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# Fundraising in Uncertain Times

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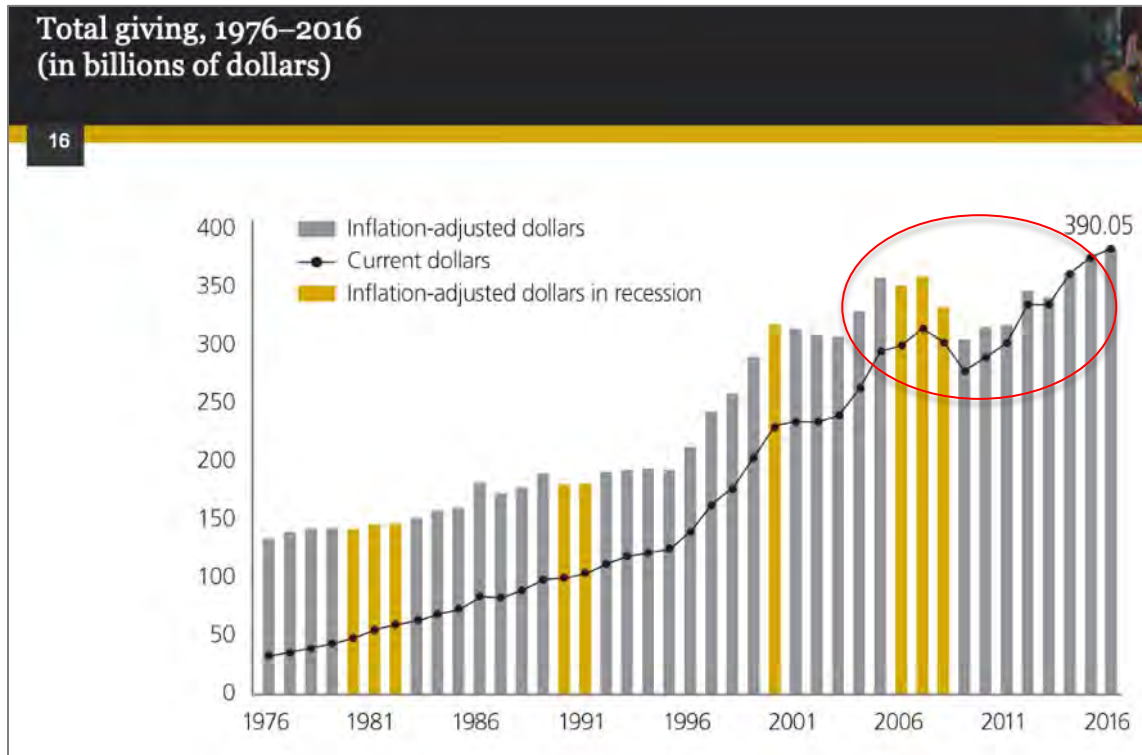


Lora Dow



# LEARNING FROM THE PAST

Giving decreased by 3.7% in 2008 & 8.3% in 2009



But the decline was short-lived and did not impact everyone.

Source: Giving USA



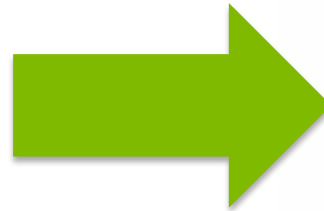
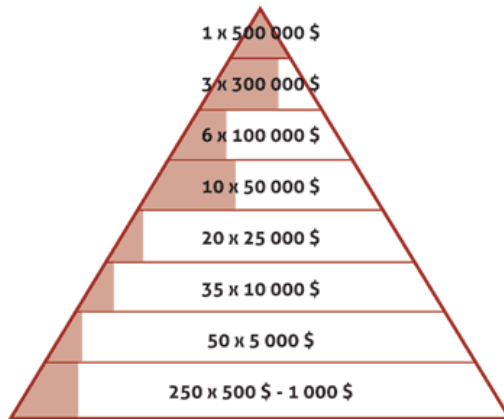
# LEARNING FROM THE PAST

Organizations that pulled back and stopped soliciting after 9/11 and the 2008 recession took *years* to recover from their losses

Organizations that continued to solicit their donors with messages of need and impact emerged stronger and healthier.

