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TIP SHEET

10 Scalability Tips Your Small Nonprofit Can Steal from the Big Shops

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Your growing nonprofit has something in common with the largest philanthropic organizations in the world: Whether it oversees thousands of dollars in donations or tens of millions, two staffers or 200, every social-good enterprise is looking for an easy-to-use platform that makes managing fundraising and finances simple. But just because you have software like the industry leaders doesn't mean you are using it as effectively as possible.

By taking advantage of the tools already at your fingertips, your lean nonprofit can create efficient and scalable processes that rival the industry's top players. Adopting even a few of these techniques, you'll leapfrog the growing pains top-tier organizations had to experience and use technology to achieve your mission goals that much faster. Let's get started!

1 Make the right ask.

Top-performing gift officers don't leave money on the table. Like them, your lean team can use data insights to pinpoint the ideal ask of each prospect—not too much, not too little.

- **Apply it to your nonprofit:** Your system might offer analytics capable of producing multidimensional insights about your prospects, including wealth, spending, giving history, and affinity for your cause. Use your system's smart recommendation functions to eliminate guesswork for target gift amounts.

2 Identify and cultivate major donors.

You're not too small to raise major gifts. Predictive modeling—now both user-friendly and affordable for growing organizations—can help you identify and nurture donors who have the means and motivation to give big to your cause.

- **Apply it to your nonprofit:** Follow in the footsteps of powerhouse fundraisers (who know that 40% of $1,000 donors end up making a gift of $10,000-$50,000) by using your platform to find and cultivate annual giving donors well-qualified to move into major gifts.

3 Use your platform, not your people, to store institutional knowledge.

If your growing nonprofit relies on your director's memory, staff intuition, or sticky notes as its knowledge source, it's time to copy the big shops by creating a fail-safe documentation process that is accessible to current and future stakeholders and employees..

- **Apply it to your nonprofit**: Develop and share standard operating procedures for your processes, everything from onboarding volunteers to applying for grants, as well as detailed donor interactions in your CRM, such as "email only–no calls!"

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Customize your apps and automation flows.

Just because you're a lean organization, your processes don't have to conform to what your technology can do, instead of what you want it to do. Become your own developer with no-code and low-code customizations using innate system integrations and outside integrations, such as Microsoft Power Platform and Power BI.

- **Apply it to your nonprofit**: Explore templates from a community of non-developer problem-solvers building custom applications for their nonprofits, then learn to make your own. Examples: daily gift digest notifications and upcoming opportunity alerts.

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Provide timely access to reports.

Give your stakeholders view-only access to reports for just-in-time data about fund balances, grant application status, and campaign goals.

- **Apply it to your nonprofit**: Identify the reports critical for your stakeholders—new donor report, top donor list, grant tracking, volunteer hours—and run them each month or once a quarter to anticipate concerns, reinforce the impact of your efforts, or make the case for additional resources.

6

Create a standardized coding system.

Large nonprofits establish a common language around their impact areas, donation types, and fundraising channels to create consistent communication across the organization.

- **Apply it to your nonprofit**: Document your coding system in your internal controls procedures, eliminating confusion in compliance (and the need for conversion tables when development and finance share reports).

7

Use a scalable coding matrix designed to expand.

Big shops call their coding system a fund matrix, but you can think of yours as a library system with endless shelves. Each donation is assigned a call number for its type or segment, like a book coded to its shelf location (for instance, you might use the 20s for your Research Programs.)

- **Apply it to your nonprofit**: Standardize your coding to take away the guesswork and segment your coding to leave room to scale as your foundation or nonprofit grows, helping to organize future impact areas, regions, and programs.
- **Want to learn more** about setting up your fund segments in the CRM for nonprofits, Blackbaud Raiser's Edge NXT? Check out this whitepaper in the Blackbaud user community. It's free to sign up and you'll gain access to great resources and tips from other nonprofit professionals.

8

Churn your portfolio.

Optimize your portfolio management like the big-name operations, adding and deleting prospects and assigning them to a fundraiser on a regular cadence.

- **Apply it to your nonprofit**: Automatically flag low-likelihood prospects into prioritized queues and assign qualified prospects as they surface to accelerate the identification and cultivation of your best potential donors.

9

Automate your approval processes.

Like the world's biggest charitable organizations, yours needs technology to maximize efficiency. Save time (and avoid annoying emails) by having the system route and manage approvals for expenses, grant applications, and incoming requests.

- **Apply it to your nonprofit**: Set up rules and conditions to automate responses from the system. Example: an expense exceeding $500 will trigger a notification that two approvals are required.

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Make gift-giving effortless.

Big-budget nonprofits know that charitable giving must be as simple as possible for donors, or they'll move on to a better giving experience.

- **Apply it to your nonprofit**: Use every tool at your disposal to take the hassle out of donating. Adopt easy-to-use innovations, such as text, multiple payment options, mobile-friendly interfaces, suggested gift amounts, and automated recurring gifts.

Blackbaud's free *Nonprofit CRM Evaluation Guide* gives you invaluable insights about choosing the best technology for your organization's needs today and as you scale.

Download guide