FUNDRAISING
FORUM

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Strengthen your case for giving

This article is excerpted from Mal Warwick's forthcoming book, Fundraising When Money is Tight, *which will be released by Jossey-Bass early in 2009.*

You've been advised that it's essential you make clear to your donors how deeply the current recession has affected your organisation.

Your board of directors, your chief executive, your consultants – possibly even all three – are pressing you to talk about the recession in every fundraising letter, at every event, and to every major donor.

The idea, of course, is that this will show your donors how much more valuable and important their contributions are during this difficult economic period – and, willy-nilly, they'll give more. Would that it were so.

At this writing, I can't cite unequivocal and conclusive evidence that this is the wrong tack to take. However, there is accumulating a body of experience that donors are more likely to be dissuaded from giving rather than induced to give more.

Clearly, some donors are predisposed to dig more deeply when times are tough.

They'll probably do so, regardless of what you say about the impact of economic conditions on your organisation and its work.

Apparently, though, others are too easily reminded that (from their perspective, at least) times are tough for them, too. And, obviously, it's not a great idea to scare them off.

Instead of taking this simplistic course, then, reconsider why your donors support you in the first place – and re-examine your case for giving in that light. What, after all, do your donors want from you?

- They want to know that you're doing the most effective job you possibly can with the money they give you.
- They want to know that their gifts are really reaching the people you're helping, or affecting the issue you're addressing. (They're interested in impact, not in paying your salary or your electric bill.)
- They want to know that you value their contributions.
- They want you to report the results of the projects and programmes they've supported with their gifts.

All this is true, regardless of economic circumstances. However, if you act on the advice I offer in the chapters to come, you'll be cutting costs and taking other steps to make your operation leaner. You'd be wise to communicate those steps to your donors.

Write them about how you're tightening your belt, increasing efficiency, and monitoring the productivity of your operations more closely. Do not talk about such problems as falling income from corporate and foundation grants and major gifts. Donors don't really care about how you're hurting. They care about how well you're helping your clients or beneficiaries.

However, donor motivation normally runs much deeper than that. It starts with donors' affinity for your vision, mission and values.

Vision, mission and values

You've heard it before, no doubt. Individual donors are far more likely to support your organisation because of its vision, mission and values than for any specific reason related to your work itself.

If this is the case (and I certainly believe it is), and if your vision, mission and values are unlikely to change with the seasons (and I certainly believe they shouldn't), then how can you possibly strengthen your case for giving under difficult economic conditions?

Truth to tell, you can't – so long as you've done the best possible job of crafting a case for giving that relates directly to the core principles and values that animate your organisation.

Unfortunately, though, for a great many non-profit organisations, especially smaller ones, little if any thought has gone into what truly motivates people to give and what makes for a powerful case for giving.

So, for starters, what is a case for giving? (I just knew you were going to ask!)

In my view, there are two possible ways to interpret this familiar phrase:

- A case for giving is a copy platform or creative concept that is integrated into all fundraising and marketing materials produced by a non-profit organisation. It's a statement that positions the organisation, describes how its vision takes shape in the real world, and lays out the benefits that a donor may receive for giving to the

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INSIDE INFORMATION

Evaluating the evaluator

One of the more overlooked responsibilities of a non-profit board is the requirement to assess its own performance.

Non-profit boards are familiar with their other main responsibilities, such as selecting the chief executive and evaluating their performance on an annual basis, ensuring that the organisation has the necessary resources required to carry out its mission, ensuring that effective organisational planning is performed, and recruiting new members to the board.

There are three options for the board to assess its own performance:

1. Have the board chair and chief executive meet with each board member and discuss their thoughts about the strengths as well as the areas of board performance needing approval.
2. Complete a board assessment questionnaire that asks a series of questions on the work of the board with questions asking for either a response of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) or from strongly disagree to strongly agree with responses in the middle range as well.
3. Have an outside professional facilitator perform the assessment with a combination of questionnaire and confidential personal interviews asking open-ended questions that measure the board member's engagement with the organisation, how fulfilling and meaningful their experience as a board member has been, and recommendations for removing the obstacles and improving the work of the board.

Though some organisations prefer option 1, I would highly recommend against having the CEO too involved. By having the CEO along with the board chair asking the questions, this option does not always allow the board members to be candid and honest with their responses. This option can also expose the CEO to a potential political firestorm as well.

