

Automated Prospect Screening: Finding Hidden Treasures

Looking for the next major prospect to help support your nonprofit organization? “Of course, you’d know if you already had a Bill Gates in your donor base,” says David Lawson, founder of Prospect Information Network (PIN), a leading provider of prospect screening solutions to the nonprofit fundraising community and a service of San Diego-based Kintera Inc. “So your hunt should be for the millionaire next door, not necessarily someone who is involved in the glamour and glitz of society.”

Just as most money stems from private companies, which are typically unexciting but very profitable traditional businesses, Lawson says that by digging deeper into your prospect database, you will find similar hidden treasures—working men and women who might make a major gift or bequest to your nonprofit organization.

Major donor identification

Major donor identification and asset-based prospect screening have become very important in the nonprofit community, and a key reason is the cost of fundraising.

“We all know how expensive donor acquisition is for a nonprofit organization,” Lawson explains. “Invest in major prospect identification so you can work the top tier of your donor list. These are the least expensive dollars raised, so more goes to your mission.”

“With a powerful prospect screening service, you can find, profile, monitor and dynamically rank the wealth in your nonprofit’s prospect database,” he adds. “But choose your vendor wisely. You should look for a combination of processing expertise; breadth, depth and quality of data; match logic; user-oriented technology; and follow-up services to make it all work for your organization.”

No organization has the resources

to personally ask everyone on its entire prospect list, and it never will. That is what wealth identification is all about—marrying your nonprofit’s resources with the best opportunities to find the right donors to ask, Lawson points out.

Screening solutions to fit your needs

There are a number of different automated screening solutions for organizations of many sizes, but Lawson recommends an organization have a file of at least 3,000 or more donors to make sure that screening is the best option. Your organization’s records are matched to data services, and then a file is returned to you. Data mining software makes it easy to work with the data and turn that information into the knowledge you need to be successful.

Through wealth profiling services, nonprofits can match their database against vast data resources provided

by Dun & Bradstreet, LexisNexis, Marquis Who’s Who, Thomson Wealth Management and others. A clearer picture of a prospect’s major gift capacity is provided via private company ownership, professional status, public stock ownership, real estate and additional asset data, as well as political and charitable contributions—publicly available information that corporations use regularly. With this data, you can develop a profile including a prospect’s interests, gift timing and other facts enabling you to treat him or her as a unique individual, not just “the wealthy” in general.

On-demand opportunities

Up-to-date and pertinent prospect information is imperative in preparing solicitation strategies. Today, advanced on-demand prospect screening services provide instant access to data resources, allowing your organization to update previously matched records to ensure that your profiles contain the very latest information and save hundreds of hours of staff time.

Nonprofit organizations give an automated screening service thousands, even millions of names, to do



Laura Tedeschi/Stock Illustration Source

what they could never have time to accomplish—discover hidden gems who are most likely to become major donors, Lawson explains. “After your nonprofit database records are matched to our data resources, you receive software and a file that can be accessed with a feature-rich, web-based tool in which you can easily data mine for key prospects,” he says.

“The wealth profiling and identification technologies available today are very exciting,” Lawson adds. “This updated, on-demand data information can even be used to personalize and target content specific to each individual prospect when he or she visits your website.”

What could automated prospect screening mean to your nonprofit organization? Often, tens of millions of dollars. 📧

Do You IM?

According to America Online Inc.’s recent *Second Annual Instant Messaging Trends Survey*, instant messaging (IM) is increasing, and not just among those under 20. Other findings from the survey of 4,510 respondents, 13 years and older, in the top 20 markets around the country, include the following:

- 59 percent of Internet users use IM

- 29 percent of mobile messengers send as many, if not more, IMs as they do emails

- 27 percent of mobile messengers users use IM at work, a 71 percent increase from the previous year

- 19 percent of IM users now send instant and SMS text messages from their mobile phones and PDAs, compared to 10 percent the previous year

- 90 percent of 13–21-year-olds use IM

- 48 percent of those aged 55 and older use IM

More than 7 billion instant messages are sent every day worldwide, according to IDC, a market intelligence and advisory firm headquartered in Framingham, Mass., while Reston, Va.-based ComScore Media Metrix, which provides Internet audience measurement services, reports that there are 250 million people worldwide and 80 million Americans who regularly use instant messaging.

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