

KindCon²⁰²⁶

Benchmarking your prospect development operation

What 131 large shops told us about
staffing, throughput, and what actually
moves revenue

apra

Kindsight



Our Presenters



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THE SESSION

How the next 90 minutes work

1

You score yourself first

Ten minutes, five questions. Before we get to benchmarks.

2

We put your score in context

Where you land among 131 peer organizations.

3

We look at three levers

The things that actually separate the top tier.

4

You leave with one action

Let's begin by taking the PDMI
ourselves

kindsight.io/reports/2026-prospect-development-benchmark-study



KEEP YOUR PEN OUT

Three more numbers to write down



Your ratio

Research staff to major gift officers. One researcher for every how many fundraisers?



Qualification volume

Prospects your team qualified in the last twelve months. An approximation is fine.



Assignment rate

Share of qualified prospects assigned within twelve months. "We don't track it" is a real answer.

NOTE YOUR TIER — WE COME BACK TO IT

Four tiers, based on your score

0-39

Emerging

Practices exist but are not yet consistent.

40-59

Developing

Some practices are reliable, others depend on the person.

60-79

Advanced

Most practices hold up without heroics.

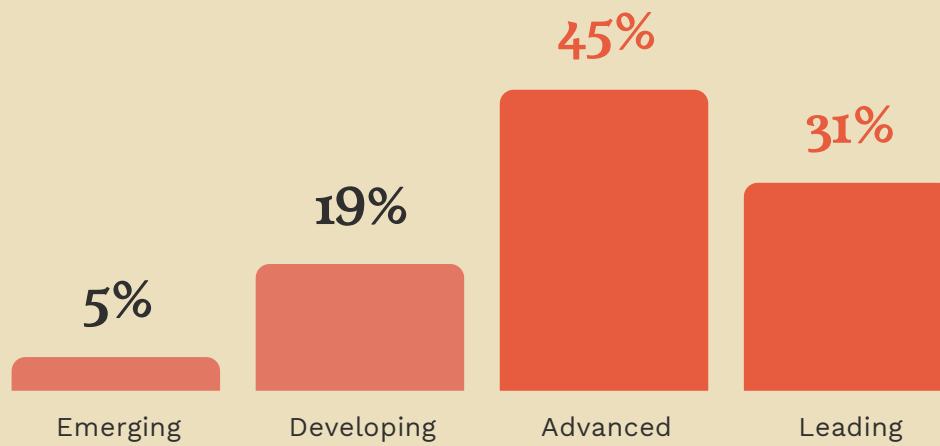
80-100

Leading

All five practices are the default way of working.

BLOCK 2 • WHERE YOU LANDED

Where 131 large organizations landed



76%

of large shops score Advanced or Leading.

Across the full study — including small shops — that figure is 57%.

YOUR PEER BENCHMARK

What “typical” looks like at your scale

Research staff

Middle half: 3 to 7

5

Research budget

Middle half: \$150K to \$400K

\$225K

Researchers per gift officer

Middle half: 1 to 3 — 1 to 8

1 : 5

Maturity score

Middle half: 61 to 79

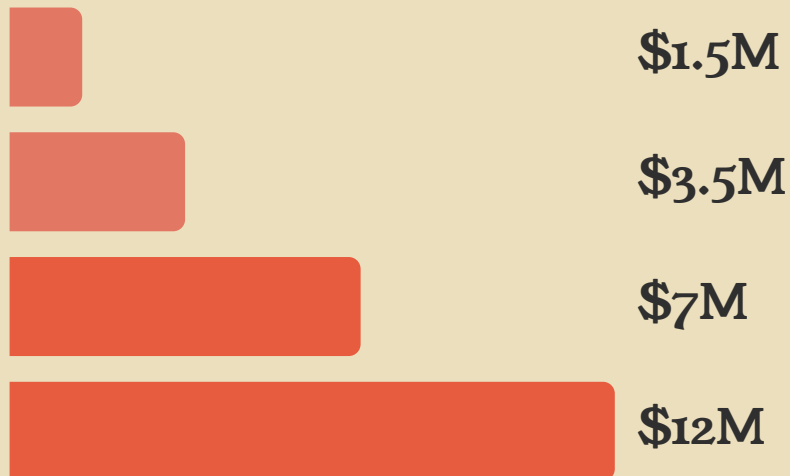
70

“Middle half” means half of large organizations fall inside these numbers — a quarter are below, a quarter above.

