

betterworld

10 practical tips

to lead with resilience and
fundraise through change



Everyone's talking about the storm—**economic uncertainty, grant cuts, and donor fatigue.** Right now, the probability of a recession has reached 60%, and more than 103,000 nonprofits face losing their government grants. On top of that, consumer confidence has dropped to a 12-year low.

In moments like these, building resilience matters more than ever. It means planning ahead, staying grounded, and being willing to adapt. The organizations that weather the storm best keep their footing—even when everything's shifting around them—and keep their hope rooted in their supporters and cause.

As the data shows, people are generous:



While donations may dip in recessions, giving has a history of bouncing back:



Resilient leaders don't just wait it out—they rethink, re-engage, and build smarter strategies that prepare them for what's ahead.

In this guide, we'll share 10 powerful tips to help you lead with clarity, build donor trust, and future-proof your fundraising efforts.

01

Put the well-being of your people first

Through good times and uncertain ones, your team matters most. True resilience is built on a foundation that supports its people, plans ahead, and stays flexible when things change.

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You can't pour from an empty cup. Take care of yourself first.

– Norm Kelly

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When establishing a strong culture, keep the following in mind:

Foster team alignment: A strong culture keeps everyone on the same page—working toward shared goals with clarity and purpose.

Drive productivity: When planning, preparation, and prioritization are part of your culture, your team stays focused and efficient.

Boost morale: Putting people first and leading with positivity builds a supportive environment where employees feel valued, energized, and motivated.

A strong culture doesn't just help you get through tough times—it helps you lead others through them with clarity and confidence.





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Everywhere else in the world, profit and self-interest seem to drive behavior. But in the nonprofit world—large and small—it’s individuals who see a need in their community and decide to do something about it.

Whit Hunter

Co-Founder, BetterWorld

02

Optimize your budget

Every dollar matters and building a resilient organization means taking a close look at your budget—and being willing to make changes that align with your mission and long-term goals.

Organizations that actively manage budgets save up to 20% annually.

A 20% margin can mean the difference between cutting services and staying strong through a downturn.

Focus your efforts on these steps:

Examine every expense: Take a good look at where your money's going—what's truly essential, and what can be trimmed, paused, or swapped out.

Invest in donor retention: It's easier (and cheaper) to keep the donors you already have than to chase down new ones.

Encourage recurring giving: Monthly or multi-year gifts give you a more reliable stream of support and take some pressure off fundraising.

Leverage in-kind donations: Don't overlook the power of donated goods, services, or time—they can go a long way in stretching your budget.

Optimizing your budget doesn't mean shrinking your mission—it means protecting it. When your finances are streamlined and intentional, you create space to lead with confidence, even in the face of uncertainty.



03

Make sure you're using the right tools

User experience is super important and you don't want a potential donor getting hung up on a technical snag.

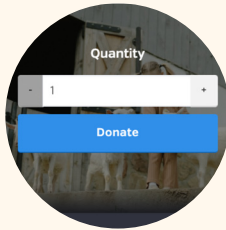
27% of donors abandon donation forms because they're too long.

Pick tools that make giving easy—for your team and your supporters. The right platform should take work off your plate, not add to it.

Look for something that lets you:



Keep donation forms short, sweet, and mobile-friendly



Run and track campaigns without a bunch of extra steps



Offer helpful features like recurring giving, donor segmentation, and impact tracking

Nonprofits with user-friendly donation forms see a 23% increase in contributions.

When the process is smooth, more donors follow through—and your team gets time back to focus on what really matters.

04

Always have a plan B

Even the best laid plans shift sometimes—and that’s okay. It’s all about how you respond and how you’ve prepared. Having a thoughtful Plan B means you can keep moving forward with clarity, no matter what comes your way.

Here’s a mini checklist to get started:



Create a simple backup plan for a few “what if” scenarios



Diversify your revenue so you’re not relying too heavily on one source



Know what you can scale—up or down—based on your team’s capacity

70% of successful nonprofits have contingency plans in place.

It takes a little time to map these things out, but it’s well worth it to be ahead of the curve. When you’ve got options in your back pocket, you’re not reacting—you’re calmly and confidently leading.



05

Talk directly to your donors

Segmented campaigns see **14% higher response rates.**

People want to be seen and feel valued—to know their contribution matters and that they’re making a difference. In challenging times, you have an opportunity to connect with supporters in a new way through thoughtful messages that recognize their role in something bigger.

Here are four ways you can make sure your communications are resonating with your audience:

Segment your audience: Tailor messages based on donor behavior, interests, or giving history.

Personalize the message: Use names, reference past giving, and speak to what matters most to them.

Re-engage lapsed donors differently: Don’t send them the same message as your most active supporters—approach with empathy and relevance.

Tap into generosity scoring: Use data to better understand who’s most likely to give—and why.

