About This Paper
WealthEngine has written this seminal “how-to” publication to help advocacy and community organizations meet fundraising challenges and glean best practices to raise more money and deepen engagement with their constituents. Readers will find six best practices covering annual giving, using social media in events, campaign planning, research strategies, renewing first-time donors, and involving volunteers and board members in fundraising.

Based on original research from over 300 survey respondents, this publication is filled with insight and actionable strategies. We’ve included in-depth case studies and examples from organizations that are experiencing success. We’ve also interviewed experts in the field, and included their tips as well as useful forms, reports and templates to help organizations take their fundraising practice to the next level.

WealthEngine Publications Team:

Tony Glowacki, President and Chief Executive Officer
Tricia Ambler, Senior Consultant
Sally Boucher, Director of Research, WealthEngine Institute
Shane Bair, Creative Director
Kimberly O’Donnell, Chief Marketing Officer
Lili Mehta, Consultant, Marketing & Special Projects
Jeremy Woolf, Senior Manager, WealthEngine Institute

Key Contributors:

Tom Ahern, Consultant, Ahern Communications, Inc.
Dawn Andreas, Program Manager, Eventbrite
Debra Behrens, Director of Donor Relations, Animal Humane Society
Rick Christ, Vice President, A emergent
Laura Coltrin, SEO expert and Product Manager, Eventbrite
Kelly Merry, Campaign Manager, Wesley Homes Foundation
Lisa Mitchell, Director of Campaign, Ronald McDonald House Charities Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana
Kari Rollo, Executive Director, Wesley Homes Foundation
Ritu Sharma, Executive Director & Co-Producer of Social Media for Nonprofits
Jason Wood, Director of Digital Communication Services, Salvation Army National Headquarters
Executive Summary
The State of the Sector

With nearly 1 million public charities in the U.S., there is no denying that nonprofit organizations represent a significant portion of the U.S. workforce (5.4% of the gross domestic product (GDP) and 9% of all wages/salaries paid). They also make a meaningful impact on the quality of life for many citizens. Advocacy and community organizations of all sizes provide services that support nearly every mission—responding to national disasters, hunger, homelessness, healthcare, the environment, arts/culture, education and many other critical and preventative needs.

Roughly three-quarters of tax-exempt organizations are small, community-based charities with expenses under $500,000. Many of these organizations advocate for youth, animals, the underprivileged, the elderly, those afflicted with handicaps or specific diseases and the like. Similarly, many national organizations with expenses of $10MM or more, fall under the advocacy umbrella, including those involved in wildlife and environmental causes, humanitarian and international aid, political causes and international affairs.

Even though recent fundraising statistics have shown slight increases and promising signs of recovery since the “Great Recession,” fundraising has still not recovered to levels achieved prior to 2008. Human services, international affairs and environmental and animal-related organizations, comprising the bulk of advocacy and community-based organizations, have realized slight increases in giving when compared to 2010 numbers.

Giving USA: The Annual Report on Philanthropy estimates total charitable giving for 2011 to be $298.4 billion, an increase of 4% from 2010. Individual giving comprises approximately 73% of all charitable giving and in 2011 individuals contributed an estimated $217.8 billion, a 3.9% increase over 2010 levels. Figure 1 illustrates this slight increase graphically. The slight increase in funding is promising as charities leverage new mediums, including social media, mobile and highly targeted fundraising strategies to retain and gain greater shares of contributions. Still, general consensus among advocacy and community organizations suggests real growth comes from an organization’s commitment to strengthening donor relationships, streamlining departmental and technological workflows, and investing in prospect research and analytics to support existing donors and target new possibilities at all levels of the giving spectrum.

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1 Source: NCCS Business Master File 08/2011
2 Source: NCCS Business Master File 08/2011
Key findings from Giving USA include:

- Human services organizations realized an estimated 2.5% increase in charitable giving, compared to 2010. This is flat growth when adjusted for inflation.

- International affairs organizations experienced an increase of approximately 7.6% in 2011, (4.4% when adjust for inflation) following a significant increase of 15.3% in 2010. These spikes could be attributed to increased awareness and visibility of the missions of these organizations in light of their work with global causes such as the Haitian earthquake and other natural disasters that affected third world countries. These events have helped highlight humanitarian work done in these countries by nonprofit organizations like Catholic Relief Services, Oxfam, and many others.

- Environmental and animal-related organizations realized an increase of 4.6% from 2010 to 2011. Inflation adjusted numbers translate to 1.4% growth. Large gifts supporting the cleanup effort in the wake of the Gulf oil spill have helped drive this sector’s gains. This gain followed on the heels of a decrease in the 2009 to 2010 time period. This was in part attributed to decreases in property valuations affecting the value of conservation easements being gifted to nonprofit organizations.

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1. Ibid
Survey Methodology and Overview
WealthEngine’s Best Practices in Fundraising for Advocacy and Community Organizations highlights this unique sector of the fundraising community, which represents an estimated 40% to 50% of charitable organizations and is responsible for about 20% of the revenues overall.

In order to better understand and bring greater clarity to fundraising practices and trends among organizations within this category, we conducted a survey in the spring of 2012 to identify their best practices in fundraising and prospect development. Three-hundred and fourteen organizations responded to the survey, in which we asked a variety of in-depth questions about their use of prospect research, social media, volunteers, campaign goals, annual fund practices and more. This report contains their responses in summary format and provides strategic advice and direction to organizations wishing to adopt best practices in their own shops.

Details on the types of organizations responding to our survey are indicated in Figure 2. They range in both size and scope from small grass roots nonprofits to large national and international organizations.

What Type of Organization Do You Work For?

![Pie chart showing the distribution of organizations by type.]

*Figure 2: Types of organizations represented by survey respondents*
The survey results reveal several key differences between advocacy and community-based organizations and other nonprofit industries such as education, healthcare, and arts and culture:

- Among individuals who responded to this survey, only 9% indicated that prospect research is their primary responsibility, which is a significant departure from other nonprofit sectors surveyed in WealthEngine’s previous Best Practice reports. For example, in both our higher education and healthcare best practice surveys, respondents indicated they have on average 1 to 2 full-time prospect research professionals on staff. For advocacy and community-based nonprofits responding to this survey, the average was very close to zero.

- Sixty-eight percent of the responding individuals indicate they are involved in another aspect of fundraising, such as major gifts, stewardship, or annual fund. However, many indicate they are wearing multiple hats and spend between ten and 30 percent of their time conducting prospect research. Forty-eight percent of all individuals dedicate less than 10% of their time to researching donors.

- Many of these organizations are smaller community-based or grass roots organizations with lower major gift thresholds. They tend to have smaller annual budgets (as shown in figure 3) and fewer staff.

- The individuals working within fundraising in these organizations typically manage multiple development functions such as fundraising, research and information services. They may also be involved in communications and marketing.

- Approximately 67% of all organizations have only one development/major gift officer on staff.

**What Is the Size of Your Organization’s Overall Annual Budget?**

![Figure 3: Annual budget size of responding organizations](image-url)
Six Best Practices Identified

The Best Practices in Fundraising for Advocacy and Community Organizations survey helped us identify six best practices used by responding organizations. The best practices outlined below are discussed in greater detail within this report.

1. **Engage Donors and Prospects Using Traditional and Emerging Annual Fund Practices:** Advocacy and community organizations continue to utilize traditional annual fund methods including direct mail and in-person cultivation. Many continue to have tremendous success using these mediums. However, newly emerging online and mobile technologies offer new and effective methods of fundraising. The most successful organizations continue to use proven methods while testing and learning around newer, emerging methods.

2. **Convert First Time and/or Disaster Donors into a Consistent Base of Support:** Ninety-seven percent of the individuals responding to our survey indicate that it is either “extremely important” or “very important” to convert first time donors into consistent donors to their organization. Many of these organizations are using a variety of strategies and touches to ensure first time donors remain involved and engaged. These strategies range from strategic thank you letters to use of social media resources for ongoing cultivation.

3. **Involve Your Board and Volunteers in Fundraising:** Sixty-three percent of responding organizations have one major gift officer on staff, and 83% of responding organizations are using board and trustee members to assist with fundraising. The use of volunteers in the organization’s fundraising is a proven, and excellent, way to increase your fundraising capacity. In order to maximize the effective use of volunteers, many organizations are using wealth screening and peer screening to identify and qualify prospects. Having a solid, comprehensive training policy and program also has a positive impact on fundraising success.

4. **Ensure Capital Campaign Success Through Careful Planning:** Forty percent of organizations responding to our survey are currently in the planning stage of a multi-year capital campaign. To ensure success, organizations are turning toward data and analytics-driven approaches to determine feasibility and goals, and using sound strategic planning to guide fundraising efforts.

5. **Build Your Donor and Prospect Base with Prospect Research:** Just 9% of survey respondents dedicate 100% of their time to conducting prospect research. However, prospect research, prospect identification and segmentation are still considered vital functions within these organizations. Seventy-seven percent of survey respondents dedicate between 1% and 30% of their time to prospect research-related functions. These activities include prospect research on individual prospects, screening and data appends for greater wealth intelligence, and predictive modeling for rank ordering, segmentation, and strategy guidance.
6. **Use Social Media to Boost Event-based Fundraising:** Eighty-eight percent of the individuals participating in the Best Practices for Advocacy and Community Organizations survey report they are using social media sources to enhance event-based fundraising. Event fundraising is a mainstay of advocacy and community organizations and includes online auctions, walk- and other “a-thons,” and all other fundraising events. With the successful integration of social media into events of all kinds, we share some of the best practices for success in this medium.
Best Practice #1: Engage Donors and Prospects Using Traditional and Emerging Annual Fund Practices
Annual Fund Objectives
An annual fund campaign has several key objectives from year to year. These objectives include:

- Solicit and secure new gifts, repeat gifts and upgraded gifts
- Build and develop a consistent base of donors
- Establish patterns of giving by regular solicitation, cultivation and stewardship
- Expand the donor base by identifying new donors and prospects
- Inform, involve, and link your donors to your organization’s mission
- Identify donors with the capacity and interest to make a larger major or capital gift to your organization

Annual fund campaigns represent a substantial percentage of revenue for many advocacy and community-based nonprofits, as indicated in figure 3. While annual giving is the foundation of many organization’s fundraising efforts, there is not one consistent approach to the strategy, execution, and success of their annual campaigns.

The most successful organizations regularly analyze their base of annual giving support to identify:

- The ideal time of year to ask their donors for support; for instance, community-based food banks receive a higher response during the holiday seasons
- The best source of new supporters, whether that acquisition is through direct mail, phone, social media, word of mouth, some other method, or combination of methods
- The amount of revenue change in key giving categories; acquisition, leadership giving, renewals, multiple gifts, events, and other sources that contribute to their organization’s annual fund
- Appropriate codes for appeals and solicitations within the donor management system to allow revenue tracking and analysis of return on investment (ROI)
- Key trends such as timing of large gifts and periods of increased numbers of gifts
- The effect of stewardship and cultivation activities upon donor renewal and retention and consistently seek new ways to appropriately thank their donors at all levels and engage them in the ongoing mission
- The most effective ways of renewing and retaining donors to sustain a loyal and stable base of support
A strong and focused annual fund will help an organization tie their constituency to their organization, build a steady flow of income for programs and services, and allow the organization to go on to larger fundraising efforts such as major or planned giving or a capital campaign. If an organization does not have a focused annual fund it may be continually involved in crisis fundraising in order to maintain its existence.

An overwhelming 88% of advocacy and community-based nonprofits consider the annual fund to be a campaign run by staff, even those that are using volunteers in major gift cultivation or other fundraising efforts.

**Annual Fund Revenues are a Significant Source of Income for Many of our Respondents**

The advocacy and community organizations responding to this survey represent a wide variety of nonprofits. The amount of revenue generated through their annual funds is represented in figure 4.

*Figure 4: Annual fund contributions of responding organizations*
As is evident, almost 45% of survey respondents raise $500K or more through annual fund campaigns and appeals, with 15% raising over $3.5MM. Annual giving is indeed big business for many national organizations.

Create a Strategic Annual Fund Campaign Plan

Individuals are typically the primary supporters of an organization’s annual fund and they tend to make their annual contributions from their discretionary income. The campaign or campaigns surrounding an annual fund should be as well planned as a capital campaign and take into account environmental implications of giving, including current economic, political, and lifestyle factors of supporters. If individual giving is a component of your organization’s budget, it is essential for you to establish an annual fund goal every year.

The key components of a strategic annual campaign plan include:

- **Campaign Pyramid**: showing the number of gifts needed at each level to reach the goal
- **Donor Base Analysis**: to determine if you have the base needed to support the goal
- **Timeline**: indicating the optimal timing for all appeals that will make up your campaign
- **Donor Renewal Strategy**: an analysis of the number of repeat annual donors you have every year and the average number of gifts per constituent, along with tactics to improve these metrics
- **Donor Acquisition Strategy**: including knowledge of return on investment and optimal sources for acquisition of new prospects and donors
- **Giving Club**: leadership giving levels with recognition and stewardship to build a bridge between your annual fund and major giving or capital campaign fundraising
- **Segmentation Strategies**: based on data such as modeling and wealth characteristics that differentiate types of annual donors and suggest meaningful actions
- **Case for Support**: engaging stories of how monies have been used in the past, what they will be used for this year and why a donor’s support is critical to ensuring success. These case points should be specific and targeted to individual segments as appropriate.
Proven Annual Fundraising Techniques are Working Alongside Emerging Tools

**Digital Media and Online Giving**

As technology changes and nonprofit organizations become more creative in their approach to fundraising, the techniques used in annual giving campaigns are changing. Online giving campaigns, social media and mobile giving tools are being used alongside traditional methods and are employed to increase both revenue and awareness.

While advocacy organizations are using social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter in conjunction with digital media such as online giving in their fundraising, it is reported by our survey respondents as one of the least successful fundraising strategies, as shown in Figure 5. Direct mail and face-to-face cultivation visits continue to top the list of successful strategies. This may be partially attributed to organizations adopting a “build it and they will come” approach to social media and online giving. Many nonprofits create a Facebook page and an online giving form and wait to see who donates.

An online giving tool should tell the story of your organization and provide a quick and simple way for the prospect to donate. If it doesn’t meet these criteria, it will not be an effective giving channel for the organization.

