

The Advancement Technology Landscape 2017

A Survey of Industry Professionals Conducted in Fall 2016



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Welcome...

Is the status quo good enough?

Welcome to our **2017 Advancement Technology Landscape report**. We're here because advancement has changed tremendously over the past few years—and as the industry evolves, technology will continue to play a key role in the success of fundraisers, alumni groups, researchers, and leadership at organizations of all sizes.

As your partners in advancement, EverTrue and Zuri Group are committed to surfacing technology trends that affect nonprofits and educational institutions. While we know that it's challenging to predict the future of advancement technology, we *can* take stock of where we are now to provide insight into where we might head.

What follows is a survey of the advancement industry's satisfaction with the different technology resources in use today. The results represent insights from 654 advancement professionals from 427 organizations ranging in size and mission. We heard from individuals across all seniority levels and functions (including vice presidents, advancement services staff, alumni professionals, and gift officers), indicating that technology impacts the entire advancement office, regardless of role.

Still, our findings show that there is substantial opportunity for moving advancement professionals towards greater satisfaction with technology resources. The majority of participants assigned moderate-to-neutral ratings to the systems available to them today.

But is the status quo good enough? With participants “just surviving” and “making do,” is the industry willing to embrace new technology to help raise more money and build better relationships?

When we think about how technology has transformed and improved our daily lives—from how we shop to how we stay in touch with friends—the need for innovation in advancement becomes even clearer.

Join us on the journey to uncover, understand, and fill these gaps. The advancement office of the future is connected, efficient, and donor-focused. EverTrue and Zuri Group believe that better technology can help us get there.

Who We Asked

654

Advancement Professionals

427

Organizations

DEMOGRAPHICS AND DETAILS

We invited industry professionals from a variety of different institutions to participate in the survey. The following graphs illustrate details related to their roles, seniority levels, size of their institutions, amounts raised, and database usage.

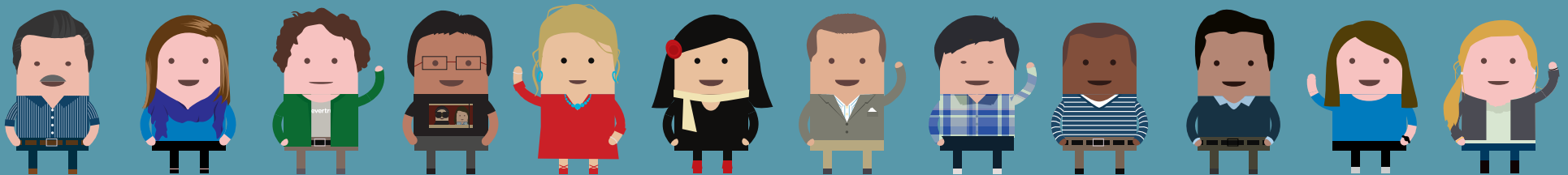


Fig 1. What functional area and seniority level best describes your role?

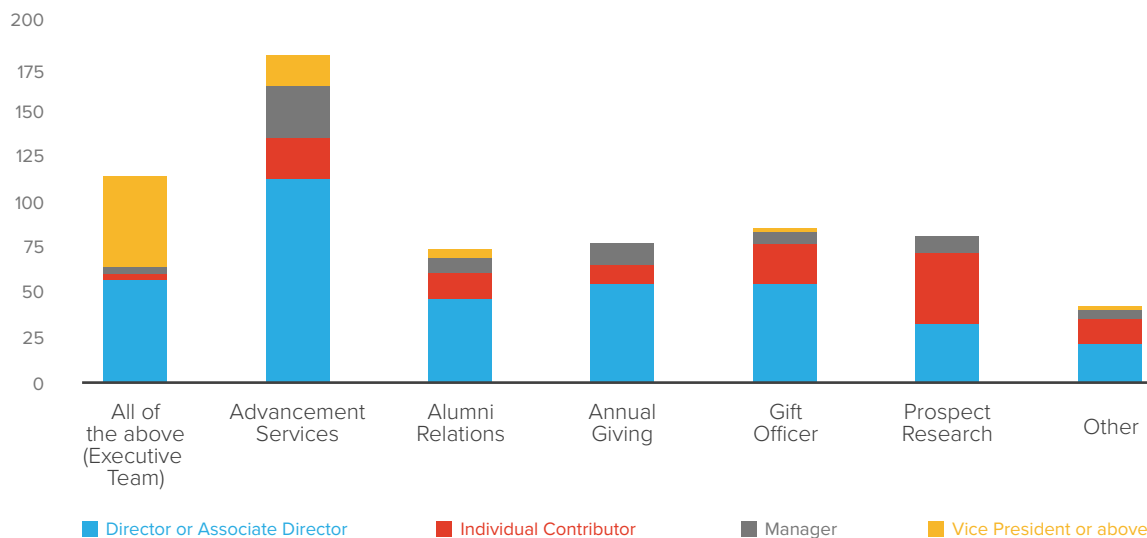


Fig 2. How many staff members does your advancement office employ?

