

The danger of becoming an 'average' fundraising school

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I am delighted that the report is now in the hands of those who made it possible. I hope it is already being employed to reflect on successes, identify areas for improvement, and develop plans for the future. All involved should be rightly proud of the £172.5m raised to enhance both the educational experience offered by your schools and the ability of the most talented pupils to enjoy that experience.

Benchmarking reports are invaluable tools, and bespoke reports are available to participating schools which give more tailored insight and comparison. Over the coming weeks, Graham-Pelton's expert consulting team will also be sharing their own take on aspects of the survey.

However, one message we consistently share with clients and have shared with members at recent regional meetings is the danger of 'becoming average'.

Naturally, averages are used to help interpret data. But taking the average of any data point as an aspirational target or a benchmark from which to grow misses the fundamental point that there is no such thing as an average school, or at least I am yet to find one claiming, or aspiring, to be average!

Successful fundraising is reliant on a handful of core factors: committed leadership, a compelling case for support, enough prospective (and ideally engaged) donors, the correct resourcing, and a strategy to deliver it. Strengths and weaknesses in each of these areas will differ for each school and should determine how you structure, invest in, and execute your development programmes.

Thanks to the survey, it is now easier to see where you stand in terms of return on investment (ROI), staffing numbers, budgets, and fundraising performance. This is hugely helpful information. What no survey can tell us with great accuracy is what your ROI, staffing levels, budget, and fundraising targets should be.

A school which boasts strengths across all the core factors above should be optimistic about breaking the mould in terms of ROI, not simply exceeding an arbitrary ratio perceived as good performance. Those starting out need to fully understand their own position and build from there, which may not be to immediately transplant the blueprint from a similar school which has enjoyed success. Those in the midst of their development journey should make informed decisions as to how they increase their resource to realise potential.

The overriding finding of the report is that investment in development over time positively influences fundraising performance. Unless you count TARDIS owners amongst your alumni, the biggest influence you can have over increased fundraising performance is to ensure that the investments you make are the correct ones for your school.

Andy Wood
Managing Director, Graham-Pelton Consulting



Hardcopies of our benchmarking report are available for a nominal cost of £25 including postage and packing. **Please contact info@idpe.org.uk to arrange for us to send you a copy of this report.**

Bespoke Reports

In addition, to the general benchmarking report, bespoke reports for those schools who participated in the survey are also available, which will provide additional insight into your school's results based on:

- Type of school
- Region
- Income raised
- Size of team

Bespoke reports will include tables indicating the position of your school against other anonymised schools as well as specific content and additional points for consideration by your school.

If you require a bespoke report the cost is £500 - please email inside@grahampelton.com to request your bespoke report directly.