



The Current State Of Non-Profit Charitable Organizations in Western Canada

THE GOLDIE COMPANY

Serving Non Profits Since 1965

Summary of Survey Results

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Summary of Survey Results

The Goldie Company's Survey of Non-Profit Organizations in Western Canada

The Goldie Company together with Collis & Reed Research designed and surveyed non-profit organizations in Western Canada regarding the current state of their fundraising practices. The survey had four objectives. These were to:

- Create a snap-shot of non-profit organizations operating in Western Canada.
- Ascertain the extent to which they have been impacted by the current economic downturn.
- Query these organizations about 28 key characteristics of effective fundraising that focus on organizations' structure, approaches and practices. Then build a profile of the extent to which Western Canadian non-profit organizations perceive they have adopted these 28 characteristics into their organizational practices.
- Compare and contrast organizations that have and have not been affected by the current economic downturn in terms of the extent to which these organizations practice the 28 characteristics of effective fundraising.

The survey consisted of three sections:

1. **The characteristics of the organization:** Five questions covered topics such as the type of services provided by the organization, the fundraising approaches used, the size of the organization and their annual fundraising goals.
2. **The impact that the economic downturn has had on your organization:** Five questions covered topics such as changes observed in the amount and number of donors, changes in the demand for services and actions undertaken by organizations as a result of the economic downturn.
3. **Characteristics of effective fundraising:** Twenty-eight characteristics of effective fundraising practices were presented. Respondents were asked to indicate on a seven point disagree to agree rating scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree) to indicate the extent to which they agree their organization practiced each of these characteristics. These 28 characteristics were divided into four thematic sections, case for support, their fundraising team, fundraising development, fundraising activities and communication strategies.

The survey was designed as an online internet questionnaire. Western Canadian non-profit organizations were informed about the survey via an electronic newsletter sent to these organizations by Canadian Fundraiser and by local chapters of the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

Survey data collection took place from Friday May 1st through to Friday May 15th. A total of 75 organizations participated in the survey. Characteristics of organizations that participated in this survey were consistent with the results of other recent Western Canadian non-profit organization surveys. Seventy-six percent of participants supplemented their responses with a total of 257 comments. In addition, there was a general consistency of responses within the survey results. Thus the 75 survey participants appear to be a reasonably representative sample of non-profit organizations in Western Canada. Further, these respondents clearly took this survey seriously and were willing to provide detailed insights into their experiences working within this sector.

Summary of the Main Survey Results

1. Characteristics of the organizations participating in this survey

Types of organizations:	Community & Social Services	42%
	Health Care	25%
	Recreation & Culture	15%
	Education, Training & Development	12%
	Other	5%
Fundraising approaches used:	Annual	85%
	Capital	52%
	Endowment	40%
Size of organizations	Median number of staff	9
	Median number of volunteers	85
	Median number of people served annually	7000
Approximate annual fundraising goal	Less than \$100,000	17%
	Between \$100,000 and \$499,999	21%
	Between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000	17%
	Over \$1,000,000	36%