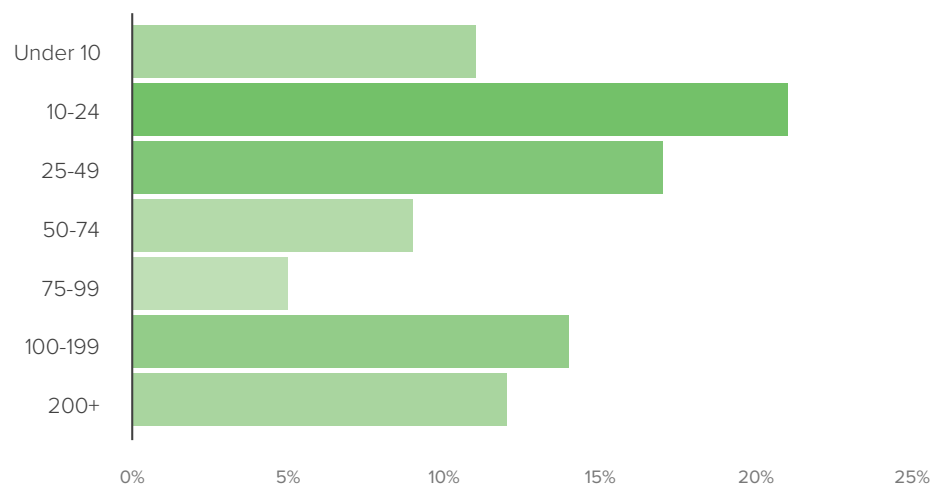


Fig 3. What best describes your institution's total dollars raised per year?

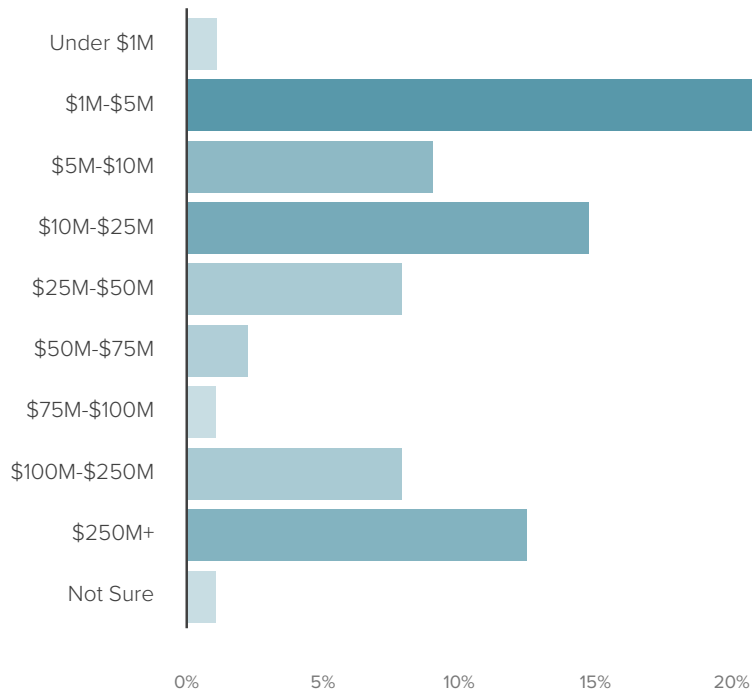


Fig 4. How many constituent records does your database hold?

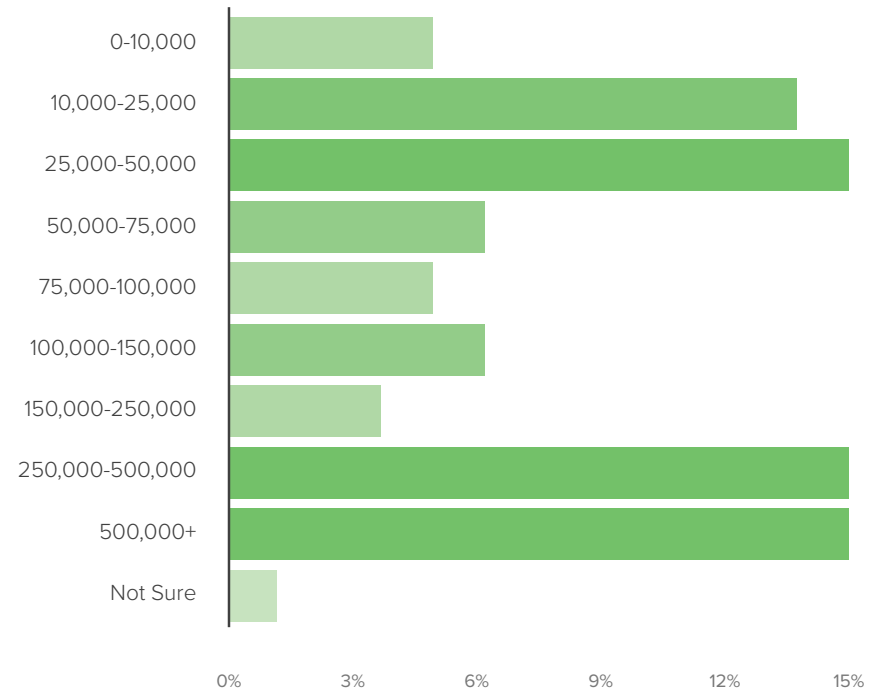
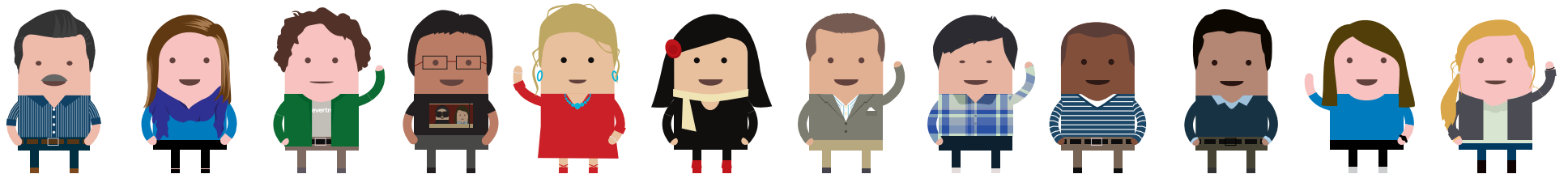
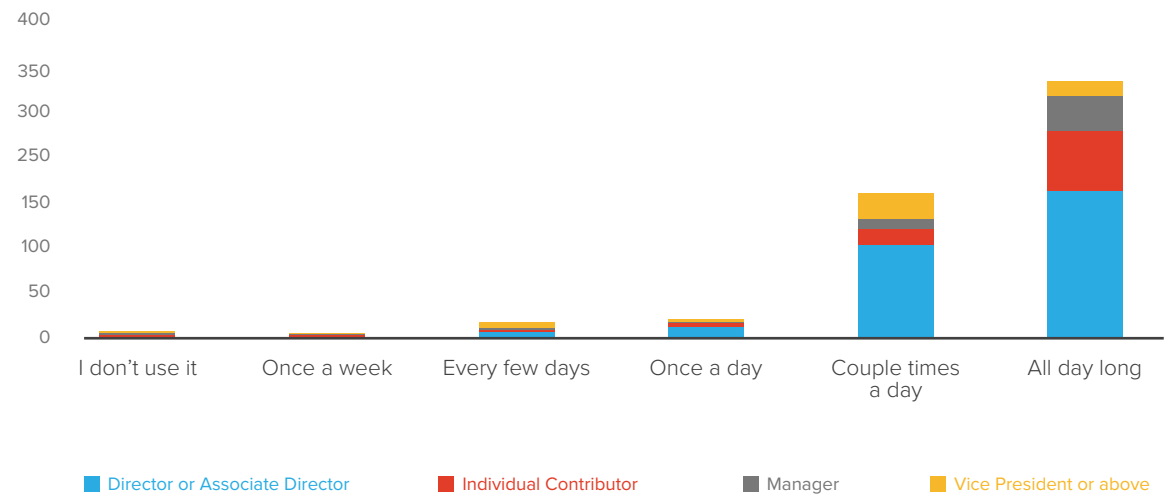


