

DOWNTURN GUIDELINES

In October 2008, The Resource Alliance and The Management Centre, an international consulting firm, developed a survey report which suggested these guidelines and tips for non-profits during a downturn.



The strategic and tactical decisions made by charities will have more influence on their fortunes than the recession itself. Charities have more control than they think they do, so long as they focus on the fundamentals of their programmes. Do not panic and focus on the long-term.



Board members and senior management need to understand the current financial data and stop making unrealistic expectations.



Work like a for-profit organisation and accept reduced short-term growth in service expenditures to gain increased long-term growth.



Develop messages, themes and scripts around why you need your donors now more than ever, and offer downgrading or payment holidays for donors who might otherwise not give or cancel their gifts.



Strengthen current partnerships to weather the storm rather than look for new ones. Look at what you do best and focus on that before trying a new tactic. Examine where your money comes from and concentrate on high-yield activities.



Focus on the big areas—regular giving and major gifts. Drop all other marginal or unprofitable activities that won't provide significant long-term benefits.



Invest time, intelligence and money in massively improving the donor experience with the charity. Remind donors that they are wanted, needed and appreciated.

The survey was conducted online last April, with respondents from North America, Asia, Europe, Africa, Australia and the Middle East. A total of 94 out of 100 fundraisers responded. Care was taken to avoid any American or European bias. For more information, visit the Association of Fundraising Professionals' website: www.afpnet.org.

The Management Centre is a global management consulting firm working exclusively with nonprofits with offices in the UK, USA, Australia, Singapore, Brazil and Mexico.

The Resource Alliance is a UK-registered charity whose mission is to build fundraising capabilities of the nonprofit sector worldwide.