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**Organizations are finding better results when they:**

- Drive traffic to their online giving form using online and social media advertising such as Facebook advertising and Google AdWords
- Cross-promote online giving in all of their online and offline communications
- Make the online giving experience easy and secure for the donor
- Spend time and resources making their donations pages emotionally and visually appealing

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*Figure 5: Fundraising strategies ranked by respondents*
Many nonprofits do not dedicate the same amount of time and resources to online giving as they do to more traditional annual giving fundraising techniques. For instance, the testing many organizations do to ensure their direct mail pieces contain the right message for different donor segments is not consistently practiced with online giving. Mal Warwick, Founder and Chairman of Mal Warwick Associates, who has over 40 years of direct mail fundraising experience, suggests that email solicitations include the ask in the subject line. His research shows this strategy produces a lower "open" rate, but a higher average gift size among responders. Consider subject lines like, “Give from the Heart: Support Local Homeless,” or “Hurricane Hits Home: Give Now.” Other research shows that having the words “video,” “exclusive,” or “Top 5” in the subject line of an email can elicit higher "open" rates. Subject lines like “An Exclusive Invitation from [CEO Name]” or “The Top 5 Solutions for Homelessness” could increase open rates. Your results will vary, but be willing to test and measure.

Whether you are running fundraising, marketing or event campaigns, tracking and measuring results is a key to improvement and a positive ROI. Nonprofits must adopt a test and learn mindset for online fundraising much as they have in direct mail appeals and phon-a-thon scripting. Only through consistent testing and tracking can they begin to realize the benefits inherent in online giving.

**Mobile Giving**

Mobile fundraising includes two channels: Online access and text-to-give. In one sense, mobile fundraising is simply an extension of online giving. More and more of us are accessing the internet from smart phones, tablets and other portable devices, as well as receiving email communications and interacting with social media sites via these devices. In fact, according to the 2011 PEW research report, *Smartphone Adoption and Usage*, approximately 25% of Americans access the internet “mostly” through their Smart phones. It is predicted that this percentage will rise to 50% by 2014. Therefore, it stands to reason that nonprofit organizations must look to optimize their websites and emails to be mobile-enabled. This is particularly important for advocacy organizations, where the need to contact and call supporters to action quickly is often a necessity.

Mobile giving also encompasses “text-to-give” or SMS (Short Message Service) giving as well as the newer “pledge-to-give.” This type of fundraising became a phenomenon during the first few days after the 2010 Haiti earthquake, when it was used by the American Red Cross to raise funds and organize supplies and volunteers.

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rapidly. It has since been used by many national nonprofits after natural disasters to raise funds and mobilize in-kind donations and volunteers.

The process for making a text donation is relatively simple for both donors and nonprofits. For donors it involves texting a keyword to the organization’s relevant shortcode. Once the shortcode is transmitted the donor receives a text message asking for confirmation of the contribution. Once confirmation is received, the donor is sent a “thank you” via SMS, normally with a request to opt-in to further text communications. The donation is charged to the donor on their mobile phone bill.

While the mechanisms for mobile SMS fundraising are simple, there are a number of barriers that may make it difficult for some organizations to get started:

- Cell phone numbers have not been routinely collected
- SMS text messaging requires “opt-in” or “double opt-in” acquiescence from the potential supporter
- Individuals guard the privacy of their cell numbers and organizations must respect that privacy by thoughtfully developing strategies to contact and engage without violating the individual’s trust

Despite the challenges, many organizations have successfully deployed text-to-give strategies and use them in conjunction with disaster-relief efforts, events and to mobilize advocates to action on specific issues.

**Test and Learn**

One important strategy for success with annual fundraising is to test and learn. Only by testing different outreach channels and carefully tracking response rates, renewal rates and average gift sizes, will fundraisers be able to identify what works best for their organizations.

As indicated in our survey responses, the annual fund is one of the areas in which many organizations are experimenting with new and innovative fundraising approaches. This is a must if organizations are to keep abreast of trends and new technologies to maintain and grow their fundraising capacity.

**Best Practice Bottom Line:**

The annual fund provides a fertile field in which to experiment with new and emerging technologies and techniques. Successful organizations will apply a blended approach of proven and exploratory methods to ensure growth and viability into the future.
Test & Learn Experiments: Applying Proven Practices from the Commercial Sector

There is always opportunity to leverage marketing practices used by commercial businesses for fundraising uses. “Test and learn processes” allow organizations to try new initiatives before deploying broad scale. The concept of “failing fast” keeps organizations moving forward, honing fundraising efforts and, ultimately, maximizing a blend of new and proven fundraising techniques. This concept is described in his June 4, 2012 blog post The Case for Data-Driven Test and Learn Processes, where Jonathan Hornby, Director of Worldwide Marketing at SAS, offers this example from the commercial world of how test and learn strategies can quickly either confirm or refute our intuition.9

“Staples, the office supply giant, is great at successfully using test-and-learn strategies. It began by automating its ability to run and manage campaigns. It used the time saved to explore and analyze ways to improve segmentation and response rates, conducting many experiments over short periods of time.

One experiment tested different ratios of investment between acquisition and retention. At the onset of the recent economic downturn, Staples wanted to identify its best customers and figure out how to keep them happy and engaged.

The experiment provided a valuable lesson: even with a significant shift in investment toward customer retention, a portion of customers will still churn. It could be for one of a hundred reasons, many of which are out of a marketer’s control and are difficult to predict and change. A marketer that is not adequately investing in acquiring new customers will see its customer base dwindle.

A harsh lesson, perhaps, but executed in a test-and-learn environment, Staples quickly flipped the switch, reverted back to the proven ratio, and was able to gain market share from a number of competitors during the recent recession.

The lesson for fundraisers is to track the best practices of other professions such as marketing to learn new techniques for engaging donors and prospects. When a new strategy is employed in a test and learn environment, the fundraising department can be innovative, flexible and responsive—without high risk.

Best Practice #2: Convert First Time and/or Disaster Donors into a Consistent Base of Support
To be Successful, Acquisition Must be Paired with Renewal Strategies

The acquisition of first-time donors represents a significant investment of both time and resources for most organizations. An acceptable response rate for acquisition mailings ranges between half a percent to two and-half percent. For this reason, the expense involved in acquiring those few donors who respond usually far outweighs any immediate gains from the first-time gifts. Break-even and profitability do not occur until first-time donors become two-, three-, or even four-time donors.

Therefore, it is understandably important that as many as possible first-time donors convert to loyal, multiple-time donors. Unfortunately, research indicates that one-third to one-half of all first-time donors do not contribute a second gift. Penelope Burk, author of Donor Centered Fundraising, reports that donors make the decision for making a 2nd gift in the period between the first gift and the 2nd ask – not at the time you ask them. By the time you make the ask, their decision is already made. So the best practice is to ensure that first experience is meaningful for first-time donors.

Our survey indicates that ninety-seven percent of advocacy and community organizations believe it is “extremely important” or “very important” to convert first-time or disaster donors into consistent donors to their organization, and 63% of the responding organizations raise between 1% to 20% of their annual contributions from first time donors. Organizations’ perceptions of the importance of converting first time donors to consistent donors are represented in figure 6.

How Important Is It for a First Time Donor to Become a Consistent Donor?

Figure 6: 97% of respondents consider converting first-time donors to consistent donors ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important.’

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Organizations Leverage a Variety of Strategies to Engage First Time Donors

According to our survey and indicated in Figure 9, the most often employed strategies include newsletters, strategic thank you letters, and phone calls. When asked to name the least successful strategies for converting first-time donors, many organizations named invitations to join their online community and sending the organization's newsletter. Many respondents indicated that their newsletters are unsuccessful because:

- the information contained within the newsletter is often outdated by the time it goes to print or is published electronically
- newsletters are typically not read in their entirety
- newsletters often do not contain appropriate calls to action or lead readers to take steps to donate or become involved

Tom Ahern, one of the foremost authorities in the field of nonprofit communications, suggests spending the least amount of time on your newsletter articles, which are often not read. His tips to improve your newsletters focus on design and layout for visual appeal, using appealing headlines, subheads, bullets, call-outs and pictures to communicate your most important points. See the full text of our interview with Ahern beginning on page 27.

Welcome Packets are One of Several Methods used to Quickly Engage Prospects

One assumption that many nonprofits make about their first time donors is that the donor knows a great deal more about the organization they’ve just contributed to than they actually do. A welcome packet containing both historic and more recent organizational accomplishments and milestones, perhaps including a recent well-designed newsletter, is a great strategy to allow your new donors to learn more about your organization. The true purpose of a welcome packet is to inspire first-time donors to become more involved and engaged in your organization. In order to encourage involvement and learn more about your donors, a welcome packet can include a short survey that covers:

- Preferred form of communication; direct mail, email, text (for calls to action requiring a timely response), or phone
- Advocacy or community issues of most interest to the donor
- Volunteer opportunities and an easy opt-in for the volunteer program of most interest to the new donor
- Opportunity to opt-in to receive more information about your organization’s educational and advocacy activities
The strategies used by survey respondents for initial outreach to first time donors are represented in figure 7.

There are a variety of reasons advocacy and community nonprofits have listed strategic thank you letters and phone calls as the most successful strategies for reaching out to first time donors:

**Which of the following best describes your initial strategy for outreach with first time donors?**

![Bar chart showing initial strategies for outreach with first-time donors.]

- **Strategic thank you letters**
  - Provide the organization an opportunity to include additional information on the programs supported through donor contributions
  - Serve as a contribution receipt
  - Include information on the impact of the donor’s gift

- **Thank you calls** are a great way to connect and cultivate donors as they
  - Are interactive and enable donors to feel more appreciated and connected to the organization
  - Provide contact with donors that does not involve asking for an additional monetary contribution
  - Allow the organization to learn more about the donors and their reasons for providing support
  - Offer an opportunity to give donors a deeper understanding of the organization’s mission and additional ways to become involved
Advocacy and community nonprofits with missions depending on more active and timely involvement from their constituents find email communications, online forums, SMS or text messaging, and location-based services (like FourSquare, Yelp and Gowalla) are useful tools for getting their messages to supporters, driving brand awareness, growing event participation, building community and driving program involvement quickly and efficiently.

Segmentation and Conversion Strategies for First Time Donors
Organizations wishing to grow their donor pool must develop strategies to convert first-time donors into loyal, consistent supporters. Cultivation of these donors should begin as soon as the initial gift is received. Components of your strategy may include:

- Wealth screening first-time donors in daily or in "real time" (see “Emergence of New Strategies to Identify Top Prospects,” below)
- A plan to use the appended wealth and giving data to segment donors into actionable groups. For example, research shows that if a donor's initial contribution is $15 or less they are less likely to contribute a second gift, however, if the gift is $50 or more they are more likely to contribute a second gift to the organization.11
- An outreach strategy that spans eighteen months from the initial gift and includes “touches” approximately every two months
- Assignment of new donors with high capacity to either a volunteer or staff member for individualized cultivation
- Consideration of predictive modeling (see Best Practice #5) to build a profile that describes the unique characteristics of your best annual donors and matches new donors to that profile

Rick Christ, past President of the Direct Marketing Association of Washington and a Contributing Editor to The NonProfit Times Direct Marketing Edition, suggests that renewing donors within the first 100 days, using telephone where possible, and converting them to a monthly giving program are all practical strategies for success. See all of his advice beginning on page 24.

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Emergence of New Strategies to Identify Top Prospects
As competition to convert first-time donors increases many organizations are utilizing new strategies to segment new donors for personalized, timely outreach and to identify their top prospects. Data mining and/or wealth screening on a more frequent timeline can help your organization with both of these priorities. There are several ways to accomplish this:

- On a weekly basis generate a report from your donor management system that identifies all first time donors who have made a gift of $50 or $100 or greater. Create an outreach strategy unique to this group of donors.

- On a daily, weekly, monthly or quarterly basis screen all of your organization’s first time donors and develop outreach strategies based on their capacity to give, their relationships to organization volunteers and/or identified giving to other organizations.

- Screen all donors in “real time” as soon as a gift is received. With advances in technology and lowered costs, screening your new donors as soon as a gift is made is well within most organizations’ reach. There are many existing integrations between screening companies and donor management systems that allow screening data and ratings and scores to be imported into a DMS immediately.

As with other aspects of annual giving, it is essential to test different strategies for converting first-time and disaster donors to repeat and loyal supporters to determine which are most successful for your organization. Measuring success rates for each outreach method and combination of methods will allow your organization, over time, to hone in on the most effective and efficient processes. Additionally, it is important to understand that as your constituency changes and grows, and technologies continue to develop and become more widespread, cost-effective and user-friendly, the strategies you use will need to adapt in response.

Best Practice Bottom Line:

While organizations continue to achieve success engaging and renewing first-time donors through traditional methods such as thank-you letters and telephone calls, more and more are experimenting with new technologies and strategies. Using data-informed decision making can help organizations find the best combinations of outreach for various donor types.
Tips from the Expert:
Converting First-time Donors to Loyal Donors with Rick Christ, Vice President, Amergent

“Converting first-time donors, especially disaster donors, or advocacy donors, is a tough business to be in,” shares Rick Christ, Vice President of the direct response consulting and analytics agency Amergent. “It’s not a stair-step approach, where you add more donors with each disaster or campaign, and keep the donors from the last one. It’s a mountain range approach; you just hope that the valley you are heading into is not as deep as the one you climbed out of on the other side.”

In some ways, says Christ, it is easier to say what doesn’t work when renewing first-time donors than what does work. Still, he was able to provide some strategic advice for those wanting to improve or revamp their new donor renewal strategies.

1. **Have a goal.** There is no one renewal rate that is right for all organizations. It depends on the industry, it depends on the cost of your acquisitions and where your breakeven point is, and it depends on the channel and message through which the donors were acquired. “Organizations that use front-end premiums to acquire donors have a higher break-even point for those donors – the point at which they become profitable,” explains Christ. “They are also harder to renew, because they are transactional donors. They are shopping.” It is useful to look at what others in your industry are achieving, but lacking that, benchmark against your past performance. If you renewed 30% of your new donors last year, strive for 35% this year.