Fig 5. How often do you use your database in your job?





The Data's Alright

The foundation of any successful advancement program is great data. It's difficult to engage—let alone reach—constituents without easy access to affinity, capacity, demographic, and social data.

When it comes to their own constituent data, however, participants were only moderately satisfied. Only 27% reported satisfaction with access to social data; one participant commented, “More social media integrations will help me contact and maintain relationships with constituents.”

As constituents engage online, is your institution equipped to track that data and take action on it? On an average week, EverTrue tracks 600k+ engagements across 1,500+ institutional Facebook pages—valuable data that is helping advancement teams learn more about their constituents' interests and affinities to make more informed asks.

Fig 6. How satisfied are you with the accuracy of your constituent data?

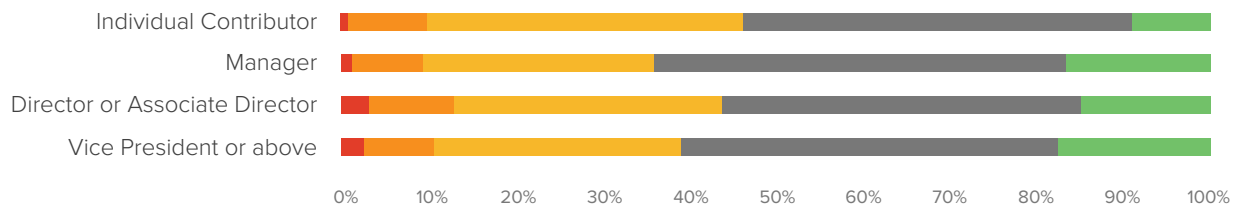


Fig 7. How satisfied are you with the depth and detail of your constituent data?

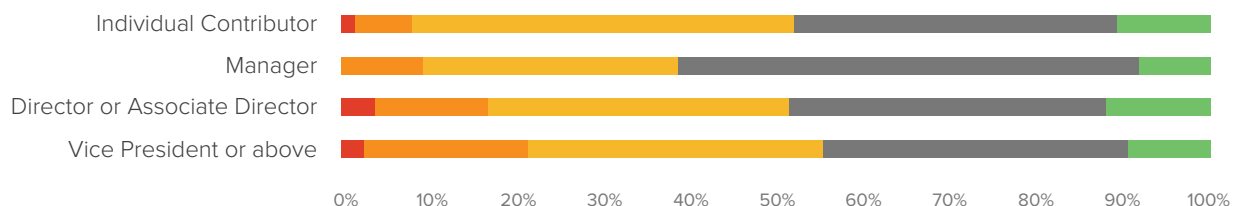
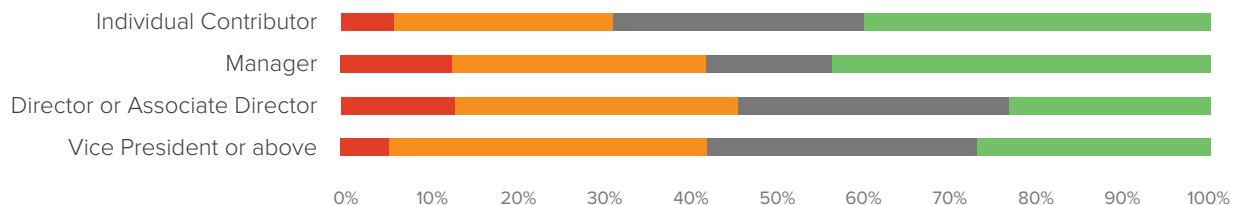