2. The impact that the economic downturn has had on your organization

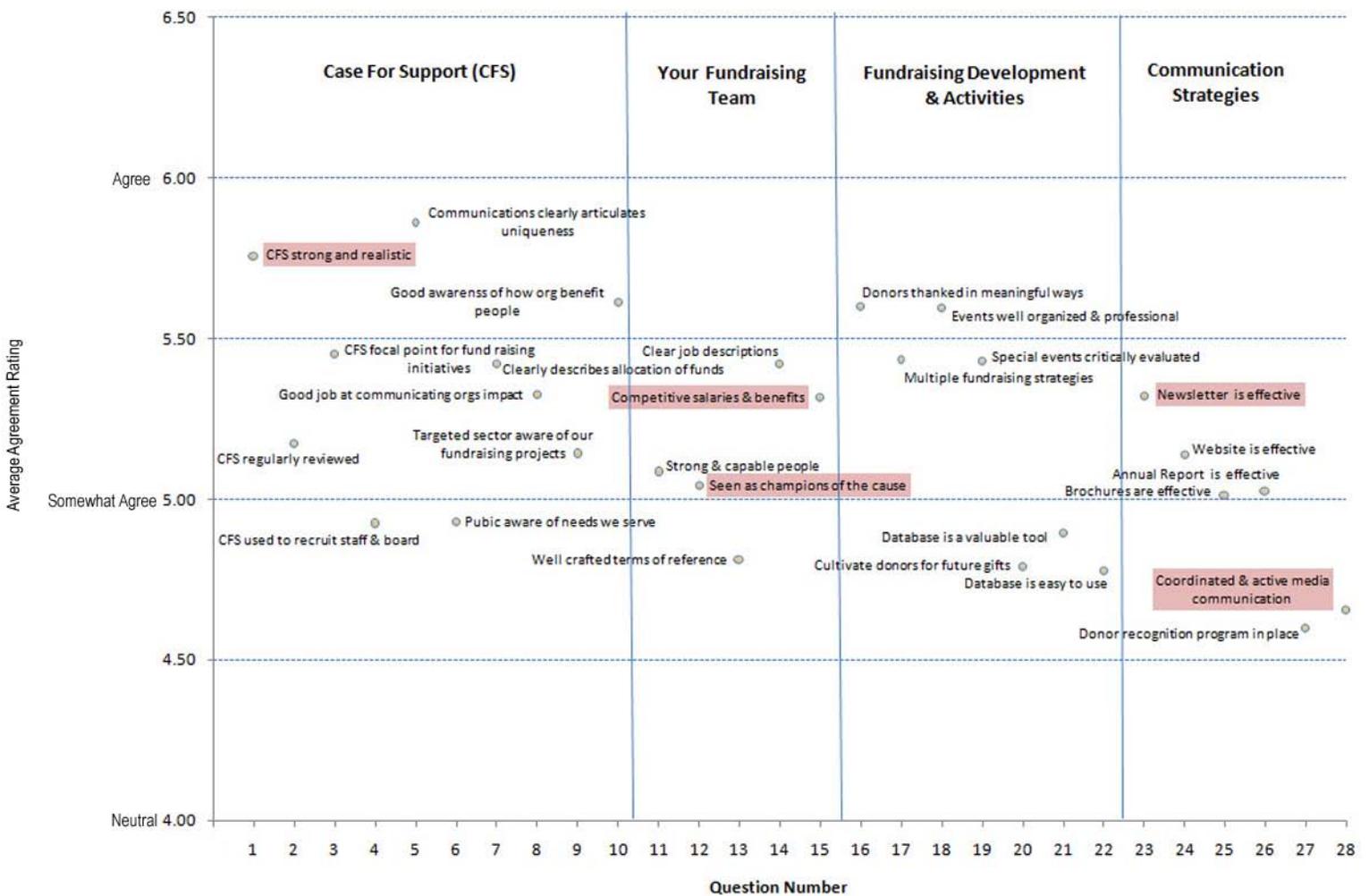
- The two measures of change in number of donors and amount donated in the first quarter (Q1) of 2009 compared to Q1 of 2008 suggest that there has not been a uniform drop during the first quarter of 2009. Nearly half of the survey respondents do report fewer donors and donations, over one-quarter of respondents indicate increases in donors and donations.
- Over half of BC organizations report an increase in the amount of donations in Q1 of 2009 compared to one-quarter of organizations in Alberta. A similar pattern is observed for number of donors.
- Slightly over half of the respondents report they have experienced an increase in demand for services as a result of the economic downturn. Most who have experienced increases in demand stated that they are coping, however, they are reaching capacity and will soon need to take actions to maximize resources.
- Three-quarters of Community and Social Service organizations report an increase in demand for services whereas the majority of health care and recreational & culture organizations did not report an increase in demand.
- Only four organizations indicated that they have not taken steps nor plan to take steps as a result of the economic downturn. Most organizations indicated that they have undertaken three or four initiatives. The top three initiatives are:
 - Revise fundraising approach
 - Pursue new granting opportunities
 - Enhance community engagement

3. Characteristics of effective fundraising:

Twenty-eight characteristics of effective fundraising practices were presented. Respondents were asked to indicate on a seven point disagree to agree rating scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree) to indicate the extent to which they agree their organization practiced each of these characteristics. These 28 characteristics were divided into four thematic sections, case for support, their fundraising team, fundraising development, fundraising activities and communication strategies.

