

Looking Ahead: Why it Makes Sense to Invest Now in Advancement

Client Advisory—June 2009

Hockey great Wayne Gretzky attributes his success on the ice to skating to where the puck is going to be, not where it is now.

Too many development shops are focused on where the economy is now. Last fall Bentz Whaley Flessner looked at where the economy was going to be and advised clients that budgets and gift levels would be difficult in the quarters ahead. We shared our insight in client advisories, spoke at conferences around the continent, and developed new campaign and annual giving strategies to help clients handle the toughest economy in a generation.

Now is the time to build your plan for the year ahead. Starting in July, we will be offering a new special series of webinars on *Preparing for 2010*. We will be looking at how to prepare development programs for the upcoming economic recovery and help you anticipate the right moves at the right time. Last summer, the development operations that only focused on today were caught unprepared during the downturn. Today, many development programs will find themselves unprepared for the recovery. Don't let the puck pass you by.

Making Investments Now

Universities across the continent are facing tough budget times, and development offices are scrambling. However, we believe 2010 will be a stronger year for philanthropy, and this fall is the time to renew efforts to reach out to key donors.

Now is the time to make your case to budget officers that any cuts need to be reviewed every quarter so you do not fall behind.

Now is the time to work with your foundation boards and other volunteers to get them ready for action in 2010.

Since cultivation of major gifts often take many visits over 12 to 27 months, you cannot afford to wait to gear up.

Making Investments in Prospecting

The tough economy has impacted every one of your donors. Some are seeing recovery underway, some are hopeful of better times in 2010, and others are badly wounded. On the reverse side, every economic upheaval results in a new group of wealth from those who were positioned to seize the moment.

Now is the time to sort your prospects by financial or business sector and reorder your calling priorities.

Making Investments in Building Strong Staff

One of the top programs for public university development officers is the Big Ten Fund Raisers Institute (you don't have to be at a Big Ten School to attend). Jerry May of Michigan, Rhea Turteltaub of UCLA, and Rod Kirsch of Penn State lead the program and are three of the best in the field.

For more information visit www.btfri.org. It's a great program and will include sessions on gearing up for the recovery ahead.