

The 7 Essentials of Fundraising

In this session, we will examine the key elements and proven methods to raise funds and build lasting donor relationships. We will discuss strategies, tactics, and practical tools to achieve your resourcing objectives. Whether you are part of a limited staff with no fundraising training, or a large organization with a dedicated team of development professionals, you will appreciate the principles and stories of success and failure, distress and jubilation.

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Introduction: The Spiritual Nature of Fundraising

One of the first fundraising/capital campaigns took place when Moses was directed by the Lord to, *“Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive from them: gold, silver, bronze...”* –Exodus 25:2, 3

“Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops.” -Proverbs 3:9

“Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.” -Philippians 4: 17-18

1. A Compelling Mission & Vision

- a. Money follows Ministry!
- b. Develop your North Star. This is the statement or slogan that captures your ultimate purpose. It is the foundation for the work of your ministry or organization. It helps you stay energized when things get difficult.

2. A Donor Centric Approach

- a. People give to people (with a cause)!
- b. Build relationships!

- c. Real change will come about as the opportunities are resourced. When we talk with someone about giving, we must recognize that the “ask” is for the cause. It is true that people give to people (with a cause).

3. Effective Communications

- a. Nothing motivates like results!
- b. People will give for needs. But they are MUCH more energized by vision! What is the opportunity?!
- c. Why you do what you do! vs. How you do it, or What you do!
- d. Tell a Great Story: Focus on the impact and less on overly emotional backstories (watch out for off-message sob stories). Tap into hope and positive emotions rather than guilt or negative feelings.
- e. Pay close attention to your lexicon. Certain words will need to come out. Other words should be inserted.
- f. Understanding the avenues of modern communication (digital and electronic formats)
- g. Best practices in communications

4. Strategic Plans and Evaluation

- a. Fundraising is part of the blueprint of your strategic planning. Resourcing your work is an integral part of your plan! Have a laser focus on linking your mission and values (compass) with your strategic plan (clock).
- b. Fundraising and communicating the value of your work should be embedded in your strategic plan.
- c. Plan the work. And work the plan!
 - i. Total Revenue goal
 - ii. Major, Average and median size gift range
 - iii. Total number of donors, gifts, new donors acquired.
 - iv. Response rates for each channel used.

- v. Email: open and click rates by campaign
- vi. Retention rates, event reporting
- d. SWOT
 - i. Keep it simple. The best fundraising strategies are simple and clear. A SWOT analysis can help you understand what's realistic and achievable. If you've never done a SWOT analysis before, there are plenty of examples you can find online.

5. Major Gifts, Events, and Recognition

- a. Not all donors are equal. ALL are priceless in value, but not the same strategic value.
- b. Some emerge as major players. Correct to give them more attention? (James 2:1-6)
- c. With unlimited resources we would treat EVERY donor as a major donor.
- d. The top 10% of your donors will provide more than 60% of total revenue.
 - i. Rarely is the first gift a major gift. Be consistent.
 - ii. Highly personalized communications and cultivation.
- e. 5 steps of the Development Process
 - i. Research
 - ii. Romance
 - iii. Request
 - iv. Report
 - v. Recruit
- f. Events
 - i. A well-planned fundraising event can leave a lasting impression on all the people who attend, which can, in turn, result in greater long-term support for a nonprofit organization.

ii. The Purpose of Events

1. Introduce people to your mission and organization.
2. Energize your base of support.
3. Build your brand. Raise your profile.

iii. Planning a Successful Event

1. Establish your goal.
2. Create a budget.
3. Design (produce) the event by considering every conceivable moment.
4. Recruit volunteers
5. Host the event with
6. Follow up effectively!

g. Recognition

- i. Showing appreciation for your ministry partners is of the utmost importance for your long-term viability.
- ii. Say thank you!
- iii. Use hand-written note cards, letters, and other creative forms of communication.
- iv. Gifts
- v. Special messages from ministry partners and beneficiaries
- vi. Naming opportunities

6. Transparency and Accountability

- a. Assure the People that their gifts will Be used for a God-ordained task
- b. Moses spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel saying, *“This is the thing which the LORD has commanded, saying, ‘Take from among you a contribution to*

the LORD...for lighting, and spices for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense...for the ephod and for the breast piece.” - Exodus 35:4-9

- c. Tracking and measuring outcomes at regular intervals provides an opportunity to assess our progress.
- d. 3rd party reporting services specialize in providing information and data on NGOs.
- e. Earnratings and seals of approval to give donors the information they need and the confidence to keep growing their support.
 - i. Candid (merge- GuideStar & Foundation Center)
 - ii. Charity Navigator
 - iii. NGO Advisor
 - iv. Charity Watch
 - v. Impact Matters
 - vi. Charity Clarity
 - vii. Give Well
 - viii. BBB Wise Giving Alliance
 - ix. National Charities Information Bureau (NCIB)
 - x. American Institute of Philanthropy (AIP)
- f. Integrity is making sure that the things you say and the things you do are in alignment.” - Katrina Mayer

7. A Diverse Revenue Stream

- a. Embrace lots of smaller donations. The strongest ministries will be those that have a long-term commitment to building genuine relationships with donors, and a true desire to have authentic ministry in those individual’s lives.
- b. God has ordained that most ministries will be nourished by many donors, not just one or two. This enables more people to experience the blessing of giving. To avoid acquiring donors implies that giving to God’s work is unpleasant or unhealthy; the opposite is true! (Mark 12:41-44)

c. Be creative

- i. analyzing your current revenue streams and determining what percentage of the pie you want to allocate to each source.
- ii. Print a list of many possible ways people can participate, such as selling boats or cars, withdrawing money from savings and retirement accounts, selling jewelry, postponing a vacation, etc. This list helps to stimulate creative ideas.
- iii. Utilize new technologies and trends. Grants and programs.

Conclusion

Approaching fundraising with an enthusiastic attitude can enhance the experience for donors. Excitement is contagious, leading donors to share in your mission and vision. Fundraising is precisely the opposite of begging. We are not asking others to help us keep the lights on, we are inviting others to invest in the Kingdom through resources that God has provided, to be a part a work that He has set before us and called us to fulfill. Our invitation is clear because we trust he will accomplish everything He has in mind.

- *Fundraising is Spiritual (Proverbs 3:9)*
- *Fundraising is Relational (Phil. 4:17-18)*
- *Fundraising is Strategic (Luke 14:28)*
- *Fundraising is Game-changing (Neh. 2:1-9)*

“...’The king said to me, “What is it you want?” Then I prayed to the God of heaven, 5 and I answered the king, “If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it...”
- Nehemiah 2:1-9

Resources:

What Does the Bible Say About Fundraising? (openbible.info)

Tim Smith: *10 Examples of Generosity in the Bible and How to Follow Them* (crosswalk.com)