TWO WAYS TO READ REVENUE IMPACT

What each tier reports

MEDIAN REVENUE INFLUENCED



SHARE OF MAJOR GIFT REVENUE RESEARCH TOUCHED



Dollar figures scale with institution size. The share of your major gift revenue that research touched does not.

01

What actually separates the top tier

It is not what most people assume.

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SHARE WHO AGREE

Large shops are better at four of the five practices

Large shops
Everyone else



Four of these are yours to control. One is not.

WHAT SCALE SOLVES

**Logging. Pipeline tracking.
Portfolio hygiene. Impact
reporting.**

These live inside the research function. More people, better systems, clearer process — and they improve.

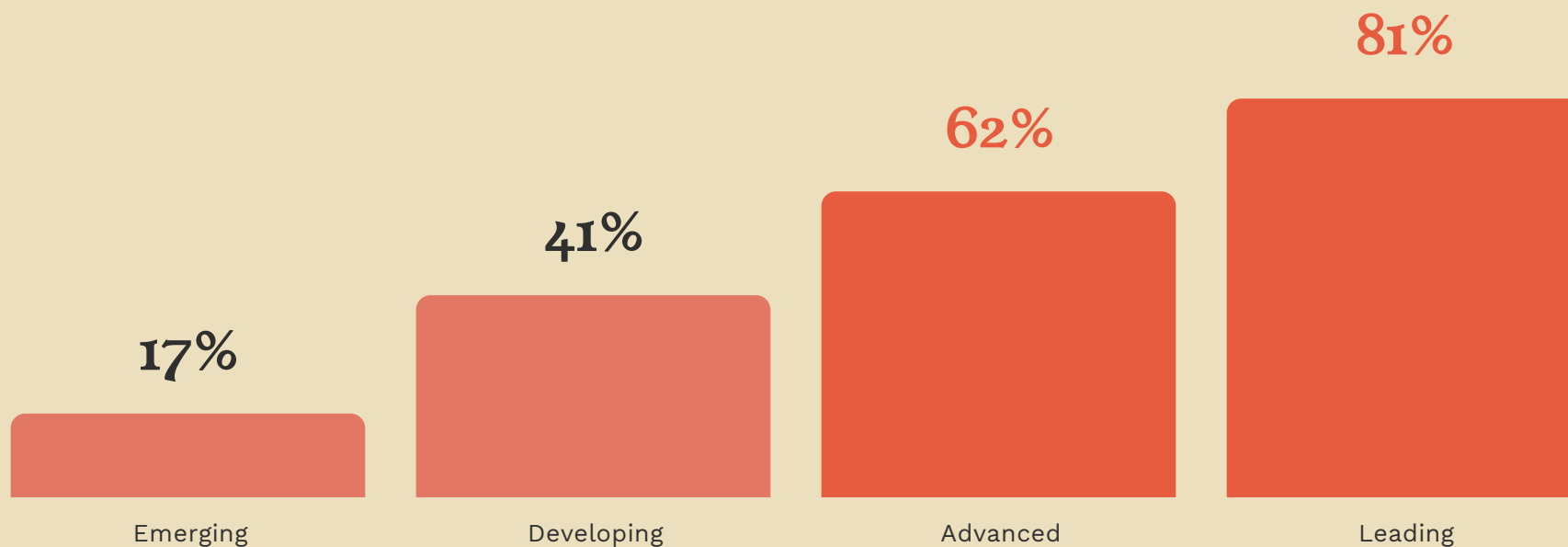
WHAT SCALE DOES NOT SOLVE

**Whether a gift officer
opens the profile, acts on it,
and moves the prospect.**

This lives outside the research function. In the data, it shows no relationship to how many researchers you have.

GIFT OFFICERS ACT ON RESEARCH · BY TIER

Adoption is what the top tier has that others do not



Of the five practices, this one has the widest spread between the bottom and the top tier.

