



# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

# BACKGROUND

In 2020, the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) Foundation began an exploratory process to determine the most effective strategy to elevate its fundraising performance. Recognizing that much like dentistry, professional fundraising is both an art and a science, professional counsel was sought to ensure the highest quality results and instill confidence in the recommended course of action.

Association Development Solutions (ADS), a firm specializing in fundraising and development for nonprofit organizations, was retained to conduct a comprehensive Planning and Feasibility Study. The goal was to determine the feasibility of shifting to a proactive fundraising model that would allow the Foundation to obtain the resources necessary to grow its impact on the dental community, with a focus on oral cancer.

Over the years, the AGD Foundation has been proud to provide programs and resources to improve oral health. In more recent years, we have been focused on oral cancer, given the major role that general dentists play in early detection. We believe oral cancer is not only an important topic, but one where we can make significant strides to improve the status quo. We have now reached a point where we want to do more, and, to that end, we invited our stakeholders to weigh in on the future direction of the organization and gauge the degree to which they would be willing to provide support.

Through the Study process, we engaged past and present leaders of AGD and the Foundation, as well as the general membership and industry representatives from the dental field. Their insights allowed ADS to assess critical elements essential to any successful fundraising initiative: the case for support, the availability of volunteer leaders, a pool of qualified prospective donors, and other variables that may influence the Foundation's ultimate plan of action.



# CASE FOR SUPPORT

The first step to successfully implement a fundraising strategy is to understand if stakeholders believe in the Foundation's mission and funding priorities. A preliminary background statement was developed to communicate the Foundation's vision for the future, highlighting the need to expand our efforts in education, screening, and resource development to prevent and detect oral cancer. The feedback provided helped to prioritize the programs that would be most attractive and meet donor expectations.

## STAKEHOLDER INPUT:

The case for support tested well, with the majority of member interviewees (90%), industry interviewees (60%), and member survey respondents (77%) stating they were supportive or very supportive of the document. Expanding education tested the most positively, with the greatest member survey respondents (70%) citing it as the most appealing component for funding.

## KEY TAKEAWAY:

Based on these results, it is evident that Study participants are supportive of the preliminary background statement, which provides a strong basis that a compelling case for support can be developed and embraced.

“No one is better equipped to tackle oral cancer than general dentists; our detection efforts can mean the difference between life and death for our patients. It is exciting and inspiring to see what the Foundation could accomplish, and the lives that could be saved, with additional resources for a targeted effort.”

- AGD Member

“Our company is highly supportive of opportunities to co-create programs that would meaningfully benefit AGD members and the dental community. It would demonstrate tremendous value to see AGD members supportive of oral cancer efforts; their active participation would be a significant motivator for us to make a financial investment.”

- Industry Representative

# LEADERSHIP

The identification and recruitment of a committed volunteer leadership team is necessary to achieve the desired goals of a fundraising initiative. Beyond the AGD Foundation Board of Directors, additional volunteers will ensure that extra leadership is present to amplify the message to the membership. The personal commitment and financial investment of these individuals is critical; prospective donors will look to them as they consider their participation and level of involvement.

## STAKEHOLDER INPUT:

Remarkably, the vast majority of member interviewees (73%) shared that they would be willing to serve the Foundation in a fundraising volunteer capacity. Additionally, Study participants identified over 60 individuals whom they believe would make influential fundraising leaders. Of those identified individuals, 13 participated in the interview process, with 93% stating they would serve as a fundraising leader.

## KEY TAKEAWAY:

It is evident that one of the greatest strengths of the Foundation is the availability of dedicated volunteer leaders. Responses to these questions illustrate interest and enthusiasm among members to assist the Foundation if a proactive fundraising effort moves forward. Furthermore, the affirmative responses from interviewees who happened to be cited by their peers substantiate the strength of suggestions made by participants.

“ I am a firm believer in what the Foundation is doing, and I would be more than willing to lend my time.

- AGD Member

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“ AGD has always had a reputation for having a highly engaged, volunteer-driven membership. This effort can only be as strong as the people involved, and I believe any effort will have no shortage of dedicated volunteers.

