

Break It Down: PLANNING AHEAD

The rules of the road in nearly every challenging or crisis situation are first, never stop communicating, and next, never stop fundraising.

That doesn't mean that you continue blindly moving forward with plans that were likely crafted months, or perhaps more than a year ago. It does mean that you take a thoughtful and strategic step back to consider what the strongest plan forward is in this current environment.

What does this mean?

YES:

- ✓ Send your monthly renewals and e-renewals on time. Make sure the content and tone matches the reality of today.
- ✓ Send your fiscal year-end direct mail and email. You have a strong case to be made right now as to the value of PBS, your station, and the vital programs and services you offer. Don't shy away from it.
- ✓ Continue with telemarketing until you find indications that it is not working, or donors are not receiving it well.
- ✓ Consider the strongest sustainer strategy, within the context of your program.
- ✓ Seek any new ways that you can regularly communicate your value in this time to your donors outside of fundraising appeals to warm them up even further for a positive response when your appeal arrives.
- ✓ Create new impact and proof of performance spots for your air that are relevant to today.

PAUSE:

Consider carefully your lists for direct mail. Response is likely to be down, potentially as much as 20% or more, depending on how the situation evolves and how uncertain donors feel about the economy and their finances. Keep your additional gift strong, because this is pure cash in the door. This is the time, however, to be cautious about lapsed and acquisition lists. Consider lowering planned quantities to mail only to the most responsive segments in an effort to shore up your net revenue while still remaining in front of your best prospects.

REPROJECT:

Once your optimum plan is devised for the next several months, adjust any projections based on changes you have made, and on the expectation that results will be lower than you had originally planned.

COMMUNICATE:

This is likely to be an extremely tense and trying time for many organizations as it will put organizations into fiscal difficulty and/or crisis. Clear, early, and regular communication with leadership and finance teams is of the utmost importance to ensure that all parties are on the same page as to the move-forward plan. Likewise, it is essential for leaders and finance teams to understand the true revenue implications in order to make wider plans for your organization as it moves through and beyond the crisis.