Questionnaire

The vast majority of boards that perform an annual performance assessment utilise a questionnaire format. Questions are asked that call for a numerical response on a wide range of issues dealing with the organisation's mission, programmes and services, financial resources, fiscal over-sight, CEO performance, board and CEO relationships, new board member orientation, board committees, meetings, and other policies.

A summary is prepared after all responses have been obtained and a numerical score is provided indicating areas of strength as well as areas of improvement needed. The problem with most, if not all, questionnaires is that they don't allow open-ended questions or ask the most important questions getting to the heart of the matter for improving the board's work.

From my experience, the most effective way to assess the non-profit board's annual performance is to combine a questionnaire with a trained board facilitator asking important open-ended questions measuring the level of motivation and engagement of the board members. The key questions that need to be asked include the following:

- How would you describe the board's passion for the mission of the organisation?
- How passionate are you about the mission of the organisation?
- What is the vision of this organisation?
- How do you feel about the organisation's current strategic plan?
- What recommendations, if any, would you make to improve the process and plan?
- How would you describe your level of excitement about seeing this vision become a reality?
- What do you like about being on this board?
- How meaningful and fulfilling has been your experience serving on this board?
- How would you describe your level of engagement with the organisation?
- How would you describe the board's level of engagement with the organisation?
- How effective are the board meetings?
- What are the strengths of the board?
- What areas of improvement are needed?
- What is the image of the organisation in the community?
- What recommendations, if any, do you have for improving the image of the organisation in the community?
- How does the board measure the success of the organisation?
- How does the board ensure that the organisation provides value to its stakeholders?
- How would you describe the strengths of the CEO?
- How would you describe the CEO's communication style?
- What recommendations, if any, would you make to improve the CEO's performance?
- Who has responsibility for fundraising in the organisation?
- What is the board's fundraising role?
- What recommendations would you make to improve fundraising for the organisation?
- Do you make an annual personal gift to the organisation?

To dramatically improve the work of the board, one has to assess the level of engagement and motivation of their board members with the organisation. Only through engaging and motivating members of their boards can non-profits truly achieve a culture of success by integrating board governance, visionary thinking and philanthropy.

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With acknowledgments to
The Non Profit Times
1 January 2009
Visit
www.nptimes.com

Milestone Thinking

On-target observations in brief

It's important to impress donors because they talk, and they talk to one another.
With acknowledgement to
The NonProfit Times
September 15 2008

Creating a year-long operational plan with goals and strategies is one thing. Including incentives that make achieving these goals more fun is quite another.
With acknowledgement to
Successful Fund Raising
December 2008 Volume XVI, No.12

I will love the light, for it shows me the way, yet I will endure the darkness, for it shows me the stars.
Og Mandino

Fundraising professionals should develop the concept of generosity. What really matters is the size of the gift in relation to the donor's means.
With acknowledgement to
The NonProfit Times
June 15 2008

Fundraisers raise funds. It's in the title. But great fundraisers are more than human automated teller machines. Raising the most money isn't the only measure of a great fundraiser. Overcoming obstacles and still breaking new ground for the future is just as important to an organisation's bottom line as today's Rand.
With acknowledgement to
The NonProfit Times
January 15 2008

You absolutely must have a very short 'elevator pitch' when you are asking for money. If you can't explain in two or three simple sentences why the donor should be interested in your programme, you won't get anywhere.
With acknowledgement to
Virginia Turner in
Successful Fund Raising
December 2006, Volume XIV, No. 12

Working to reveal hidden treasures

The Umcebo Trust is an inclusive art and craft workshop and retail environment for people with special needs and other community members, including ex-street children and the elderly.

Based at uShaka Marine World in Durban, local crafters come together to explore their art and craft potential, to make items which are sold to generate an income for themselves and their families – and as a means of personal and creative development.

Their works hang in top local and international corporate and private collections, and the trust also exhibits at the annual Design Indaba and the House and Garden Show.

The project is currently striving to develop a self-sustaining model, which can grow and ultimately benefit more people.

'Umcebo' means 'treasure' or 'wealth', and the idea behind the trust is that it serves as a treasure chest which local crafters can dig into, to find themselves and their potential to create spectacular works, which will put KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa even more firmly on the art and craft map. Contact Robin on 083 793 3408 for more information.