2. **Thank donors promptly.** Some organizations have a lag from the time they receive the gift, to when they enter it into their system, to when they thank the donor. The longer the lag time, the lower the odds of renewing the donor. “There is a window of about 100 days from the time of the first gift during which it is likeliest that the donor will renew. You may need to have several communications with the donor during that time, so don’t waste a lot of it getting your first stewardship communication in the mail,” advises Christ. The thank you can include a very soft ask or an invitation for further engagement, such as a request to complete a short online survey or provide additional contact points, such as email and/or phone or mobile phone numbers. The goal is to acknowledge the gift and give them reason to remain involved with your organization.
3. **Steward donors perfectly.** Let your donor know that you spent the gift quickly, and for the purpose they intended. Christ advises demonstrating the specific impact of the gift in your thank you communication. ‘Your $50 gift fed a family of four for a month.’ ‘Your gift provided a child cleft palate surgery.’ ‘Your gift kept this abused animal from being euthanized.’ “It’s like the thank you notes you sent to Grandma when she gave you $5.00 for your birthday. You didn’t just say, ‘Thanks for the $5.00.’ I hope you said, ‘I was able to get the new bell and streamers for my bike!’”

4. **Get additional contact channels.** Always strive to get additional contact information, recommends Christ. “Our research shows that individuals who give us their email address give 50% more often, and 50% more money per gift. That makes them twice as valuable.” There are two reasons for this. First, donors who give you their email address are demonstrating a higher level of connection and trust. Second, they are giving the organization additional opportunities to steward and cultivate them.

5. **Practice multi-channel stewardship.** Use all available channels to thank and cultivate donors. “We don’t really know the true value of multi-channel donors,” suggests Christ. Some people say multi-channel donors are two times as valuable, and others say eight times. “It can be difficult to track and most organizations do a poor job of it. But by all means, try all channels, including email, phone, mail, social media, and mobile. They will help.” He points out that in some organizations, communications are stuck in silos. Marketing and communications departments do not always sync with fundraising and stewardship teams. “Where they are integrated, the organization can make quantum leaps. The ASPCA and The American Indian College Fund are good examples. Where they are siloed, organizations miss a lot of great opportunities.”

6. **Ask for a second gift.** One of the big mistakes organizations make is waiting too long to ask for a second gift. Christ advises asking within 100 days of the first gift. The most successful method of renewing first time disaster donors is by telephone. And converting first time donors to monthly givers by telephone has been a highly successful model for many organizations, providing the highest return on investment (ROI), according to his experience.

7. **Measure the impact of the second gift.** “We can measure the impact of a second gift in the donor’s first year on giving in the second year,” according to Christ. Donors who make a second gift in year one are two-and-a-half to three-and-a-half times more likely to renew in year two. That’s a big impact on the organization’s bottom line and ROI.
8. **Keep your message simple.** Some organizations want to share too much, too soon, says Christ. “If a donor has given a gift to feed the hungry, ask for another gift to feed the hungry. Don’t tell them they can also cure the lame, and shelter the masses. Let them do what they’ve proven they want to do.” If you build a strong relationship, there will be plenty of time to tell them about the other things you do. And don’t make the mistake of thinking it’s all about you and what you do. It’s all about the donor and the mission they are serving through you.

9. **Tell stories, boldly.** Break gift opportunities down to bite-sized, tangible chunks. “Giving $100 to cure cancer feels a lot like fighting the National Debt by saving $100 in Medicare costs,” suggests Christ. “It feels like no progress at all. But giving $100 to help fund the laboratory where they have dramatically increased the speed of tests on cancer cells… that’s tangible evidence of progress! Explain how the donor’s $100 will fund measurable progress. Help them to feel that they’re making a difference.” Christ suggests touring the front lines, talking to the people who are providing services or receiving services. Then tell their stories, in words, pictures, and video. On YouTube, Facebook, in letters, on your website and on the phone.

Renewing new donors is a key that nonprofits should spend more time and effort on. Every donor renewed eases the costs and burden of acquiring new donors, and reduces that break-even point for the acquisition program. Better and more responsive stewardship and ongoing communications, with concrete, credible stories, will help move your numbers in the right direction.

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*Rick Christ is a well-known expert in nonprofits’ use of the internet, a frequent speaker at industry events and a prolific writer on the subject. He is a past President of the Direct Marketing Association of Washington and is a Contributing Editor to The NonProfit Times Direct Marketing Edition. He is also a member of the Direct Marketing Association, and the Association of Fundraising Professionals.*
Tom Ahern is one of the foremost authorities in the field of nonprofit communications. We had an opportunity to talk with him about creating nonprofit donor newsletters that are effective communications and fundraising tools:

1. **Use “you” often and prominently.** “The word ‘you’ is more than a pronoun: it is a profound emotional trigger that helps keep the reader attached to the page,” shares Ahern. “Remember this rhyme: you is glue.” Every page of your newsletter should include many uses of the word you, and don’t just use it in the body of your articles. “You,” like donors themselves, should be front and center. Make sure your headlines, sidebars, subheads and pull-quotes are peppered with “you,” too. “You is the most powerful word in marketing,” adds Ahern. “Your newsletter should give constant credit to the role that donors play in making your mission successful. This is a way of shifting the credit to the donors’ shoulders.”

2. **Make your article titles memorable.** “Four out of five readers will only read your titles, not the articles,” says Ahern. Therefore, it is important that your title captures the one thing you want your readers to remember. Sure, you can make it catchy, but be sure it tells a story, and be sure it is the story you want it to tell. Ahern suggests this test of a good headline: “Cover the article with your hand, and tell me what the story is really about from what the headline tells you.” He also recommends checking each headline for conflict, tension, drama and interest. “Without those elements, it may look like a headline, but it’s not a headline.”

3. **Include pictures in your newsletter.** Along with headlines, pictures have the power to pull the reader into your world. They can extract emotional responses and connections that no article can compete with. Says Ahern, “Eyes that stare out from the printed page strongly draw the reader in.” He also notes that photos of children and animals raise money. “Humans are hardwired to respond emotionally to children and pets,” he explains. Captions should include two sentences. One sentence to tell the viewer what s/he is seeing in the picture and a second sentence to tell him/her why it is important.
4. **Fill prime real estate with pull quotes.** Pull quotes are another element that draws the reader in. Use them judiciously and make sure the quote is emotional, surprising and includes concrete details. Quotes, when they reflect the speaker’s real words and true emotions, help establish authenticity, and let the reader know exactly what the charity is accomplishing. Don’t waste prime real estate on your page with lackluster or meaningless quotes. If you are lacking interesting quotes, fill these areas with donor-centric “you’s.” “We’re making progress, but there’s much more to accomplish. We can’t do it without you.”

5. **Testimonials grab readers by striking an emotional chord.** Ahern advises using testimonials that create a picture in the reader’s eye, so they can “visualize the organization and the people who are supported.”

6. **Link the reader to your organization.** Each page should include something that links the reader directly back to your organization. Maybe it is an offer for free information, perhaps directions to a portion of the website to read more, or an offer to sign up for a seminar. Whatever your offer, make it prominent, clear and compelling. Calls to action result in interaction, which is what will make your newsletter a fundraising success.

7. **Sidebars are a perfect place to share more on a related subject or to link the reader back via an offer.** “For instance,” says Ahern, “if your article mentions someone who gave a bequest, you have a great opportunity to include a sidebar that tells the reader more about bequests and specifically how they can name your organization in their will or trust.” And don’t forget the “you” test – “You can make a difference.”

8. **Your articles are the least important element.** Most readers will not read them, so don’t invest your time and effort here. Make your pictures, headlines, subheads, bullets, sidebars, pull quotes and testimonials shine. That is the formula for a winning, profitable newsletter. To the extent you do focus on the articles, make them entertaining, authentic, and “mercifully brief,” says Ahern. Break up long articles with subheads. Use short paragraphs, indents, bullet points and lists to break up text and make the information easy to skim, which, if you’re lucky, is what most readers will do.

Tom shares the proven formula for a profitable donor newsletter in the book he wrote with Simone Joyaux, *Keep Your Donors: The Guide to Better Communications & Stronger Relationships*. The formula was developed through extensive testing by the marketing firm Merkle.
**Merkle’s Proven Formula for a Profitable Newsletter:**

- 11”x 17” format, folding to four 8.5”x 11” pages, you can add an 8 1/2” x 11” sheet in the middle if you must.
- One-color, two-color, or full-color printing, any work.
- Do not print on glossy paper
- NOT a self-mailer
- Mail in a #10 envelope with some variation on the teaser: “Your donor newsletter enclosed.”
- Send exclusively to your current donors.
- Include a reply envelope and reply device.
- Mail as often as possible. Six times a year is not an unusual schedule.
- Use the newsletter for “impact reporting.”

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*Tom Ahern is the author of four well-regarded books on fundraising communications, with a fifth on the way. He is in demand as a communications trainer, traveling internationally to present his workshops. He is an award-winning magazine journalist (which means he knows how to tell a story).*

*And he gets results. His work has won three prestigious Gold Quill awards, given annually to communications programs judged to be among the most effective in the world. He’s written numerous cases for successful campaigns, totaling more than $1.5 billion (B as in Boy) in goals.*
Best Practice #3: Engaging Your Board and Volunteers in Fundraising
Volunteerism Directly Impacts Fundraising Results

According to numbers maintained by the National Council on Charitable Statistics, 26.3% of Americans over the age of 16 volunteered through or for an organization between September 2009 and September 2010. Other than in 2003, when there was a slight increase to 28.8%, the proportion of volunteers has remained relatively constant.¹²

Volunteerism has a direct impact on high net worth giving. According to the most recent study of High Net Worth Philanthropy published by Bank of America – Merrill Lynch and the Indiana University Center on Philanthropy, high net worth individuals who volunteered in 2009 gave more on average to organizations where they served on the board or had another oversight role. The average gift size from these volunteers was $84,551. Volunteers not serving in an oversight role also reported that their volunteer work impacted their giving. They contributed $69,929 on average to organizations where they volunteered. Through their efforts as volunteers, many individuals witness firsthand the impact their giving has on both the organization and the community it serves.

An overwhelming 63% of advocacy organizations responding to our survey have only one major gift officer. A majority of these organizations are community based with annual budgets split almost evenly between the $500,000 to $2,499,999 and the $2,500,000 to $9,999,999 categories. Many of these groups are extremely reliant on other organizational staff such as executive directors, program and event staff members for fundraising. In addition to staff members within the organization participating in the fundraising effort, 83% of the organizations in our survey have the assistance of their board members and trustees in fundraising. If the organization is involved in a capital campaign, approximately thirty-one percent also rely on the fundraising efforts of their capital campaign committee members. The categories of other individuals involved with fundraising are represented in figure 8. Organizations that have involved board and trustee members in their fundraising efforts have used them in a variety of different ways, including events, prospect identification initiatives, and cultivation visits.

There are a Variety of Ways to Involve Volunteers in Fundraising

Engaging volunteers in your organization’s fundraising is very different than using either paid staff or consultants. Volunteers can help your organization’s fundraising efforts in a variety of ways; walk-a-thons, major donor fundraising, and hosting cultivation or education events. Typically volunteers have a vast amount of enthusiasm for involving their peers in organizations with which they are engaged. However, since volunteers do not directly work for the organization, it is harder to harness their energy than when working with paid staff members.

Lisa Mitchell, Director of Capital Campaign for the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana (RMHC-CNI), profiled on pages 38-41, explains her success working with campaign volunteers: “This campaign has allowed us to push our board and committee members in directions they would not have gone before. They are dedicated advocates and donors. They have helped to make us aware of many potential new friends.” One piece of advice Lisa shares is to carefully allocate your time. It’s time-consuming to work with committees and volunteers, so identify the movers and the shakers early on and spend most of your efforts supporting them.
Identifying and Utilizing your Board Members Networks

In working with board and committee members it is essential to maximize the relationships they have with others in your community. The first step is to identify who they are connected to. Asking your volunteers and donors to share names of their peers who could also support your organization is not always successful. Many volunteers are reluctant to share names with staff members, or they may not be immediately aware of the many valuable connections they do have.

![Diagram showing connections between board members and prospects]

With advances in wealth screening, the ability to quickly identify relationships your volunteers have has become much easier. You can screen your inner circle—that is your board and other key volunteers and supporters—which will provide your organization with wealth data on your volunteers as well as a list of individuals with whom they are connected through business and charitable boards. To take it one step further, organizations can screen these contacts or connections of their inner circle, to develop the profiles and strategies necessary to begin a cultivation process with these newly identified prospects. The end result is a list of qualified prospects that are connected to your inner circle, as illustrated in figure 9.

There are a few steps you can take to make leveraging the relationships your volunteers have within the community more successful:

- Review the prospect list to identify individuals connected to multiple volunteers
- Review the list to identify prospects with particularly high giving capacity

Figure 9: Discover prospects connected to your inner circle
Review the number of connections identified for each of your volunteers and if possible, consider asking a well-connected volunteer to host an event on your organization’s behalf, of course inviting the identified connections.

Review your donor management system to ascertain if any of the identified prospects are already involved in your organization, perhaps at an “under the radar” level.

In order to successfully cultivate this new group of prospects, initial outreach to these connections should not be a solicitation from your organization.

Initial outreach should leverage the relationship the newly identified prospect has with your volunteer using a letter signed by your volunteer or a phone call or event invitation coming directly from him/her.

An informational or welcome packet that highlights your organization’s mission and focus is an appropriate accompaniment to your volunteer’s letter, or a good second step in engaging the prospect if initial contact was through the telephone or an event.

The initial contact from your volunteer should be followed by a phone call from a member of your organization’s senior leadership team.

