



SURVIVING THE BURN

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"Yes, the field is burning; but don't worry, it will come back greener"
John Thaxter Ghiorso

As we peer out at the economic landscape today, the field is indeed burning.

We are assured by pundits that the field will be remade "greener," but there is no codified game plan as to how, and no calendar or timetable to indicate when. We are only aware that significant change is afoot, and we must adjust at full speed.

As we all know, a herd mentality takes form in times of crisis, leading the way toward panic. History tells us, though, that those who pause, think critically and differentiate from the mob psychology eventually succeed, and many at dramatic levels.

Please join us in taking the latter path. From their vantage point with clients across the country, our team of professionals at Ghiorso & Sorrenti, Inc. has come together to develop some thoughts and recommendations as a starting point to help you survive the tumultuous times and perhaps take advantage of some unique opportunities presented within them.

Stay Educated

Key to managing change is being as informed as you can possibly be. Read, observe and understand the nature and totality of circumstances. Listen. And share what you learn by communicating often and openly with colleagues. Filter information carefully; be discriminate in separating the informative from the exploitative.

Be Resourceful

Go the extra mile with due diligence and discovery. Draw upon the depth of talent and experience around you, both peers and consultants. Even the most accomplished among us won't be able to find the solutions alone.

Avoid Prejudgment

There are always winners *and* losers. Personal situations differ greatly. Income streams and asset bases vary. Be certain that comments and decisions are based on thorough research, facts and knowledge rather than on what you or another *believes* must be the case. Above all avoid the potentially damaging consequences of across the board decisions.

See the Forest for the Trees

It is enormously helpful to step back every now and then and envision the big picture. This will reinforce the fact that the crisis will pass. Keep firmly in mind that the job at hand is to *get through the "burn"* without jeopardizing all that has and can be accomplished.

Stay Focused

Keeping it simple will increase focus and help maintain a direction, a plan. Distractions, excuses and time wasters can appear to outweigh the merits at hand and be counterproductive, *but only if we allow this to happen.*

Be Anticipatory

Stay out in front of work developments with your campaigns and development operations. Position yourself in lock-step with donors, prospects and volunteers to better read the signs and get a sense of what they are thinking. Play through scenarios and be ready to respond. *Anticipate!*

Best Prospect? Previous Donor!

Of necessity, donors will be much more discriminating about whom they support. Naturally, those with close relationships will always prevail. It is crucial to redouble stewardship efforts, guard special donors, and nurture close relationships. Now is the time to focus inward to secure and maintain what's in hand.

Integrity is the Watchword

Our business has no more important core value than integrity. It is the foundation of all strong relationships and governs our work ethic. Now more than ever we are called upon to apply sound principles coupled with open, honest communication and debate. This is the conduit to that special trust which is the hallmark of philanthropy.

