

FINDING WEALTH WHEN YOU NEED IT

A Donor Discovery Case Study from Texas Woman's University



Challenge:

Prior to 2015, TWU did not have a formal advancement program or management system. They had three gift officers and no formal prospect research role. The university was annually raising \$2-3 million in cash receipts. They were using Raiser's Edge for their donor database but had limited tools to help staff identify prospective donors who were capable of giving a major gift to the organization.

The TWU advancement team said their past initiatives were more like "fund receiving" instead of "fundraising." The team would commonly receive calls from prospective donors inquiring about how much it would take to start a scholarship or contribute in other ways. Without easy access to donor information with respect to wealth and propensity-to-give, the advancement team would err on the side of caution, often quoting the minimum contribution needed out of fear of losing a potential donation. By not having wealth information, or giving history, at their fingertips, the advancement team was likely leaving money on the table and not maximizing their asks.



Solution:

One of the main goals for the new advancement leadership team at TWU was to build a prospect management system. A common approach when taking on such an initiative is to purchase a one-time, costly wealth screen of the whole donor database. However, large wealth screens are a risky expenditure because wealth data becomes stale and unreliable very quickly. Due to the size of most donor databases, it is cost prohibitive for most institutions to keep the information current with more frequent wealth screens.

In the spring of 2015, TWU turned to Reeher for help. The team began by implementing the Reeher Appeals Management package to improve the effectiveness of their annual giving program. The university quickly determined that they also needed an affordable and effective method to conduct wealth screens and learn more about their constituents. TWU decided to add on the Reeher Donor Discovery Best Practice Module to provide their gift officers with easy access to vital donor information.



CASE STUDY

Background Info:



TEXAS WOMAN'S
UNIVERSITY™

- ▶ A public university founded in 1901.
- ▶ The largest institution primarily for women in the country
- ▶ Locations in Denton, Dallas and Houston, Texas
- ▶ 15,000 active students
- ▶ 88,000 alumni



Results:

With Donor Discovery, TWU was able to quickly review comprehensive data on wealth capacity and demonstrated philanthropy. The team can also see detailed information on that prospect's philanthropic and political giving, any non-profit involvement, real estate ownership, and SEC insider stock transactions.

Researchers are also able to query on key Donor Discovery indicators. The results of these queries are automatically placed into a Relationship Profile in the Reeher Platform for everyone with access to that profile to see. Users are also able to easily apply logic to further customize the reports. They have the ability to delete irrelevant individual real estate holdings, charitable contributions, or political donations. With these edits, the researcher can recalculate philanthropic interests, total giving amounts, and largest gift. All of this is intended to give TWU a more accurate picture of the prospect they are researching as well as help gift officers prioritize whom they should be visiting.

Donor Discovery helps TWU gift officers and alumni relations to run ad-hoc or "one-off" wealth screens on individual prospective donors as needed. Gift officers and alumni relations staff are able to run these wealth screens on their laptop, tablet, or mobile phone so they have access to the data whenever they need it. The officers have found it easy to run the wealth screens and interpret the data so they are armed with the information they need to maximize their fundraising efforts.



Future:

TWU has used Reeher to discover key donors, including a couple who gave a non-pledged \$25,000 gift to the institution each year. With the ability to analyze the wealth, giving thresholds, and other philanthropic giving, TWU was able to work with these donors to secure a pledged gift of \$250,000 over the next five years! If it weren't for Donor Discovery, and the creativity of the advancement team, TWU could have potentially lost out on hundreds of thousands of dollars from this one couple alone.

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Donor Discovery has become a part of TWU's best practice when evaluating the prospective donor base. They feel that the tool pays for itself by helping them move from "fund receivers" to proactive and informed "fundraisers." While the institution still gets "fund receiving" calls from prospective donors, everyone

on the advancement team is trained to quickly pull up a wealth screen using Donor Discovery and view a report while the prospective donor is still on the phone. This allows for a more substantial conversation during the first call.

As a result of the team's success, the number of gift officers has doubled since 2015. TWU was also able to free up a prospect researcher who can dedicate more time to strategic research since the gift officers are now able to run wealth screens themselves. The advancement team, as a whole, has also raised its' sights to grow to a \$12-15 million fundraising institution in the coming years.