Fig 8. How satisfied are you with the access you have to constituents' social media data? (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)



Very Dissatisfied
 Dissatisfied
 It's OK
 Satisfied
 Very Satisfied



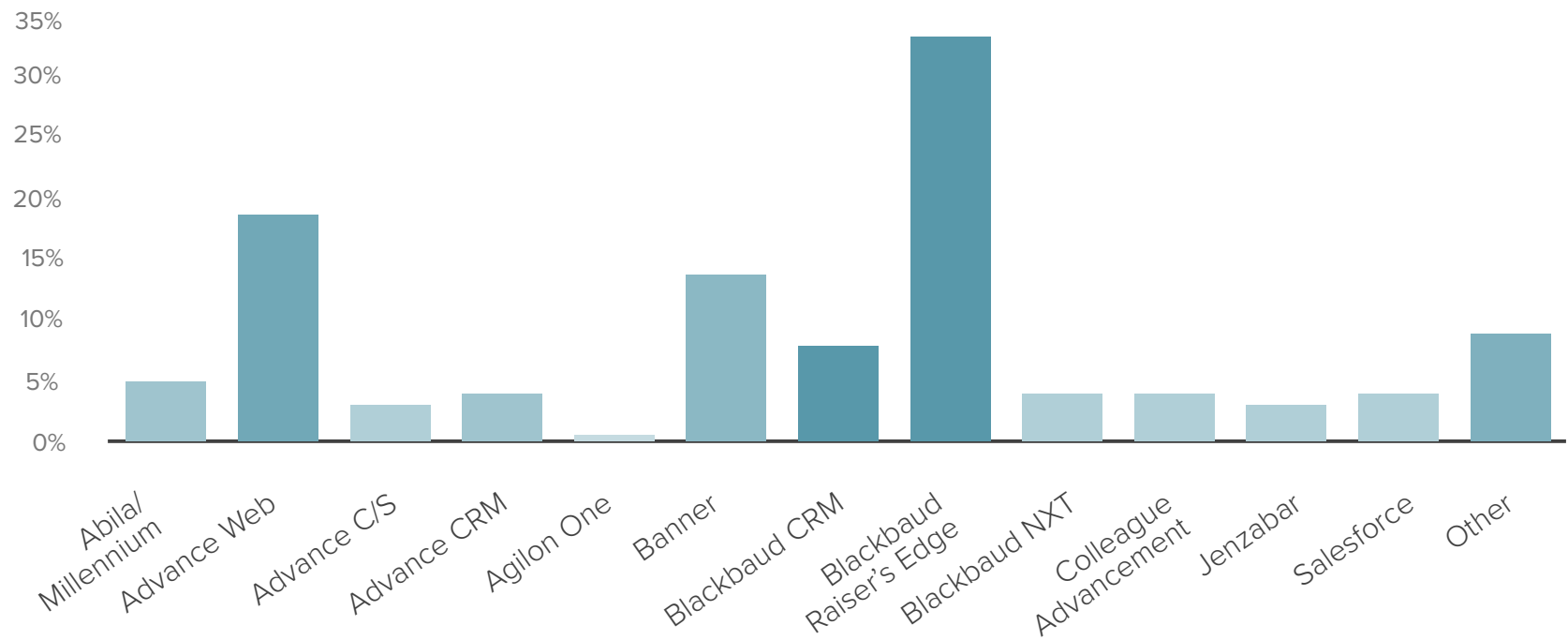
LEGACY DATABASES:

Yay or Nay?

Participants' satisfaction with their databases of record varied widely by system. When we asked participants to rate their databases by “ease of use” and “effectiveness,” the average mark was 3 out of 5 for both measures. As with many of the responses, VP and director-level respondents indicated less satisfaction than managers and individual contributors.

While we do not portray per-database satisfaction here, we do show the distribution of databases used across all respondents. Blackbaud and Ellucian products represent the majority of users, which is standard for the higher-education landscape. And, unfortunately and apparently, “it’s okay” is the standard response among advancement systems users.

Fig 9. What is your institution's current database of record?



The ease (or lack thereof) of integrating databases with third-party platforms/tools was another area of concern among participants. 61% of respondents were dissatisfied, extremely dissatisfied, or just “okay” with integration capabilities. Survey respondents elaborated:

“There are so many different solutions out there, but it’s just short of a nightmare to get them to integrate with our database.”

“We’ve been frustrated by a lack of integrations between tools and our database.”

Fig 10. How satisfied are you with your database’s ease of use?

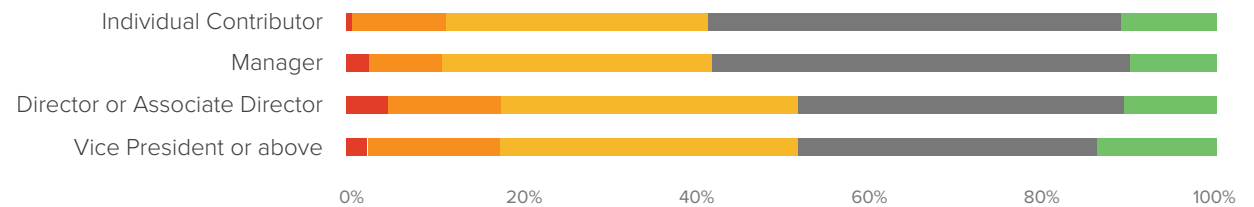
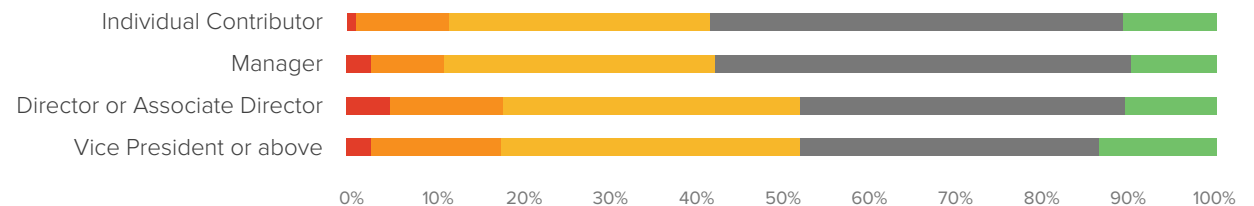


Fig 11. How satisfied are you with the effectiveness of your database?