Peer Screening

Peer screening is a method of prospect identification and qualification that has been used in fundraising for many years. It involves asking key volunteers and board members to assess the capacity and inclination of potential donors to your organization. It is a forum in which you can involve your volunteers in the fundraising and prospect identification process. There are many reasons for your organization to undertake a peer screening process, as it can:

- Cultivate, educate and involve key volunteers
- Maximize regional outreach effort
- Assess and qualify known leadership and major gift prospects
- Identify new donor prospects
- Identify potential volunteer solicitors

When beginning a peer screening program there are several factors you will need to consider:

- What is your timeline?
- What is your overall process?
Who are the key players and what jobs do they have?
Who will you invite to participate?
How will you use the results?
Will the peer screening sessions be conducted as a group or will they be conducted individually?
What criteria will you use to determine which constituents will be on your screening list(s)?
- Geographic
- Total giving
- Estimated Giving Capacity
- Other

Traditionally organizations have viewed peer screening as an opportunity to screen individuals, however it is also a forum in which you can review foundations and corporations. Frequently you will have a list of corporations and foundations you will want to approach for funding; however it is not always easy to identify connections to the key decision makers within these organizations. Peer screening can be used to identify connections your board and volunteers have to key decision makers. Conducting a peer screening for foundations and corporations can be a time consuming, but very rewarding, process. In order to conduct a peer screening for corporations and foundations there are a few recommendations:

- Identify all corporations and foundations that may fund your organization, including all suggestions brought to you by your board and volunteers
- Review Form 990's for current board members affiliated with all foundations on your initial list
- Identify through Dun & Bradstreet or another corporate source key executives within each company on your initial list

The objective in conducting a peer screening for corporations and foundations is to identify who your board and volunteers know within each organization. It is not intended to identify which organizations to approach. On the list prepared for screening provide only the names of the individuals associated with the organizations and do not provide the name of the corporation or foundation they are associated with. Another helpful piece of information to include is whether any of the identified corporate or foundation executives are donors to your organization. In Appendix 1 we have included a sample peer screening form to use or adapt for this purpose.
Provide Volunteers with the Information and Training They Need for Success

According to our survey, when engaging volunteers for cultivation visits, organizations provide them with a variety of reports to ensure they are prepared and successful when calling on their peers. The information shared with volunteers includes biographical and giving information, as well as history related to volunteer and organizational involvement. The types of insight survey respondents provide to volunteers and board members assisting in fundraising efforts are represented in figure 10.

**If Volunteers Are Involved with Cultivation Visits What Information Do You Provide Them with?**

![Figure 10: Organizations provide volunteers with a variety of information](image)

When an organization uses volunteers for fundraising, there is some important infrastructure to put in place to ensure your efforts are successful.

1. **Develop a Volunteer Training Program** – To assure your volunteer fundraisers are successful, engage them in a comprehensive training program. This program should teach them fundraising basics and engender confidence and enthusiasm. There should be considerable role playing to allow your volunteers to ask questions and practice before meeting with their peers. A training program will involve a significant time commitment on the part of fundraisers and other organizational staff members, but it will pay off for
the organization with happier volunteers as well as more gifts, higher ask amounts and increased revenues. We have included in Appendix 3 a Sample Volunteer Fundraiser Training Manual Checklist and a Volunteer Fundraiser Training Workshop Checklist.

2. **Provide Materials and Support** – An essential element of ensuring your volunteers are successful with fundraising includes supplying them with the tools and information they need. These tools should include copies of any training materials developed, campaign materials, annual reports, the organizational mission statement, training around the confidentiality of donor and prospect information, and most importantly, a staff person or mentor to serve as a key contact in case of questions or if support is needed. Many organizations routinely pair a staff fundraiser with a volunteer for each fundraising call. See Appendix 3 for a Sample Volunteer Solicitation Guide, Volunteer Job Description and Responsibilities and Sample Volunteer Privacy and Nondisclosure Agreement.

3. **Implement a Volunteer Prospect Management System** – Tracking the progress and success of your volunteers is an integral part of any campaign that involves volunteers. This allows you to celebrate your stars and to provide extra help and assistance to volunteers that are not as successful. Use these learning opportunities to continue to develop your volunteer fundraising training and mentoring program. A Sample Volunteer Contact Report Form is also included in Appendix 3.

4. **Create a Volunteer Stewardship System** – When engaging in volunteer fundraising one of the most important pieces to remember is that the volunteers are giving both their time and considerable effort in fundraising for your organization. They could be doing a lot of things with their time, but they have chosen to help you. Be sure you reward their dedication to your cause by making the volunteer experience fun, creative and rewarding. Be sure your volunteer program has robust stewardship practices in place.

**Best Practice Bottom line:**

Board members and other volunteers continue to be an important constituency for advocacy and community-based organizations. As technology and social changes drive more openness and transparency between volunteers and the organizations they serve, it is more important than ever to have appropriate training and policies in place, especially to encourage greater fundraising.
Ronald McDonald House Chicagoland

Ronald McDonald House Charities Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana Leverages Board and Volunteer Connections to Reinvigorate Capital Campaign

The Client
The Chicagoland & Northwest Indiana affiliate is the largest chapter of Ronald McDonald House charities in the United States, providing over 22,000 nights of respite annually to families of hospitalized children. The chapter was formed officially in 2005 with the merger of several independent houses, although the first area house was opened in 1977. The charity currently operates four houses in the greater Chicago area. In addition to providing housing for families near its affiliate hospitals, Ronald McDonald House Charities-Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana (RMHC-CNI) operates a Mobile Care unit, providing vaccinations and physicals to children in underserved areas, awards college scholarships to deserving and economically-challenged youth, and has recently opened the first in-hospital Family Room in Illinois, in conjunction with affiliate Edward Hospital.

The Challenge
Director of Capital Campaign Lisa Mitchell joined the RMHC-CNI fundraising team of four in 2009 and was asked to manage the organization’s first ever capital campaign. The $30MM campaign had been planned and the silent phase launched in 2008. The campaign is to fund the building of the world’s largest Ronald McDonald House, with 14-stories and 86 guest rooms.

Mitchell came from an advertising, marketing and branding background. Starting in 2000, she worked on the advertising campaign for McDonald’s corporate account. This led her to Ronald McDonald House Charities, where she began volunteering by preparing meals for families staying at the homes. “When asked to join the staff, I was a novice fundraiser,” says Mitchell, “but a committed volunteer and donor with a true passion for the mission and the good I could see being done in the community.”
Prior to launching the campaign, RMHC-CNI screened their entire database to help them evaluate their potential for fundraising and to reprioritize their prospects. When Mitchell came on board, she felt the screening was a useful tool, but she realized the top prospect lists had been exhausted and she still needed to raise $10MM. With only four staff members in development, she needed to narrow the prospect lists and specifically identify potential supporters connected to their 30-member board and 26-member campaign steering committee. “I needed very specific, immediately actionable information that our board members could use and be successful with. When I took over the campaign management, we were in a stall. I wanted to quickly breathe life into the campaign and regain momentum,” says Mitchell.

“I needed very specific, immediately actionable information that our board members could use and be successful with. When I took over the campaign management, we were in a stall. I wanted to quickly breathe life into the campaign and regain momentum.”

- Lisa Mitchell, Director of Capital Campaigns, RMHC-CNI

**The Solution**

Mitchell worked with WealthEngine to create a high-potential prospect list using Circle of Friends analytics. RMHC-CNI provided their list of board and steering committee members (their “Inner Circle”), and WealthEngine determined who their connections (“Circle of Friends”) in the community were. Once those connections were identified, they were screened and profiled, providing Mitchell with lists of 147 individuals sharing a connection to their board and steering committee members. Each connection is someone with a relationship to the organization through an Inner Circle member, and has the capacity to significantly impact the campaign and the future of the charity. This was exactly the specific, actionable information Mitchell was looking for.
The Results
“This campaign has allowed us to push our board and committee members in directions they would not have gone before,” shares Mitchell. “They are dedicated advocates and donors. And both our board members and WealthEngine’s Circle of Friends Analytics have helped to make us aware of many potential new friends. It helped our best, most enthusiastic supporters realize that they had even more contacts that could help the charity than they had realized.

“Both our board members and WealthEngine’s Circle of Friends Analytics have helped to make us aware of many potential new friends. It helped our best, most enthusiastic supporters realize that they had even more contacts that could help the charity than they had realized.”

- Lisa Mitchell, Director of Capital, Campaigns, RMHC-CNI

Next Steps
With $26.1MM of their $30MM goal now in hand, Mitchell and the team see the end in sight. The new House, located in downtown Chicago, opened June 26th, 2012. In the midterm phase of the construction, they were able to conduct private "Dusty Shoes Tours" which Mitchell describes as a great opportunity to engage potential supporters. “Now that the House is open, we are able to bring our donors direct contact to our mission through tours.” Neighbors from the densely populated downtown area are invited, or actually reach out and request, tours daily. Through these tours, they can see firsthand what the charity is all about and catch a passion for the mission. “We have a very high success rate in keeping donors,” explains Mitchell. “Once in, they stay in.” For this reason, she feels optimistic that many new capital donors will continue to help by contributing to operating support and program funding when campaign funding is complete.

RMHC-CNI still has 11 months and $4mm to raise before the end of the campaign in 2013. After the opening of the house in June, Mitchell has revisited the targeted prospect lists they received from WealthEngine and continues a structured approach to engaging donors through their board and volunteer connections, and through tours and other events designed to allow potential donors and volunteers to see firsthand the enormous impact of RMHC-CNI.
All four RMHC-CNI development staff members came from backgrounds other than fundraising, and none had worked on a campaign prior to this one. The tremendous success of the first RMHC-CNI campaign is a testament to them, to the organization, its leadership and its mission. It demonstrates that with passion and perseverance, leadership and vision, and a few key tools and technologies, anything can happen.

**Lessons Learned on the Campaign Trail**

Mitchell has been learning fundraising and campaign management as she goes, and has some valuable advice for other novice fundraisers:

- **Carefully allocate your time.** It’s time-consuming to work with committees and volunteers. Identify the movers and the shakers early on and spend most of your efforts supporting them.

- **A great way to engage people is through volunteering.** If you’re lucky enough to have volunteer opportunities, ask prospects to get involved to experience the mission for themselves.

- **Don’t be disturbed by the natural ebb and flow of donations.** You’ll go through periods where everything “clicks” and you are energized, and then will come a period where nothing seems to be happening. If you are patient, all the groundwork you’ve put in place will come to fruition and you’ll soon be in another period of reaping.

- **Be flexible.** The desires of the donor are critical. Upon the opening of the House, some donors have expressed interest in program and operational support, while others are expressly focused on capital. By honoring and cultivating their interest areas, these donors will only become more committed to the charity.
Best Practice #4: Ensure Capital Campaign Success through Careful Planning
Assessing Campaign Readiness

Before deciding to undertake a capital campaign, an organization should assess its readiness to initiate this major fundraising effort. Nonprofits that dedicate time and effort at the onset to prepare and assess readiness for a campaign will be better positioned to efficiently and effectively deploy time and resources during the campaign.

According to an article on Campaign Readiness in the AFP Resource Center there are ten key questions organizations should ask in order to determine campaign readiness.13

1. Is your nonprofit needed and actively making a difference in the community in which it serves?
2. Is your nonprofit and its mission known and respected within your community?
3. Is your nonprofit fiscally healthy?
4. Do you have a strong fundraising base? Is your annual fund successful?
5. Is your board and volunteer leadership ready?
6. Is your staff leadership ready?
7. Does your organization know what it needs to raise funds?
8. Is there a written and documented plan in place to tell your story?
9. Do you have the additional resources allocated to raise major gifts in support of a capital campaign?
10. Will the campaign make a difference both within the community and within the organization?

Improved Attitudes Regarding the Economy May be Encouraging More Campaigns

Based on data from our survey, as well as from other organizations that study the onset of capital campaigns, there is an increase in the number of nonprofit organizations beginning campaigns. This increase can be attributed to a more positive outlook on the state of the economy. Both the Community Foundation of Central Florida and the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines conducted surveys to determine the impact the economy has had and continues to have on capital campaign fundraising:

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13 AFP Resource Center. Article retrieved from http://www.afpnet.org/ResourceCenter/ArticleDetail.cfm?ItemNumber=2792
The Community Foundation of Florida recently completed a study in which 600 Florida based nonprofits participated. One hundred thirty-six of the 600 participating organizations (23%) were involved in a campaign in 2011 and 86% of those organizations were on track to raise a collective $561 million.

The Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines took a slightly different approach in studying nonprofits and the effect the economy had on fundraising in central Iowa. They compared 2012 survey data to surveys from both 2009 and 2010. They found there was an increase of 5% in the number of organizations that had begun capital campaigns since 2010.14

The results of these studies are among the clear signs that organizations are initiating campaigns in anticipation of a brightening economy. Our survey of advocacy and community based organizations revealed that 36% are currently involved in or are in the planning stage of a capital campaign. Figure 11 represents the campaign goals of the responding organizations.

What Is Your Campaign Goal?

![Campaign Goal Chart]

Figure 11: 72% of survey respondents have campaign goals of less than $10MM

14 Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines. Article retrieved from http://www.desmoinesfoundation.org/article.aspx?id=43 & Community+Foundation+releases+2012+Nonprofit+Economic+Impact+Survey%3A+Individual+and+corporate+donations+rise%3B+majority+of+nonprofits+are+financially+healthy%3B+funding+continues+to+be+a+challenge
The average campaign size is $5 million and 55% of campaign goals of survey respondents fall into the range of $5 million or below. The minimum major gift amount of 30% of organizations is between $1,000 and $2,500. Of the organization’s currently involved in a capital campaign, 40% are in the planning stage, so the reality is that many are just beginning their campaign efforts. It is possible that there is a direct correlation between so many organizations beginning campaigns and increased confidence in the economy both from organizational and donor points of view. The campaign stages of the responding organizations are represented in figure 12.

**What Stage Are You In?**

![Pie chart showing campaign stages]

- **Planning**: 40.0%
- **Quiet**: 28.4%
- **Public**: 25.3%
- **Post-Campaign/Wrap-Up**: 6.3%

*Figure 12: Almost 70% of survey respondents are in the planning or quiet phase of their campaign*

**Strategies for Successful Campaigns**

Regardless of the campaign size, organizations that are the most successful at meeting their campaign goals use similar strategies. They engage in solid planning before beginning the project which helps:

- Generate excitement and buy-in from internal constituents
- Solidify the vision for the campaign
- Maximize donor involvement and giving

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**Feasibility Study**

Only 34% of organizations currently in a campaign conducted a feasibility study prior to campaign launch. Failure to plan can lead to:

- Unmet goals and a loss of community confidence in the nonprofit and its leaders
- An apparently successful campaign that leaves money on the table and donors underwhelmed
Wesley Homes, profiled on pages 49-52, is benefitting from their commitment to sound campaign planning. “We are making good strides and have built a lot of energy and momentum,” Kari Rallo, Executive Director of the Wesley Homes Foundation explains. “We are raising awareness and securing lead gifts, and in the case of Lea Hill [a senior facility undergoing expansion], which is farthest along, it is ahead of schedule and we’ve raised $200K more than we thought we’d have at this point in the campaign.”

