

2011



SIX NONPROFIT SEERS PREDICT WHAT'S AHEAD

Out With The Old Year ... Quickly, Please

Interviewer: What's your prediction for the fight?

Clubber Lang: My prediction?

Interviewer: Yes, your prediction.

Clubber Lang: Pain

Those of you who have no taste in movies will recognize the lines from *Rocky III*, where Clubber Lang, played by Mr. T, plans to hurt Rocky Balboa, played by Sly Stallone. It turned out Clubber was right, as were many of the prognosticators in last year's look ahead to 2010. Rocky never made it out of the second round and 2010 was a painful year in most quarters of the nonprofit sector.

Predictions are always fun, particularly when you can point a finger at someone and laugh after one of the ideas is horrendously wrong. Unfortunately, last year's doomsayers couldn't be laughed at by the sector. And while there are some brighter lights for 2011, it looks like it's going to be another angst-filled year.

Six sector luminaries try in this special report to guide us through what might be a rocky 2011. Take heed in what Apollo Creed told Balboa as he prepared for his rematch with Clubber Lang: *See that look in their eyes, Rock? You gotta get that look back, Rock. Eye of the tiger, man.*

Rocky found that look and won. The nonprofit sector will, too. Hopefully, the sector's dialogue will be better. --Paul Clolery



REGULATION

Culling The Herd

Automatic revocations will reshape nonprofits beyond 2011

BY DAN MOORE

Critics claiming that there are "too many" nonprofits will have something to cheer about in early 2011 when the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) publishes the list of tax-exempt organizations that have had their status automatically revoked for failure to file annual information tax returns for three consecutive years. By last estimates, more than 300,000 organizations

were on track to lose their exemptions.

This is an important time for nonprofits. We will have a more accurate idea of the size of the sector, and can therefore better gauge our strengths and challenges.

But, as recently predicted by Diana Aviv, president and CEO of Independent Sector, there will also be an "unholy mess" from the fallout of the automatic revocations, making this one of the biggest regulatory trends to watch in 2011.

PROOF OF EXEMPT STATUS

The new rule that almost every tax-exempt organization must annually file an information return with the IRS to maintain status will be quickly adopted by the sector, raising the expectation that basic transparency is required to be a tax-exempt organization.

However, it's not maintaining tax-exempt status that will be the issue for the

philanthropic sector. It will be proving that an organization's status remains current that will fundamentally change nonprofit practice.

Today, development officers photocopy or create PDF images of the IRS Letter of Determination. They attach the letter to grant applications as a confirmation of tax-exempt status. Now that current tax-exempt status is tied to ongoing reporting obligations, the IRS Letter of Determination will not satisfy basic due diligence requirements for grantmakers. How development professionals respond will be another industry trend to watch.

REVENGE OF THE SMALL NONPROFITS

By all published accounts, the IRS response to the impending revocations has been unprecedented. The IRS sent two

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THE ARTS

Groups Still Fighting Through Recession's Final Scenes

BY BOBBY DEAN

The past few years have pretty well ravaged arts organizations around the country. Many have fallen victim to severe budget shortfalls, suspended operations indefinitely or have reduced the amount of artistic output.

There are still many more small and mid-sized arts organizations that are continuing to struggle to meet budget. Those organizations that entered the economic downturn with healthier bottom lines and eyes open and were flexible enough to make financial decisions to reduce their expenses and maximize revenue are still bringing their artistic products to the public. They also seem to have been able to withstand the economic pressures thus far.

The end of the economic struggles seems to still be off in the future and in many cases, the nimble have been rewarded with continued and increased support.

Because arts organizations tend to be hit the hardest during recessionary peri-

ods, they must be better at managing budgets and raising contributed and earned income better than the other not-for-profit organizations that they are competing with.

From the standpoint of fundraising, donors not only must be asked for their gifts, but receive the most extraordinary of stewardship. In many situations, you will find that those donors you counted on in previous years are just not able to give at levels of the past. It is important that those donors remain part of your ongoing stewardship and cultivation efforts.

There will be a large majority of donors who find themselves in the unfortunate position that they can't give to the organization at the levels that they would like. If the organization continues to provide extraordinary stewardship and inclusion, the donor will remember their kindness when their asset values have returned to the pre-recession levels and greater.