(Readers are invited to submit photographs, together with a brief overview of their organisation's work, for inclusion in this regular feature.) ■

'We welcome people to visit us, and to chat with the crafters about the latest projects they are working on, and what the work means in their lives.'
– Robin Opperman, Director

FUNDRAISING FORUM

Fundraising Forum is a regular newsletter dedicated to the enhancement of management, fundraising techniques and the promotion of community service, welfare and not-for-profit organisations of all kinds. It is published by Downes Murray International and circulated, free of charge, to anyone with an interest in the growth and improvement of the non-profit sector and those served by it. In addition to regular features written by Downes Murray International staff, there are extracts from international fundraising publications which are reprinted with acknowledgement to the publishers. We welcome submissions for publication from all writers involved in not-for-profit work.
Visit *www.dmi.co.za*

Does your stuff suffer from 'jargon breath'?

'At risk'? 'Accessible'? 'Services'? I hear what you're saying. I just can't see what you're saying. And that's the problem. Tom Ahern reports on the dangers of using jargon in your external communications.

What's wrong with jargon? Just about everything – once it leaves your office.

Jargon is for specialists only. It's convenient professional shorthand used by staff to speed meetings along. Every industry has its jargon: the sciences, social work, health care, education, even fundraising. (The peculiar term 'planned giving' comes to mind. You think the average donor understands what that really means? But I digress.)

Outsiders – and virtually all donors are outsiders – do not get jargon, not the way insiders do. Sure, outsiders understand the words at a superficial level. But jargon does not, will not, cannot ring the bell that is the donor's heart. Jargon is always clinical, abstract language. And, worse, it tells no tales.

Now maybe you're thinking you're immune to jargon? Not so fast. Jargon is sneaky. Charities often use jargon and don't even know it. For example: at risk ... accessible ... services.

These three terms seem innocent enough. And they're certainly common; even news reporters use them without a second thought.

But is the real meaning of words like these all that obvious to the layperson? Don't count on it, I'm begging you.

Of course, ask a donor what a term like 'at risk' means; and you'll get some kind of definition. 'At risk'? Why, that's some poor child who's forced to grow up in a bad neighbourhood. It's tough. But, you know, heck, my grandfather was an at-risk child once, when he came over from the old country. And he turned out just fine.

Charming. Just not what you meant.

When you, the expert, say 'at-risk kid', you have in mind:

A specific child whose name you know, with a dozen things stacked against him and a less than 50% chance of ever graduating high school.

Which means, even with a good brain, he's doomed, statistically speaking. Without a diploma he'll work minimum-wage jobs the rest of his life, marry too young, die too young, and society will lose his full contribution.

And yet you know – you have the proof – that it doesn't have to be that way. You know that, in fact, this particular 'at-risk' child can make it and become a successful adult – if enough donors continue to support your wonderful, proven, amazing, life-transforming programmes.

Confusion

Just remember (have it tattooed on your wrist, if it helps): an outsider simply cannot accurately visualise what your jargon means. The references are missing. The daily exposure is missing. The context is absent. For insiders, jargon can conjure a rich world. For outsiders (i.e. donors), jargon just conjures confusion and blank mental screens.

It is the vivid mental picture of human suffering that stirs donor empathy. You can't create that kind of picture with mere jargon.

Takeaway: jargon can be a serious obstacle to communicating effectively with your base of supporters. Outside the office, jargon is a dead language. We carelessly fling technical shorthand ('accessible', 'services') at our donors and prospects. But generalists do not interpret these terms correctly and profoundly, the way specialists do. Terms like 'at risk' fail to move people unless we bring those terms to life vividly through anecdotes, photos and other real-life evidence. ■

With acknowledgments to
Ahern E-news 6.6
Visit www.aherncomm.com

Provide 'facts at a glance' as effective leave-behind

What handouts, brochures or materials do you leave with someone who is not all that familiar with your organisation?

It's easy to inundate would-be donors with so much information that they end up reviewing none of it.

Your handouts should include a concisely written, easy-to-read brochure on your purpose, programmes and those you serve. This could be a one-page sheet, bookmark or multi-panel brochure. Here is a checklist of information often found on such pieces:

- Year of founding and by whom.
- Mission statement.
- List of services provided.
- Number of clients served.
- Client profile summary.
- Number of employees.
- Yearly budget and payroll.
- Consecutive years of balanced budget.
- Map of facilities and location.
- Description of outstanding facilities and/or equipment.
- Names of officers, board members.
- List of achievements, recognition.
- Calendar of events.
- Where to go for more information.
- Size of endowment.
- Previous year's total contributions.
- Current year's fundraising goal(s).
- Uses of gifts.
- List of volunteer opportunities.
- Distinguishing characteristics.
- Testimonials.
- Brief summary of future plans.
- Key contact information.

