

Knowing Your Investors

As a nonprofit leader, knowing your investors is a core aspect of strengthening your organization's fundraising skills – a core component of your Asking Rights™. Knowing details about each investor will help you best strategize for their retention, expanded engagement, and increased investment in your work. We live in a data driven world yet the concept of developing and maintaining a robust database, or “house file,” often feels like an insurmountable task for many small and mid-sized nonprofits.

Starting simple is the key. It is not necessary to jump from zero to full-dossier over a single quarter – or fiscal year for that matter. Working with the information available as a starting point and leveraging surveys to augment data points can help provide building blocks from which you can work to expand your credibility among your existing investors.

The reference points below offer some ideas to guide development of datapoints that support the creation or expansion of a database. As information is collected, it should be leveraged to guide strategic communications and stewardship activities. And of course, privacy and data integrity should never be overlooked!

• ACQUISITION POINT

Where did each investor in your database come from?
How were they introduced to your organization initially?
Where (if different) was their first gift initiated?

• BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Do you know your investors' birthdays?
If you can access the info, knowing spouse and children's names is a nice touch.
Where do they work, and what is their role/skill set?

• ENGAGEMENT

How regularly do you update contact information?
Do you know preferred mediums for communication?
How do you track last face to face, event attendance, etc.?
Is the investor also a volunteer, and what potential opportunities might an investor to volunteer comparison reveal?

• RESEARCH

Are you tracking trends on individual and/or sector related revenue trends?
Do you have access to a wealth analytics service?
What does your retention rate look like year over year?
Are you tracking lapsed investors and proactively working to reengage them?