Very Dissatisfied
 Dissatisfied
 It's OK
 Satisfied
 Very Satisfied

A collage of various data visualization charts is scattered across the left side of the slide. It includes a bar chart with months (Mar-Dec) on the x-axis, a pie chart with segments labeled 5%, 10%, 20%, and 60%, a line graph showing an upward trend, a stacked bar chart with orange and blue segments, a small bar chart with three bars, a line graph with multiple lines, a bar chart with four bars, a donut chart with segments labeled 5%, 10%, 20%, and 30%, and a bar chart with five bars. The charts are overlapping and tilted at various angles.

Reporting & Analytics Challenges

Our findings suggest that the advancement industry is less satisfied with reporting than nearly any other aspect of their technology stack. Yet, the ability to access reporting and analytics is key to operational efficiency within an advancement organization. It's challenging to solve problems and make decisions without data-driven insights.

The takeaway here is loud and clear: participants would welcome improvements on the reporting front.

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Fig 12. How satisfied are you with the usefulness of your reporting systems?

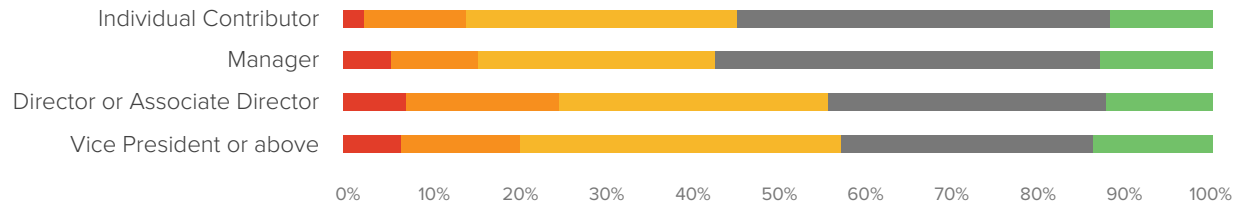


Fig 13. How satisfied are you with the access you have to reporting tools?

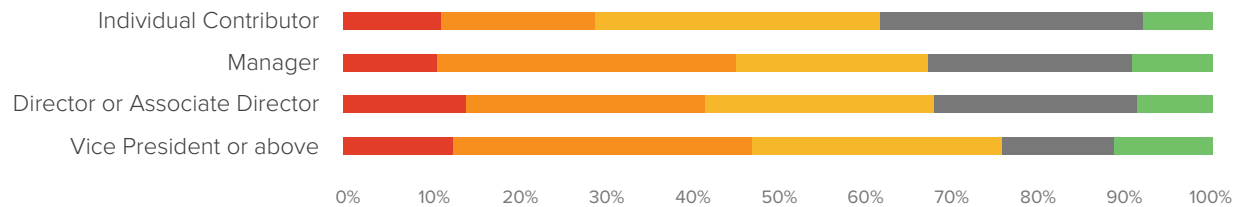
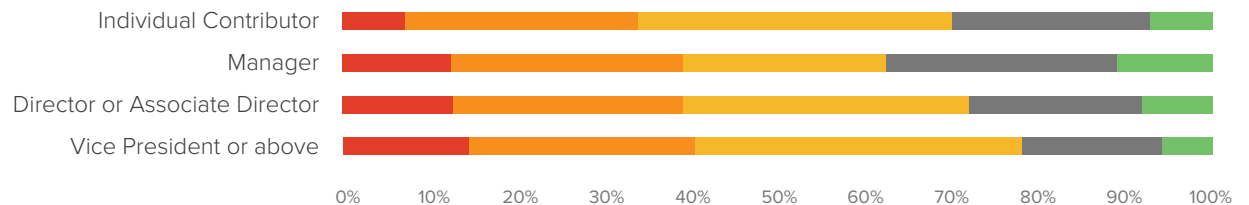


Fig 14. How satisfied are you with the data analytics and modeling capabilities of your tools?



Very Dissatisfied
 Dissatisfied
 It's OK
 Satisfied
 Very Satisfied



THE STATE OF Online Giving Tech

With giving days and online giving gaining steam, it's imperative for institutions to harness technology to support donors' online behavior and preferences. Many institutions have responded by implementing online giving functionality—but how do participants rate their existing tools and resources in this area? Is the technology keeping up with the demand?

Although we do not analyze satisfaction by platform in this report, we did ask participants to report on the systems they currently use for online giving. Blackbaud (29%) and iModules (28%) led the way, with other platforms including EverTrue, GiveCampus, and ScaleFunder.

The best online giving solutions address both staff and donor expectations. For donors, it should be easy to make a gift in seconds on a desktop computer or a mobile device. On your end, it should be simple to create a beautiful giving experience, segment and target constituents with an ask, watch the funds come in, and reconcile those gifts. One participant said it well:

“Online shopping has evolved to be very simple and user-friendly. Advancement technology needs to be equally as easy to use. We’re just not there yet.”