Where adoption shows up in the numbers



CLEAREST LINK

Portfolio health

Where gift officers act on research, portfolios carry fewer unresponsive prospects.



WEAKER LINK

Assignment rate

More of the qualified work gets picked up — but the connection is looser.

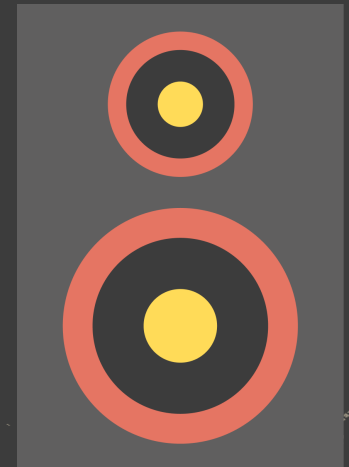
Adoption is not a soft metric — it shows up in portfolio health. What the data does not show is a reliable link to revenue, so this is a **pipeline-quality argument**, not a revenue argument.

02

Three levers

Throughput. Depth. Ratio.

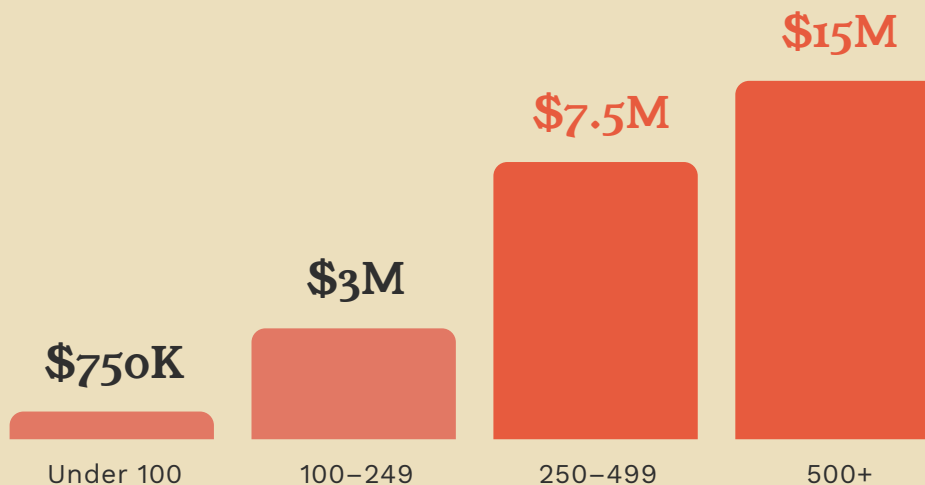
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LEVER ONE · QUALIFICATION THROUGHPUT

How many prospects you qualify is the clearest line to revenue

MEDIAN REVENUE INFLUENCED, BY PROSPECTS QUALIFIED PER YEAR



This holds even after accounting for institution size, research staffing, and budget. **Volume is doing work of its own** — it is not simply a reflection of being a large shop.

It also tracks with the share of major gift revenue that involved research, which is measured separately.

LEVER TWO · RESEARCH DEPTH

How much time per prospect? The data does not settle it.

Time per prospect	Profiles per researcher / yr	Maturity score	Solicitation rate
Under 1 hour	900	70	38%
1 to 3 hours	450	70	45%
More than 3 hours	220	69	56%

ONE READING

More time per prospect means fewer prospects — and no gain in maturity or revenue attribution.

THE OTHER READING

Deeper shops report higher solicitation rates. Depth may make better prospects, not just fewer.

LEVER THREE • THE RATIO

Research capacity per gift officer

Researchers : gift officers	Share of large shops	Median maturity	Advanced or Leading
1 : 3 or richer	18%	79	90%
1 : 5 typical	34%	71	78%
1 : 8	27%	67	70%
Leaner than 1 : 8	21%	62	61%

The step change happens at **1 to 3** — nine in ten of those shops score Advanced or Leading.

