

# FUNDRAISING WHEN TIMES ARE BAD

## A SIMPLE CHECKLIST FOR NONPROFIT LEADERS

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- Create a strategic development plan** to drive your fundraising growth and operations. Answer these questions:
    - *Where are you now? (assessment)*
    - *Where do you want to go? (goals)*
    - *How are you going to get there? (core strategies)*
    - *How will you know you have arrived? (measurable objectives)*
  - Update your strategic development plan** by starting with the proximate.
    - Review specific and upcoming tasks and activities.
    - Consider these tasks in light of overall objectives and adjust longer-term goals accordingly.
    - Assess and identify the rippling effect and adjust revenue projections.
  - Revise (or create!) your gifts table** to adjust revenue projections and major donor plans.
  - Update (or create!) donor messaging templates** to reflect how your organization is addressing the challenging situation.
  - Reach out to every major donor** (individual and foundation) to share with them what your organization is doing to remain relevant and successful—and thank them for positioning your organization to weather this storm!
  - Review foundation donors' websites** to see updates to their giving and how they are responding to the situation. Reach out to them to update on your organization's activities and/or how the situation is affecting your execution of the grant terms.
  - Update (or create!) a planned giving page** on your website. Use donor-centric language inviting the donor to join their legacy with your mission to advance their goals for many generations more.
  - Update (or create!) your direct mail calendar** and adjust each mailing's talking points as necessary.
  - Send a housefile update** about how you are responding to the situation, and inviting them to partner with you in these efforts (if appropriate at the time).
  - Adjust your acquisition mailing plans:** continue renting lists, but shy away from testing new lists; re-engage lapsed donors, but not as deep in your file as you had planned.
  - Increase digital fundraising investment** and integrate messaging across all fundraising platforms—be sure to share positive stories. Apply quality over quantity approach.

- Recover revenue from cancelled events** by asking to repurpose sponsorship and ticket revenue—communicate 100% of contribution will now go to supporting mission.
- Move events online** if you have a captive audience who already supports your mission.
- Review your database for hygiene and usability.** Update as possible and necessary. Implement procedures and best practices to acquire and retain useful data.
- Overcommunicate with development staff**, checking in more regularly with them individually and as a team. Continually refine and communicate expectations that can be met. Adjust department goals and individual goals to be more realistic and to correspond to new plans and procedures.
- Stay truthful to your principles and faithful to your mission and people.**

