

TIP SHEET FOR NONPROFITS

8 Things Successful Philanthropy Leaders are Doing Right Now

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Now is the time to have the courage to lead. Strengthen the relationships with those around you: your team, staff, donors, and board members. These people are looking to you. Your job is to find them, engage with them, and dream with them about what life could be.

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1

Put people first.

Now is not the time to lose a valuable team member. Despite facing increased costs and lost revenue, some leaders have chosen to give millions of dollars to support their employees.

Make sure you convey to employees that they are a valuable part of a team that will continue to move forward. Help your team set goals and identify metrics so they know they are doing a good job. Invest in their development through training, education, and challenges so they know cuts and sacrifices will pay off.

2

Show the relevancy of philanthropy.

As a leader, it is your job to ensure your CEO understands the value of philanthropy to the bottom line. That means speaking to the CEO about numbers - presenting the business case of philanthropy. While you have showed you are agile by stepping in to coordinate food deliveries and man the door, now is the time to reinforce the value of philanthropy and be very sure the CEO understands that your highest and best use is to safeguard philanthropy.



3

Push back when you can.

This gets to the essence of leadership. A lot of across-the-board cuts are occurring, but it doesn't always make sense to cut fund development. If philanthropy is a solid revenue source for your organization and your organization has made across-the-board cuts, consider challenging the cuts. Remind leadership that fundraising is a revenue center, not a cost center. But, if you haven't already been putting money on the table, it is a hard argument to make.

4

Connect meaningfully.

Many philanthropy leaders do a good job of managing up to C-suite, but don't develop good relationships laterally within their organization. Smart leaders build meaningful relationships with their different chief officers. Many nonprofit professionals faced burnout before this crisis and this crisis will likely make it worse. You can be a source of resilience for them.

5

Think big picture.

This is your chance to be a bold leader. How can your board of directors better impact your organization's mission? A board of directors should be comprised of leaders, not people who are honored to sit on the board. If you don't have the leaders you need on your board, now is the time to get them. Identify the type of leaders you need and begin to recruit their talent to support your mission.

Already have the right people? Consider adding a board management committee to work horizontally within the board to ensure it is functioning properly and members are held accountable. This is different from an executive committee, which works with executive leadership. This board committee can manage peers in a way that a staff member cannot.

6

Reimagine what could be.

Very few strategies are going to remain untouched. When you created your strategic plan, you made assumptions about the world you would be working in. That world has changed and your plans need to adapt. The American Hospital Association estimates COVID-19 could cost hospitals \$202 billion in three months. Leaders in all industries may be forced to make tough decisions. As a philanthropy leader, how will you innovate to help? Are there new opportunities you had not seen before? People give when you tug at their heartstrings. Fundraising letters should evoke emotion and appeal to the reader's beliefs and values. Use stories, graphics, and anecdotes to highlight the humanity of your campaign and the concrete difference you're making.



7

Rethink how things have always been done.

This is your chance to lead. As you look at your strategic plan, consider adjusting programs or policies considering changing times. Maybe now is the time to move away from perpetual naming rights. This could be an easier adjustment to make now that there is a wide understanding that organizations and environments change. Make the decision to cancel this year's time-consuming event that did not yield results, then re-evaluate next year. This one-year break could offer valuable insight you would not normally get.

8

Don't wait.

If you feel philanthropy is part of the financial solution for your organization – you must act. You must rise. Don't delay campaigns, donor engagement or major gift efforts. Don't wait for your board to assemble in-person. Continue pushing your mission forward and making philanthropy a sustainable revenue stream.

For more resources, visit ceplan.com/covid-19 or [watch the webinar](#) associated with this handout.

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