Fundraising Basics for Women’s Organizations

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Culture & Preparation

Why is fundraising important?
- Allows your organization to become sustainable and stable. Not finding yourself forced to cut programs
- Fundraising gives you the flexibility and independence to respond to your clients’ needs, to build programs, and take calculated risks
- Stable funding enables you to plan strategically
- Not relying on one or two funders models independence to your clients

Engaging your Board of Directors
- Board members need to be visionary. They should be:
  - Fundraisers & ambassadors for your organization
  - Donors
  - Willing to approve expenditures for capacity building activities like fundraising

Building a culture of philanthropy in your organization involves:
- Entrepreneurship and opportunism
  - Actively look for opportunities and take advantage of them
  - Conduct a SWOT analysis for each new opportunity
- Openness to engaging the community
- Donor-centered fundraising & relationship building
  - Donors want a relationship with the organizations they give to.

Allocation of resources & data capture
- What you need:
  - Dedicate resources to fundraising, including money and staff
  - Good accounting procedures to ensure clarity and transparency
  - Database & tracking tools to capture data and track campaigns
  - Understanding of legal requirements (ex. what you can issue a tax receipt for, privacy laws)
Most important things you can do to get money now

Tell stories!
- We are often inclined to use stats and figures to convey the problem but *people give to people*
  - Collect testimonials and stories
    - Tell a client’s story, or have a client tell her story
    - Talk about your personal experiences; your passion for working in the sector
    - Collect stories from volunteers
  - Use stories to appeal to a donor’s emotions
- Apply this to ALL fundraising activities

Major Donors/Planned Giving
- Inexpensive way to bring in large donations but takes time to build these relationships
- Major donors want:
  - A personal connection with people at your organization
  - A return on their investment (which you can convey through reporting, site visits, etc.)
  - To see that you manage their money well (ex. audited financial statements or annual reports with financials)
- Do research on your donors
  - Document research using donor profile sheets (see Donor Profile Template)
  - Make sure this information is kept confidential
  - You can find information on:
    - Net worth
    - Other philanthropic involvement
    - Donation amounts, volunteering, committee chairs, etc.
    - Interests
    - Family
- Moves Management
  - This is the process of building interest and trust between your organization and the prospective donor
  - Involve donors in different ways before asking for a gift (ex. a birthday phone call, lunch, site visits)
    - Document these “moves”, their results and next steps (see Donor Call Template)
- Asking for the gift
- Make sure to match your donor’s interests to a program at your organization
- Who asks for the gift is as important as the project or amount → wealthy donors prefer to do business with someone who appears to be at their level
  - Involve your board, long-time volunteers, executives
- Expand your network
  - Ask current donors to bring their friends in for a tour/small reception and begin moves management process with the new contacts
- Planned Giving
  - Long cultivation process
  - These gifts usually come from donors who have been giving for a long time – even a $2/yr donor who has given for 25 years
  - Come in the form of bequests, life insurance, trusts and annuities
  - Can provide substantial donations but are unpredictable
  - Different requirements on how these are handled & receipted – best to do research on your area

Corporate Partnerships
- Companies are looking for mutual benefit and social responsibility activities
- Look for creative ways to partner
  - Financial donations are not always the company’s preferred method of involvement
  - Offer volunteer opportunities to employees as teambuilding activities
  - In-kind donations
- Connect with a leader in the company - not necessarily an executive, but someone loyal to your cause who knows how to get things done
- For financial donations, find out if the company has any specific funding interests or formal proposal guidelines. Work with your connection at the company to champion your proposal.
Maintaining & Building the program

Stewardship

• Stewardship is what makes an occasional donor a committed donor; what turns $500 into $1000
• How?
  • Show how the donation has made a difference:
    ▪ Say thank you (notes, phone calls, letters, emails)
    ▪ Provide recognition
    ▪ Invite donors in for tours or meetings with frontline staff to talk about your programs
    ▪ Provide reports (specifically for larger gifts, or when otherwise requested) and tailor them to your audience
    ▪ Annual report to loyal donors (see samples)
  • Invite them to special thank you events
  • Segment large donors out of your regular mail stream if you have one – send newsletters and tailored solicitations only
  • Ensure communications are timely. Send tax receipts and thank you letters/phone calls out within days of receiving the gift.

