



Philanthropic Ventures Foundation Streamlines Charitable Giving

Background

Philanthropic Ventures Foundation (PVF), founded by Bill Somerville in 1991, is a public foundation based in the San Francisco Bay Area that works with individuals, families, businesses and foundations to create innovative giving programs that match the specific interests of donors. PVF takes the investment approach to charitable giving, seeking out quality people and programs doing outstanding human service work.

At PVF, givers can establish a Donor Venture Fund, an advised fund through which all of their charitable giving can be done. Donors can make recommendations for grants to charitable causes of their choice or they can get information from PVF on high-impact programs that match their interests. Grants can be made to causes anywhere in the world, regardless of nonprofit status, at anytime. PVF evaluates potential grant recipients, conducts site visits, negotiates grants and, in some cases, creates a new program to match a donor's interests.

Problem

PVF's goal is to maximize the impact of charitable giving through its unique grant making approach. In order to give when giving is most needed and meet the requirements of its donors, PVF looks to issue grant requests within a 48-hour period. In order to achieve this, PVF must follow standard procedures that are core to the success of the organization. In an effort to manage the different facets associated with grant making activities, PVF historically relied on generic database programs that were not designed with the unique needs of grant making in mind.

PVF used Microsoft® Excel spreadsheets, ACT contact management software and QuickBooks® accounting software to manage the many elements of grant giving. PVF staff found that it was unwittingly wasting valuable time on administrative tasks associated with maintaining the programs, primarily data entry. PVF professionals were required to enter grant activity information, such as grants given and gifts received, in each of the three programs to ensure consistency. This made it difficult to maintain accurate records and decreased the time that the organization could focus on its mission of connecting donors' with their cause. In addition, the organization

was limited in its ability to produce detailed reports and analyze its programs. For example, the organization often had to analyze the percentage of grant allocation to counties within its school teachers program. In order to do this, PVF had to manually count the number of grants each county received and do the math by hand—a time-consuming and error-prone process.

As with any organization, PVF was required to keep track of contact information for its volunteers, board members, grantees and donors. The maintenance of this information was often left to each professional's discretion and due to staff preferences, contact information was kept in programs such as Microsoft® Outlook and Excel documents, which included mailing lists for newsletters, Access, ACT and others. This made it difficult to maintain the history associated with donors and grants and resulted in duplicate and oftentimes incorrect contact information.

PVF recognized that in order to continue serving the unique requirements of its donors and to sustain meeting its 48-hour grant turnaround goal, the organization needed to streamline its grant-making processes.

Solution

In 2001, PVF chose Exceed! Premier – Telosa's flagship fundraising and donor management software – specifically for its grant making and grant seeking functions, integrated with its donor tracking capability. "We recognized the need to track and manage the myriad of details during the grant making process," said Allyndreth Stead, office manager at PVF. "Using Exceed! Premier we have centralized and can now harness our most valuable information. We can record, schedule and access details of all grants and PVF programs to operate faster and more efficiently than ever before."

PVF can manage the entire fundraising and grant making procedure through Exceed! Premier, eliminating the time-consuming need to enter data in three separate programs. In addition, because Exceed! Premier easily interfaces with most accounting programs, PVF can transfer grant and gift information directly into QuickBooks to generate grant checks and log donor gift deposits. "The ability to transfer data

between programs is saving the organization time and money and eliminated the need for us to add additional staff. We can generate grant letters faster than ever before, spending only minutes on tasks that took hours with our old process," remarked Stead.

Due to improved reporting capabilities in the software, PVF can now optimize and analyze its grant giving activities to ensure that its program's goals are achieved. For example, by using Exceed! Premier, PVF has eliminated the manual processes associated with analyzing the allocation of funds for its many programs. Now the organization can change the parameters of its reports to analyze the history of grants given over one month or the past 10 years.

Finally, PVF can automatically generate donor and grant letters through the unique mailing features found in Exceed! Premier, again saving the organization precious time.

Results

Today, PVF is using technology to streamline and more efficiently manage its fundraising and grant giving activities. The organization can quickly access donor or grantee information and grant programs to ensure that all aspects of the process are thoroughly accounted for and on schedule. The organization is saving time on data entry and is more productive as a result.

"Through the use of technology, we are able to save time on performing administrative tasks like data entry, grant check writing and information management," added Stead. "By making the decision to invest in Exceed! Premier, we estimate that we are operating five to six times more efficiently due to technology."

"A computer is like a car. You don't want to spend your time under the hood, you want to drive it," said Bill Somerville, president and founder of PVF. "Exceed! Premier is like a clean, well-running engine for our car. It minimizes the time we spend behind our computers, so we can spend more time in front of people."