Some good news is that during the past two years, some donors and foundations have risen to the challenge and given more than previous levels to help offset many donations that have been reduced or removed from the organization's income stream.

Planned gifts might also become more prevalent during these recessionary times. While many donors don't have access to liquid assets and the income that they are receiving from their assets is much reduced, this is a great time to have a conversation about making a deferred gift through a bequest or through a life income planned gift like a Charitable Gift Annuity or a Charitable Remainder Trust. Many times this kind of arrangement can provide an income from an asset that is

not producing income and provide a deferred gift to your organization.

The outlook for calendar year 2011 is somewhat optimistic for arts organizations. Those donors, subscribers and members who truly enjoy and frequent the arts will continue to give at the levels that they are able as their asset values rebound and the tax climate changes. The task at hand for all organizations is to continue to provide excellent donor-centered stewardship and cultivation so that when the dust settles organizations will be not just standing, but thriving with a renewed sense of excellence and a much higher level of donor, subscriber and member satisfaction.

Leadership of arts organizations should be willing to be much more visible to their subscribers and members, and always tell them thank you for their ongoing support.



In the area of annual giving, most donors who have been brought closer to organizations through personal contacts and great stewardship will again see giving increase over 2010 levels, but those donors who feel more alienated will challenge that organization by giving even less. The competition for the donor's disposable income should be fierce, but in too many cases, organizations cut in areas of cultivation and stewardship during these diminished economic times and the net result will be reduced contributed income.

To those organizations that excel at their cultivation and stewardship, not only will they be rewarded with higher levels of contributed income from donors, but when those donors are looking for an organization where they can create a legacy of their passion and interest, those organizations will be the great beneficiaries of their donor's philanthropic legacy gifts.

The most important work that any development office does is great cultivation and extraordinary stewardship of the contributed gifts a donor gives. Think about little things you can do, such as writing a quick handwritten note, a birthday and anniversary card, adding a benefit that the donor does not expect, remembering their name, being sure their name is spelled and listed correctly in publications and saying thank you every time you communicate with them.

If these and other little things are performed well, most of our arts organizations should fare well next year and well into the future.

Bobby Dean is director of major gifts and planned giving for the Houston Grand Opera in Houston, Texas.

REGULATION

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letters to organizations on its Business Master File in an attempt to notify small nonprofits of the new filing requirement, and conducted a marketing campaign to help spread the word. In May, in the face of enormous noncompliance, IRS created a one-time extension to file the Form 990-N and created a voluntary compliance program for delinquent Form 990-EZ filers.

All of these efforts have resulted in higher levels of compliance and a general sorting out of errors on the IRS database of tax-exempt organizations. The question remains whether all of the tax-exempt organizations that have not filed are actually out of business. It is probably as likely that the address on file with the IRS is no longer a good one.

The dead-end address might not mean a dead end to the small nonprofit. The IRS must be preparing for the possibility that the publication of the revocation list will result in the reapplication of tax-exempt organizations in existence today that never received notice that the rules have

changed.

The filing fees for a new determination by IRS are \$400 or \$850, depending on the expected total revenue of the small nonprofit. That's a \$40 million to \$85 million transfer from small charities to the U.S. Treasury for every 100,000 organizations that must reapply.

Tucked into the massive Pension Protection Act of 2006 that created the new filing requirement is a provision for the IRS to waive the filing fees for "just cause." How the Treasury Department, which writes the rules implementing tax law, and the IRS, which administers the rules, respond to petitions to waive filing fees for small charities that never received notice of the new filing requirement is still to be determined. One thing that is certain: the new Congress will be watching.

2X OR 3X THE NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS?

The IRS annually processes about 90,000 applications for exempt status. Depending on the number of tax-exempt organizations that must reapply, the

workload for IRS could increase exponentially. It could take into 2012 or beyond to deal with the impacts of reapplication of small tax-exempt organizations that never received notice of the rule changes. One has to ask: Is this the highest and best use of scarce IRS oversight resources devoted to the nonprofit sector?

COLLECTING FEES FOR FAILURE TO FILE

An unheralded aspect of the Congressional directive is the fact that the revoked organizations will have to address potential income tax liabilities and other penalties. Failure to file annual information returns results in tax penalties for delinquent filers. For smaller organizations, the penalty is \$10,000 or 5 percent of the gross receipts for the organization in that filing year.