Recognition

• It takes 7 thank yous for someone to feel appreciated
• Use a personal touch – hand-written cards, kid’s art, etc.
• Larger donations = more public recognition
  • Thank you from a board member or manager
  • Donor wall (physical and/or online)
  • Features in publications – newsletters, annual reports, email blasts, etc.
  • Public recognition at an event
  • Naming awards after a donor
• Helpful to have a policy or chart outlining gift levels and what level of recognition donors will get. This will ensure consistency.
• Before publicly recognizing a donor, make sure they want their donation made public.
Other fundraising activities

Grants and Proposal Writing

- Important source of funding, specifically for new projects
- Treat foundations the same way you would a major donor. Build a relationship and steward them, match your programs to their interests.
- See handouts Funding Proposal Outline and Budget Template

Direct Marketing & Communications

- Gets smaller donors in the door and introduces them to your organization
- Multiple channels: direct mail, monthly giving, street canvassing, social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube), online initiatives, special campaigns
- Tips for successful campaigns:
  o Tell a story
    ▪ People give to people, not organizations
    ▪ Use stats very sparingly
  o Use easy, understandable dollar amounts & give a range
    ▪ Ex. $40 buys toiletries for a new resident
  o Keep language simple and use short sentences and paragraphs. Reading level should be below grade 10.
  o Keep concepts simple
  o Tell your audience the problem and tell them how to fix it. Donors don’t like feeling overwhelmed by a problem they think can’t be solved.
- Get yourself on other mailing and e-communication lists to see what others are doing
- Eblasts
  o Add a “sign up” field on your website, response devices and bring sign-up sheets to all events
  o Use an email marketing provider like Campaign Monitor to design and send e-blasts
- Tracking results
  o Rate of response, gross & net revenue, ROI, # new donors
    ▪ See handout Direct Mail Tracking Sheet - Template to calculate these statistics
  o Use Google Analytics to track website hits and referral sources
  o Open and click-through rates on eblasts
  o Social media activity
Special Events

- Helps build public profile but success is also dependent on your profile
- Low return on investment in initial years
- Third party events
  - Great way to involve the community or to use volunteers who you don’t have room to accommodate in regular programming
  - Create a contract for event holders to sign to ensure you are not liable for any lost revenue, legal issues, etc.
  - Ensure all events fit your mandate & values

Capital Campaigns

- See handout Resources for books on capital campaigns

Other things you can do

- Joining the Association of Fundraising Professionals chapter in your city give you access to:
  - Online resources
  - Introduction to fundraising course
  - Webinars
  - Annual conference & fundraising days
  - Mentorship programs
- Join relevant LinkedIn groups
- Read fundraising blogs and websites
- Sign up for newsletters. Canadian Examples:
  - Hilborn ENews – Canadian Fundraiser
  - Imagine Canada
- Hire consultants (use RFP process)
## Resources

### Books

**General Fundraising:**

- The Fundraising Audit Handbook – Guy Mallabone & Ken Balmer (Civil Sector Press 2010)
- Establishing Your Development Office - Linda Lysakowski, ACFRE (Association of Fundraising Professionals, 2002)
- Conducting a Successful Annual Giving Program – Kent E. Dove (Jossey Bass Publishers, 2001)
- Developing Major Gifts: Turning Small Donors into Big Contributors – Laura Fredricks (Jones and Bartlett Publishers, Inc., 2003)
- Anything by Mal Warwick, Tom Ahern, Ken Burnett
- Donor Centred Fundraising – Penelope Burk (Burk & Associates Ltd., 2003)

### Online

- Association of Fundraising Professionals (http://www.afpnet.org) – must be a member to access most resources
- Imagine Canada (www.imaginecanada.ca) – Canadian advocacy organization
- SOFII (www.sofii.org) – an online collection of fundraising examples
- CharityVillage (www.charityvillage.com) – resources and links

### Blogs

- wwwflatearthdirect.com/blog
- www.futurefundraisingnow.com
- www.theagitator.net
- www.pamelagrow.com