How satisfied are you with your institution’s...

Fig 15. Online giving functionality?

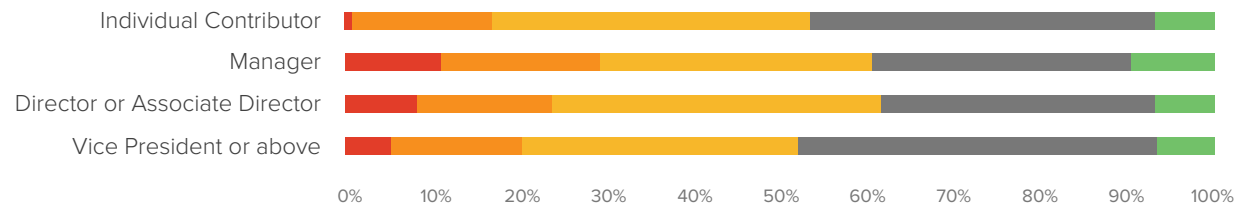
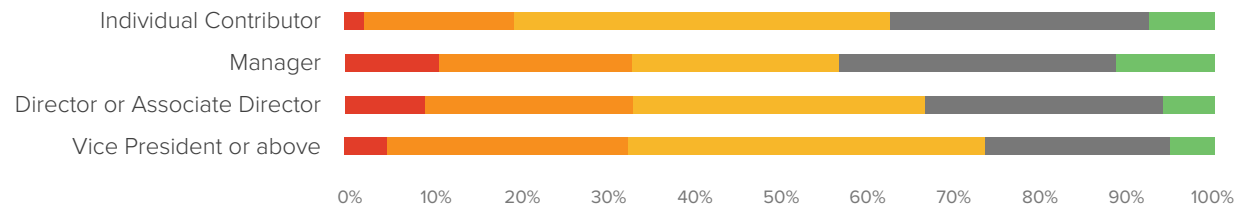


Fig 16. Peer-to-peer and day-of-giving resources?



Very Dissatisfied
 Dissatisfied
 It's OK
 Satisfied
 Very Satisfied

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

in the Digital Realm



On average, participants gave a 3 out of 5 rating to solutions focused on alumni engagement outcomes. Based on this response, we see a fair amount of room for improvement in the tools serving alumni relations teams.

Think about it: would you to take someone out to eat at a 3-star restaurant?

Especially when it comes to constituent-facing tools such as a website or an alumni directory, don't our alumni and donors deserve a better online experience? Should we be settling for just "okay"? Taking it a step further, can technology help us learn more about our alumni so we can tailor content and other engagement opportunities to their interests? One participant summed this up well:

"Engagement is key to an institution's success, so being able to incorporate new technology that provides insight into constituent behaviors and affinities is important."

How satisfied are you with your institution's...

Fig 17. Email marketing provider?

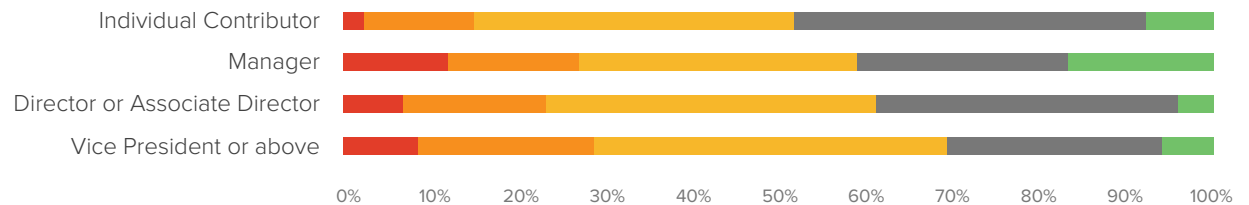


Fig 18. Alumni website?

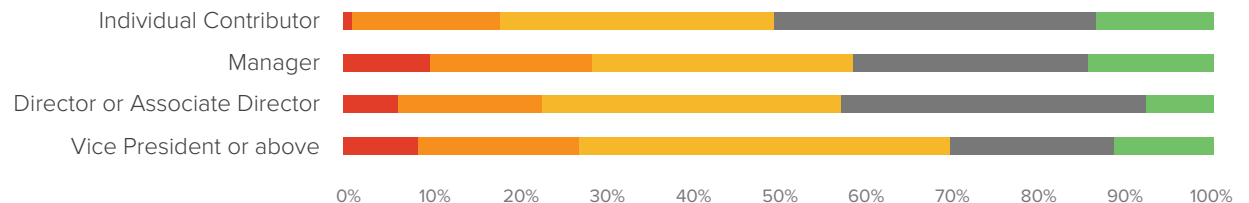
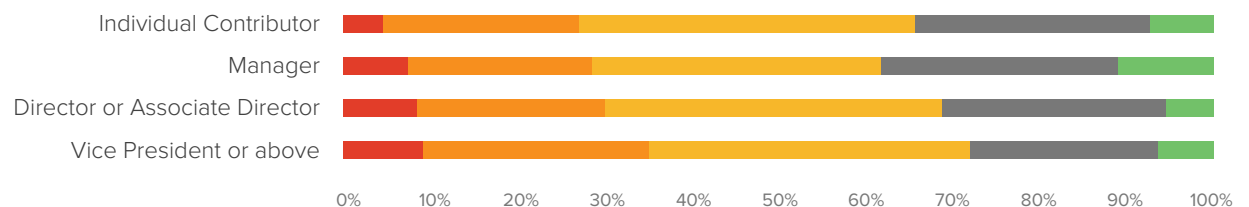


Fig 19. Alumni networking/directory solution?



