

## 8 Recession-Proof Tips for Communications\*

Savvy communications combined with a solid perspective and plain old common sense can help your organization weather the economic storm and come out on the other side with strategy intact and minimal losses. Now is a good time to focus and simplify, while reaching out and collaborating with like-minded individuals and organizations to save money and amplify impact.

### 1. Stay the course.

Avoid the tendency to “refocus” your efforts during these times. If you are operating according to solid, long-term goals, there is no need to toss the baby out with the bath. Your present circumstances might necessitate minor adjustments, but don’t allow those circumstances to influence your overall plan. Stay focused and make every decision beneficial to both the present and the future.

### 2. Listen to your stakeholders.

Talk to your board, senior executives, sales staff, development staff, partners and customers proactively. Now might be the perfect time for a survey. How are they doing? How can you help? During a downturn, many of your stakeholders share your burden and can offer new insights, reveal new needs and bring unexpected opportunities.

### 3. Review and refine your communications.

The knee-jerk for many organizations is to cut marketing and communication expenditures to the detriment of future revenue streams. Now more than ever, it is essential to clearly voice who you are and why your work or services are important. You may want to consider an audit of your efforts to uncover communications strengths and weaknesses, and refine your strategies accordingly.

### 4. Consider collaborations.

Other organizations, be they partners or competitors, are dealing with limitations similar to yours. This is a unique time when people and companies are more readily open to pooling or sharing resources or responsibilities to save everyone time and money.

### 5. Show your value.

When money is tight, everyone wants to stretch their dollar further and not waste it – especially funders. Share widely and often across your donor and support networks about your latest updates, successes and accomplishments. When they see something working, it looks like a smart investment and they are more likely to give. For businesses, the same goes for communicating with your boards and shareholders.

### 6. Keep asking.

During challenging times you may be feeling uneasy asking others for money. But keep asking. It is a sign of respect that it is assumed that individual donors will still have the capacity to give. It also provides an opportunity for individuals to feel they are able to help in some way.

### 7. Control costs.

Evaluating how to run a more cost-effective ship can be one of the helpful aspects of a recession. Ask every employee for ideas on how to save money at his or her level and optimize performance. Reassess budgets, but be realistic about how much it will take to reach your goals. Do not short-change your work leaving you to do more with less.

### 8. All systems go.

Use this as an opportunity to get your house in order – build organization charts, train employees on processes and systems, and create templates for frequently used forms and documents so that no time is wasted. When business bounces back and it’s time to staff up, a solid and productive foundation will be in place to facilitate growth.

Would you like to “recession proof” your communications?