

Unlocking the Past: How The Mark Twain House & Museum Drives Fundraising with AudienceView Professional

4 MIN READ



If walls could talk, The Mark Twain House & Museum would have so much to say.

The National Historic Landmark in Hartford, Connecticut was home to Mark Twain, an American writer, humorist, entrepreneur, publisher and lecturer, from 1874 to 1891. Twain wrote many of his enduring masterpieces while he lived in the home, including *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.

Poor financial investments forced the Twain family to move to Europe in 1891 and they never returned to the house – eventually selling it in 1903. The building later functioned as a school, an apartment and a public library before being rescued from possible demolition in 1929. It was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1962 and opened as a museum in 1974, in time to celebrate the building's 100th anniversary.

Importance of Donations

As a nonprofit organization, The Mark Twain House & Museum depends on contributions from its generous supporters to ensure the preservation of the home. In fact, **over 40% of their annual operating income comes from individual, corporate and foundation supporters**. These donations also allow the organization to share their enriching programs, education initiatives and events with their community.

The Mark Twain House & Museum has a dedicated fundraising arm that provides supporters with several opportunities to donate to the organization. They make it easy for their patrons to support their general fund on their website – with the ability to make a donation in any amount, with options to give a one-time gift or enroll in a [recurring donation](#) plan that allows people to donate in a subscription-style monthly, quarterly or yearly.

They also promote their fundraising campaigns during the checkout process, seamlessly allowing their customers to make a donation in the same transaction as a ticket purchase.

Membership Program

Beyond soliciting more traditional donations, the organization also boasts a very sophisticated membership program that offers 10 different tiers – ranging from \$35 to \$1,000+. As a baseline, each member receives free admission to the House and Museum, year-round discounts in the Museum Store and Nook Farm Café, members-only events/programs, discounts and a subscription to their e-newsletter.

COST	LEVEL	TYPE
\$35	Twainiac Membership	For those aged 30 and under, as well as all students and teachers (ID required).
\$37.50	06105 ZIP Code Membership	Discounted household membership rate for Hartford residents in the 06105 zip code!
\$40	National & International Membership	Unlimited admission to basic guided tour for an individual not living in Connecticut.
\$50	Individual Membership	Unlimited admission to basic guided tour for one person.
\$75	Household Membership	Unlimited admission to basic guided tour for member couple and all children 17 and under.
\$100	Senior Sustaining Membership	Sustaining Membership for those age 65 and up.
\$150 – \$249	Sustaining Membership	Unlimited admission for basic guided tour for member couple and up to four guests.
\$250 – \$499	Steamboat Crew	Unlimited admission for basic guided tour for member couple and up to four guests + invitation for two the annual Museum Store Holiday Nosh.
\$500 – \$999	Nook Farm Neighbor	Unlimited admission for member couple and up to six (6) guests.
\$1,000+	Samuel Clemens Society	Premier-level membership that includes an array of exclusive benefits.

For donors who give \$2,500 or more annually, they will tailor additional benefits to their supporter's personal preferences so that they can best craft a meaningful package of benefits to acknowledge their generosity.

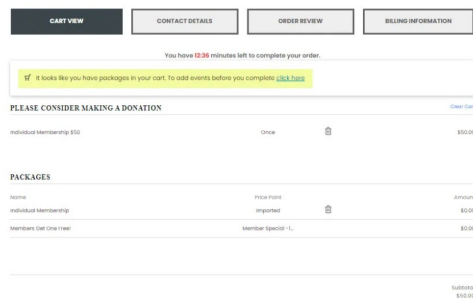
Membership Has its Privileges

The organization's Become a Member page does a fantastic job of breaking down each of the 10 membership options and truly offers something for everyone.

The \$35 [Twainiac Membership](#) provides a low-cost option for those aged 30 and under, students and teachers. The family-friendly [Household Membership](#) costs \$75 and is designed for couples attending with children 17 and under. They even offer a hyper-local [06105 Zip Code Membership](#) option, which is a discounted household membership rate (\$37.50 instead of \$75) for Hartford residents in the immediate zip code.

Each of the 10 membership options has a dedicated storefront page (also called a [storefront deep link](#)) that begins the online donation transaction process. The page clearly states the membership type and cost at the top, while providing additional details on the benefits tied to it. The donor selects the amount of the package, enters their name and then adds the item to their cart.

Every membership is tied to a *flexible package* that includes all the benefits (tour tickets, store discounts, etc.), so it's automatically added to the customer's order in the shopping cart at no additional cost. Further, the system intelligently notes that they have a package in their cart that unlocks those associate benefits in real-time. This allows customers, as an example, to add tour tickets for free during the initial membership purchase because it's a benefit available for immediate redemption.



How Does it Work?

Within AudienceView Professional's fundraising campaign tools, live events organizations can enable membership functionality to grant patrons flexible packages when they make a contribution in a specific monetary range. This feature can be used to give high-level donors ticket benefits when they make large contributions or, as in the case of The Mark Twain House & Museum, as a method of enticing prospective donors to make a contribution.

Each membership is tied to a flexible package that gives patrons the ability to redeem a defined set of benefits. A benefit is equivalent to a ticket redemption, and a redemption is a ticket worth a set value, anywhere from \$0 tickets to a specific discount.

When a patron makes a contribution to a campaign that has a membership, the associated membership benefit (flexible package) is added to their order at no additional cost. Patrons with flexible packages can then decide how and when they want to redeem their ticket allowances, either at the time of purchase or at a later date.

With AudienceView as an end-to-end event commerce partner, The Mark Twain House & Museum continues to innovate in fundraising and audience engagement.