



Tips on Fundraising

An important catalyst why people donate is that they were approached by the right person asking them for the right gift, in the right manner, at the right time.

This process suggests that there is a balance between the art and science of approaching potential donors to non-profit fundraising / organizations. The science component arises when there is a systematic by which fundraising happens:-

- * Identify prospects through research and understanding barriers, their views and past motives.*
- * Educate prospects through direct and appropriate channels & materials.*
- * Gradually cultivate prospects through relationship-building activities and events.*
- * Empathise with and engage prospects through meaningful involvement.*
- * Solicit prospects through personal contact in a courteous and sensitive manner.*

The effective stewardship of a gift is an ongoing process of asking people to support your mission, keeping them involved, and deepening their relationship with your organization.

The process is something in which a wide range of stakeholders and representatives should be involved - the board, other volunteers, as well as the organization's staff dedicated to the process.

- Board members can review their list of personal contacts and carefully consider which of them would be interested in their organization. Board members represent the community at large and are the organization's link with its constituencies. Board members have a level of access to other community leaders that may be beyond the sphere of influence of the staff members. They need to be willing to make those connections and forge bonds between the organization and the potential donors.
- Board members can set the tone for others who may be considering a gift. Inform board members that fundraising development is a process of building relationships, not just a once-off request. Within a structured programme, ask board members to systematically invite someone to an event; make a thank-you call, or add a personal note to an appeal letter.
- One way to build a fundraising mindset at board level is to work with several current board members who are participating in fundraising-related activities to serve as examples to other board members. Ask them to share their experiences at board meetings about calls and meetings they had with prospective and current donors, especially if their contact resulted in a contribution or increased gift. By taking the mystery out of what "fundraising" means, often you will discover that some of the more dormant / reluctant "fundraisers" will understand that they could do more.



- Staff members should also participate in building the base of potential supporters – that can be reviewed and compared with lists generated by the board. Provide them with easy-to-use tools, such as prospect information forms, that describe the type of information that is most helpful to know.

Identifying Potential Donors.

Start with individual donors, who as a group give more than corporations and foundations combined. You can assist board members by helping them categorize prospects along certain lines, such as family, friends, and neighbours; fellow church, or business colleagues; club members. Even if these individuals are not yet ready to be solicited for a financial contribution, their names should be collected and added to the organization's mailing list. They can always get a newsletter from your organization as a first step.

Corporations, local business owners, and foundations should not be ignored. Encourage board members and staff to explore the contacts they may have in these areas. Their friends or colleagues may sit on boards of local corporations or foundations. Assemble a master list of target corporations, examine the connections identified, evaluate those connections, and plan your strategy accordingly.

Establish a process & structure to facilitate the exploration and evaluation of prospects. Typically, this is accomplished through regular prospect rating and brainstorming sessions. Bring board members, key volunteers, and staff together in small groups to discuss specific prospects and prospect strategies. Use these meetings to have frank and comprehensive conversations about prospects, their ability to give, and the right solicitation team that needs to be assembled to reach out to these prospects. Structure these meetings to balance simple brainstorming. Ensure that such sessions are reported on properly and that someone takes notes.

Five Key Steps

Here are five key steps to success in fundraising - readiness, research, reality, relationships, and the request.

Readiness to Fund Raise

- Do you have a board of directors made up of individuals committed to your organization's vision and mission, who provide the time, expertise, and resources necessary to support your organization?
- Do you have a fundraising plan that outlines the resources needed to reach your goals?
- Do you prepare a written case statement that articulates clearly why your organization needs the funding being requested?

Demonstrate that your funding request is a fit for the funding priorities the foundation has established to fulfill its mission.



Research

Begin the careful process of asking the right donor in the right way for the right amount at the right time. Research helps you determine the "right" funding sources by giving you an understanding of a donor's giving patterns, areas of interest, and types of support given. Research also helps you determine the amount to ask for and informs you about the institutional funder's grant deadlines and requirements.

The research process begins with developing a broad list of prospective donors. Set up brainstorming sessions with your board, other volunteers, and staff. Be creative. Talk to colleagues who provide different programs to your target market or audience and think creatively about ways you can work together.

Then begin the process of gathering information for each name on your list. Utilize your board members to help gather information and develop contacts with potential individual donors. Look at your current donor list and create a profile of your organization's individual donor. Why do current donors support your organization, where do they live, where do they work, and what programs do they support? Do you see any commonalities among your individual donors?

Reality

Refine your prospect list down to a manageable number of prospects. Determine what is manageable on the basis of your organization's human resources to cultivate, solicit, and follow up with funding prospects. Determine which of your funding needs matched a particular donor. Establish a timeline for the preparation of a proposal for each institutional funding source. Determine the best method of solicitation.

Relationships

Begin a cultivation process and educate the potential donor about your organization before you submit a proposal or make a solicitation. Given the vast number of proposals that reach a grant-maker's desk and the many requests for support that arrive in mailboxes, develop a creative implementation strategy to help a donor focus on your request. The relationship step is all about building a sense of trust and partnership with the donors who support your work.

There are many ways to build a relationship with your donor prospects.

- Attend grant-maker forums or meetings to hear a funder speak and wait in line to meet them.
- Send out periodic informative letters or newsletters.
- Create opportunities for prospects to experience what you do in the community by holding an open house or by participating in community events.
- Schedule awareness-building activities and events, and ask your current donors to attend and bring a friend.
- Ask board members and other volunteers to make calls to invite prospective donors and grant-makers to these informational events. Follow up with each person who attends with a thank-you note or call.



The Request

Prepare a proposal or solicitation kit for an individual donor, making the request a straightforward process, and ensuring that correct terminology and diplomatic / polite language is always an integral part of the discussion with potential donors. Illustrate how fundraising is directly related to the mission, programs, and services of the organization.

Create a kit that includes materials and information that board members or staff can use to ease their concerns and to ensure that a consistent approach is undertaken. A typical solicitor's kit includes an organization's brochure articulating the organization's case for support; information on how to make a gift--to whom to make the cheque payable, and whom to contact at the organization if additional information is needed.

Assure donors that their information will be handled with sensitivity and confidentiality. Also gauge the extent to which they would be willing to have their name used in future newsletters etc that specifically acknowledge them as donors.

After receiving donations, continue the cultivation process by sending a prompt thank-you letter. Submit any reports and evaluations required by the donor on time. Provide informal updates to keep your funding partners informed about your progress.

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