Adapted from Successful Fund Raising, *December 2008, Volume XVI, No. 12.* ■

Strong messages mean strong leaders

Yet few presidents of non-profit organisations spend time each month – or, in most instances, ever – working on their message. They ignore this task but then are confused about why grant makers, policy makers or journalists ignore them. They bemoan poorly attended programmes, forgetting they were too busy to create a message pitching the programme to participants' desires.

We are living through the fourth major communication revolution in human history; the primary responsibility for navigating an organisation through the increasing upheaval lies with the chief executive. The development of a strategic message – that set of statements that lays the foundation for conveying in-depth information – is no longer a task to delegate to a charity's public relations expert.

It is now a fundamental responsibility of presidents and executive directors; as fundamental as strategic planning.

Planning helps an organisation align internal resources effectively and efficiently to meet goals. 'Strategic messaging' helps an organisation attain goals by aligning it with external resources – people whose actions cause the changes the organisation seeks.

Overload

Both are essential for success in a world of information overload, increased competition for resources and shrinking resources.

The importance of a strong message is reason enough for a chief executive to be accountable for developing one. But the chief executive needs to play a key role for other reasons. Developing a message often challenged longstanding elements of an organisation's culture. In most cases, conceiving a strong message requires the active involvement of people from a range of departments.

Non-profit leaders may have to take the initiative in changing deeply ingrained corporate cultures and moralistic attitudes if they want to develop successful messages. Following are the most common cultural traps that charities must escape to create effective messages:

- Expecting people to do the right thing for the right reason. This mindset leads organisations to ignore the reality that self-interest drives what individuals pay attention to and act upon. Not surprisingly, organisational messages fall on deaf ears when groups try to catch the attention of audiences by speaking about what interests the charity instead of the audience.
- Telling people what they need to do rather than connecting with what they want to do. People are often more motivated by their desires than by their needs. Continually focusing on what people should do because they need to do it and ignoring the power of desire as a motivator may seem righteous, but it is a recipe for failure in getting across a message.
- Assuming that creating awareness or providing information will, by itself, accomplish a charity's mission. Creating awareness, informing, educating or persuading are only stepping stones on the path to action. Unfortunately, many non-profit groups cannot articulate what action they are trying to effect. Developing a message that succeeds in moving people to take a desired action requires a clear focus on what that action is.
- Deciding to do something without fully assessing the financial and other implications of doing so. Once a group has identified what people want, it needs to determine that it has the time, money, expertise and other resources to deliver results that match up with those desires – or its message will fail to generate the sustained action needed to make change.
- Providing the maximum amount of information as quickly as possible in the belief that this is key to communication success. When developing a strategic message, whose purpose is to connect with and engage key supporters while laying a foundation for delivering the organisation's in-depth information, more is often less. The process of capturing and holding attention relies upon a listener being able to easily grasp what is being said – and that is easier to do when sentences are short and simple.
- Making communications a second-tier function, not a strategic component of a charity's mission worthy of attention from the highest levels of the organisation. The best programmes, the most persuasive policy positions, the most worthy causes – are invisible if the messages that carry them into the world are not as strategically crafted as the programmes and policies themselves.

Businesses are increasingly recognising the importance of strategic messages, and that same approach can benefit non-profit organisations without undermining their focus on charitable causes. The attention and energy of the people whom charities consider 'theirs' is being sought not merely by other non-profit groups but by virtually every entity in society. The ever-growing tidal wave of information that engulfs every person every day drowns out the messages of all but the most skilful non-profit organisations. Those that survive will be led by chief executives who recognise that developing the message is a key component of leadership. ■

Presidential candidates know that to become the next president they need to devote a good part of their days to developing and delivering specific messages.

Adapted from
The Chronicle of Philanthropy
April 17 2008
Visit
http://philanthropy.com

Strengthen your case for giving (cont.)

Continued from page 1

organisation. A case for giving of this sort is generally no longer than a few sentences or a couple of paragraphs – one side of one sheet of paper at the most. It's not intended for external distribution.