A feasibility study, sometimes called a capital campaign planning study, can help your organization determine if it has necessary resources, tools and support to conduct a successful capital campaign. According to our survey, only 34% of the organizations currently involved in a capital campaign conducted a feasibility study before beginning their campaign.

A feasibility study is an important step in the campaign planning process and will help to:

- Establish an overall campaign goal
- Identify potential volunteer leadership for the campaign
- Determine a pool of potential major gift prospects
- Articulate a clear justification of your organization’s needs
- Uncover your organization’s strengths and weaknesses
- Develop defined fundraising objectives that will attract community-based support and build upon your organization’s mission
- Catalogue the resources, staff, funds, facilities, events, and technology to carry out the campaign
- Provide the basis for a campaign strategic plan
- Pinpoint successful stewardship strategies

Traditional feasibility studies test a proposed campaign goal by interviewing key supporters and obtaining qualitative data concerning their likelihood to support the proposed campaign and at what level. Interview subjects are also questioned about the organization’s case for support, campaign priorities, and leadership. In that way, potential leadership gifts are identified and possible concerns about the campaign, the case for support, the leadership and the organization are exposed. From a series of these interviews, the consultant conducting them is armed with recommendations for the organization’s leadership including:
Possible leadership gift prospects
- Referrals from these prospects
- Changes to the campaign priorities set out within the draft case for support
- Needs for greater organizational branding or improved reputation within the community
- Potential campaign volunteers
- A “feasible” campaign goal that can be achieved with the identified leadership giving prospects

Because these studies are conducted using a necessarily small sample size, and because they are based on qualitative data and insights, many organizations question whether the goals validated through these studies are as accurate as possible. Not only do some campaigns fall short of their goals, but perhaps more often, money is left on the table because goals are formulated or validated based only on known and pre-identified prospects.

A New Data-Driven Approach to Feasibility Studies

With the availability of big data (more and better), and the widespread adoption of predictive modeling techniques in the fundraising community (see best practice #5), many nonprofits are looking for a more quantitative, data-driven approach to feasibility studies. Data-driven feasibility studies begin with a thorough assessment of the entire organizational constituency, looking at capacity to give (based on appended wealth data) and affinity and inclination data (based on predictive modeling).

With this data in hand, the consultant and organization are in a much better position to evaluate:

- Potential leadership giving prospects
- The campaign gift table or pyramid
- Possible campaign volunteers/leadership
- Candidates for more in-depth interviews for qualitative validation
- A realistic and achievable goal for the overall campaign that accounts for the affinity and ability of the entire constituency

A data-driven feasibility study uniquely combines the best of traditional qualitative techniques such as campaign interviews with the scientific methods of data appends, predictive modeling and analytics to predict the optimal goal for your campaign grounded in data and vetted through analysis. This blended approach is highlighted in figure 13.
Data-Driven Feasibility Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feasibility Study Action</th>
<th>Data Understanding &amp; Preparation</th>
<th>Deliverables</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Analysis</strong></td>
<td>Screen &amp; Append Data</td>
<td>Fully Screened and Scored Database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop Model</td>
<td>Custom Predictive Model Score</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rank Order</td>
<td>Campaign Pyramid</td>
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<td>Develop Gift Table</td>
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<td><strong>Internal Analysis</strong></td>
<td>Development Office Audit</td>
<td>Development Office Audit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Evaluate Prospects – Analytic and Peer Review</td>
<td>Working Campaign Prospectus</td>
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<td>Develop Working Campaign Prospectus</td>
<td>Prioritized Campaign Lists</td>
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<td><strong>External Analysis</strong></td>
<td>Interview Key Donors, Prospects, Volunteers</td>
<td>Validate Case and Campaign Goal</td>
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<td>Test Case for Support</td>
<td>Recommended Campaign Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Validate Campaign Goal</td>
<td>Recommended Campaign Structure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final Campaign Recommendations

Figure 13: Data-Driven Feasibility Study: Integrating qualitative and quantitative insights to develop accurate and actionable campaign intelligence

Campaign Strategic Plan

The feasibility study will contribute to the development of a campaign strategic plan. A strategic plan is a working document designed to keep your organization on schedule to complete campaign goals and objectives.

A successful and well-researched campaign strategic plan will:

- Facilitate commitment from community and volunteer leaders
- Inspire confidence and engender support among internal stakeholders such as board and organizational leadership
- Provide a roadmap against which to track progress and measure success
- Define and prioritize fundraising objectives
- Outline opportunities for donor engagement and involvement
- Contribute to the development of a compelling case for support

Best Practice Bottom Line:

Successful campaigns are built on careful plans grounded in solid analysis. Organizations that fail to plan adequately may fail to achieve their goal or leave precious funding on the table. Investing the resources needed to thoroughly plan your campaign is ultimately the best stewardship of your organization’s resources.
Wesley Homes
Wesley Homes’ Ambitious Campaign Promises Big Benefits as a Result of Sound Planning and Effective Use of Prospect Research

The Client
Wesley Homes is the nonprofit operator of two continuing care retirement communities in the Puget Sound region of Washington State. The flagship Des Moines community was founded almost 70 years ago as a ministry of the Methodist Church and is home to 600 residents from all walks of life and faith backgrounds. A second community, Lea Hill, houses approximately 225 residents. “We are very proud of our history and the quality of care we provide,” shares Kelly Merry, Campaign Manager. “Our Circle of Concern is the expression of our charitable mission that provides care for those who have outlived their resources or need additional help to maintain their health, well-being and dignity.”

“A lot of our success can be attributed to having the right prospects on our lists, and being able to develop the right strategies to cultivate them. WealthEngine has supported both of those goals.”

- Kelly Merry, Campaign Manager, Wesley Homes Foundation

The Challenge
“Our vision is unique for our region,” explains Kari Rallo, Executive Director of the Wesley Homes Foundation. “We are looking to expand and bring the full continuum of care to families in communities in our region that don’t have that option.” Wesley Homes Foundation is embarking on a comprehensive, multi-phased, seven-year campaign to fulfill its mission. Campaign priorities include:
The renovation and redevelopment of the flagship Des Moines campus, which at almost 70-years-old needs a new, contemporary building.

A skilled nursing facility at Lea Hill, which when complete will expand the levels of care there to the full continuum of independent living, assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing.

Two completely new continuing care communities in Puyallup and Renton. These facilities will offer all levels of care and will be unique in their communities.

Each priority includes both a capital and an endowment component. Additionally, a Capital Investment Fund has been created to accommodate donors who wish to support the mission and overall vision without specifying a benefit to a particular community or project. Campaign goals range from $3MM to $11MM for each project, and timelines differ for each, with Lea Hill well underway, and Puyallup and Renton still in the building awareness and engagement phases.

“Getting funding for projects that benefit seniors is a challenge,” says Rallo. “We were told that in King County less than 1% of donors support projects for seniors.” As a result, finding major gift donors is even more difficult for Wesley Homes than for many organizations. It’s truly like trying to find a needle in a haystack.

Wesley Homes faces the task of identifying major gift donors:

- With the capacity to give six- and seven-figure campaign gifts, and the propensity to support projects for seniors
- For multiple campaigns, two in regions where staff is not familiar with the community and where there is no natural constituency

The Solution

Given the significant challenges, Wesley Homes’ campaign counsel recommended a database screening and ongoing access to a prospect research and identification solution they could rely on through the life of the campaigns. Rallo and Merry interviewed two firms, and selected WealthEngine. Initially, they screened their database of residents, families and supporters and were able to begin building a gift pyramid to provide structure and prioritize cultivation and campaign asks. “The WealthEngine information has been very helpful in the community aspect of the campaign. It shows connections that community members have to our residents and volunteers, and we can begin to strategically build relationships with them,” shares Rallo.
“WealthEngine is an important tool in building a campaign. As we’ve advanced in our strategy, we are learning how to best use it, and how to integrate it with anecdotal information. It is one tool, and an important one we would recommend to others.”

- Kari Rallo, Executive Director, Wesley Homes Foundation

Wesley Homes Foundation has been using WealthEngine’s Prospect Generator to help identify completely new prospective capital donors. “We have generated lists based on wealth attributes as well as a proclivity to support projects for seniors,’ says Merry. “We’ve been surprised when we share those lists with our campaign volunteers, as they never would have anticipated some of those people have capacity. It’s like finding the millionaire next door.”
The Results

“We are making good strides and have built a lot of energy and momentum,” explains Rallo. “We are raising awareness and securing lead gifts, and in the case of Lea Hill, which is farthest along, it is ahead of schedule and we’ve raised $200K more than we thought we’d have at this point in the campaign.” Merry adds, “A lot of our success can be attributed to having the right prospects on our lists, and being able to develop the right strategies to cultivate them. WealthEngine has supported both of those goals.”

“The WealthEngine information has been very helpful in the community aspect of the campaign. It shows connections that community members have to our residents and volunteers, and we can begin to strategically build relationships with them.”

- Kari Rallo, Executive Director, Wesley Homes Foundation

The Wesley Homes staff has relied on WealthEngine’s ratings and scores to generate lists and prioritize prospects based on both their ability and propensity to give. The lists are then sanitized of any sensitive information and shared with their volunteer team. Like many volunteer fundraisers, they know people, but they are often not comfortable sharing wealth or suggested ask amount information. The basic WealthEngine information is enough to get conversations started and get volunteers to open up. Sometimes it also opens their eyes to new possibilities.

Next Steps

Rallo and Merry will continue to use WealthEngine as their campaign matures and evolves. They will use it to:

- Identify prospects from among their known constituents and supporters based on identified capacity and propensity to give
- Discover completely new prospects with capacity and proclivity to give to senior-related projects using WealthEngine’s Prospect Generator database
- Clarify and leverage connections between the people they know, including residents and campaign volunteers, and those they would like to get to know in the communities into which they are moving
Best Practice #5: Build Your Donor and Prospect Base with Prospect Research and Analytics
Advocacy and Community-based Organizations Seldom Have Full-Time Prospect Research Staff

Prospect research is a fundraising practice that should be an important part of every organization’s fundraising efforts. Consistent and focused prospect research can help your organization concentrate its limited resources on the best prospects in order to maximize fundraising ROI. It is an essential part of the fundraising cycle shown in figure 14.

![Fundraising Lifecycle Diagram](image)

Figure 14: The fundraising lifecycle

Prospect research is one of the “hidden” gems of fundraising. By conducting prospect research your organization can become more focused in both your annual and major giving campaigns. Prospect research assists in fundraising by identifying, interpreting, analyzing and disseminating information on prospects and prospect segments. It can help organizations gain a better understanding of the capacity, interests and affinity of their constituents, and garner increased private philanthropic support from individuals, corporations and foundations.

“*WealthEngine’s FindWealth Online has saved us a great deal of time by consolidating information from a number of useful sources. It has allowed us to identify the individuals that we should be engaging with and has become a valuable fundraising tool within the department.*”

- Carly Webb, Individual Giving and Trusts Assistant, Epilepsy Society
Thinking about all of your duties and responsibilities, what percent of your time is spent on prospect research (a process in fundraising wherein a researcher identifies and provides relevant information about potential donors to an organization)?

Only 9% of our survey respondents work full time as prospect researchers. Sixty-eight percent identify with other core job functions within fundraising, from development officers to membership coordinators. As represented in Figure 15, of all survey respondents, 53% spend 10% or less of their time on prospect research.

Organizations with Limited Staff and Budgets Find Time for Research
As evidenced by the 47% who spend 11% or more on prospect research, even organizations with limited staff and small budgets consider prospect research an important tool to provide them with wealth intelligence – the systematic understanding of their prospects by identifying exactly who they are, where they live, their wealth, disposable income, spending patterns, lifestyle, interests, demographics, business and more.

With limited time and resources, these organizations need to be creative in their approach and many are using free resources such as Google and Yahoo, and/or online fee-based resources that allow access to multiple tools or data sources at once. The tools used by survey respondents are represented in figure 16.
Thinking about the last few times you’ve used prospect research tools please describe the first tool you use to research individual donors/prospects:

- Fee-based, multi-source online research center (WealthEngine, LexisNexis, etc.): 33.3%
- Fee-based, single-source online research tool (HEP Development Services, Foundation Center, etc.): 6.1%
- Free, search engine (Google, Bing, etc.): 42.5%
- Free, single-source online fact-based research tool (local news, tax assessor websites, etc.): 3.4%
- Free, single-source social networking research tool (LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.): 9.6%
- I don’t use any of the above methods: 5.0%

Figure 16: Research tools used by survey respondents

Wealth Screening and Data Appends

For organizations that are not fortunate to have the talents of a prospect research professional on staff, it is important to recognize that research data is not outside of their grasp. As the accessibility, affordability and accuracy of wealth screening and data append products has increased, more and more organizations are able to purchase data that will inform their fundraising and prospecting efforts. Available data includes:

- Assets such as real estate, stock, boat and airplane ownership
- Business ownership, stock ownership and affiliations
- Lifestyle characteristics such as upscale credit card user, horse enthusiast or wine lover
- Demographic data like age, gender and marital status
- Philanthropic interests and donations data
- Ratings and scores built on wealth and affinity data using sophisticated algorithms
Data such as this and more can be purchased and easily integrated with your organization's existing data in your Donor Management System (DMS). This strategy is highly recommended as it allows all staff members with access to the DMS to use this valuable data in their fundraising, prospecting, communications and advocacy activities. This approach helps organizations optimize data purchases across multiple programs, making the investment more affordable and the ROI more pronounced.

Debra Behrens, Director of Donor Relations at the Animal Humane Society profiled on pages 61-63, shares their approach to prospect research and routine screening: “We have 50,000 donors each year, and many of those are new donors. Add to that new pet adoptees, and volunteers, and it adds up to a lot of new names each year. We need to understand who our supporters are and how best to inspire their giving.” The Animal Humane Society successfully integrated prospect research strategies into their fundraising programs. In little more than a year, they were able to make a successful case to hire additional staff, and as a result they doubled the number and value of major gifts to the organization, and increased their Legacy Society by 12.5%.