For organizations with revenues of more than \$1 million, the penalty is \$50,000 for one return. That does not factor in the likelihood that the revoked organizations will be required to pay federal income taxes at the prevailing corporate

rate for the years in which they are not tax exempt or face collection action, including possible seizure of assets.

Some analysts point to more than 60,000 filers delinquent in filing Forms 990-EZ and 990. Pursuing the delinquent filers to collect federal income tax and tax penalties could occupy IRS enforcement actions well into 2012 and beyond.

What role, if any, state attorneys general will play in determining the amount and disposition of charitable assets from delinquent and defunct organizations in their states is yet to be determined. Will state regulators stand by while federal regulators take charitable assets through income tax assessment and tax penalty collection procedures?

An "unholy mess." That about sums it up.

Dan Moore is the vice president for nonprofit programs at GuideStar USA, with offices in Williamsburg, Va. and Washington, D.C. He is a former charity regulator from New Mexico and a past president of the National Association of State Charity Officials.



HUMAN SERVICES

Technology Vs. People

Old ideas will develop a new, polished spin

By JILL SCHUMANN

It doesn't take a crystal ball to predict that many of the current challenges and opportunities will continue: the ongoing effects of the economic recession; an emphasis on impact rather than activity; next phase implementation of healthcare reform; and the blurring of boundaries between nonprofit and for-profit sectors. Most readers of *The NonProfit Times* could easily add to that list off the tops of their heads.

The more compelling – if less crystal clear – trends to watch are in the wider environment, as they might manifest themselves in nonprofit social services in creative ways. Here are just a few examples:

- Mobile applications and technologies are everywhere: medication reminders; remote worker data entry; food vouchers; fundraising campaigns; GPS monitoring for seniors with dementia; bioconnectivity applications; weight loss coaching; tutoring for kids; and even a phone app that detects if a person falls and calls for help.

The coming year will see rapid expansion of mobile technologies into more areas of social services. Human-technology interfaces are becoming more complex and addressing the subtleties of ethics, interactions and access will be key as this remarkable picture of possibilities is shaped. Social media is integrated into everything from fundraising to volunteering to the direct provision of service. Let's pledge to sort out what platforms work best for which purposes.

In the midst of access to a dizzying amount of information, people will turn to trusted sources to help them sort and understand it. "Sense-making" is an increasingly important role as nonprofit professionals partner with people who are making choices customized to their partic-

ular needs and preferences. Whether those people are volunteers, donors, people seeking supports and services or employees, organizations that are able to meet this sense-making need will be valued.

- Busy people who can afford it are outsourcing a wider range of everyday tasks. They are paying for tutors, sports coaches, companions for their pets, and caregivers for children and other family members. Might this present opportunities not only for social service organizations to bridge private and public funding, but also to bring people together across communities?

- Environmental concerns are moving into the mainstream of all types of social service delivery. How green can we go? What creative greening efforts and environmental stewardship can nonprofits engage in with staff members and clients alike?

- Dated basics come back with new twists. Frugality, gardens, composting, group volunteering, intergenerational households and retro fashions are already in evidence. What will emerge as the next wave of back to the future?

- The conversation about replication and scaling has entered a new chapter. Foundations, social entrepreneurs, investors, and service providers – both proprietary and nonprofit – are rethinking what it takes to take successful programs to scale. What new experiments will be the social service sector's entries into this brave new world?

And then there are some things we might hope will happen in 2011:

- 2011 has been declared the Year of the Caregiver. Most informal caregivers do not identify themselves as caregivers and simply do what needs to be done, often juggling a variety of challenging roles and demands with significant consequences to themselves. Professional caregivers are often underpaid and undervalued. Will 2011 be a year in which we can come together to celebrate caregivers while finding new ways to share the load?

- A renewed spirit of curiosity and humility emerges as people involved in social service, social change, social enterprise and social impact initiatives move beyond hype to share what they are learning about what works and which experiments fail to reach their anticipated results.

- The vestiges of paternalism continue to erode and the people with whom social service providers share journeys are increasingly able to exercise choice, to direct their supports, and to have their gifts and skills valued. Social change is integrated into services and advocacy, organizing, and services pull together.

And, in so many spheres, we hope for a movement away from "us/them" and away from "me" toward a realistic but resounding "we."

