

Five ways to integrate fund-development consultants for success

Many nonprofit organizations have already experienced the benefits of hiring a consultant like Thurlow/Associates to help expand their capacity and promote success. As you plan for the year ahead, are you anticipating the need for outside expertise. Here are just a few of the times when consultants can help:

During a transition. Rather than hire new executive leadership, more organizations are retaining an outside expert for an interim period before hiring the next incumbent. The interim leader plays an important role in conducting an internal assessment, which in turn allows the organization to identify what skills and expertise will be needed to achieve *future goals* — rather than simply hiring a carbon-copy of the prior staff member. Your consultant can also help address issues that would otherwise impact an incoming staff member's success — and can help ensure a speedy transition.

When you're succession planning. Even more forward-thinking organizations may choose to engage a consultant to plan ahead for senior staff transitions. (You know it's inevitable that senior staff will eventually leave, right?) Planning ahead gives the organization an opportunity to build existing bench strength, provides time for more thoughtful planning around transition and growth, and allows you to dream big. Think organizational transformation versus crisis-mode!

When you require expertise...but not full time. Are you starting an individual giving program, but you're not yet ready to hire full-time gift officers? Do you have special projects that don't require year-round staffing — such as annual reports or other publications, complex funding requests, or staff/board development? An outside consultant can lend expertise on a temporary basis, leading to higher-quality outcomes and potential cost savings.

When you need clear assessment and direction. Perhaps you know your fund-development function needs to be stronger, but you're not sure which areas have the greatest upside potential, or which require additional capacity building. Or perhaps you're considering a capital campaign, but need a better idea of whether your funding goal is feasible. A consultant with the appropriate experience and knowledge can help you when you need a more clear definition of the best way to move forward.

When you need honesty. You want your staff to be deeply entrenched in your organization — but that can also have its challenges. They may be fearful of raising questions or concerns, or otherwise “rocking the boat,” or they may be influenced by office politics in various ways. An unbiased, outside opinion and/or moderator can be invaluable when engaging (for example) in:

- Strategic planning.
- Organizational assessment.

- A development audit.
- A leadership/board retreat.

Do you need support with any of the above? We can help. Contact us at hello@thurlowassociates.com to set up a free consultation.