### Analytics and Predictive Modeling

In addition to data appends, screening and individual level prospect research, many organizations are turning to analytics and modeling to enhance their fundraising success. Businesses have used modeling and other analytical techniques for years to discover untapped potential within their customer bases. They have used a combination of transactional data and other customer information to target their most profitable markets, identify high potential upsell potential, and maximize campaign effectiveness. In fundraising, the combination of wealth screening, organizational data on constituents (gift history, etc.) and analytics results in a comprehensive understanding of donors and prospects. Wealth intelligence is defining new strategies for highly targeted fundraising with stronger return on investment, serving as an incubator for fundraising machines.

Over the past 5-10 years, the trend toward predictive modeling and data analytics has grown within the nonprofit community. Nonprofits are using analytics to better understand and predict who their best major gift, annual giving and planned giving prospects are and on which prospects they should be focusing more resources. Analytics turn the constituent data in your organization’s database into actionable intelligence. When your organizational data is combined with wealth and asset data you are able to build powerful profiles of your best donors and identify lookalikes within your prospect population.
You have probably reviewed characteristics such as recency, frequency, and gift size within your prospect pools. Predictive modeling can take this to the next level by identifying the characteristics that define your major, planned or annual giving donors. For instance, a statistically derived model may indicate that your major gift donors:

- Contribute on average ten or more gifts to your organization
- Have been a member of your organization for the past fifteen years
- Participate in your educational programs
- Are widows/widowers
- Are more likely than average to have a family foundation
- Have an estimated giving capacity of at least $25,000 or greater

These are simply examples, but knowing the characteristics of your best prospects will help you predict which will benefit from a higher touch experience with your organization and which should be invited to specific events, receive a planned giving brochure or a leadership-level annual giving ask.

Benefits of Prospect Research, Data Appends and Modeling and Analytics

Whether you are conducting prospect research on individual major gift prospects using free tools, have conducted a wealth screening or data append, or have completed a predictive modeling project, you’ll reap the benefits of wealth intelligence:

- Prospect research can mean the difference between receiving a large gift and a major gift. It provides a more complete picture of a prospect’s wealth, interests and community connections
- Prospect research can help your organization develop a focused approach to major gift fundraising by identifying essential information on a donor/prospect before a meeting or before a fundraising proposal is made. All information is from publicly available data sources and when combined with information learned during cultivation will help you gain a greater understanding of a donor’s capacity, interests and passions
- Wealth Intelligence allows you to prioritize and segment prospect pools. Prospect research can help organizations become more focused at all levels of giving; annual, major and planned giving. Data and analytically-based segmentations of donors and prospects can:
Lower mailing costs by identifying which of your annual giving donors should receive leadership level annual giving solicitations and which should be mailed less frequently.

Identify which leadership-level giving prospects should become major gift prospects based on a combination of total giving, gifts to other similar nonprofits and assets.

Identify which donors should receive planned giving information or solicitations by reviewing a combination of total number of gifts, marital status, age and overall capacity.

Even organizations that do not employ a prospect researcher should not build gift requests or ask amounts based on anecdotal information—there are better options. They can use inexpensive or free tools such as Google, Zillow and Guidestar, as well as metasites such as Supporting Advancement and the University of Virginia’s Portal to learn more about their constituents and explore ways in which investments in professional research staff, analytics, data and technologies can boost their ROI.

**Best Practice Bottom Line:**

Prospect research provides actionable information for major gift prospect identification, cultivation and solicitation, and through data appends, predictive modeling, and analytics provides practical donor and prospect segmentation strategies for organizations at all levels of fundraising sophistication, budgets and staffing.
Animal Humane Society
Animal Humane Society uses WealthEngine to Double Major Gifts and Grow Legacy Program

The Client
The Animal Humane Society (AHS) is the largest animal welfare organization in the upper Midwest, serving the Twin Cities metro area with five shelters and caring for more than 25,000 animals annually. The impact of the organization is evident in the decline in homeless animals as new holistic programs are implemented by AHS to help keep animals in homes, to spay and neuter animals, and to provide more services for animals to increase their adoptability.

“We have 50,000 donors each year, and many of those are new donors. Add to that new adoptees, and volunteers, and it adds up to a lot of new names each year. We need to understand who our supporters are and how best to inspire their giving.”

- Debra Behrens, Director of Donor Relations, Animal Humane Society

The Challenge
2007 saw the merger of three animal welfare agencies in the Twin Cities area to become the Animal Humane Society. At the time of the merger, they had five donor databases, as well as an additional 8 databases representing adoptees, volunteers, and other constituents. “From a development perspective, it was a perfect storm, and a magical moment,” explains Debra Behrens, Director of Donor Relations for AHS. “We wanted to learn more about our donors and constituents, so we invested in a database screening that would also allow us to identify duplicate records and flag relationships between data in the various databases. While we couldn’t screen all our records, this gave us an opportunity to test the waters and see if screening would be a successful strategy for us.” By all accounts, the project was a success. “Shortly after receiving data back from the screening, we received a major gift in response to a mailing – from someone who had simply never been asked to donate – that more than paid for the entire project.”
Fast forward to 2010, and it was time to implement a broader screening strategy. “We wanted to get a 360-degree view of our constituents,” says Behrens. “We have 50,000 donors each year and many of those are new donors. Add to that new adoptees, and volunteers, and it adds up to a lot of new names each year. We need to understand who those people are.” AHS was ready to fire on all cylinders, wishing to strengthen an already successful planned giving program, grow a major giving program, and enhance annual giving performance. To accomplish these goals, they opted to couple their investment in wealth and demographic data with analytics to power their fundraising strategies.

The Solution
Using the evidence from 2007 to demonstrate to the board and leadership that the investment would result in a positive return, they were able to partner with WealthEngine and consulting partner Bentz Whaley Flessner to purchase screening data, data enhancements such as email overlays and National Change of Address updates, as well as predictive models for:

- Major giving
- Planned giving
- Annual giving
- And a cluster model to indicate each constituent’s level of connection to AHS

“Shortly after receiving data back from the screening, we received a major gift in response to a mailing – from someone who had simply never been asked to donate – that more than paid for the entire project.”

- Debra Behrens, Director of Donor Relations, Animal Humane Society

The Results
The screening (providing details on each constituent’s ability to give a major gift) and major giving model (indicating each constituent’s likelihood to make a major gift to AHS) together identified so many solid major gift prospects that Behrens was able to make the case to their leadership that they needed to hire additional major gift officers. They had one MGO, and the initial results of the project allowed
them to hire two additional, full-time MGO’s. They also went through a portfolio realignment and optimization exercise, ensuring that the best major gift prospects were actively managed by either a MGO or by someone on the executive team, three of whom also actively manage prospects. The end result is that in little more than one year, AHS doubled the number of major gifts they received and the value of those gifts also grew by nearly 100%.

AHS’s Legacy Circle – an opt-in recognition society for planned giving donors, also grew during this time. As a result of better targeted mailings to those most likely to leave a bequest or make another type of planned gift, the society grew from 600 to 675 members.

While this doesn’t represent the totality of planned gift commitments to AHS, as many do not opt-in, it does suggest the efficacy of the planned gift modeling and use of data in identifying the most appropriate constituents to receive legacy messaging.

“We wanted to learn more about our donors and constituents, so we invested in a database screening that would also allow us to identify duplicate records and flag relationships between data in the various databases.”

- Debra Behrens, Director of Donor Relations, Animal Humane Society

**Next Steps**

AHS is actively planning ahead, looking at the next three years. During this time, according to Behrens, they hope to hire an additional major gift officer, and begin to lay the groundwork for a feasibility study they plan to undertake in 2015. “By understanding our constituents, keeping our data up to date and routinely screening new donors, adoptees and volunteers as they come through our doors, we will be in the best position to launch a major campaign.”

The Animal Humane Society is actively growing their fundraising capacity with data and analytics. They are thinking strategically about the future and positioning themselves for success when they launch a major campaign in the future. WealthEngine is proud to be playing a part in this achievement.
Best Practice #6: Use of Social Media in Event-based Fundraising
Social Media is Being Rapidly Adopted by the Fundraising Community

Fundraising at its core is about building donor loyalty, and cultivating and building relationships in support of your organization's mission. Social media is largely about creating and strengthening connections among people and organizations. WealthEngine's research shows that social media is rapidly being adopted by the fundraising community, with platforms such as social networking sites, blogs and micro blogs, photo and video sharing website and online communities.

The use of social media to enhance your fundraising mission should center on how it can build community and loyalty to your organization. Many organizations are finding success using social media tools to engage and involve supporters, issue calls to action, attract new followers, improve brand recognition and reputations, and learn more about what the community is saying about them. Many are also using it successfully in fundraising, particularly event-based fundraising.
Advocacy and Community Nonprofits Use A Variety Of Social Media Platforms For Events

Eighty-eight percent of advocacy and community organizations are using a variety of different social media tools to enhance event attendance and event-based fundraising. The social media tools used by survey respondents are represented in figure 18.

**What social media tools, if any, does your organization use to promote your organization’s mission, either for fundraising or marketing purposes?**

![Figure 18: Social media tools used by survey respondents](image)

When using social media for events organizations need to anticipate and plan for how this form of interaction can help them change and grow their relationships with constituents. Social media is used to:

- Invite your constituents to be part of an interactive conversation
- Give your audience some control over the conversation
- Allow your constituents to influence your organization’s message
- Provide almost instantaneous feedback from your constituents
Trends in Nonprofit Fundraising Events

Traditional events, such as walk-a-thons and galas, are a mainstay for nonprofits, according to Laura Coltrin, Product Manager at Eventbrite, “But we are seeing two trends. First, with the economy, nonprofits seem to be doing smaller, less costly events, such as get-togethers at someone’s home as opposed to the larger galas at an expensive hotel.” This enables them to focus more on the mission of the organization in an intimate setting. Smaller events focus on programs and initiatives of the organization, rather than on a band or other forms of live entertainment.”

A second trend is part of the social revolution. “We are beginning to see ‘pop-up’ events at many nonprofits,” shares Coltrin. Pop-up events are ones that are suggested and generated by the organization’s supporters, rather than the organization itself. This amplifies the true ‘grass-roots’ element to social media, by inviting and allowing supporters to drive the agenda for the organization. It has a democratizing effect on volunteerism and on philanthropy. “We can all be part of it and make a difference if we want to,” says Coltrin.

Social Media Provides Options for Event Planning and Follow-through

Social media is a tool that is well suited for event fundraising and can be used to:

- Invite constituents
- Collect event details in a centralized location
- Send event reminders and communications
- Provide a forum for post-event follow-up
- Distribute updates on funds raised
- Invite event participants to actively participate in the fundraising process by enabling them to ask their friends and family to participate or donate before the event
As with any fundraising strategy, your organization will need to lay the groundwork well in advance in order to secure success. Part of this process is to ask these essential questions that facilitate planning:

1. Who will be the staff coordinator that will respond to inquiries and ensure content is up to date?

2. Is there a policy in place for how your organization will respond to questions, comments and suggestions?

3. How much staff time will be allocated to the event?

4. What benchmarks and metrics will your organization use to measure achievement?

The National Headquarters of the Salvation Army has successfully integrated online fundraising, social media, and mobile fundraising into its national Red Kettle fundraising campaign. According to Jason Wood, Director of Digital Communication Services for the Salvation Army’s National Headquarters, “While the Red Kettle Campaign started as a very traditional campaign in 1891, in the last 7-8 years it has become an ‘all-encompassing’ campaign. It includes the traditional bell ringers, print, TV, radio, live events, virtual events, online giving, mobile giving, text to give, and we will continue to support our donors by adapting to changes and allowing them to give in whatever ways they choose.” Our full interview with Wood appears on pages 72-75.
Using Social Media to Increase Success of Fundraising Events

PUBLICIZE

EVENTS PAGE  BLOG  FACEBOOK

INVITE

SOCIAL MEDIA  EMAIL  DIRECT MAIL

HOUSE LIST  HOUSE LIST  HOUSE LIST

SHARES  SHARES  HOUSE LIST

FRIENDS OF FRIENDS  ADVOCATES  COMMUNITIES

MEASURE

GOALS  PROSPECTS

CLICKS  TWEETS  SHARES
To help nonprofits understand how to get started using social media in event-based fundraising, we asked experts Laura Coltrin and Dawn Michele Andreas of Eventbrite, a provider of online event management and ticketing services, and Ritu Sharma of Social Media For Nonprofits, a nonprofit dedicated to teaching nonprofits social media for social good, to share their advice.

There are principally two ways nonprofits use social media in their event fundraising. The first is to use their social presence to promote the event. The second is to leverage their social communities to promote the event to their networks. Our experts share a dozen tips for successful "social" event fundraising:

1. Create an event registration page separate from Facebook on a platform that will allow you to link socially to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, other networks and your website.

2. Promote your event on Facebook by creating an event on your organizations Facebook account. Make your Facebook event page visually appealing and interesting by including photos, video and other compelling or interactive content.

3. Create an appealing feature on your Facebook wall, including photos, videos and/or interesting content about the event. This can be your banner and you can also include a news feed with a link to your event page and "pin it" to the top of your page (above the "fold" so there’s no need to scroll to see it).

4. Link from your website to the event registration page and Facebook event page. Put information about your event on your homepage even if it links to another page or tab on your website. Capitalize on web traffic by sharing it front and center (and again, above the fold).

5. Send invitations directly to your entire community. You’ll need their help to spread the word. Marry social media invitations with direct mail and email communications, and be sure that they carry the same message.

6. Ask staff and supporters to share the original "social" invitation with their networks. They can click on the “share” or “I am attending” buttons, which translates to instant credibility for your event. When those on the fence can see who is attending, it creates excitement and momentum. Statistics
collected by Eventbrite show that of those who share your event invitation with their networks, 40% share “pre-purchase” (e.g., they haven’t yet committed to attend) and 60% share post-purchase. Further, among those who share the event “post-purchase,” there are 20% more ticket sales among their networks. This may be explained simply. Those who share the invitation pre-purchase are saying, “This might be fun, want to go?” while those who share post-purchase are saying, “I am excited about this event to support XYZ organization. Who’s in?” Knowing that someone they know is already attending makes the event more appealing.

