

Royal School of Church Music

Doubles Annual Fund and Increases Individual Giving by Implementing a Prospect Research Programme



Founded as an international organisation in 1927 with a mission of supporting the best use of music in Christian worship, the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) is made up of a world-wide network of 8,500 churches, schools and individuals. The charity is committed to ensuring music remains available within churches around the world through education, training, publications, and investments for the future.



According to Catherine Clark, Head of Communications, Marketing and Development, there are members, volunteers, and donors in the United Kingdom, Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

As an educational Christian charity, the RSCM is an open, life-long learning organisation with involvement from people of every age, from 8 to 80. Primarily a membership-based organisation, the organisation's main objectives are to support members through practical and applied programmes of education and resources for music training. Through these programmes, RSCM enables singing, encourages choirs, nurtures skills, and deepens musical understanding.

Integrating Prospect Research into Fundraising

Despite its size and length of existence, RSCM has primarily been largely supported by membership subscriptions, course fees, sales of publications and other retail with little focus on increasing individual donations and fundraising efforts. In an effort to increase charitable giving of current RSCM 'Friends' (£25 subscribers), encourage members to become donors, and find new donors, RSCM needed an experienced Head of Development. Catherine Clark fit the bill and began working at RSCM in April of 2009. Catherine had previously worked as director of development and a capital campaign consultant at other nonprofits in the United States and had the knowledge to leverage those skills in the United Kingdom. With a large database of over 11,000 individuals, Clark began by reengaging with the current small pool of donors at RSCM.

"I wanted to reconnect with these donors and learn as much about them as possible. With so little cultivation and engagement done in the past, I needed to find people of wealth and influence among members, RSCM 'Friends', and the majority of individuals in our database made up of billing, church and school contacts who receive our magazines and have never given," says Miss Clark. "So I began by running our database through a wealth screening agency and found about 150 individuals with 'liquid assets' of between £1 million and £25 million who we decided to invite to an event."

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Systematic Research Identifies New Potential

The event engaged current donors as an initial action to increase fundraising efforts. Hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace it featured the Millennium Youth Choir and the BBC Radio 2 Chorister of the Year winners. “A total of £15,000 was raised, but following the event I knew we could do more,” says Miss Clark. “I was surprised by the results of the screening we had previously conducted. It contained individuals without any wealth and many with only housing equity as ‘liquid’ wealth. The true test came when we subscribed to WealthEngine’s FindWealth Online-UK and began researching our event attendees.” With Catherine’s previous prospect research experience in the US she knew the UK product would provide the right starting point to launch research for RSCM in the UK.

“Implementing the use of WealthEngine for prospect research at the Royal School of Church Music resulted in a 75% increase in voluntary giving.”

—Catherine Clark, Head of Communications,
Marketing and Development,
Royal School of Church Music

“Through our research efforts we quickly identified new philanthropic potential for these individuals. Armed with new information our director set up personal meetings with selected individuals, and along with a targeted mailed appeal we achieved a 75% increase in voluntary giving,” says Miss Clark.

Prior to using WealthEngine as a research tool, individual unrestricted giving at RSCM totaled about £25,000 a year. “With these research tools we identified previously unknown potential and important new prospects,” adds Miss Clark.

Forward Progress - The Importance of Prospect Research in the UK

Since Catherine Clark joined RSCM, the importance of proper prospect research and cultivation has already proved valuable in building fundraising efforts and pounds.

“Through our research with WealthEngine, many new individuals have been identified. What we know now,” says Miss Clark “is that with proper research, identification, cultivation and stewardship we can determine proper ask amounts and increase individual giving.”

Since implementing the use of WealthEngine RSCM has seen their Annual Fund level double from £100,000 to £200,000. Moving forward, Clark is already planning to create a Legacy Society focused on building and generating future and planned giving at the RSCM. By researching individuals in WealthEngine, Catherine is able to identify ages and segment those who are the correct age for targeted planned giving. Miss Clark is proud of the impact made, “At RSCM, we’re very excited to be promoting philanthropy in the UK, and look forward to continued growth of our fundraising efforts; we couldn’t have made this difference without WealthEngine.”