



# Succeeding Through Analytics

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After returning from the second annual APRA Symposium on Data Analytics, I am thrilled about the opportunities data strategies present in these times. The faculty presented the ways data mining and modeling has brought certainty among organizational uncertainty. Side conversations with many great research and advancement services professionals gave me a renewed sense of hope. The resounding theme was analytics was providing the road map to navigate through this challenging terrain.

How are these organizations succeeding with analytics? Here are three ways.

## 1. Identifying donors who are able and ready to give now.

Predictive modeling is an effective tool for producing pools of prospects by priorities, levels, and also readiness. By using these statistical tools, data miners can rank constituents by their likelihood to give despite the recession. I call these models, "Prospect Resiliency Models."

Bentz Whaley Flessner has built several prospect resiliency models for clients and taught the method to clients with in-house analytics staffing. By knowing who is still receptive to giving, organizations are more effective in deploying frontline fundraising staff.

## 2. Enhancing metrics and reporting to pinpoint risk before it becomes loss.

With the adoption of sophisticated statistical analysis tools, organizations are better able to understand how their fundraising programs are doing, the ways different departments interrelate, expected production levels, and most importantly, when a program is at risk before it becomes a problem.

I remember a data mining course I took ten years ago. My professor had designed a neural network housed in fighter jets predicting the likelihood of component malfunction. The pilot needed to know when something might stop working before it was too late. In fundraising, our lives may not be at risk; but our development programs might be losing altitude. Successful organizations view metrics as critical to staying on-course.

## 3. Bringing efficiency to fundraising operations and increasing output with frozen staffing numbers.

It is costly to send field staff out on discovery visits to constituents who will never give. The travel and opportunity costs are readily apparent to most development managers. It is also costly to conduct prospect research on many names just to have them sit in the database. A common rule of thumb you may hear is, "It takes four prospects to get one gift. And, it takes four leads to get one prospect." The rule of thumb indicates you will spend your resources to research and or qualify 16 people to get one major gift!

An analytics professional is drawn to a 16:1 ratio like a cat is to milk. Bringing efficiency to a process is a driving force for a data miner. By prequalifying names according to level, likelihood, and readiness, organizations using analytics review far fewer names and more effectively use their frontline and operations staff. This is but one of many efficiencies analytics is bringing to the fundraising process.

### DonorCast Analytics by Bentz Whaley Flessner

If you have questions about how you might use analytics to find your resilient donors, measure your program effectiveness, and increase the output of your staff, contact DonorCast, the analytics division of Bentz Whaley Flessner. We are proud of the many organizations we have served through our analytics services and guided in the implementation of in-house programs. You too can be successful through the strategic use of data.

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