7. Identify champions. Ask partners and other collaborators to feature your event on their wall. This helps create buzz and additional visibility for the event. Don’t be afraid to ask those in your network to share it on their walls or groups and act as champions to their networks. When prospective donors see that others in their peer network are attending outside of the organizing nonprofit, they will be more likely to participate.

8. Recommend your event on meetups, community calendars, and as many other online outlets as possible, including craigslist and LinkedIn.

9. Link your event registration page to all other social channels including Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest, and your blog. And by all means, do blog about your event!

10. For larger events, with 75 or more attendees, create a Twitter hashtag. This can add hype leading up to your event, and allow attendees to interact during the event. Display the live Twitter feed on a projector during the event to spark interest and inspire creativity. After the event, the hashtag gives you an avenue to thank supporters, appeal for additional donations, share links, photos and video feeds of the actual event. You can send a post-event survey, and it’s also a great place to create momentum for your next event.

11. Join specific LinkedIn or Facebook groups that are active in your geographic region. These could be groups related to the region itself, such as a local association focused on the betterment of the community or a group with a targeted professional or social theme. After you are a member, you will be able to run campaigns via these groups. Periodic posts will enable you to identify and target the members. Don’t go overboard, as many group members get emails or notifications for every post, but it’s another great way to get your message out.

12. Measure your success with multiple metrics. Dollars raised, new individuals engaged, click throughs and retweets. There are a number of technologies that can help you measure social media metrics and learn more about the demographics of your following. Our experts suggest looking at Simply Measured and Sprout Social for no cost or low cost options. Hootsuite is also worth checking.
The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army’s Red Kettle Campaign is an All-Encompassing Campaign Integrating Old and New

The Client

The Salvation Army, a longtime WealthEngine client, was founded in 1865 in London by William Booth, with the mission of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ and meeting human needs without discrimination. The familiar Red Kettles seen at the holidays were first introduced at a wharf in San Francisco in 1891 and have been a holiday tradition ever since.

“We saw significant growth in yearly giving as well as ROI from what we invested in digital media. With traditional offline advertising it’s difficult to track returns, but with online we can see what is working and make adjustments in real time, in the middle of a campaign. We can shift resources and the results are well documented.”

- Jason Wood, Director of Digital Communication Services, Salvation Army’s National Headquarter

The Challenge

How does a campaign begun over 120 years ago remain relevant and able to stimulate passion among the public? For much of its history, the fundraising concepts did not change significantly. According to Jason Wood, Director of Digital Communication Services for The Salvation Army’s National Headquarters, the iconic Red Kettle concept was designed with the donor in mind. “It began as a convenient way for people to give what they could – and it remains just as simple. For many the red kettle is a welcome sign that the holidays have arrived.”

Part of The Salvation Army’s strategy is the pairing of celebrity and recognizable
brands. For example, The Salvation Army has partnered with Walmart for more than 30 years. In 1997, they first partnered with the Dallas Cowboys for the nationally televised kickoff to the Red Kettle Campaign on Thanksgiving Day, including nationally recognized talent such as Grammy Award winning superstar Enrique Iglesias and special guest Pitbull in 2011. In 2010, they began the “Rock the Red Kettle Concert” in Los Angeles to engage and garner support from younger donors.

While these additions to the traditional fundraising methods and messages were enhancements to the original campaign, things really began to get interesting with the spread and adoption of digital technologies taking place in the mid-2000’s. Beginning in 2005, The Salvation Army launched the Online Red Kettle. Says Wood, “We started it in 2005 and for the first couple of years we ran it as we did any other online outreach, ‘Let’s turn it on and hope the money comes in.’”

“The Red Kettle Campaign started as a very traditional campaign, in the last 7-8 years it has become an all encompassing campaign…we will continue to support our donors by adapting to changes and allowing them to give in whatever ways they choose.”

- Jason Wood, Director of Digital Communication Services, Salvation Army’s National Headquarters

**The Solution**

It was in 2007 and 2008 that their online giving started to perk. “We made a conscious decision to use digital marketing to drive traffic to our Online Red Kettle.” The Salvation Army began digital marketing in 2007, encouraging people through email and social media to sign up and assist with the Red Kettle Campaign. In 2008 they began Facebook advertising to target social media audiences, and expanded to additional online advertising across multiple platforms. “We saw significant growth in yearly giving as well as ROI from what we invested in digital media,” shares Wood. “With traditional offline advertising it’s difficult to track returns, but with online we can see what is working and make adjustments in real time, in the middle of a campaign. We can shift resources and the results are well documented:’
The Online Red Kettle Campaign is a peer-to-peer fundraising concept that marries very well with the traditional off-line campaign. In both, community members become bell ringers for The Salvation Army. In the case of traditional bell ringers, they can be found outside a Walmart or Sam’s Club, or elsewhere in the community. All proceeds are directed to the local Salvation Army Corps, and are used to serve community needs. The online peer-to-peer networking works much the same. An online ringer sets up their red kettle page, and shares in their own words why they are passionate about supporting The Salvation Army. They invite their neighbors, friends and family to donate, too.

The Results
The Red Kettle Campaign has been wildly successful in terms of fundraising, pulling in $148.7 million in contributions in 2012. The Army raised more than $2.1 million through Online Red Kettles, up from $1.7 million in 2011. Other online donations in November and December, not through the Online Red Kettle, totaled $21.2 million, a 17 percent increase from 2011. As part of the total, The Salvation Army received an unprecedented $3.9 million in online donations on the final day of 2012.

The growth is due partly to the ability of the Salvation Army to continue to push the envelope to offer new technologies and open new opportunities for people to become involved. Two years ago they began accepting text-to-give donations, mainly in conjunction with events such as the Thanksgiving Day Kick-off event at Dallas Field, or the Rock the Red Kettle Event in LA.

Next Steps:
In 2012, the Salvation Army released a Red Kettle mobile app for the iPhone. This is representative of where they see a need to invest resources and develop strategies. “The key word is ‘mobile,’” says Wood. “We’re moving to make all of our content, forms and solutions more mobile friendly. As more and more people are accessing the internet via tablets and smart phones, it’s essential that we give them mobile-friendly solutions.”

Wood admits that it is fairly difficult for an established organization, with tried and true and proven fundraising methods to predict where technology is going and be able to quickly adapt to it. But he believes The Salvation Army has been fairly successful at integrating these innovations into their strategies. “It’s very helpful to have leadership that are open to new ideas and willing to test new donation channels or new components of a campaign that will engage donors.”
History of The Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign

1865 - Salvation Army founded in London
1891 - Red Kettles introduced in San Francisco
1983 - Partnered with Walmart to increase visibility and incidence of Red Kettles
1997 - Partnered with Dallas Cowboys for Thanksgiving campaign kickoff event
2005 - Online Red Kettle component of the campaign is born
2007 - Digital marketing and online advertising drive online donations
2010 - First Rock the Red Kettle event in Los Angeles
2012 - Red Kettle goes mobile with iPhone app

“While the Red Kettle Campaign started as a very traditional campaign, in the last 7-8 years it has become an all encompassing campaign. It includes the traditional bell ringers, print, TV, radio, live events, virtual events, online giving, mobile giving, text to give, and we will continue to support our donors by adapting to changes and allowing them to give in whatever ways they choose.”
Adoption of Social Media Policies Lag Behind Social Media Use

As indicated in Figure 20, 88% of the organizations participating in our survey indicate they are using social media as a tool for event-based fundraising and 19% percent are using social media as a research resource at least once a week. However, only 14% of organizations indicate they have a policy in place governing the use of social media in research and fundraising. Clearly, good business practice dictates that organizations extensively using social media as a tool to bring visibility to their organization should develop policies to govern their use of it.

Have you (or, to the best of your knowledge, one of your Development Officers) ever:

- Posted a prospect visit on social media
- Invited a prospect to an event using social media
- Connected with a prospect on social media
- Monitored what people are saying about your organization on social media
- Monitored a prospect's behavior based on geo-location
- Posted a prospect visit on social media

Figure 20: Uses of social media by survey respondents

Social media is a phenomenon that is fluid and quickly evolving. The use of social media within an organization should follow and utilize the same ethical guidelines an organization applies to other aspects of its fundraising or community presence. In 2010, the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) convened a group of nonprofit technology professionals to craft guidelines for members of AFP, The Center for Association Leadership (ASAE), The Nonprofit Technology Network (NTEN) and The Direct Marketing Association (DMA) Nonprofit Federation. The guidelines published by AFP include policies for using social media by both employees and constituents. The results, which were released in 2010, can be found in Appendix 4.
A social media policy will ensure consistency of the use of social media both by internal staff and external constituents. A policy will:

- Provide a set of operational guidelines for people within the organization that use social media in their job
- Set expectations and boundaries
- Define the organization’s view of social media
- Identify the organization’s concern and interest
- Explicate what to avoid
- Closely reflect other agency policies and guidelines
- Provide guidelines for “friending” donors, prospects and co-workers
- Cover how you engage your constituents, the people your organization serves and your staff
- If it is being used as a research tool, include guidelines to protect your constituent’s privacy

The lack of a policy within your organization could lead to:

- Organization, campaign, education or other programmatic leaks before you are ready to announce plans to your external community
- Unauthorized persons speaking on your behalf
- Inconsistent messages and content being posted from your organization

While no one policy will work for every organization, every organization should go through the process of developing a policy that can be changed, updated or appended as future needs dictate. Having no policy is a disservice to your organization and your supporters.
Conclusion
Increased competition for fundraising dollars and budgetary constraints, coupled with increasing needs for services provided by advocacy and community organizations, makes it ever more important for development professionals to create clear and concise plans for engaging their constituent base to reach their fundraising goals. The plans should include strategies for using both the tried and true methods as well as test and learn practices with newer techniques such as social media and mobile giving. The most successful organizations will be those that continue to review and refine their methods, policies, procedures and how they approach the business of fundraising.

The best practices identified in this report cover a wide range of fundraising methods in use within advocacy and community organizations. These organizations are some of the leaders within the nonprofit world in creating innovative and successful fundraising approaches. The practices defined in this report cover many aspects of fundraising, from attaining annual fund and capital campaign success, to resources and strategies for researching donors to using new and innovative fundraising tools. What is clear is that advocacy and community organizations continue to push the envelope in all areas of development. Implementation of these practices will help any organization achieve a higher level of fundraising excellence.

It is our hope that this publication is of service to fundraising professionals working to champion the missions of the charities they represent. We have long held the belief that peer to peer sharing is a vital and often underutilized resource in nonprofit communities. By facilitating the sharing of best fundraising practices of successful organizations with others in the field, we hope to increase the fundraising capacity of this vital component of our economy and culture.
Appendix 1:
Sample Corporate and Foundation Peer Screening Form
Master List (Internal Organization Use Only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Strength of Relationship (circle one)</th>
<th>Potential Interest (circle one)</th>
<th>Current Donor</th>
<th>Foundation Affiliation</th>
<th>Corporate Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prospect 1</td>
<td>Prospect 1</td>
<td>not close: 1 2 3 4 5 (very close)</td>
<td>not interested: 1 2 3 4 5 (very interested)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td>Northrop Grumman Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospect 2</td>
<td>Prospect 2</td>
<td>not close: 1 2 3 4 5 (very close)</td>
<td>not interested: 1 2 3 4 5 (very interested)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Gates Foundation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospect 3</td>
<td>Prospect 3</td>
<td>not close: 1 2 3 4 5 (very close)</td>
<td>not interested: 1 2 3 4 5 (very interested)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Coca Cola</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospect 4</td>
<td>Prospect 4</td>
<td>not close: 1 2 3 4 5 (very close)</td>
<td>not interested: 1 2 3 4 5 (very interested)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Community Foundation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List to Be Distributed to Screener

Your Name:______________________________________
Organization Name:________________________________
Screening Date:___________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Strength of Relationship (circle one)</th>
<th>Potential Interest (circle one)</th>
<th>Current Donor</th>
<th>Foundation Affiliation</th>
<th>Corporate Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>not close: 1 2 3 4 5 (very close)</td>
<td>not interested: 1 2 3 4 5 (very interested)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>not close: 1 2 3 4 5 (very close)</td>
<td>not interested: 1 2 3 4 5 (very interested)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>not close: 1 2 3 4 5 (very close)</td>
<td>not interested: 1 2 3 4 5 (very interested)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>not close: 1 2 3 4 5 (very close)</td>
<td>not interested: 1 2 3 4 5 (very interested)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Appendix 2: Sample Volunteer Prospect Profile Form
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational:</th>
<th>Date of Profile:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prospect Name:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation to Org:</td>
<td>Donor, friend, volunteer, staff, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest Area (If Known):</td>
<td>Area of philanthropic interest or interests</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Biographical:

| Home Address:               | Address:                           |
|                            | Phone:                             |
|                            | Email:                             |
| Business Address:           | Address:                           |
|                            | Phone:                             |
|                            | Email:                             |

| Giving Club/Giving Range:   | Last gift date:                    |
|                            | Current giving range:              |
|                            | Current giving club (if applicable): |

| Interests and Hobbies:      |                                |
|                            |                                |
| Birthdate:                 |                                |
|                            |                                |

| Education:                 | Name of college, program, degree, etc. |
|                            |                                |

| Family:                    | Spouse:                           |
|                            | Children: (#, ages, names)        |
|                            | Other:                            |

| Community Affiliations:    | Organizational affiliations, friends, civic interests, boards, honors and awards |
|                            |                                |

<p>| Charitable Contributions:  | Known contributions to other organizations (recipient organization) |
|                            |                                |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Organizational:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Date of Profile:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prospect Name:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affiliation to Org:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Donor, friend, volunteer, staff, etc.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interest Area (if known):</strong></td>
<td><strong>Area of philanthropic interest or interests</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biographical:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home Address:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Address:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Phone:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Email:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business Address:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Address:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Phone:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Email:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Giving Club/Giving Range:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Last gift date:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Current giving range:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Current giving club (if applicable):</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interests and Hobbies:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Birthdate:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Name of college, program, degree, etc.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Spouse:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Children: (#, ages, names)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Other:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Affiliations:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Organizational affiliations, friends, civic interests, boards, honors and awards</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Charitable Contributions:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Known contributions to other organizations (recipient organization)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Financial:

| Current Business/Employer: |
| Current Title: | Name of college, program, degree, etc. |
| Capacity Rating Range: | Estimate of largest gift possible over five years |
| Staff Assignment: | Name of prospect manager assigned to prospect |
| Volunteer Assignment: | Name of volunteer manager assigned to prospect |
| Last Contact Date: | Date & type of contact (visits, phone calls, events) |
| Stage: | Identification, discovery, cultivation, solicitation, stewardship |
| Expected Annual Solicitation Range: |
| Expected Campaign Solicitation Ask Range: |
| Organization Notes & Comments: |
| Comments: |

---

**Confidential Report:**
The information contained in this profile has been compiled from relevant public and internal sources and is believed to be accurate and current as of the date indicated. This document is not intended for distribution and is highly confidential.

