

The 'Beyond Cash' Fundraising Management Dashboard

This dashboard is designed to help nonprofit boards of directors achieve fundraising excellence year over year.

Each indicator is critical. However, if an organization prefers to implement this resource gradually, priority should be assigned from left to right, beginning with Retention Rate and ending with Future Commitment. *See reverse for additional information.*

Date Completed:

___/___/___

Month / Day / Year

Example Indicator	Retention Rate	Engagement Index	Median Gift Size	Non-Ask Ratio	New Donor Number	Brand Strength Rating	Future Commitment
GOAL							
CURRENT YEAR							
1 YEAR PRIOR 2 YEARS PRIOR							
<p>Enter your goal (e.g. %, #, \$) in the top box. Enter actual data for the current year and prior two years in the boxes below the goal.</p> <p>Below is an example of how that might look.</p>	Measures % of donors retained from prior year.	Determines % of new donors who report having learned of organization through an existing donor or volunteer.	Identifies dollar amount of median (not average) gift in total donor base.	Indicates ratio of non-ask contacts (e.g., gratitude, evidence of impact, or general warmth and kindness) to solicitation contacts.	Counts number of new donors introduced per year.	Reflects, in aggregate, the confidence of board and staff in the strength of the organization's brand – both internally and externally.	Quantifies gift commitments for future years – excluding current year.
<p>Example Indicator</p> <p>85%</p> <p>70%</p> <p>67% 68%</p>	<p>INSTRUCTIONS</p> <p>Calculate percentage of prior year's donors who gave in subsequent year (e.g., from 2008 to 2009).</p>	<p>INSTRUCTIONS</p> <p>Determine % who report being inspired by a volunteer or donor to initially make their gift or become involved with the organization.</p>	<p>INSTRUCTIONS</p> <p>Calculate median of all gifts per year. Do not confuse with mode or mean.</p> <p>See reverse for review of the distinction between mean, median and mode.</p>	<p>INSTRUCTIONS</p> <p>It is acceptable to set a goal ratio for non-ask contacts and use this as a benchmark, instead of measuring every single contact.</p>	<p>INSTRUCTIONS</p> <p>Count number of new donors added per year.</p>	<p>INSTRUCTIONS</p> <p>Twice a year, have all board and staff members answer the following: "On a scale of 1 to 10, how confident are you that we consistently & compellingly explain what we do and why we do it?"</p>	<p>INSTRUCTIONS</p> <p>List dollar amount of current pledges to become payable over the next three (or five) years.</p>
<p>FOR GREATER DEPTH</p> <p>Only after retention rate is adequately measured and managed, determine % of retained donors who increase, decrease or maintain gift size. Additionally, segmenting retention per gift range is very helpful.</p>	<p>FOR GREATER DEPTH</p> <p>Ask what inspired first-time donors to become involved or give. Identify whether the reasons change over time and build on these strengths in programming and marketing.</p>	<p>FOR GREATER DEPTH</p> <p>Set annual goals regarding increasing median gift size. Be conservatively ambitious.</p>	<p>FOR GREATER DEPTH</p> <p>Be creative, innovative and strategic with increasing quality contacts with donors that do not involve asking for money.</p>	<p>FOR GREATER DEPTH</p> <p>Segment new donor numbers for relevance – whether by gift size, geography, or program area.</p>	<p>FOR GREATER DEPTH</p> <p>Once a year, conduct an inventory to see how/if brand and marketing tools such as logo and messaging are used in materials, both on & off-line. Make them consistent.</p>	<p>FOR GREATER DEPTH</p> <p>Set goals regarding the number of additional pledges to be made annually – then measure and manage performance.</p>	

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Using the Dashboard as a Tool to Measure & Manage Fundraising Success

Nearly all nonprofit boards are responsible for monitoring and evaluating fundraising success. If asked: "How will we know if our fundraising activities are successful?" most boards will answer: "If we raise enough money to meet this year's budget goals."

But this seemingly obvious answer is ***misleading and risky***.

Any nonprofit board that focuses exclusively on "cash raised this year" places the organization at risk. (Hint: It is possible to raise a lot of money in one year while also alienating donors in the same year!) What may appear, in the short term, to be "success" might actually imperil the organization's ability to meet its goals in subsequent years.

This is why prudent boards measure fundraising success ***both in cash and 'beyond cash'***.

"How will we know if our fundraising activities are successful this year?"



"We meet our cash and 'beyond cash' goals."

How To Use the Dashboard Indicators & Best Practices

This dashboard has been designed specifically for internal benchmarking (like "competing with yourself" in a sport). The best practices illustrated here are to measure the right things, then improve—not to reach a contrived number. The single exception to this is Retention Rate. For extensive information on best practices in donor retention, contact the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

Retention Rate:

A falling retention rate is the clearest sign of trouble. 80% retention is high, 70% is fairly strong, and 60% needs improvement. The "industry standard" is shamefully low, so it won't help you. Instead, be a leader and foster high retention rates!

Engagement Index:

The surest signal of engaged donors is that they share your story and inspire others. Word-of-mouth is the most effective (and least expensive!) form of marketing.

Median Gift Size:

Mean is "average." Mode is "the number given most often." Median is the point where 50% of donors are above and 50% are below. If an unusually large gift comes in, "average gift size" goes up disproportionately, but "median gift size" does not.

Non-Ask Ratio:

Words to the wise: Fundraising is not about money—it is about relationships with people who make decisions about money. Be smart.

New Donor Number:

Internal benchmarking is what matters. The number will vary with every organization, size and mission. Just make sure it goes up!

Brand Strength Rating:

Brand is about much more than a logo! When used to its fullest, it can be a powerful management tool. Having messaging that is compelling, consistent and clear is a critical step toward having "brand confident" board and staff.

Future Commitment:

The most important fundraising work this year should bear fruit in future years. Cash received this year is largely the result of prior years' work. Aspire to start each year with at least 51% of the goal already committed!