

Blog Post: Thought Leadership

Rapidly Adapt Your Grantmaking Program with [Client Product]'s Program Module

Most people agree by now that 2021 will be a year of continued uncertainty. When COVID-19 shattered how we approach our work, many organizations reacted rather than responded. And who can blame them? In the face of disorienting and unpredictable change, the default human reaction is to freeze up, pull back, and adopt a wait-and-see mentality. Innovating in the face of a global pandemic is not for the faint of heart, yet philanthropic organizations have bravely stepped up to do just that.

Consider the many ways that grantmakers have risen to the challenge of rapidly adjusting their programming to meet emerging challenges. Take, for example, the ALIPH Foundation (the International Alliance for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Conflict Areas) that launched their international grantmaking programs on [client product] in 2019. During the global pandemic, they knew they needed to shift their normal funding program immediately to give emergency support to museum staff on the ground.

With the help of [client] and their new grants management system, ALIPH launched their COVID-19 Action Plan in just one week, and dispersed almost \$2 million in grants so that smaller heritage sites could survive during the pandemic. Staff quickly learned the intuitive new module to then make further improvements on their reporting – for example, by creating filters and List Views by project type and country, and extracting them into an XML file to build more complex reports. ALIPH achieved these great outcomes relatively quickly by using [client product]'s Program module within their [client] grant management solution.

And so the question becomes, **how do grantmakers position themselves to rapidly innovate in a time of uncertainty?** Grantmakers need a program management solution that enables them to identify a need within their mission and, through a grant program, quickly allocate funding towards that cause. [Client]'s Program Module has helped organizations like ALIPH to easily launch grant cycles in a matter of days.

There are a few key benefits to being able to create new initiatives, or pivot existing ones, as your funding areas and goals evolve. First, you can create rapid response programs without being held back by administrative burden. Second, you can implement changes to existing programs to align with your reporting needs. Finally, you can scale up your grantmaking to complement your organizational priorities or growth. When grantmaking is streamlined, not only are you freed up to focus on your core mission, but your entire organization will have more time for strategic efforts and ultimately be empowered to scale its philanthropy.

To be more nimble in grantmaking, nonprofits need configurable solutions

“Configurable” here refers to software that is designed with flexibility that comes “out of the box” with the system, so that no fundamental code needs to be changed for the system to work best for the customer. Configurable software is often confused with “customizable” software, which is a completely different concept. “Customization” refers to changing the source code of how the software operates to meet the needs of a particular organization.

As Mariana Catz, Managing Partner at [client] and Adjunct Lecturer at the University of Toronto, states, “Be cautious with customized solutions – versus ones that are configurable – which may not always stand the test of change in the long-term without significant effort and cost to re-customize.”

So, unlike configurable software, customizable software cannot be easily changed once it’s built. By contrast, configurable software is designed so that the customer can easily change or add anticipated features, such as user fields, values, and functionality. The result is a flexible software that can be adapted by the customer as their needs evolve.

Powered by [client]’s next-generation collaboration and automation platform called [client product], [client product]’s Program Module exemplifies this kind of configurability. Recognizing that no one size fits all, [client product] – [client]’s all-in-one grantmaking solution – is designed with the flexibility to accommodate different missions and their programs, from small foundations to international grantmakers. The Program Module’s intuitive design makes it easy for everyone on the team to learn, while support from [client] is available upon implementation and along the way. [Client] solutions combine technical expertise and a dedication to our clients to help grantmakers and foundation staff work more efficiently so they can make greater strides towards their mission.

Automate the data entry and focus on what matters

Pandemics, political issues, and economic shifts can disrupt grant programs, calling for grantmakers to adapt their programs and reporting. If they lack efficient processes to manage these complexities, most funders will lose hours of work manually entering the same data into multiple forms, sifting through files and email to retrieve important documents, and juggling multiple applications.

[Client product]’s Program Module brings added focus to these grants management processes by allowing you to autonomously build, manage, and iteratively tweak the specifics of all your grantmaking programs as needed. The module also lets you automatically sync all your related grant applications, budgets, and meetings to every one of your grantmaking programs, whether or not they be competitive calls or multi-year continuation grants. Everything is stored securely in the cloud to give you an instantly-accessible, organized view of all your giving programs and their unique requirements.

High-level visibility and granular personalization: You *can* have it both ways

[Client product]’s Program Module provides you with a clear high-level view of all your foundation’s giving programs, including grantmaking targets, program scope, and where