



Know More. Raise More.

How Columbia University's Research Team Found Success with Insightful

Columbia University's director of prospect development, Adam Bradford, was searching for tools to enhance fundraisers' ability to connect with donors. He wanted to explore new ways to uncover unique information about prospects and donors to help the university make more personal, meaningful connections with alumni, supporters and new friends.

"We really want to know more about our donors," said Bradford. "Learning about what's happening in their lives and their careers is important. It helps build and strengthen our relationships."

With a desire to learn more about what news they may be missing, Bradford's research team decided to test out several information providers, including Philanthropy News Digest, LexisNexis, Google, and a new product, Insightful. They dedicated six months to tracking approximately 200 prospects/donors across the platforms.

"Everybody would love to just be able to use one tool, but it's pretty rare to be able to have one tool that satisfies every need," said Bradford. "That's why we wanted to try out Insightful. There are sources Insightful has that others don't. We wanted to know what we would find there that we might be missing from other sources."

Next, they compared and evaluated each resource for their value in delivering unique, accurate and timely information.

"We are looking for news and information on five categories: awards and honors; board affiliations; philanthropy; wealth impact; and general interest," said Bradford. "Ultimately we want to create unique cultivation opportunities."

What did the 6-month study reveal about Insightful?

"It's surfacing items that don't appear elsewhere," said Bradford. "Insightful has a lot of local sources that others don't. That's where a lot of the unique information is coming from."

Bradford's team also discovered that Insightful provided a wider variety of news items than other providers they use. "Insightful often finds content that some of the others don't, especially awards and honors and just general information about people who are prominent in their local communities."

When new information is uncovered, Bradford's team shares the article with gift officers or senior leadership to use as a cultivation opportunity.

"I'm aware of multiple occasions where we sent a high-level acknowledgement to a donor because of information Insightful surfaced," he said. "It helps our relationships [with donors and prospects] if we know more about them."

What is Insightful and how does it work?

Insightful is a new software that was designed *by* fundraising teams *for* fundraising teams to provide an easy way to access credible, vetted news and information to improve cultivation opportunities with donors and prospects.

"We heard from many prospect researchers that it is hard to manage email alerts on all the prospects they're charged to follow," said Sarah Landman, executive vice president of Insightful. "Insightful provides a central hub to easily follow constituents. With a simple click, development teams receive notifications when new information appears. This saves time and helps to keep on top of important news."

Insightful's content is powered by its parent company, NewsBank inc. NewsBank has been a leading news and information provider for 50 years offering a depth and breadth of news content unmatched by any other resource. Insightful's content is available online 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from any device.

"There is no better or easier way to stay up to date on your prospects, donors and their interests," said Landman. "It helps fill in information gaps, so you don't miss out on key information, and ultimately leads your organization to raising more money so you can do more good in the world."

At Columbia University, Bradford agrees. After the six-month study they found information in Insightful they did not find in other search engines or databases. He says the news Insightful delivers allows the university to make more meaningful connections and stand out to prospects and donors.

Are you ready to see how Insightful can work for your team? Contact us to schedule a customized demonstration.