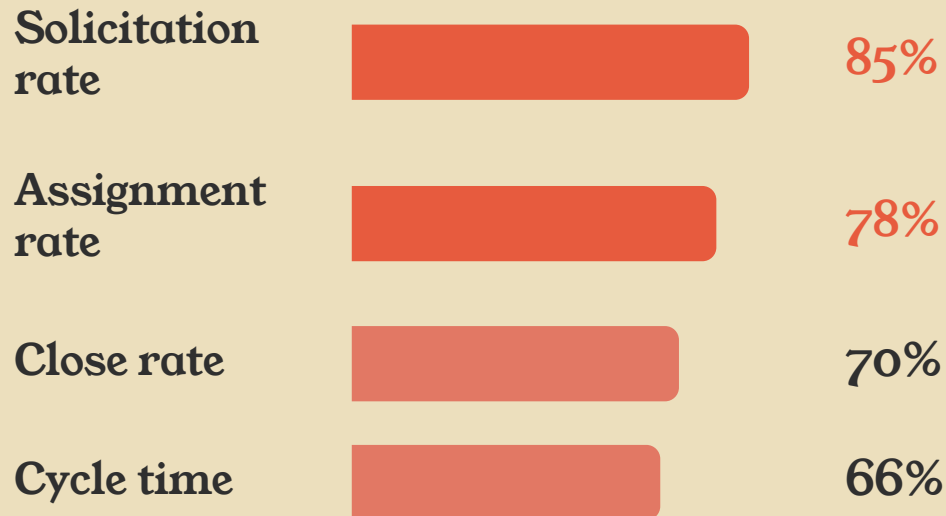
THE PRACTICAL MATURITY INDEX

Pick your goal, then pick your practice

● Strongest
○ Secondary

Practice	Revenue story	Cleaner pipeline	More assignments
Logging in the CRM	●		
Impact reporting	●		
Portfolio hygiene		●	●
Gift officer adoption		●	●
Pipeline tracking	○	○	○

What large shops currently track



1 in 3

large shops track all four metrics.

Those shops report a typical maturity score of **75**, compared with **65** for shops missing one or more.

THE QUESTION MOST OF US CANNOT ANSWER YET

64%

of large shops are not sure
what a 25% increase in
research investment would
produce.

A genuine frontier for the whole field — top tier included.

More than half

of the shops that say they can demonstrate
research value still cannot answer it.

Drops to 1 in 3

among shops tracking all four pipeline metrics.
Measurement narrows the gap considerably.

03

Your turn

Diagnose. Discuss. Decide one thing.



Where is your constraint?

Most people match more than one.
Identify the one that would change
the most if you fixed it.

Do gift officers routinely leave your recommendations unactioned?

YOUR LEVER

Adoption

Is qualification volume the first thing that gives when capacity tightens?

YOUR LEVER

Throughput

Are portfolios carrying prospects nobody has touched in a year?

YOUR LEVER

Hygiene

Could you produce your assignment rate today if someone asked for it?

YOUR LEVER

Measurement

Compare notes



1 What did you circle, and why that one? Two minutes each around the table.

2 If your constraint is adoption, what have you actually tried? What worked, what did not.

3 Who can produce their qualification volume and assignment rate on request? Where does the number live, and who maintains it?

4 Who owns the handoff at your institution? Research, relationship management, the AVP, or nobody in particular?

ONE ACTION · ONE OWNER · ONE DATE

Pick one. Write it down.

If your lever is	Your first concrete step
Adoption	Ask three gift officers what would make the research more usable. Before you build anything.
Throughput	Put a floor under qualification volume for next year and name what gives instead.
Hygiene	Run one portfolio review and agree the removal rule with one gift officer.
Measurement	Pick the one pipeline metric you cannot produce today and decide who owns it.
Ratio	Write your ratio into the next budget request next to the large-shop peer figure.

You have built the operation. The frontier is what happens next to the work.

Your benchmark

5 research staff, a \$225,000 budget, a 1-to-5 ratio, and a maturity score of 70.

The adoption finding

Four of the five practices improve with scale. Adoption does not — and that is where the top tier separates.

Qualification volume

The clearest line to the revenue story — and it holds up regardless of institution size.

Full report and self-assessment tool: kindsight.io/reports/2026-prospect-development-benchmark-study

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Questions?



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