- Industry Representative

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# PROSPECTIVE DONORS

A prepared pool of qualified prospects is vital to generate the meaningful levels of financial support required to fund the aspirational goals set by the Foundation. To better understand the pool of prospective supporters. Study participants were asked a series of questions to gauge their willingness and capacity to provide financial support.

## STAKEHOLDER INPUT:

Nearly all member interviewees (93%) indicated they would be willing to consider a financial commitment to the Foundation. Preliminary indications from members ranged from \$50 to \$5,000 across personal interviews and the electronic survey. Most AGD leaders provided indications between \$500 - \$1,000, with several citing considerations as high as \$5,000. Among the general membership \$100 - \$250 on an annual basis was cited most frequently. Industry representatives were openly conservative in their assessments, but 40% stated that they would consider support, representing commitments over and above any existing spend with the organization.

## KEY TAKEAWAY:

Participant feedback validates the willingness of members and companies to consider financial support for the AGD Foundation. With nearly 40,000 members, the Foundation has a solid base of potential supporters that may consider a financial commitment should a proactive fundraising effort be executed. Companies often expressed a willingness to explore potential, but with the caveat that an investment must be proportionate with the perceived value and demonstrate a positive return on the investment.

“ I would be comfortable committing \$1,000 annually to the fundraising effort described in the preliminary background statement. This gift is not only important to me as a long-time member of the AGD and leader of the organization but also because I know people who have been personally impacted by oral cancer. I believe it is realistic that other leaders within AGD would be within a similar commitment range based on their history with the organization.

- AGD Member

“ For us, investing in the AGD Foundation demonstrates corporate responsibility and being a leader within our community. The opportunity to work closely with general dentists this effort shows we are committed to the same things they are, improving public health and ensuring the best patient outcomes.

- Industry Representative



# PLAN

During the Study, participants were asked a series of questions to assess factors that may influence the development and implementation of a fundraising strategy. The input provided will be incorporated into the plan, to ensure that it is tailored to the audience and adapted to the current climate.

## STAKEHOLDER INPUT:

- ✓ Both member and corporate interviewees suggested that synergy, manifested in a unified approach to achieve a common goal, between AGD and the AGD Foundation would have a motivating effect on participation.
- ✓ As indicated by Study participants, a more personalized approach to cultivation and solicitation will lead to greater engagement and inspire members to higher, more aspirational levels of support.
- ✓ Member interviewees cited the importance of grassroots efforts, particularly the potential that could be realized by leveraging the vast network of AGD constituent organizations.
- ✓ Most interviewees (94%) shared that a multi-faceted donor recognition program that offers valuable opportunities throughout the year will motivate support among both members and industry stakeholders.
- ✓ Economic uncertainty, particularly due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, was cited as a potential challenge by personal interviewees. Still, it is not believed to be something that should prevent the Foundation from moving forward and raising funds.



## KEY TAKEAWAY:

Input received during the Study verifies that a plan built on proven methodology and fundraising best practices can be designed and successfully executed to fulfill the Foundation's mission, as well as donors' desired outcomes.

# OUTLOOK

During the Study, participants were asked a series of questions to assess factors that may influence the development and implementation of a fundraising strategy. The input provided will be incorporated into the plan, to ensure that it is tailored to the audience and adapted to the current climate.

Based on the findings and evaluations derived from the Study process, the AGD Foundation has validated the case for support, assessed the availability of volunteer leaders, and determined the anticipated levels of financial commitments require to implement a proactive fundraising strategy. Successful execution of the plan will require participation from numerous companies and individuals who are dedicated to oral cancer and the dental community.

At this time, the AGD Foundation seeks your support to generate funds to help set the Foundation on a positive trajectory. More information will be forthcoming as the plans are finalized.

## CONTACT:

Marilyn Mays, Manager, AGD Foundation  
560 W. Lake St., Sixth Floor  
Chicago, IL 60661-6600  
[marilyn.mays@agd.org](mailto:marilyn.mays@agd.org) | 312.440.4329



The AGD Foundation would like to acknowledge and thank all individuals and industry representatives that participated in the Study process. Their valuable feedback and insights are appreciated and will be incorporated into a strategy to position the AGD Foundation as a leader in oral healthcare.