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Appendix 3: Sample Volunteer Resources
## Campaign Volunteer Contact Report

Please use this form to record your progress with your assigned campaign prospects. Indicate the date of any meetings or substantive telephone conversations you have with any prospects, the follow up or outcome and any relevant notes or comments. This sheet should be submitted to the campaign committee chair and development office liaison at our bi-weekly meetings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prospect Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Date Contacted</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Gift Commitment</th>
<th>Next Appt.</th>
<th>Required For Follow Up</th>
<th>Notes/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joe Smith</td>
<td>xxx-555-1212</td>
<td>02-17-12</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>$25,000 5-year pledge</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Need to request formal pledge card</td>
<td>Joe loves the work we are doing and would like to be more involved. Thinks we are an asset to the community. Knows some on the bank board who should be involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Wells</td>
<td>xxx-555-1212</td>
<td>02-24-12</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>$10,000 commitment, will pay with stock transfer by 3-31-12</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Asked for copy of annual report for records</td>
<td>Kathy mentioned she is on the Food Bank board through 2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eli Strong</td>
<td>xxx-555-1212</td>
<td>03-12-12</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eli supports his college, the United Way and several faith-based charities. No interest in adding another priority this year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Singh</td>
<td>xxx-555-1212</td>
<td>03-14-12</td>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>Considering a pledge for technology in late husband’s memory</td>
<td>4-10-12</td>
<td>Bring proposal for sponsorship of new technology and naming and recognition plans</td>
<td>Mary is interested in making a contribution that will honor Arnav’s memory. She thinks technology is the right fit, but we need to find creative ways to recognize and publicize the gift. Gift size could be $50-$100K.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane O’Keefe</td>
<td>xxx-555-1212</td>
<td>03-22-12</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jane is not interested at this time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy Li</td>
<td>xxx-555-1212</td>
<td>03-29-12</td>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>Considering a gift</td>
<td>Call in 2 weeks</td>
<td>Obtain follow up appointment with James, Nancy and CEO</td>
<td>Nancy needs to discuss options with her husband James.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Items to Include in a Volunteer Training Manual or Packet:

- Case for support or campaign prospectus, including:
  - Ways to give (funding options)
  - Campaign priorities
  - Naming opportunities

- Written volunteer job responsibilities

- Campaign organization chart

- Campaign timeline

- Campaign goals broken out by committee

- Solicitation guide

- Privacy and nondisclosure agreement

- Contact information and communications methods
  - Main volunteer contact with cell phone, main phone and email
  - Main development office liaison with cell phone, main phone and email
  - Private LinkedIn group for all volunteers to ask questions and share successes

- Glossary of terms

- The organization’s gift acceptance policy

- Campaign volunteer contact report form

- Meeting schedule

- Pledge form and reply envelope for volunteers to make their leadership commitment

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Volunteer Training Checklist

☐ Volunteers need a written job description

☐ Volunteers must be passionate about the mission — orient them to the organization with an open house, tour and meeting with leadership

☐ Volunteers must understand the organization’s case for support

☐ Volunteers must make their own gift to the campaign

☐ Volunteers must understand and have documentation for the contribution and naming opportunities

☐ Volunteers should understand what types of gifts can be accepted, including
  - Cash
  - Pledges
  - Gifts of stock
  - Gifts of real property
  - Planned gifts
  - Other

☐ Volunteers should be aware of policies regarding gift acceptance

☐ Volunteers should sign a privacy waiver

☐ Volunteers must know the full campaign timeline

☐ Volunteers must have clear guidelines on their expected timeline

☐ Volunteers must have achievable and realistic goals

☐ Volunteers must know the procedures for asking, including:
  - Selecting prospects
  - Establishing a specific ask amount
  - Obtaining a face to face appointment
    - Send introductory letter on campaign letterhead
    - Distribute materials (case, pledge form) in person
  - Making the ask
  - Reporting progress

☐ Volunteers should be given the opportunity to practice asking in a group training session

☐ Volunteers must know what success look like for the organization

☐ Volunteers need to know how staff will support them and be given the opportunity for staff to accompany them if possible

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Topics to Include in an In-Person Volunteer Training Workshop:

☐ Organization orientation:
  ☐ Open house
  ☐ Tour
  ☐ Meeting with leadership

☐ In-person training session to cover contents of training manual/packet especially:
  ☐ Organization vision and mission
  ☐ The case for support
  ☐ Campaign priorities
  ☐ Naming opportunities
  ☐ Ways to give
  ☐ Solicitation guide
  ☐ Role play campaign asks and possible responses (consider filming a portion of this for sharing on a private YouTube channel if there are those who cannot attend the workshop)
  ☐ Review prospect lists and select prospects
  ☐ Remind volunteers to make their own gift

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Sample Volunteer Privacy and Nondisclosure Agreement

As a volunteer, you may be provided with information regarding donors and prospects to assist you in your volunteer role. Information may include names, addresses and phone numbers of individuals, their giving interests, gift society memberships, potential capacity, a suggested ask amount, or other information relevant to your role as a fundraiser on behalf of ________________.

Because of the sensitive and confidential nature of these types of information, each campaign volunteer must agree to abide by a strict policy of privacy and non-disclosure:

As a volunteer, I understand that I am provided with this information in strict confidence to enable me to perform my functions as a volunteer. I will not share this information outside of the development office of ________________ including development staff and volunteers acting in a development role on behalf of ________________.

I have read and understand this Privacy and Nondisclosure Agreement:

Signature: ________________________________

Print Name: ________________________________

Date: ________________________________

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Sample Volunteer Job Description and Responsibilities

Committee Chair Responsibilities

☐ Make a personal leadership gift commitment

☐ Help identify and recruit committee volunteers

☐ Attend the volunteer training workshop

☐ Identify and solicit leadership prospects

☐ Serve as liaison between the committee and the development office

☐ Serve as a coach and mentor for committee members

☐ Ensure committee members make personal leadership gifts to the campaign

☐ Keep committee on track to meet goals and responsibilities and intervene or seek development office intervention where needed

☐ Fulfill all the responsibilities of committee members

Committee Member Responsibilities

☐ Make a personal leadership gift commitment

☐ Attend, if possible, the volunteer training workshop

☐ Review prospect lists and help to identify prospects of ability with whom you have some connection

☐ Educate yourself about the campaign case for support, giving opportunities and ways to give

☐ Select and solicit ________ prospects for a campaign gift

☐ Utilize the Solicitation Guide, your committee chair, and your development office liaison as needed to make your solicitations on behalf of the campaign

☐ Promote attendance at, and attend, campaign events

☐ Update your committee chair and/or development office liaison on the progress of your calls

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Volunteer Solicitation Guide

Step 1: Preparation

1. Make your own gift first

   You cannot ask others to support a cause you have not supported yourself. You will improve your credibility and comfort level in asking others to donate by making a personal contribution, at a significant level for your situation, before you begin talking with others.

   Once you have uncovered the reasons you are supporting the organization at a sacrificial or significant level, you will be able to share those reasons and your passion for the cause with others.

2. Attend a volunteer training workshop and read all provided materials.

   Be sure to fully acquaint yourself with:
   - The organization's Case for Support or Campaign Prospectus
   - The need for the campaign and donor support
   - Specific giving opportunities
   - The different ways to fund gifts

3. Consider what you know about the prospects you will be soliciting and develop strategies where appropriate (See prospect strategy worksheet):

   - What information will be compelling to them in terms of giving opportunities?
   - How might they be persuaded to give a larger gift or pledge than they have in the past?
   - Who should be part of the conversation? You may want to include someone from the development team or organization, or perhaps the spouse or financial advisor of the prospect.

4. Make an appointment:

   - Depending on how well you know the prospect, consider sending a letter on campaign letterhead first to establish your position as a volunteer for the campaign.
   - Follow up with a telephone call to set a face-to-face appointment (see sample scripts). Explain that you must deliver the campaign prospectus and supporting materials in person if possible.
   - If you have tried to connect via telephone and been unsuccessful, you may leave a message, send an email, or mail a handwritten note asking them to get back to you.

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Step 2: During your meeting

1. Establish rapport; build on past experiences, common friends or acquaintances, and shared interests.
2. Thank the donor for his or her past support if applicable.
3. Explain your role as a volunteer on behalf of _____________ and why you feel so strongly about the mission and the organization.
4. Ask open-ended questions and allow the prospect to voice his/her opinions and thoughts. This may give you a better understanding of his/her interests and areas of the campaign that will be of most interest. Use your listening skills at least as much as you use your talking skills. (“You have two ears, and one mouth. Use them in that proportion.” KAY SPRINKEL GRACE).
5. Make the case for support. Use the written/printed/draft case to guide the conversation. Always seek feedback from the prospect.
6. If you cannot answer a particular question, say you will get back to them with the answer. Be sure to ask your development office liaison to obtain the answer.
7. You may use this time to explain how you made your gift and for which campaign priority.
8. You may want to share stories of the impact of the charity and how it has helped and is helping meet needs.

Step 3: Closing the gift

1. Make the ask. Ask the prospect if he or she will consider a gift of $_________ to support the campaign.
2. If there is no immediate response, let silence fill the room.
3. Allow the prospect to be the next one to speak, no matter if it feels a bit uncomfortable.
4. Wait for the response:
   - **YES:** If your prospect agrees to support the campaign, provide him/her with the pledge card and return the completed card to the development office liaison. If the prospect does not wish to fill in the card immediately, accept the verbal pledge and report to your development office liaison to follow up to obtain the official pledge.
   - **MAYBE:** It is not unusual for someone to want time to think carefully before committing to a gift. If possible, obtain a second appointment to follow up before leaving. Otherwise, seek permission to follow up in a week or two.
   - **NO:** Thank the prospect for their time and consideration, and express the hope that they will consider a gift at another point in time.

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Step 4: After the solicitation

1. Report on progress/outcomes to your committee chair and development office liaison. Use the Campaign Volunteer Contact Report form to record:
   − The date of the contact
   − The response
   − Any gift commitment
   − Follow up required and anticipated date of follow up appointment or call
   − Notes and comments that are relevant to the gift, or the relationship between the prospect and the organization

2. Keep all information concerning the prospect and any information disclosed in conversation confidential.

3. Send a personal thank you note or email to your prospect, regardless of the outcome of the solicitation.
Appendix 4:
Social Media Guidelines: Ethical, Safe and Effective Practical Standards
The goal of AFP’s social media guidelines is to both provide fundraising professionals guidance on social media for their workplace and to establish guidelines for Organization leaders to use with their staff, consultants, volunteers, members, stakeholders and affiliated groups. This document also covers the conduct and expectations of the public when participating in an organization’s social media or social networking platforms.

Social media is an area that moves quickly and can be challenging, so it is important for Organizations such as AFP to provide resources for members and volunteer leaders. It’s also crucial to support the ethical guidelines that already exist with details and applications in the digital age. As the Organization that links all the different disciplines of fundraising, AFP is working to bring together all the various pieces of this puzzle and provide a comprehensive view of social media. Please access the full guidelines for the complete standards, guidelines and examples.

**Ethical, Safe and Effective Practical Standards**

**Organization and Affiliate Organization Staff, Consultants, Volunteers, Members and Stakeholders**

Organizations fully respect the legal rights of its employees, consultants, volunteers, members and stakeholders. In general, what a person does on their own time is their affair. However, activities in or outside of work that affect job performance, the performance of others, or Organization business interests are a proper focus for Organization policy. The following guiding principles apply to Organization and Affiliate Organization staff, consultants, volunteers, members and stakeholders who are asked to participate in social media as part of their job or Organization responsibilities, or who participate to advocate and advance professional fundraising interests and endeavors or personal interests related to charity and nonprofits. Failure to abide by these guidelines could put a person’s participation, employment and membership with the Organization or Affiliate Organization at risk.

1. Follow Appropriate Industry Laws and Guidelines
2. Be Informed and Interesting – and Listen
3. Always Be Respectful, and Be Polite When Disagreeing
4. Make Sure You Properly Attribute All Content
5. Be Responsive
6. Use Discretion At All Times
7. Transparency, Honesty, and Integrity Are Paramount
8. Don’t Mix Worlds—Know the Line Between Professional and Personal
9. Be Authorized and Official
10. Respond to Violations of Standards
Public (Non- Members/Non-Stakeholders)

By participating in Organization and Affiliate Organization social media (forums, discussions, blogs, etc.), public users agree they will not do the following:

1. Post material that the Organization or Affiliate Organization determines is threatening, harassing, illegal, obscene, defamatory, libelous, or hostile towards any individual or entity.

2. Post phone numbers or email addresses of yourself or any other individual or entity in the body of your comments.

3. Post material that infringes on the rights of the Organization or any individual or entity, including privacy, intellectual property or publication rights. This includes the improper use of (but is not limited to) images, logos, videos, content, documents, white papers, etc.

4. Post material that promotes or advertises a commercial product or solicits business or membership or financial or other support in any business, group or organization.

5. Post chain letters, post the same comment multiple times, or otherwise distribute SPAM.

6. Allow any other individual or entity to use your identification for posting or viewing comments.

7. Post comments under multiple names or using another person’s name.

If a user is found to be in violation of any of these Standards, Organizations and Affiliate Organizations reserve the right to: (a) Ban future posts from people who repeatedly violate the Organization’s terms and conditions. Such bans may be affected by refusing posts from specific email addresses or IP addresses, or through other means as necessary, and/or (b) Remove or edit comments at any time, whether or not they violate these terms and conditions.

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References


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