



Engaging with Alumni and Donors during a crisis

Small steps that will have a big impact

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Uncertainty but also opportunity

Fundraising, alumni relations and community engagement have all changed under COVID 19. The pandemic has impacted the lives and livelihoods of everyone in our community in some way.

Charities, schools and universities have all had to rethink existing strategies and pivot towards the fundraising and engagement opportunities that are available to them.

Even with so much uncertainty and disruption, there is some good news for fundraising ...

- Will writing in New Zealand is up 30%
- Substantial gifts are being made by both individuals and corporates
- Your donors and alumni want to hear from you.

Key takeaways from today...

- DO engage in some way
- SHARE relevant stories about your school or university
- DECIDE what to do regarding your existing fundraising and engagement programmes
- If you have a genuine need, continue to ASK for donations
- DEVELOP new ways of connecting with your community (with an emphasis on digital)

Alumni and Donors at this time



- Pre-occupation with other issues (health, business, family stress etc)
- Concern for fundamental values (will-writing is up 30%)
- Inability to meet in person
- Financial deterioration or uncertainty
- Many are available (no one is travelling)
- Many have time to talk

Engage

- Phone
- Email
- Virtual event

Engage: post-isolation



Share

- What is happening at your school or university right now?
- How is your school or university responding to COVID-19?
- Do you have any success stories at this time?

Deciding what to do: delay or cancel



- ❑ If you are Director of Development at a school, recognise that the Principal will continue to be very busy, so develop an ally on the board and with a career-minded Deputy Principal
- ❑ Consider the impact on individual constituencies within your donor or prospect pool, and on the donors and prospects who have individualised plans
- ❑ Test where you can; send first to a small number and note response
- ❑ Take a traffic light approach; here are some example of traffic light assessments ...

Deciding what to do, delay or cancel



RED LIGHT (never waste a crisis)

- Take the opportunity to cancel and bury unproductive fundraising events or community engagement activities.
- Pause that Foundation if it is not working well; prepare for renewal or wind-up

Deciding what to do: delay or cancel



ORANGE LIGHT (delay with explanation)

- If you have vacant positions in development/alumni relations, don't lose the roles.
- If you have active programmes, like a campaign or feasibility study, continue where you can, and explain delay where this is needed
- Use this time to improve information management, develop cases for support, do prospect research
- Check your website, make sure it tells the role of philanthropy in the founding and development of the school or university
- Build your on-line giving facility if you don't have one.

Deciding what to do, delay or cancel



GREEN LIGHT

- Keep momentum on as many programmes as possible
- Ask for something, keep as many people giving as possible (keep the habit), but make sure each request is honest and authentic (that you really need the money, and will use it as intended).
- Keep active communications with key donors and prospects.
- Take opportunity to develop new community engagement events that suit the modern era and provide a virtual option
- Start a former staff programme if you don't already have one

Develop new ways of connecting

- Your school or university will have its own unique opportunities to engage. Opportunities could include:
- Create a virtual event where staff and students provide some tips and encourage alumni to keep fit at home. This can easily be turned into a fundraising event if appropriate.
- Invitation for alumni to attend a virtual meeting with a guest speaker on a relevant topic
- Are your alumni or donors interested in the science of COVID-19? Host a webinar using the expertise of your science teaching staff and students if possible.

Remember the key takeaways...

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AskRIGHT services

- Fundraising Review & Strategy
- Coaching & Training
- Campaign Feasibility & Preparation
- Campaign Management
- Fundraising Recruitment
- Interim Services
- Prospect Research (e.g. Residential Real Estate Valuation)

Thank you



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