

TEN KEYS TO REALISTIC AND SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING

Successful campaigns depend on the strengths of the organization. The following ten key elements need to be in place or the organization needs to be able to put them in place so that everyone involved has the confidence to begin and complete a successful fundraising campaign.

1. Make a compelling Case for Support. A statement of urgent needs, a well-designed plan to meet those needs, a clear budget of the funds necessary to meet those needs, and a well-thought-out fundraising plan are in place.

2. Exercise committed leadership. One hundred percent (100%) of the Board of Directors, paid leadership, and the campaign committee have pledged a personal stretch gift and are willing to make the ask over and over again.

3. Recruit stakeholders who care to provide leadership. These individuals believe in the organization and its mission and have a history of financial and perhaps even volunteer support with the potential to provide or open the doors to others who can provide the needed campaign funds.

4. Invest money in fundraising. The organization has an adequate budget and cash or the ability to raise cash for the costs of the fundraising campaign, which might include a feasibility study, professional-quality publicity materials, meeting with donor prospects, and high-quality fundraising consultants.

5. Have sufficient skilled and qualified staff. The staff has excellent people skills, is able to lead volunteers successfully, has written and oral communication skills, is well-organized and personally motivated, with campaign experience and the openness necessary to learn from consultants.

6. Utilize the top-down, inside-out sequence of donor solicitation. An early pattern of a few large gifts or even challenge gifts to successfully move the campaign toward its goal and motivates other donors.

7. Conduct prospective donor research. Develop a plan and a process to **utilize personal contacts** and understand each prospective donor; establish a plan to locate five prospects for each gift at each level; create or build on existing relationships.

8. Have goals, objectives, and timelines. Clear fundraising goals and well-designed objectives move organizations toward obtaining each goal. Clear action steps ensure that each objective is fulfilled. Specific individuals are assigned to carry out these steps and to report progress regularly. A method to respond when action steps are not being executed well or in a timely manner is in place.

9. Utilize volunteer leadership. Recruit and train people who truly care about the non-profit organization, people with power and influence who are able to open doors, people to train board members and leadership staff, and people to help with tracking and administration activities.

10. Create contagious, overwhelming enthusiasm. Get people excited about your organization, its Mighty Mission, the importance of your organization's urgent unmet needs, the fundraising campaign, and the likelihood of success.

Of course, many within a well-run non-profit, non-governmental, charitable and, of course, faith-based organization may be skeptical. They may think that their organization cannot significantly increase the amount it receives in annual donations. There will be those who are sure that their organization cannot successfully complete a major fundraising campaign. They believe that their own organization cannot garner the attention, the time, the talents, and the donations of people with power and influence. They may be right. But think about it. If your wonderful organization steps out on a \$2.5 million campaign and only raised \$1.5 million, it is still \$1.5 million ahead.