Jill Schumann is president and chief executive officer of Lutheran Services in America, based in Baltimore, Md. She is also chair of the board of the National Human Services Assembly in Washington, D.C.

TECHNOLOGY

What's Next?

Bleeding edge, cutting edge or if it ain't broke ...

By RUSTY BURWELL

What will be the big technology buzz for your nonprofit in 2011? It depends. Organizations, and individuals for that matter, occupy their own specific space on the technology continuum.

Some organizations have the staff, resources and the culture to not only be early adopters, but first adopters. Some like to be ahead of the curve, but not until at least most of the bugs have been worked out. And, for the rest of us, we'll wait until we're forced to move ahead, because we lack resources or we have organizational inertia or the fact that we're just focused on the mission and not the tools.

For one organization, moving all of their applications to "the cloud" (Google apps and Gmail, Microsoft 365, etc) is so 2009, for others it's the next big thing. Moving your travelers to cheaper, lighter Netbooks might be a big deal or maybe you are already moving on to iPads. I might be still trying to figure out a Facebook strategy and you are setting up a fundraiser using Foursquare.



So the 2011 technology news for most of us depends on where we are and what we see as the next step for us. Here are some items that I think will show up on a number of wish lists:

- **Cloud Computing** – As mentioned above, outsourcing your file, application and mail servers is now a real option. And, if you have staff in multiple offices and locations, it might be the cost-efficient solution. Get a computer and a Web connection and you can work from anywhere.

- **Microsoft Windows 7** – In MS operating system history, few versions have been as ridiculed as Vista. Many of us passed on that release and are still using XP. Windows 7 has been getting solid reviews and means that a new Windows version is a solid bet for 2011.

- **Data Integration** – The days of allowing your data to be "siloes" and disconnected are over. Increased broadband capacity and processing speeds, open application programming interfaces (APIs), ease of data warehousing and the business logic of getting a full view of your constituents all weigh in favor of data integration. The ability to have all of your interactions and relationships in one place for analysis and business intelligence and relationship management will soon be the norm.

- **Smartphones** – You provide your staff with a computer, maybe a laptop and now, maybe a smartphone. Whether it's Blackberrys, Droids, iPhones or Windows phones, they all now easily connect into enterprise email and calendars. It's not so much a question of the cost of the phone and service so much as the efficiency that the tool brings to staff. Being able to work anytime, anywhere at a moment's notice through that smartphone can pay for itself in staff time and satisfaction pretty quickly.

- **Apps** – We've spent the past 10 years building Web sites to serve the public and our constituents. Now, per the above, many of them are looking for immediate gratification as they stroll around with their smartphones. Mobile ready Web sites are one option, but the business community has been teaching folks "there's an app for that." If we deliver consumer info via the Web, should we also deliver it via an app on their phone? Increasingly, the answer is yes.

- **Social Media** – Just kidding. That ship has sailed and if you're not there yet, you must not need to be.

- **Private Communities** – The corporate intranet that used to be a repository of documents is beginning to morph into a Facebook-like private community for staff and volunteers to provide profiles, places to comment on current issues, even workspaces with document sharing and version control. And, if you have a constituency – members, clients, patients, advocates, etc., – don't they need a space on your site to connect? If you don't provide it, they'll find it somewhere else.

Some of the above require significant investments of dollars and time, but some could save you money and, more importantly, provide a better base to serve your mission.

Scottish satirist Thomas Carlyle wrote, "Our main business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand." So the task for 2011 is not to look into the dim future of bleeding edge technology, but to look around to your peers and see what they did last year that you can do this year. My sense is that providing people with current tools that allow them to be effective and efficient is the best way to assure a productive workplace.

Rusty Burwell is vice president, data and technology, for the American Lung Association in New York City.



THE D.C. BELTWAY

Gridlock

Partisan fights will damage nonprofits

By GARY D. BASS

Predictions. We love to make them, and once we do, we become more confident that what we project will come to pass. Maybe it helps us feel like we can influence the future by predicting it. In that spirit of confidence, I assert that my predictions below are absolutely spot-on.

First, with Republicans holding control of the House and Democrats the Senate, we are likely to see much more gridlock in Congress. Each party will have slim margins to operate with, making it difficult to pass legislation.

To the intractable gridlock, you can add the likelihood of internal fights in both parties. For Republicans, Tea Party activists could create a fracture. Polls show that Tea Party views are disfavored by average citizens and are viewed as extremist.