- The average response to the 28 characteristics was 5.2 (somewhat agree their organization practices these characteristics).
- With respect to the four sections that comprise the 28 rating characteristics, *Case for Support* questions on average received the highest agreement while characteristics pertaining to *Your Fundraising Team* received the lowest average agreement.

The average agreement for each of the 28 characteristics of effective fundraising practices is presented in the graph below. In this graph each of the 28 characteristics are presented vertically according to the overall average agreement that organizations practice these characteristics and horizontally according to question number (separated by section). An interesting pattern in these data suggests that characteristics that received lower average ratings were those that dealt with specific elements of the fundraising process (e.g., existence of an easy to use data base, an inclusive donor recognition program, and a coordinated media communications program). For the exact wording of each characteristic please refer to the table at the end of the document.

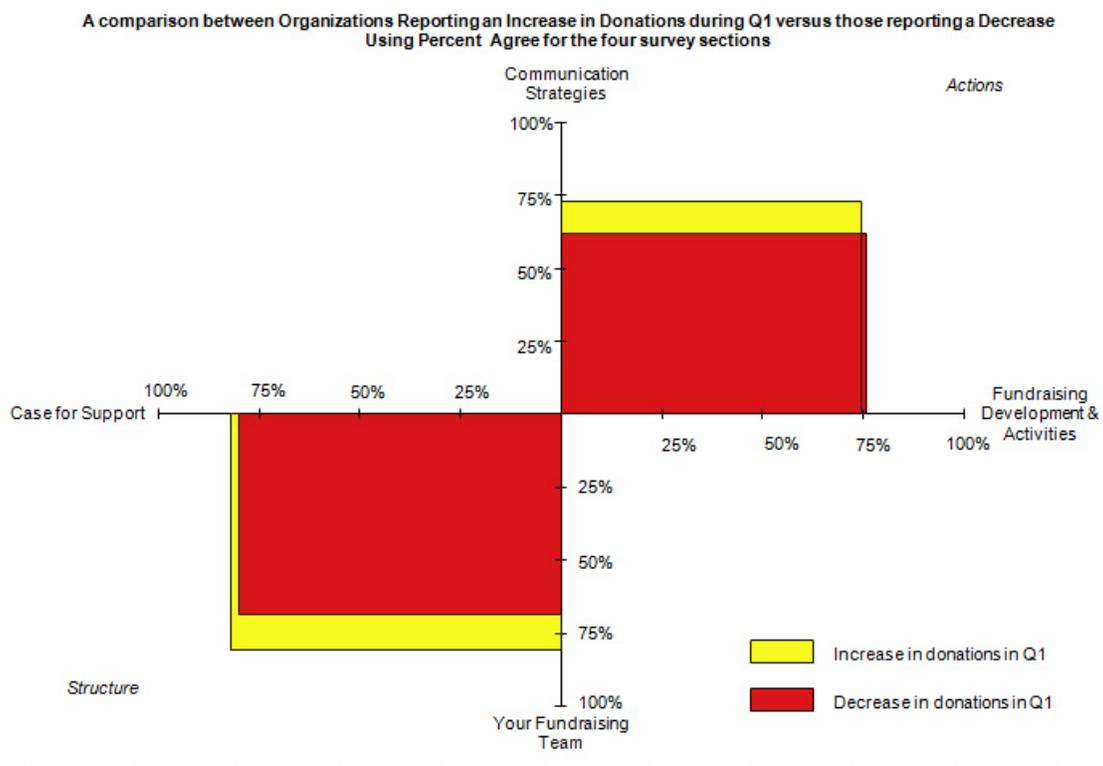


- Some differences in agreement for practicing characteristics were observed between organizations that reported an increase in donations during the first quarter of 2009 versus those that reported a decrease in donations during the same period last year.
- Those who reported an increase in donations more strongly agreed that they practice the following five characteristics (highlighted in the graph above):
 - A strong and realistic Case for Support

