Squark|AI

Your Nonprofit Fundraising Strategy Is Incomplete Without Predictive Donor Intelligence

And why foundational models (LLMs) can't replace what Squark does—even when they sound like they can

squark.ai

Modern fundraising is no longer a straight line. A supporter can see a TikTok, click a paid ad, ignore an email, respond to a direct-mail package, and then upgrade through a monthly-giving flow—all inside a week. Squark describes this reality bluntly: the donor journey now *"hops from direct mail to TikTok to crypto,"* and traditional analytics can't keep up.

That's why **"adding AI"** to your strategy is not enough. The question is: **which kind of AI** are you adding, and what job is it actually doing?

Most teams start with foundational models—ChatGPT-style large language models (LLMs). They're useful. They'll absolutely help you create more content, faster. But if you mistake **"better words"** for **"better decisions,"** you'll build a fundraising strategy that looks modern on the surface while leaving your biggest levers untouched: **targeting, timing, channel selection, ask amounts, suppression, and forecast accuracy**.

> That decision layer is exactly what Squark is built to deliver: turning raw donor data into predictions and plain-language next steps that fundraisers can execute.

Two kinds of AI. Two very different outcomes.

1) Foundational models: exceptional at language

Squark's own fundraising AI glossary defines LLMs as foundation models trained on vast text corpora—great for summarizing, generating, classifying, and reasoning in language. In nonprofit use, that translates to drafting appeals, landing pages, and social posts.

So yes:

- More copy variations
- Faster first drafts
- Cleaner summaries of notes and research
- Better brainstorming

> *If your bottleneck is writing, a foundational model is a powerful assistant.*

2) Squark: built for prediction + next-best action

Squark is **purpose-built for fundraising decisioning**: it "turns raw donor data into predictions and plain-language, do-this-next recommendations—delivered across email, mail, social, and SMS."

It's not just "insight." It's operational guidance:

- **Find more likely givers** (predict who will give/churn/upgrade and by channel)
- **Next-best action recommendations**
- **Journey orchestration across channels**
- **Revenue + KPI forecasting** with fundraising-specific time-series models
- **No-code ingest** (CSV or connectors) and activation into the tools you already use

> This is why Squark isn't a "nice to have." It is the missing layer between your donor file and your campaign decisions.

Why foundational models don't do what Squark does (even when they claim they do)

Here's the trap: LLMs can produce confident, plausible answers that feel like analytics. They'll output donor segments, predicted gift amounts, "top audiences," and even fake confidence scores if you ask.

> But confidence is not correctness.

OpenAI's own research describes hallucinations as instances where a model "confidently generates an answer that isn't true," and explains that standard training and evaluation can reward guessing over admitting uncertainty.

Nielsen Norman Group puts it even more plainly: generative AI outputs can seem plausible but be incorrect, and LLMs don't reliably know when they're right.

In fundraising terms, that means a foundational model can:

- **sound like it "scored your donors,"** while actually producing a narrative guess
- **recommend an "optimal ask,"** without any validated model trained on your donor outcomes
- **invent rationale ("these donors have high affinity")** without statistically tested evidence
- **confidently recommend budget allocation decisions** that can cost you real net revenue

And even if you feed an LLM data, you still face the hard requirements fundraising decisions demand:

- **calibrated probabilities** (not vibes)
- **holdouts / validation** (to prove lift and prevent self-deception)
- **repeatable scoring** (stable, auditable outputs)
- **governance + access control** (especially with donor data)

> *Foundational models were not designed as end-to-end fundraising prediction engines. Squark is.*

What goes missing in your fundraising strategy without Squark

Most fundraising strategies are built on some combination of:

- **segmentation rules** (RFM, manual flags, "lapsed = X months")
- **channel calendars**
- **creative testing**
- **program goals and dashboards**

Those are necessary—but they're incomplete, because **they're missing the predictive decision layer**.

1) You can't systematically reduce waste while protecting revenue

Real fundraising efficiency comes from knowing **who to suppress, who to reactivate, and who to upgrade**—before you spend. Squark case studies describe outcomes like -25% mailings with +6.7% net revenue in a reactivation scenario (Currency Non-Responders).

-25% mailings +6.7% revenue	Squark case study result: Reactivation scenario with Currency Non-Responders. That's not "better copy." That's better decisioning.

2) You can't personalize actions—only content

LLMs personalize words. **Squark personalizes what you do next**:

- **who is likely to respond**
- **what channel is most likely to work**
- **when to engage**
- **what action advances the donor journey**

> *Squark explicitly positions this as "predict your donors' next move and what to do about it."*

3) You can't forecast with confidence (and boards hate "we'll see")

Many orgs still forecast with spreadsheets and institutional memory. Squark's forecasting use case emphasizes **predicting gift volume and revenue by week and channel**, scenario planning, and reporting with ranges and drivers—not just point estimates.

> *That is an executive advantage: you can manage pacing earlier, protect downside, and allocate spend with discipline.*

4) You don't have a closed loop from data → prediction → activation → measurement

A strategy is only as good as your ability to execute and learn. Squark describes a flow that connects data, generates propensities and next-best actions, operationalizes them via agents inside existing tools, and measures impact continuously.

> Without that loop, "AI" becomes theater: impressive demos, modest results.

The practical way to use both (and win)

Think of it like this:

Foundational models = language horsepower	Squark = decision intelligence for fundraising

Use LLMs to:

- **draft appeals and stewardship letters**
- **create content variants for segments Squark identifies**
- **summarize call notes and generate first-pass briefs**

Use Squark to:

- **decide who gets what (and who doesn't)**
- **choose channel + cadence across email, mail, social, SMS**
- **forecast revenue and model scenarios**
- **prove lift and reinvest in what works**

A quick self-check: do you have fundraising AI—or just fundraising copywriting?

If your **"AI strategy"** can't answer these with measurable accuracy, you don't yet have **the decision layer**:

1	Who is most likely to give in the next 30/60/90 days—by channel?
2	Who is at risk of lapsing before they lapse—and what is the save action?
3	Who should be suppressed from mail to reduce cost without losing net revenue?
4	What happens to revenue if you shift spend, list mix, package, or cadence—before you commit?
5	Can you push those decisions into your existing tools with governance and auditability?

> If the honest answer is "not reliably," your strategy is missing what Squark delivers.

About Squark AI (powered by Market Holdings)

Squark AI is an artificial intelligence platform purpose-built for nonprofit fundraising and data-driven decision-making. The platform connects directly to an organization's existing data systems and applies automated machine learning, predictive modeling, time-series forecasting, natural language processing, and generative AI to forecast donor behavior and recommend the next best actions to improve fundraising performance. Designed as a no-code environment for fundraising teams, Squark translates complex analytics into clear scores, forecasts, and recommendations that can be deployed across direct mail, digital, and multichannel campaigns. In addition to the core application, Squark provides an API that allows organizations and partners to embed its predictive intelligence directly into CRMs, marketing systems, and operational workflows. Over the past seven years, Squark AI has helped power fundraising strategies that have generated billions of dollars for some of the world's largest and most mission-critical nonprofit organizations.

About Market Holdings

Market Holdings is a global group of companies focused on fundraising, marketing, media, data solutions, and artificial intelligence for nonprofit and mission-driven organizations. Through its portfolio of agencies and technology platforms—including Innovairre and Squark AI—the company provides integrated services spanning strategy, analytics, creative communications, digital marketing, print production, and donor engagement technologies. Together, these organizations support hundreds of charities worldwide and help raise billions of dollars annually for causes such as healthcare, climate initiatives, hunger relief, and social services by combining data-driven marketing with advanced fundraising technology.

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