

Fundraising Planning

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Fundraising planning helps you to set priorities, to increase involvement, to assist in diversifying your fundraising vehicles, and to limit “crisis” fundraising. It also focuses your school and staff on priorities, such as fundraising events, grant writing, etc. Whatever the source or activity, planning will help hone and deepen your efficacy as an organization.

Planning also assists in diversifying your fundraising so that you are not overly dependent on one source, which therefore limits “crisis” fundraising in the event that something falls through. A plan will not totally prevent “surprises,” but at least if one grant doesn’t come through, for example, there will be other avenues to explore.

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The following ten steps outline the general processes involved with fundraising planning.

1. **Present a strong mission statement and vital programs.** All of your fundraising flows from your mission and values. It never hurts to reconnect with your mission statement as you move forward. It should tell the world why you exist and what you’re all about. You want to get people excited about your vision, both within and outside your organization.
2. **Conduct an assets inventory for your program.** Take a serious look at your program and services. This would include evidence of skills, experience and expertise. Don’t focus on your organization’s needs. Instead, focus on how well you are meeting the needs of those affected by your organization as well as your track record and the demand for what you are proposing.
3. **Create a dynamic case statement.** This statement outlines the reasons why your organization or program needs and merits support. Be sure to include your mission, your programs and services, your accomplishments, plans for the future and your budgetary needs.

4. **Set realistic fundraising goals.** To set goals, start with donors. What can you expect to raise. Then decide what you can spend the money on.
5. **Diversify the funding mix for your program.** Explore multiple sources of potential donors. First, think of the donors you already have (if any). There is a good chance you can receive continued support from existing donors. But what other funding partners might be viable. Have you raised from individuals before? Have you worked with local businesses and foundations? Could you expand beyond your community to state and national sources? After assessing sources, speculate on what you could reasonably project from these sources, and what resources you will need to secure these funds. It takes time to research new prospects, write proposals, etc.
6. **Formulate strategies for raising money from individual donors.** Look at donors who have the ability to give. Do they believe in your cause, and are they accessible? Explore personal contacts that will rise above the noise. The Internet is a useful tool—such as having a Contribute Now button on your site. Just be sure you have effective drivers to these destinations. Special events are a vehicle for raising money from individuals.
7. **Formulate strategies for raising money from institutions.** Again, see if your organization has any personal connection with a particular institution. Assign an individual or a team to assess an institution and formulate a realistic, actionable plan of attack.
8. **Put your fundraising plan/calendar together.** Set a goal for each revenue strategy. Think through the details: the Who, When, What, Where and How. Create a chart or narrative description outlining the details.
9. **Build relationships.** Keep all those involved up-to-date on your fundraising progress. Create a means whereupon stakeholders can instantly follow this progress of fundraising as a motivation tool. As the goals come within reach, stakeholders will become excited and, ideally, share that excitement with other potential donors or those who can help further your cause.
10. **Monitor and evaluate your fundraising efforts.** It takes money and time to raise money. If you've never raised money from institutions before or held special events before, you will have to make initial investments of money and time and make an analysis of if their worth. That said, efforts might not pay off right away but could develop over time, such as in building relationships. If you try a special event and you find you didn't make the money back, you now have a learning for future efforts.