Republicans will thus need to avoid the appearance of catering to fringe elements while recognizing that the Tea Party movement played a role in giving Republicans the House majority. Democrats will experience a push-pull situation, with liberals arguing that the party wouldn't have lost seats if it had been more forcefully progressive and moderate Democrats warning that the party lost seats because its agenda was too liberal.

And, forget about putting together a 60-vote, veto-proof majority in the Senate.

Second, congressional gridlock will present an enormous challenge to the Obama administration. With legislation likely to be stuck, the pressure will be on President Obama to use the levers of executive branch power to get things done. However, there will be huge tension between policy and campaign advisors, with the campaign folks seeing every policy decision through the 2012 re-election lens. That same tension will apply to potential vetoes of undesirable bills that actually make it out of Congress.

Third, the situations above will have colossal implications for nonprofits. Most nonprofits are reeling from increased demand for services and flat or decreasing revenue. The fact that Congress will have an even harder time passing budgets creates uncertainty for nonprofits that depend on government funding. Even worse, if Congress does pass spending bills, you can count on increased cuts to discretionary spending, which will directly harm many groups.

Many nonprofits that benefited from resources under the Recovery Act have been nervous about what will happen in the next couple of years when stimulus funds run out. Under the Pledge to Amer-

ica, Republicans in the House of Representatives plan to speed up the pain. They say they will immediately "cancel" unspent Recovery Act funds. In addition, they will attempt to roll back spending to FY '08 levels "with common-sense exceptions for seniors, veterans, and our troops," will impose a "hard cap" on discretionary spending, and will propose a spending cut each week. This translates into immediate and long-term cuts for nonprofits involved in service delivery, the arts and humanities, economic development, and more.

Furthermore, some time in the first or second quarter of 2011, there will be a big fight regarding raising the federal debt limit. If Congress does not vote to extend the debt limit, government will shut down. This will be a test for Tea Party activists and conservatives who are angry about the growth in government spending to see whether they can force actions to shrink the size of government. The government last shut down in 1995 during a 21-day showdown between House Speaker Newt Gingrich and President Bill Clinton over the size of government; it was the longest closure in history and ended up working against the GOP.

Adding to this bleak picture is the coming attack on public protections. Like many in this country, nonprofits have a love-hate relationship with regulation. We hate the burdens imposed on us, but we recognize in the aftermath of disasters, such as the BP/Deepwater Horizon explosion and oil spill, that the government needs to develop strong public protections and complement them with effective enforcement.

With the gridlock described above, President Obama will rely on regulation even more to get things done. At the same time,

businesses and conservatives will continue to strongly oppose regulations – whether they relate to protecting the environment, addressing women's health needs, or reining in Wall Street greed. This clash will affect all of us in the nonprofit sector.

We can also expect a renewed push to devolve many federal responsibilities to the states. In the Pledge to America, House Republicans were overt about their objectives, claiming that they will exploit the Constitution's Tenth Amendment whenever possible while ignoring or downplaying the clear grant of congressional power found elsewhere in the Constitution. The Tenth Amendment says that powers not granted to the federal government by the Constitution are reserved for the states or the people, but the amendment does not modify or impact the broad grant of power found in Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, which enables Congress to enact laws to do a number of things, such as provide for the general well being of the public and regulate interstate commerce and foreign trade.

The philosophy of transferring responsibilities to states, an extreme form of federalism, will come at a time when state resources are stretched to the breaking point and could result in direct harm to nonprofits and citizens alike.

On a positive note, Democrats and Republicans seem to agree on improving government transparency, particularly when it comes to federal spending. For nonprofits that believe in accountability, this could be a real plus. On the down side, this might be little more than a window on painful spending cuts.

Gary D. Bass is executive director and founder of OMB Watch in Washington, D.C.

INFORMATION

Using Research in Difficult Times



By RICHARD BELOUS

Let's face it: 2011 is going to be a difficult year for most nonprofits. Real human needs will continue to rise, and hardship is not about to head south. At the same time financial and human resources - in the language of economists - will remain binding constraints for our sector.

Analysis by United Way Research shows that giving to nonprofits is a so-called lagging variable. Even if the economy starts to show signs of a strong recovery, it will take many months before charitable giving will start to recover.

