

# Reinvigorate Your Strategic Planning with Data

At their most powerful, data and analytics are a “big picture” tool and an important part of leading organizations and teams to next-level success. As you evaluate plans and possibilities, keep last year’s plan on the shelf and make your data front and center. Take a fresh look and see where it leads.

Use the data to understand your organization’s potential for new and increased giving, new strategies that are more likely to be successful than others, and to consider the opportunity to save resources in some areas and reinvest them in other initiatives.

## 1 What is your organizational capacity for aspirational fundraising goals?

Just because your leadership wants your team to raise 20% more this year doesn’t mean it is likely – or even possible. Analytics can help identify the capacity of your existing database in the near-term and may even show additional potential within two or three years – especially if you’re considering new fundraising strategies. Beyond that, it can help inform your action plan. When you have the data behind you, it is much easier to have this discussion with your leadership – or any other stakeholder. Conversely, your data may reveal a great deal of untapped potential and your planning can focus on bringing it to life.

## 2 How can you communicate with stakeholders the value philanthropy brings to the financial health of the larger organization?

Fundraising has a much larger return on investment than service line revenue. \$10 million in philanthropy is equal to a net patient revenue of \$330 million at an operating margin of 3% ([see the comparison](#)). Help leadership at your hospital or health system understand this value by communicating things like revenues, projections, and forecasts for fundraising. Using your organization’s data, you can speak the same language to lay out how you will reach your goals and increase philanthropic investment toward a healthier bottom line.

## 3 What are areas for strategic growth?

Rank your revenue sources based on their level of untapped potential for things like upgraded giving, giving to newly important initiatives, retention of first-time donors – whatever is most important to highlight opportunities for significant growth. Make sure to take into account donors who are new to your organization, perhaps as the result of COVID – for retention or increased giving! Beyond that, there are also many donors,

like event participants, who may be ready to give in new and different ways. Have you considered their untapped potential?

Recommit to relationships with your peers. Benchmark your organization against similar-size peers (consider the [Blackbaud Healthcare Philanthropic Index](#)). Building a “brain trust” inside—and outside—of your organization will help everyone learn in a dynamic environment.

#### 4 Which activities are worthy of investment?

Look at the total dollars raised (net) of your organization’s activities alongside the investment required to realize those donations. Rank each activity based on the staff time and effort the activity requires, then assess your list. You want to put your effort into the activities with the biggest return on investment. When you can show the data behind the decision, it will be much easier to reallocate time and effort – and you will raise more money!

#### 5 Do you have an accurate revenue forecast?

A revenue forecast is key to getting buy-in from leadership, establishing goals, and navigating change. Using your pipeline as a revenue forecast is a well-managed, well-informed approach that drives outcomes and results. Proposals within your CRM can serve as a [planning tool](#) to ensure staff are investing time and talent on strategic activity that produces results. You can see trends and identify issues with plenty of time to make corrections. Leverage what you know about rolling averages for renewal rates and donor attrition, average gift sizes, and other internal benchmarks—alongside analytics—to further refine your approach. For example, if you know your organization is typically successful closing half of the major gift solicitations you propose in a year, that’s an important layer for this exercise.

Request a free opportunity analysis to identify your organization’s untapped potential.

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