

MAKE THIS TIME MATTER

As we all adjust to the surreal situation of working from home with kids and pets scrambling around in the background, we have to figure out how to make this time matter. This is not a vacation. There is still lots of work to be done. So, how do we avoid getting sucked into apathy or resignation that we have to wait this out to start making a difference again? It's time to make a plan for continued impact. Here are a few opportunities:

- 1 Keep Donor Contacts Up.** You already know this, but your communication during a crisis matters. Commit to making calls to at least three donors per day. Honestly, they need to know what's going on and how they can help. They are also similarly stuck at home and might be grateful to take a break from the monotony of social isolation.
- 2 Catch Up on Professional Reading.** You know all those great trade magazines and business books that have been piling up on the corner of your desk or your bedside table? Dust them

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off, and start making a dent on getting them read. Take notes on excellent ideas that could elevate your work. You can also use this as a way to bring your team together by finding a book to read together and then discuss.

- 3 Call Board Members.** This is a great time for both professional and personal connection with your board leadership. Check in with them to update them on what is going on at the hospital and to find out how they are faring.
- 4 Dust Off Your Strategic Plan.** Too often, reviewing and updating the living document that is our strategic plan falls by the wayside due to the hectic nature of the day-to-day.

However, this is a great time to pull out your document, see where you are relative to your objectives, consider what key assumptions have changed and update your plan to reflect new objectives, opportunities and obstacles. There are also great ways to engage with your team, board and others around strategic planning and visioning even while working remotely, and doing so is a great way to simultaneously collaborate around building the roadmap for moving forward and to take control of your shared future while you are physically apart.

5 Provide Professional Development. Bringing the team or board together over an electronic platform for professional education during this time has a variety of benefits. Not only does coming together for education and discussion affirm a sense of “we” when folks miss being together, but it also provides an opportunity to ramp up skills, affirm a shared commitment to best practices or explore new ideas. There are also lots of content providers—from associations to consulting firms—that can provide access to a custom, video-based, learning experience for your philanthropy team, board or allies.

6 Review Your Portfolio. Progressive organizations are shrinking portfolio sizes to prioritize quality over quantity. However, there’s often not enough time to really review your portfolio. Take the time to evaluate affinity, ability, likelihood of giving, area of interest, potential allies and more to see if you should reprioritize your efforts.

7 Undertake a Program Assessment. Most organizations have ready access to programmatic and performance data even on a remote basis. So, this is a great time to look

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at financial returns, ROI, donor acquisition, donor engagement, public relations value and more for each individual programmatic effort. In a time when resources are increasingly constrained, use this time to determine what efforts should be expanded, eliminated or evaluated further.

8 Update Thank You Letters. Many organizations do a poor job keeping this fundamental piece of communication up to date. Look through your letters to see if they are fresh, resonant and reflective of your current vision. See if you have the right letters to segment responses based on the fund.

9 Reaffirm Professional Goals. The slowed pace is a good time for a solid self-assessment. What professional strengths should you be building upon? What do you need to strengthen or improve? What in your work life gives you joy that is worth pursuing? What are those opportunities or experiences you need to advance in your career? If you want to get serious about mapping a plan, there is also value to finding an executive coach who can help you outline and navigate a path forward.

While the world of work will be altered for the foreseeable future, it is still a great time to make headway on valuable efforts. Our missions also demand we take this time to continue to push forward despite the challenges.

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