It doesn’t have to be complicated—just thoughtful. When you speak directly to what your donors care about, you create deeper connections that last well beyond any one campaign.



06

Prioritize transparency

Now more than ever, donors want to know where their money is going—and why it matters. Transparency builds trust, and trust builds lasting support.

During the 2008 recession, donations to highly transparent organizations rose by 15%, while giving to less transparent ones dropped by 4.5%.

Whether it's through a **heartfelt email**, a **behind-the-scenes video**, or a **breakdown of where funds go**, openness creates stronger connections.

Don't be afraid to let your community in.

Talk openly about your challenges, your needs, and share the impact their support is making. For example, maybe \$50 means providing meals for 10 families.



07

Get creative

Creativity can help your cause stand out in a way that's unique to your organization—through messages, gifts, and moments that could only come from you. Tapping into that creativity helps you stay adaptable and resilient, knowing that what you bring to the table is unique.

It also keeps you connected to your donors, boosts team morale, and moves fundraising forward—without burning out your people or your budget.

Here are a few ways creativity helps build staying power:

It makes the most of what you have: Finding low-cost ways to delight donors like handwritten notes, printed photos, or DIY thank-you gifts can leave a big impression.

It keeps people engaged: Hosting playful, low-lift events (think duck races, mini-games, or giveaways) creates a shared experience, bringing energy to your campaigns and giving donors a reason to stick around—even when times are tough.

It brings your team together: Inviting staff, volunteers, or supporters into the creative process sparks new ideas and helps everyone feel more invested in the mission.

Donors are not loyal to organizations. They are loyal to experiences.

- Penelope Burk

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Creativity serves as a reminder of the resilience of your community, that even in challenging or unpredictable times, generosity is always there.



08

Meaningfully connect with your donors

At its core, fundraising is about connection. The right message—delivered at the right time—can create generosity and build long-term trust. When your communication feels personal, clear, and consistent, donors are more likely to lean in and stay engaged.

Here are a few considerations to keep in mind when talking to donors:

71%
feel frustrated by impersonal messaging

People want to be seen. Personalized messages show supporters you value their unique connection to your mission. Whether you're referencing past gifts, interests, or location, talking about something that's unique to them, let's them know you're listening.

23%
revenue increase with consistent messaging

Consistency builds familiarity. When your message is aligned across emails, social, and events, it reinforces who you are and what you stand for. That kind of clarity builds trust—and trust leads to action.

90%
of donors say transparency matters

Donors want to know how their money is being used. Be open about your needs, your challenges, and your wins. The more transparent you are, the more confident donors feel in their decision to support your cause.

By focusing on personalized, consistent, transparent, and specific messaging, you can build trust, demonstrate impact, and inspire donors to give, even during challenging economic times.

09

Engage families & strengthen support

Fundraisers that involve families don't just draw bigger crowds—they create deeper connections. When people can show up with their kids, the experience becomes more meaningful, fun, and memorable.

Here's why it works:

Increased participation: Family events appeal to all age groups, which naturally leads to higher turnout and a stronger sense of community.

Boosted donations: Donors are more likely to give when their kids are involved—it adds purpose and creates conversations about generosity at home.

Stronger emotional connection: Shared experiences create lasting memories and deepen supporters' ties to your mission.

More volunteers: Parents and kids love to pitch in together, which makes it easier to staff events and get more hands on deck.

When families feel welcome, they're more likely to stay involved—and that kind of connection makes your mission even stronger.



10

Keep fundraising enjoyable and uplifting

Fundraising doesn't have to feel heavy. In challenging times, keeping things light can bring a lot of levity to your team and supporters. It can help build energy and remind people why they love being part of your mission.



“ Joy is not made to be a crumb ”

- Mary Oliver

Adding joy into your campaigns isn't just about feeling good—it's also strategic. Shared experiences like family events and lighthearted moments can increase participation and even boost donations by up to 25%.

When people enjoy the experience, they're more likely to give, keep showing up, and invite others to join in.



Celebrate all wins (small & big), share the joy (let donors know their impact), and find time to relax after all your hard work.

You've got this (and we're here to support)!

Resilient leadership isn't about having all the answers—it's about staying grounded, thinking creatively, and showing up for your mission no matter what.

And you don't have to do it alone.

BetterWorld gives you modern tools to help you fundraise smarter, faster, and with less stress. Plus, all the back up you need, when you need it.

From auctions and raffles to giveaways, our platform offers 10 intuitive fundraising tools to help your organization stand out. Setup takes less than five minutes—saving you 30–40 hours per campaign and boosting donations by up to 30%.

Ready to see how we can support your team? [Schedule a free demo](#) or explore more at betterworld.org.

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We make fundraising easier—and help nonprofits raise more and save time—so they can have a greater impact and spend more time doing what they love.

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Whit Hunter
Co-Founder, BetterWorld