

FUNDRAISING RESOURCES

[Meyer Memorial Trust: Information for Grantseekers](http://www.mmt.org/support_for_grantseekers/what_we_look_for/)

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Fundraising in a Recession

7 Fundraising Tips to Help Nonprofits Weather the Recession

By [Joanne Fritz](#), About.com

Yes, we agree that "desperate times require desperate measures," but we also like the saying, "don't let them see you sweat." Marc A. Pitman, author of [Ask Without Fear!](#), has [written](#) that fundraisers need to **avoid these "deadly" mistakes** during a recession:

- spend less on fundraising
- become pessimistic
- apologize when you're asking

In that spirit we offer these suggestions:

1. Don't become or sound desperate.

Instead, emphasize to your donors that every year, good or bad, your needs continue. Don't talk about grand plans for expansion, but do talk about solid plans for today. Don't lose your enthusiasm and optimism about your cause. Donors will notice and pull back if they think that you, the fundraiser, has doubts.

If your organization is in human services and the need for those services increases during a recession, let the public know. Emphasize that your organization's survival is crucial because of the clients you serve. Tell your client's [stories](#) but not in a desperate way that demeans them. Show their strength in the face of diversity and invite your supporters to help them.

2. Prove that you are responsible.

Let your donors know that you are doing your part by being [fiscally responsible](#). [Cut costs](#) where you can, make sure you have good controls in place, and that you are examining marginal programs for possible deletion. Keep your money safe by making sure it is in FDIC insured banks. Avoid non-insured investments.

3. Don't give up on your corporate and cause-marketing activities.

Gifts may decrease, but keep your [corporate](#) contacts strong. It is very hard to get back on the corporate charitable list if you are dropped. Avoid this by staying visible, and keep cultivating your contacts within the company. Likewise, don't give up on [cause-related marketing](#). Companies are finding that these activities [pay off for them](#) with consumer loyalty.

Remember too that just because a company's stock price has been depressed doesn't mean that it is not a strong company. Look at the balance sheet to identify companies that are in a good position, and that will likely come back strong from the economic meltdown.

4. Diversify your funding sources by identifying all types of financial support.

Avoid depending on one or two major donors or [foundations](#). Most charitable giving is made up of small donations. If you are not doing direct mail to a large base of supporters, start working toward doing so.

[Use the Internet](#) to reach more people. The cost is low so that donations can be smaller. Those add up quickly. Explore [payment options](#) with low transaction costs and [online donation sites](#).

[More Info](#)

5. Put your fundraising programs under the microscope.

Determine which fundraising programs work best and are the most efficient in terms of resources. Then cut the least efficient ones and shift those resources to the ones that are doing the most good.

Maybe that big [special event](#) eats up precious time and resources for very little return. Or the [product sale](#) you started last year just doesn't seem worth the time and effort. But, don't let the money and volunteer time you use in those efforts just dissipate. Put them to use by expanding the [annual campaign](#) or making more [major donor](#) calls or doing another [planned giving](#) seminar.

6. Don't pull the plug on major campaigns, but do slow down.

If you were starting a [capital campaign](#) (or [endowment campaign](#)) when the economic crisis hit, don't stop. But do slow down. Recognize that getting those lead gifts in the size you want will take longer and be dependent on how the economy is doing.

If you ask for a multi-year gift, and the donor resists, fall back to asking for part of that gift now, and plan to go back later for the rest. Donors are understandably shy about making long-term commitments in this economic environment.

7. Keep up your marketing and PR.

Building buzz about your good work will help you with your donors. The more they know and see your name about, the more likely they are to contribute to your cause. Got PR professionals on your board or committees? Seek their advice before you launch anything big. Let them organize a PR/Marketing Committee that might bring in other professionals to help. See if their firms can do pro bono work or work at a discount. This kind of help is really priceless.

Thinking Broadly: Financing Strategies for Youth

http://www.financeproject.org/publications/Thinkingbroadly_PM.pdf

For youth programs to succeed, policymakers, program leaders, and intermediary organizations need resources and strategies to support quality programs over time.
Thinking Broadly: Financing Strategies for Youth Programs is an important addition to The

Finance Project's research on financing and sustaining supports and services for children, youth, and families. This strategy brief presents a typology of approaches for financing youth programs. It suggests general principles to guide the selection of financing strategies based on the complexities and unique aspects of youth programs. It also provides considerations to help state and local leaders develop financing plans that closely align with their program goals, available resources, and the political and economic environments in which they work.