



Alternative Dashboarding: Measuring Impact for Sustainability

How does your organization define success? You may think the answer is obvious — by how much money you took in for the year! But if that's the only metric your nonprofit uses, you're only getting part of the story, and could be setting yourself up for future problems.

To guide a sustainable, reliable plan for fund development, take a closer look at your donation data. We recommend creating a dashboard to track and report key indicators of success — including the following:

Median gift size: By considering your median gift (the middle number in a sorted list of numbers), you offset the weighting that any extremely large or extremely small gifts will have on the *average* gift. You'll thus gain a more accurate picture of your typical contribution.

Number of new donors: The more people who care about your cause, the better, right? One strong indicator of growth and sustainability is whether you're attracting more new donors every year.

Retention rate: This metric reflects the number/percentage of donors who have given both last year and this year. It's crucial in determining your organization's sustainability — and in guiding upgrades to your stewardship activities. We recommend aiming for a retention rate of at least 70 percent (meaning if you had 1,000 donors in 2016, 700 give again in 2017). Keeping donors engaged can be a challenge, but it can be even harder to find *new* donors.

What other data points would be most helpful for your organization to dashboard? Once you have this information in place, you can use it to guide creation of a stronger plan for sustainability and growth!

Ready to start? Click [here](#) for a template.

To learn how Thurlow/Associates can help your organization create a sustainability-minded development plan, contact us for a no-cost consultation. You can reach us at (310) 675-6497 or at hello@thurlowassociates.com.