- Alternatively, a case for giving may be a finished document that's either distributed with or integrated into a grant proposal to an institutional funder or a major individual donor. A document of this sort may run to many pages and be colourfully, even lavishly, illustrated, printed and packaged. Its sole purpose is to be handed (or, less frequently, mailed) to donors.

I've worked on both types of cases. They're very different, as you can see.

The elaborate case for giving that a mature non-profit might develop for a capital campaign or some other major fundraising programme will need to include a number of items in detail:

- A statement of purpose that incorporates the vision, mission and values of the organisation.
- Either a capsule history of the organisation or a statement about the background of and need for the project or campaign.
- The budget for the campaign, the project, or the organisation as a whole.
- A description of the sources of funds you anticipate, providing a context for the Ask and assuring donors that you don't expect them to be the sole source of money for the project.
- A timeline for completion of the work involved.
- A specific Ask (or a range of Asks).
- Information about donor benefits and recognition.
- Illustrations, including charts, graphs, architectural drawings and photographs, as necessary.

Each of these items might require a page or more. It's not unusual for the case for giving for a major campaign to run to 20 pages or more. Major individual and institutional donors are used to receiving pitches in this form. Apparently, the stiff competition requires it.

But don't get the idea that writing the other, shorter case for giving is any easier. In fact, doing a top-notch job on any case for giving requires exploring donor motivation in some depth.

Why donors give (or don't give)

The motivation to give may be triggered by one or a combination of three components:

The emotional – recognising that not just impulse gifts but thoughtful, continuing support for a cause or institution may rest in large part on an emotional connection.

The rational – because few donors operate entirely in an emotional mode but must be convinced that a cause is credible and worthy of support on the basis of its vision, leadership, track record or other factors.

The spiritual – reflecting the fact that much of philanthropy is rooted in spiritual values and beliefs, sometimes stemming from affiliations with organised religious bodies, sometimes more closely associated with deep-seated psychological impulses of the sort that psychologist Abraham Maslow categorised as 'self-actualisation'.

Other than fundraisers for churches, synagogues, mosques, temples and other religious organisations, most people in the field tend to overlook the spiritual dimension of donor motivation.

Don't make that mistake.

Many of your donors are likely to be supporting your work at least in part because you're helping to make the world a better place – by saving the world or preserving the planet, by restoring human dignity, by suppressing violence or redressing injustice – and it's wise to keep reminding them of that broader contribution you're making.

Other donors are no doubt motivated by overt religious beliefs, since research consistently shows that people who attend religious services regularly tend to be far more philanthropic than the average.

In a general sense, your case for giving must address three needs:

- To describe how you will fulfill your mission and advance your vision if you receive the necessary funds;
- To make clear how the gifts you receive will help you achieve the specific objectives of your campaign;
- To emphasise in what ways, both intangible and tangible, the donor will benefit from contributing to your cause or campaign.

Viewed from a different perspective, your challenge in crafting a case for giving is to establish a link between your donors and your clients or beneficiaries or the issue you address. It's that connection you need to emphasise, not the connection between the donor and your organisation itself.

Let's try a few examples to make all this clearer.

Case for giving for a food pantry

Your support for The Pantry will help bring closer the day when no one in our community need go to bed hungry at night. Your contributions of food and cash will demonstrate your commitment to sharing with those less fortunate than you and to building the caring community you want to live in.

Case for giving for an environmental advocacy organisation

Continued on page 8

Scripting the call

Using the telephone to make an appeal to prospective donors to religious organisations is one of the most effective and personal ways to raise funds, as Stephen Dawson reports.

Giving to non-profits in the United States has steadily increased for more than 50 years with no sector being stronger than that of gifts to religious organisations.

Giving to such organisations is an area that has seen challenges in the weakened economy of 2008, but remains strong overall.

The most personal way to make an appeal to prospective donors for religious organisations, aside from asking in person, is the telephone.

The medium has been, and continues to be, the most effective mass-appeal fundraising tool for a number of reasons. Among those reasons are its capacity to answer a prospective donor's questions and the ability to deliver the emotional nature of the appeal in a way no other medium can match.

Make The Ask

How, then, should one craft the tele-fundraising appeal to religious donors? The first thing you should remember is to not be afraid to make The Ask. People who are members of an organised religious organisation are used to being asked to make a donation during worship services. That fact simplifies the task of your tele-fundraising appeals to those prospects.