# LEARNING FROM THE PAST

The donor pyramid was pinched in the middle.



# WHAT'S DIFFERENT TODAY?

- **Foundations are better able to respond**  
They acknowledge need for operating support and are better prepared to quickly pivot in extraordinary times
- **The rise of Donor Advised Funds**  
2018 DAFs contributions: \$37.12 billion
- **Technology**  
So many different ways to communicate and connect.



# WHAT WE LEARNED

- Relationships matter most

Consistent, transparent communications, and heartfelt stewardship keep and deepen those relationships.

- Don't make their giving decisions for them

The impact of the volatility in the economy does not affect all equally.

- Contingency plans help you operate from a place of confidence.



# TODAY

- **Gratitude goes far.**

Extend genuine and heartfelt thanks and interest in how donors, members, friends and volunteers are coping.

- **Don't take anyone for granted.**

Go out of your way to pick up the phone, hand write notes, hold a video chat.







## TO DO

1. Identify your donors who have activated DAFs
2. Identify foundations in your community who may have shifted focus during this difficult time

# MAJOR GIFTS



# DONOR DISCUSSION FRAMEWORK

FIRST, CONNECT: *How are you?*

BE PERSONAL: When they ask how you are, answer for yourself first.

IF THEY ASK  
*"How's the Y?"*

Have an answer. Share the positive and the challenging news. Pivot to your better case/story.  
Urgent, simple, fundable.



# PIVOT YOUR CASE

What is your concise, refocused case?

- What activities do you need to support *today*?  
(i.e. Child Care, Community Care, Staff Care)
- What support do you need to stabilize and sustain your Y *in the near term*?
- Be ready to *pivot again* as needed





# TO DO

1. ID who's "in the tent" and who's around the fire. Connect with each of those people often over the next weeks and months.
2. Keep sharing your pivoted case.

# ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN

- Your campaign has changed.
  - Timing
  - Case
  - Goal
- Your volunteers have a new role.
  - Information ambassadors to your mid-level donors
  - Sharing pivoted case messages
  - Spreading the word through social media



# ANNUAL GIVING IN 2020

- Y Work is Local
- Engage event sponsors and donors
  - Donate ticket or outing fees?
  - Allow us to use their gifts for areas of greatest need?
- The rest of the year will be different too.
  - Modify “Send a kid to camp” appeal when you can
  - What will be the financial assistance needs once your Y re-opens?
- These changes aren’t forever.





# TO DO

1. Consider pushing your campaign to fall.
  - But use direct response (digital and mail) in the meantime.
2. Revisit established goals and campaign timelines. Make sure to keep staff and volunteers in the loop.



# COMMUNICATING WITH DONORS

## Disaster/Crisis Fundraising

Communicate often

Focus on area of greatest need

Share good news, but also share need

Let people know how they can help

Repeat, repeat, repeat



# THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB

- **CALL** those donors that are in the tent and around the campfire
- **EMAIL** the people who have supported you in the past
  - Multiple messages
  - Stewardship, information AND asks
- Consider **DIRECT MAIL** to current/former donors 55+
- Use **SOCIAL MEDIA** for everyone else
- **MATCHING** gifts work





# TO DO

1. Create your donor communication plan. Change it as needed.
2. Execute on that plan.

# ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP



We learned and got better after 9/11 and 2008.

We got better at telling our Y story over the past few years.

This is an opportunity to talk about your Y's impact in an entirely new way.

Philanthropy is alive and well during a crisis, but you have to communicate, and you have to ask.



# YOUR TO-DO LIST

1. ID your donors who have activated DAFs
2. ID foundations in your community who may have shifted focus during this difficult time
3. ID who's "in the tent" and connect with each of them
4. Keep sharing your pivoted case
5. Consider pushing your campaign to fall.
6. Revisit campaign goals and timelines. Keep staff and volunteers in the loop.
7. Create your donor communication plan. Change it as needed.
8. Execute on that plan.



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