- A fundraising committee comprised of people seen as champions of the cause
- Competitive staff salaries and benefits
- An effective newsletter
- A coordinated and active media communication program in place

This can be interpreted as five characteristics that best distinguish between organizations that have and have not been affected by the recent economic downturn.

- The largest differences between organizations that reported an increase in donations and those that reported a decrease in donations were observed for question 15 *staff salaries and benefits are competitive* and question 28 *we have a coordinated and active communication and media program in place*.
- Differences between organizations reporting an increase versus a decrease in donations were also observed when the characteristic agreement ratings were combined by section. Those that report an increase in donations indicated an overall higher level of agreement for characteristics associated with *Your Fundraising Team* and *Communication Strategy* sections. The graph below provides a representation of these differences.



The graph above represents section differences between organizations who report an increase in donations during Q1 versus organizations that report a decrease in donations. In this display the **percent agree** is used. This agreement measure is the percentage of times that organizations provided a rating of either somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree to the statements that comprised each section.

- The lower left quadrant of the graph above represents the percent agree for characteristics on Case for Support (the horizontal axis) and Your Fundraising Team (the vertical axis). This quadrant represents the structure from which fundraising is based upon. To succeed you need a strong Case for Support and a strong team to drive all fundraising initiatives. Graphically, the larger the area, the stronger the structure would be in place to successfully implement fundraising initiatives. In this quadrant both groups provide equal levels of agreement ratings for Case for Support but the group that increased in donations more frequently agreed that their organization practices the fundraising team characteristics.
- The upper right quadrant of the graph above represents the percent agree for Fundraising Development & Activities (horizontal axis) and Communication Strategies (the vertical axis). This quadrant represents actions or initiatives undertaken by the organization to successfully carry out fundraising activities. In this quadrant

both groups provide equal levels of agreement for Fundraising Development and Activities. However, the group that reported an increase in donations more frequently agreed that their organization practices the communication strategy characteristics.

Concluding Remarks:

This survey of 75 non-profit organizations in Western Canada provided a reasonable representative sample, consistent data with detailed insight from the survey participants.

Key findings:

1. The economic downturn has not resulted in a uniform negative experience among charitable non-profit organizations in Western Canada.
2. Organizations that have experienced a decrease in donations and increase in demand are currently coping with this situation; however, their resources are being stretched to the maximum.
3. A higher proportion of BC organizations report an increase in the amount they received in donations during Q1 of 2009 compared to a year ago than organizations located in Alberta.
4. On average the participants somewhat agree that their organizations meet the 28 characteristics of effective fundraising.
5. Organizations that have experienced an increase in donations in Q1 of 2009 more strongly agreed that their organizations have adopted effective fundraising characteristics that focus on their fundraising team and communication strategies.
6. Five characteristics that best distinguish between organizations that have and have not been affected by the recent economic downturn include:
 - A strong and realistic Case for Support
 - Competitive staff salaries and benefits
 - A fundraising committee comprised of people seen as champions of the cause
 - An effective newsletter
 - A coordinated and active media communication program in place

The survey results provide a snap shot into the current state of non-profit organizations in Western Canada. It would be helpful to re-open the data collection process to increase the size of our respondent data base to enable stronger conclusions to be established, to verify patterns and trends observed in the data and to explore changes that take place as economic and social conditions evolve in Western Canada.

Click [HERE](#) to view our detailed report on the *Current State of Non-Profit Organizations in Western Canada*