

To find your fundraising identity in the current philanthropic landscape it is important to **conduct both a brief internal and external analysis** before creating new messages and strategies. To begin, ask the following questions across several different stakeholders groups.

We suggest starting by:

Connecting to 2 stakeholders in each constituency for a one-on-one interview.

- Major gifts / individual giving
- Foundations
- Corporate partners
- Program team

Sample questions to ask each:

- Major gifts / individual giving
 - What issues are you most concerned about this year?
 - What activities would you most enjoy participating in?
 - Do you plan to renew your gift this year? Fundraise for us? Support our events? Why or why not?
 - What element of our work most excites you? How can we keep you effectively updated on that?
- Foundations
 - What are your strategic priorities this year?
 - What issues intersect with your strategic priorities?
 - Do you foresee any new grantmaking initiatives this year?
 - What conferences / affiliations / networks are you a part of this year?
 - Are we able to reapply this year? Can you open doors for us? Support our events? Why or why not?
- Corporate partners
 - What are your business and/or social impact goals this year?
 - What issues intersect with your business/ social impact goals?
 - Do you foresee any new grantmaking initiatives or employee-campaigns this year?
 - What conferences / affiliations / networks are you a part of this year?
 - Would you be willing to grant/ sponsor this year again? Can you open doors for us? Support our events? Why or why not?

- Program team
 - What is the conversation we have to have with donors this year?
 - What issues / causes connect and/or intersect with that conversation?
 - Do you foresee any new initiatives or needs this year?
 - What organizations / conferences / affiliations / networks will we be collaborating with this year?
 - Are there any missed opportunities for funding and/or new relationships that surround our programmatic work?

Take this feedback and map any themes, trends, or clear shifts that need to happen within your existing development strategy.

Example: Individual donors and corporate donors mentioned they really want more in-person events and offerings this year, as well as a deeper connection to the vision/mission. Our current plan only has one in-person event planned due to minimal staff.

Pivot Strategy: Give individual donors the 'mic' by inviting them to design their own IG LIVE discussion, sharing specific stories that connect them and/or their communities to our vision/mission. Have them invite their friends and other mission supporters within their area. Encourage them to fundraise via a personal crowdfunding page we set up and/or via IG itself. Encourage corporate partners to do the same within their employee base.

Then, look to top publications to identify national and international trends such as:

- Inside Philanthropy
- Chronicle on Philanthropy
- Nonprofit Quarterly
- Devex

Sample questions to consider as you read:

- Where is there 'new' money?
- What are donors doing differently?
- Who are the leaders to connect with?
- Where are there new networks or affinity groups of funders to connect with?
- What are other fundraisers learning in our space?

Local trends can be found by connecting with:

- Local community foundation(s)
- Local nonprofit network(s)
- Local chamber of commerce

Sample questions:

- What are donors' strategic priorities this year?
- What intersections of issues are priorities for donors this year?
- Would certain funders 'hire' you for something or grant it?
- Do you foresee any new grantmaking initiatives this year?
- What conferences / affiliations / networks are you a part of this year?
- Are we able to reapply this year? Can you open doors for us? Support our events?

With this feedback, look for trends around:

- Funder behavior
- Profitable industries
- Community activities / conversations
- Leadership

Consider the following when creating your new messages to accompany these strategy pivots:

- Who are you becoming as an organization and what are you doing this year to move closer to that vision? Why should people care? **Why do current supporters care? What do they care about the most this year?**
- **What makes your organization unique and different** to every other cause asking for donations? **What makes it complimentary?**
- What causes are you supporting and why is it so important? What or **who are you serving and how are their lives different due to your work?**
- **What do you need the donations for?** What will you do with them? What can't you do without them?



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