Very Dissatisfied
 Dissatisfied
 It's OK
 Satisfied
 Very Satisfied



“I Can’t Get No Satisfaction”:

EVENT, VOLUNTEER, AND CAREER SERVICES

Despite the rise of social media and other digital engagement channels, alumni relations teams will—and should—continue to rely on events, volunteerism, and career mentoring as engagement tactics. It’s disconcerting, then, that participants’ satisfaction with these tools is less than any other area.

Among all of the survey questions, event and volunteer management tools yielded the least satisfaction among VP-level participants (less than 20% satisfied). For managers and other staff members looking to invest in these types of solutions, this statistic bodes well for getting buy-in from executive team members.

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How satisfied are you with your institution's tools and capabilities for...

Fig 20. Event management?

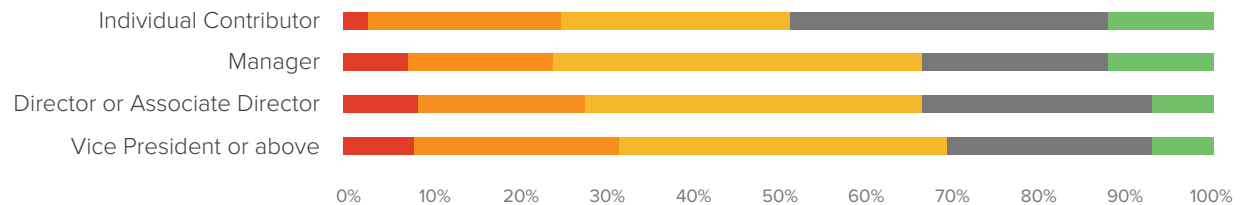


Fig 21. Volunteer management?

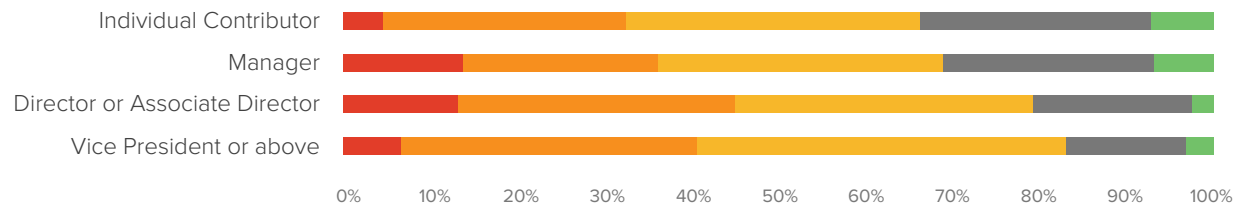
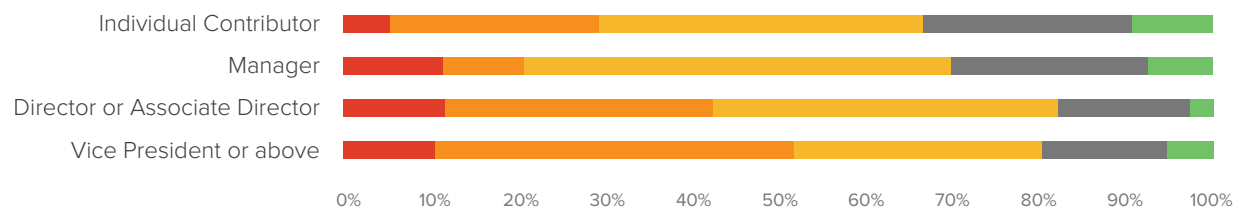


Fig 22. Career services/mentorship?