Analysis by United Way Research shows that giving to nonprofits is a so-called lagging variable. Even if the economy starts to show signs of a strong recovery, it will take many months before charitable giving will start to recover.

Unfortunately, during times like these, some nonprofits respond by making deep cuts in their research budgets and slashing research to the bone.

The irony is that research is more valuable to a nonprofit in difficult times than it is in calm seas and prosperous voyages. Almost anybody can look like a hero in terms of impact and resource development during the good times.

It is in the difficult times, when the powers-that-be can not kick the can down the road, that sound data and analysis can make the largest positive difference.

Given the above, here are several suggestions concerning how a nonprofit can make the most out of its research efforts during a difficult 2011:

- **Start doing research now wherever you are and with whatever you have:** It is not uncommon to hear nonprofit leaders say variations of the following: "I know how important research is, and we'd like to do it, but...our data stinks, we don't have the right people, etc."

If you wait to make the grade before you get started, the chances are good that you never will. Local United Ways around

the country have been working on the challenge of donor churn.

Start now with whatever data is available. Once the ball is rolling, the databases tend to improve.

Also, local staffs discover that they can do statistical analysis and reach actionable insights. Many even find out that they like doing it. From local colleges to agencies in the community, there are many research experts who are more than willing to advance nonprofit efforts – and many are willing to do it pro bono.

- **A Balanced Scorecard:** John D. Rockefeller commented that it was much harder to run the Rockefeller Foundation than it was to run Standard Oil. He said it was relatively easy to make the decisions on what to expand or cut when the goal was to maximize profits.

Ironically, it was easier to make money than to give it away soundly. For this reason a balanced scorecard can position a nonprofit to come through tough situations and be ready for new opportunities.

The first metrics and goals that we look at center around our key mission and vision. This provides a nonprofit with a

teachable moment to determine why the organization exists, what will differentiate the nonprofit in a very crowded field, and what at the end of the day is the organization trying to accomplish.

"But we are not that large a nonprofit, and we don't have all of these resources," you are probably exclaiming. No matter how small, an organization needs to think through what impact – what social good – it wants to have in the community. Set your key goals and metrics around this. Don't set your goals on programmatic metrics (such as the number of widgets distributed to the community.)

All research does not have to be primary research. Know the key secondary research in your area – and know it cold. Sound focus groups can be done inexpensively. Quantitative research does not have to be expensive in this day and age. Shape your central metrics and goals around community change, no matter how small your nonprofit.

Other types of goals and metrics that should be on the balanced scorecard include such things as public perception, **Information**, page 17

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Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree and at least 3-5 years experience working in print and web design.
- Expertise in Mac OS 10.4 and higher, Quark 8, InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop, Acrobat Professional, Font Agent, Stuff It, ability to access and use FTP site. MS Office Suite, HTML and Flash a plus.

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Send resume with salary requirements to

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some key financial metrics, and metrics/goals that underscore your non-profit's core values -- such as diversity and talent management. The old saying is that what gets measured tends to get done. If United Way can be "an N of One," Balanced scorecards can change organizations, and it can provide a clear focus for a research team. At United Way Worldwide, it does harness our various research efforts.

• **Develop a Great 'Bedside' Manner in 2011:** A research team can be doing fantastic work and yet have almost zilch impact on the organization. It can be hard for a senior vice president to hear that the evidence does not support her or his pet project -- let alone grand solution. This is why researchers should become "doctors with a great bedside manner."

How do you build up that bedside manner? First, the

You need to make house calls -- go the extra mile ...

powers-that-be have to know that you/the research team are key believers in the ultimate mission and vision of the organization.

Second, you need to make house calls -- go the extra mile -- and be of real service to the organization. When you are saying something that is difficult for some to hear on a specific issue or strategy, you will have a vast wealth of good

will to draw on.

Third, do not "blind side" anybody. If a senior manager is pushing something that is not supported by the evidence, speak to the executive first and play the game with your cards face up.

Fourth, do not expect the powers-that-be to be totally convinced after the first presentation or round of statistical analysis. It will often take repeated findings and presentations before things change.

The evidence is that the difficult times for many non-profits will not be ending soon. But this is a period where research can prove its worth to an organization and help the nonprofit be better positioned for 2011 and beyond.

Richard Belous is vice president, research for United Way Worldwide in Alexandria, Va.