

Top 5 things Charities can do in a Downturn

1. Plan for the downturn now. Look at your funding streams, beneficiaries and costs and plan likely scenarios for your organisation. Be realistic and don't wait till it's too late. Can you be more efficient in the way you do things? Can you save money by outsourcing some of your office functions?

2. Re-visit your costs. Use this opportunity to re-negotiate contracts with your suppliers (who will need your business more), or see if you can save money by switching to NCVO's recommended suppliers; www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/discounts

3. Develop your volunteers. Are you making the best use of their skills? Do you have a strategy to attract volunteers you need, especially the pool of highly-skilled newly unemployed.

4. Build your network. With the sector facing the squeeze, collaboration can enable you to achieve more and accomplish your aims despite having fewer resources.

5. Demonstrate your success. Measuring outcomes and demonstrating impact is notoriously hard to do. However it is a great way to improve your chances of securing funding.

Karl Wilding, Head of Research at NCVO says

'It is more important than ever during these tough times for organisations to plan ahead. It is vital to look carefully at your objectives and funding streams and ensure that you have the strategies in place to deal with any likely changes.'

Keith Hickey, Chief Executive of the Charity Finance Directors' Group says
'The current economic difficulties give us opportunities as well as problems and the real issue is how to identify and take those opportunities. If we're talking about a world where the need for charities increases, there is a real role for the sector to play to try and find ways of increasing the services that we provide and of making ourselves stronger organisations as a result.'

For further information access the NCVO website on www.ncvo-vol.org.uk