Very Dissatisfied
 Dissatisfied
 It's OK
 Satisfied
 Very Satisfied

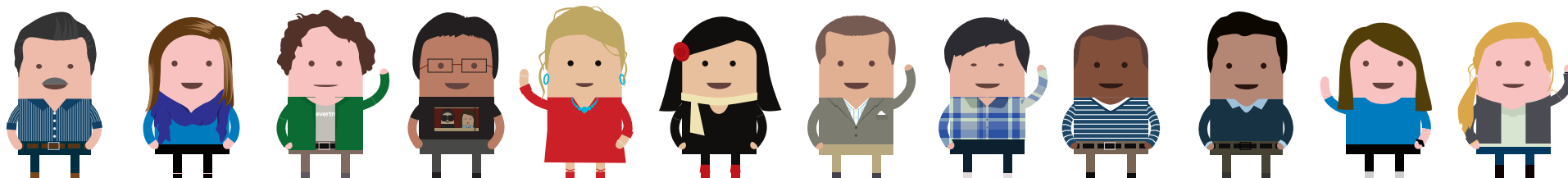
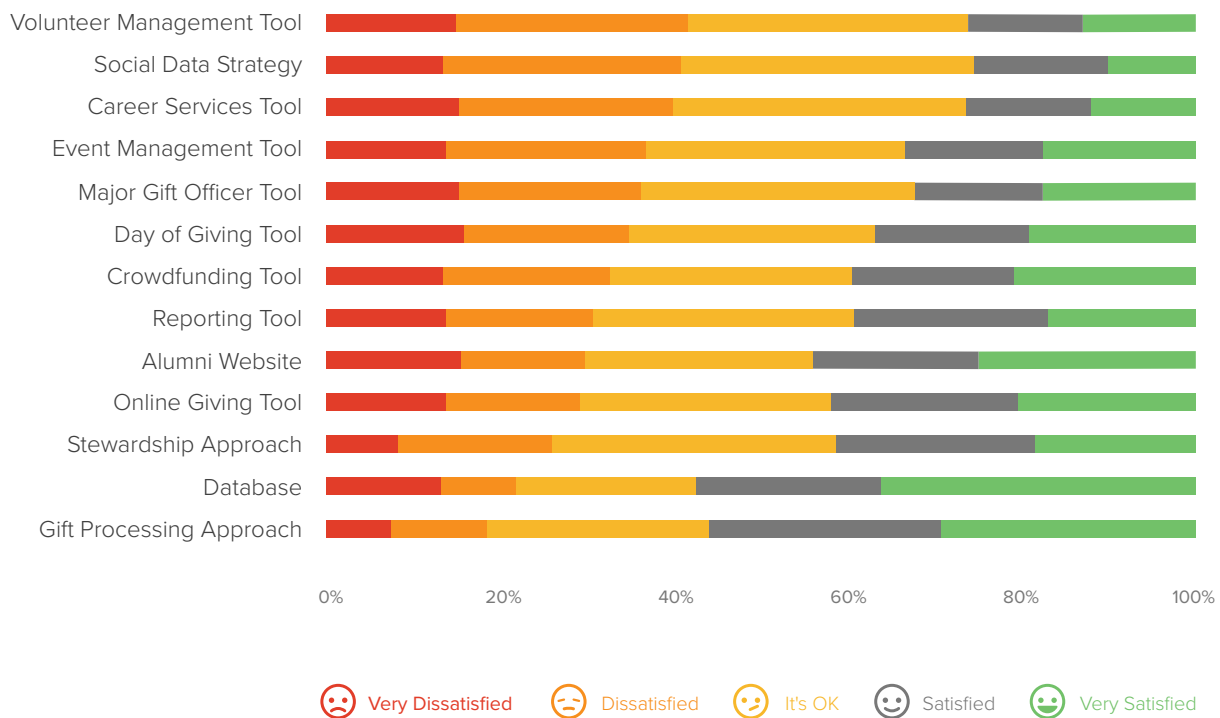


What Stays and What Goes?

Our findings indicate that an advancement offices' technological needs are broad and varied, yet underserved in many areas. Participants provided their opinions on what tool(s) they most needed to replace or implement, as well as which tool(s) they did not feel need to be replaced.

These needs generally align with the areas of least satisfaction we surfaced earlier, including volunteer management, social data strategy, and career services resources.

Fig 23. How much does your team need a new...



Final Thoughts

The technology landscape supporting advancement is strong in some places and weak in others. The majority of professionals are, at best, just “okay” with the tools at their disposal. This mediocrity has costs—program support, productivity, and job satisfaction suffer when technology is insufficient.

At EverTrue and Zuri Group, we believe that great technology can have a significant impact on advancement success. While many survey participants cited budgetary constraints, staff resources, and support and training as challenges to harnessing new technology, many remained optimistic about overcoming those hurdles—or even pushed vendors to meet the industry’s needs more quickly. (As one respondent indicated: “The fundraising marketplace needs to pick up the pace like technology companies have done for other industries.”)

Many participants also gave insight into how they see advancement technology evolving in the coming years. Key themes included “cloud-based” and “mobile” technology:

“Much less infrastructure in-house... and much more in the cloud.”

“Mobile and social is the new wave, in addition to data visualization and analytics. Any platform that can provide a complete package will be a winner.”

“The ability to access anything from anywhere is the future.”

Regardless of what’s in store for advancement technology, it’s clear that organizations that are able to keep up with changing trends will have a competitive edge. Those that can’t may fall behind in the quest for charitable dollars and attracting top talent. As one participant put it:

“Technology is constantly changing... and many institutions are not able to change as better options become available. There will be a bigger gap between institutions that are able to utilize new approaches and those that are not able to. That gap will impact an institution’s ability to fundraise in a changing marketplace.”

WHAT YOUR TEAM SHOULD DO NEXT:

- 1** Catalog your technology tools and resources.
- 2** Talk to your colleagues and see where they fall on these questions.
- 3** Press your vendors for better solutions and customer support.
- 4** Fill any gaps in constituent-facing technology as soon as possible.
- 5** Remember that the basics—great data, solid reporting, and efficient workflows—are essential even while adopting innovative new technology.

And, finally, let us know what trends, tips, and tricks you are seeing in the industry. Your feedback on this survey will help inform all of us of the best opportunities for increased success.



ABOUT EVERTRUE

EverTrue is a leading advancement software platform that supports fundraising efforts at educational institutions. Powered by institutional data and third-party insights, EverTrue provides streamlined access to donor data to help advancement offices more effectively engage constituents and maximize giving potential. The EverTrue platform improves results for the entire advancement team through targeted products for alumni relations, annual giving, prospect research and gift officers.

Today, more than 300 institutions and organizations are using EverTrue's web and mobile apps to strengthen their donor pipelines and increase giving participation and engagement. EverTrue is headquartered in Boston, MA and is backed by Bain Capital Ventures.

ABOUT ZURI GROUP

Zuri Group helps organizations around the globe raise more money and build better relationships through innovative strategies, operations, and technologies. Zuri Group provides consulting, strategic thinking, solutions implementation and custom technical, web, and design services in addition to delivering world-class expertise that is shaping our industry's best practices.

At Zuri Group, we align these best practices into the practices that are best for each of our unique clients. Organizations turn to Zuri as a solutions-oriented partner to ensure that advancement efforts can spin like a top in support of mission-driven work. Much more information about Zuri Group can be found at www.zurigroup.com.