

# LexisNexis® for Development Professionals

## University of Florida Foundation simplifies its prospect donor research with LexisNexis® for Development Professionals.

The University of Florida is Florida's flagship state university with 48,000 students and 315,000 alumni living in all 50 states and 130 foreign countries. The University is among the nation's most academically diverse public universities and has a long history of established programs in international education, research and service. In order to sustain and grow these programs and services, the University of Florida Foundation sets aggressive multi-year capital campaign goals. To achieve these goals, the Foundation relies on its Prospect Research team to provide accurate information and strategic guidance on donor prospects, and delivering this information is a challenge.

### The Challenge: Losing Productivity

With a potential donor list of more than 500,000 individuals, including living alumni and friends, the Prospect Research team within the University of Florida's Foundation faces the onerous task of finding and compiling information on thousands of them, along with potential foundation and corporate donors. The team provides information to the 58 major gift development officers and some 17 additional fundraising staff members who use the information to build their prospect portfolio and develop cultivation strategies.

A few years ago, the Prospect Research team subscribed to a number of research tools that were not adequately meeting its needs. Due to reduced number of sources available in their "so-called" comprehensive databases, researchers had to resort to multiple separate databases and news sites. In addition, the quality of information in some sources was greatly reduced. These combined factors resulted in less efficient searching and retrieval of good information and less confidence in integrity of information results. "Prospect research shops are challenged by research tools that often focus on customers in industries other than fundraising. Researchers seek tools that adapt to their needs and provide quick, reliable one-stop shopping," states Debbie Menoher, Director of Research, University of Florida Foundation, Inc.

Finally, University of Florida researchers were not satisfied with the level of customer service that they received. Vendors were often not responsive to requests for improvements and typically fell short of solving any problems.

### The Decision: Single Source Goal

The Prospect Research team set out to find an alternative source, aiming for a single source to meet the majority of its research needs. With due diligence, the team began by reaching out to other schools to learn what tools its counterparts were using. Researchers then ranked their choices according to the number of sources in the database product, the ease of search, and the relevancy of the search results, as well as the level of initial and on-going customer service and training that is included and reported from colleagues in the industry.

### The Solution: LexisNexis® for Development Professionals

The team selected LexisNexis for Development Professionals based on the number of sources it has for news and financial records for individuals, foundations and corporations. In addition, LexisNexis for Development Professionals provides a search capability that proves superior. The LexisNexis service has helped identify new donor prospects or suspects, defined by the team as someone who is not yet engaged with the university, which has led to finding additional, unplanned dollars.

Researchers have also taken advantage of the "News Alerts" feature that allows them to keep up-to-date on information about top prospects and donors that they, in turn, can quickly forward to the development officers. This information helps the development officers make more timely cultivation strategies.

Also of importance to the Prospect Research team is that LexisNexis offers the most comprehensive product training and on-going support for the team. This was a critical factor in the decision-making process, because the team wanted to be assured of consistent help with unique search requests. "LexisNexis is the Cadillac of databases and the most comprehensive source available to prospect researchers in addition to offering best-of-breed customer service," comments Menoher.

LexisNexis for Development Professionals has become the team's primary source for most of its research needs. LexisNexis for Development Professionals is helping to revolutionize the way the University of Florida Foundation's Prospect Research team does donor research.

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