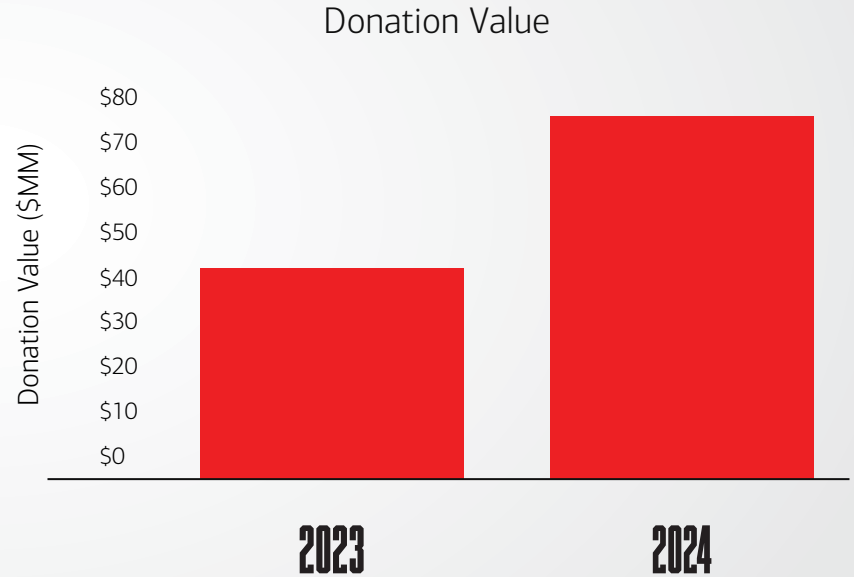
77%

increase over 2023

164

charities benefiting

Donations were raised for 164 charities selected by runners participating in the race. Success was directly attributed to the runners with Bank of America's contribution receiving regular recognition, as donors' direct responses cited the runners' stories as the inspiring element that convinced people to donate.



This campaign drove an 8% increase in customer brand favorability, reaching the highest brand favorability level and strongest 3 months ever.

+8PPPTS

The Boston Globe

BOSTON MARATHON

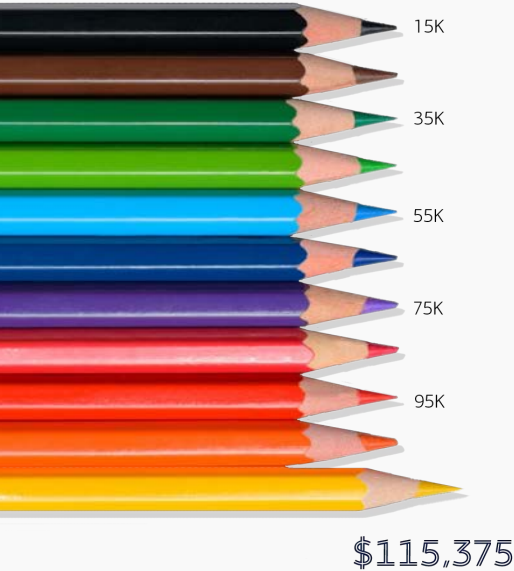
This year's Boston Marathon broke its fundraising record by more than \$30 million

By **Emma Healy** Globe Staff, Updated May 30, 2024, 4:44 p.m.



IMPACT

This campaign didn't just help the business.
It helped people and communities all over.



**HORIZONS
FOR HOMELESS
CHILDREN®**

*Donations going toward early
education and family support
programs for children in shelters.*



DREAMBIG!

*Donations going toward female athletes
from low-income communities with gear
and opportunities*

Plus hundreds more...



**camp
casco**

*Donations going toward
free summer camps for kids
with cancer and their siblings.*

“



Philip A.

“Definitely amplified.
I'd say doubled my fundraising efforts.”

Margaret D. DONATED

Thanks for all you are doing Philip. As a cancer patient, am honored to support St. Jude's and you.



Elaine G.

As soon as I saw you on TV,
I wanted to contribute to your cause.

Theresa L. DONATED

For mamas everywhere, I thank you for running
for a great reason, Therese!

“



Therese H.

“Without Bank of America, none of us
would have raised a fraction of what we have.”



Brian S.

Bank of America should be commended for using
their corporate influence to support charity runners.

Margaret D. DONATED

Thanks for all you are doing. As a cancer patient,
I am honored to support St. Jude's and you.

“



Naitik S.

“They are giving so much
spotlight to charity runners.”

Jane M. DONATED

So inspired by your story and your courage
Cedric - thank you for your service, and best
wishes as you run!



Courtney K.

Loved the posters and promos supporting
charity runners and their causes.



Ryan K.

Much more promotion and focus on charity runners.
Great energy around Bank of America.

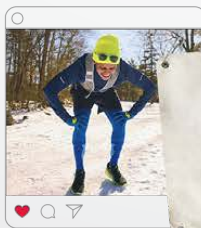
THE HUMAN SPONSORSHIP

BANK OF AMERICA 

FINANCIALLY RECOVERING
AFTER CANCER



TURNING HOPE
INTO HELP



TO DEFY
CANCER



THERE IS NO
CHALLENGE TOO BIG



RUNNING IN HONOR
OF MY MOM