The callers making fundraising appeals for religious organisations must be well-trained, as they should be for any tele-fundraising campaign. However, you must select these callers with great care for those campaigns. Those agents are the 'public face' or 'voice' of the organisation, and as such, they must represent it well.

They must not only share the beliefs of the organisation, they must be able to express them intelligently and concisely.

Sincerity is an absolute requirement in making telephone solicitations for religious organisations. Prospective donors who think the caller either does not understand or share their religious beliefs will be very unlikely to respond positively to the appeal, no matter how worthwhile the cause.

That being said, what should the tele-fundraising script itself contain? Initially, there is an opportunity to establish some rapport with the prospective donor on the basis of their religious beliefs. References to current events within the organisation might be an opportunity to build that rapport, provided they are not controversial issues.

You should also recognise the opportunity to connect the cause to the teachings and principles of the religious organisation. For example, most major religions in the United States have teachings that their followers should provide help to those in need. Using some reference to an appropriate authoratative religious text (i.e. the Bible, Torah, Koran, etc.) or teaching is invaluable here since it will establish in the mind of the listener that giving to this organisation is in line with their beliefs.

It is also important that you not oversell the religious aspect of the appeal and push people away with it. A single, well-chosen quotation or reference to that authoritative text or teaching should be sufficient, if it is expressed with appropriate emotion and sincerity.

People who give to religious organisations are perhaps more likely to think of themselves as giving for purely altruistic reasons than the general population. That assessment might or might not hold true, but the fact remains that even donors such as those will appreciate being thanked for a previous donation. Further, letting them know the good works done by the religious organisation through their previous gift will reaffirm their willingness to support it again.

There is some debate regarding the willingness of a religious organisation to allow their tele-fundraisers to either ask the prospective donor if they may pray with them during the conversation or at another time. This approach can be quite powerful, but you must be absolutely certain that the caller will handle that situation with sincerity and in a manner consistent with the organisation's beliefs.

There is no 'right' answer here, but if you choose to use this route, do so with great care. Generally, an inbound call is more suited to that conversation than an outbound one.

The Ask itself might tend to be 'softer' in campaigns for religious organisations. That is to say, rather than closing the pledge with an aggressive statement such as, 'Can we count on you for the R500 gift today, or would R200 be better?', you could find better results with a more affirming approach. An example of such an Ask would be, 'Mr. Johnson, can you find it in your heart to help (organisation) (achieve a goal summarised in five words or less) with a gift of R500 today, or would one of the smaller levels of support be better for you?'

Phrasing

The phrasing in tele-fundraising appeals for religious organisations is very important. Remember these donors are often tradition-oriented people who expect to be treated with a certain level of respect. For that reason, especially when speaking with a Baby Boomer or someone older, good manners are a must.

Giving to religious organisations remains strong because people have a relationship with the organisation through their shared values. Respecting those values, using carefully chosen and segmented lists, and tapping into those values in making a compelling appeal has had and will continue to have success in tele-fundraising for religious organisations. ■

Adapted from
The NonProfit Times
September 1, 2008
Visit www.nptimes.com

Strengthen your case for giving (cont.)

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Save the Earth can win the case against global warming at all levels of government and throughout the business sector only with your active participation and generous support.

In both ways, you help advance the media campaign and lobbying efforts that are central to our mission.

Ultimately, your unwavering commitment to leave our children and grandchildren a healthy, verdant planet and a sustainable economy will be the key to the survival of our way of life.

Case for giving for a community orchestra

As a classical music lover, you know that the arts represent the finest expression of our civilisation. Through your generous support for The Symphony, you help keep alive a centuries-old tradition of artistic excellence while making it possible for the young people of our community to express their innermost feelings and gain access to their talents through The Symphony's Music in the Schools programme.

In practice, each of these cases might well be a little longer and more specific than I've indicated.

Longer or shorter, though, the case for giving needs to connect with donors in every dimension of motivation: emotional, logical and spiritual. And that language needs to be worked into every appeal and every communication with donors.

I recognise that many non-profit organisations simply reprint their mission statements in newsletters and sometimes on appeals as well. I strongly believe that a case for giving along the lines I've described above will do a much more effective job of motivating donors.

To ask or not to ask

Just as some folks in the non-profit sector believe (wrongly, in my opinion) that it's a good idea to emphasise how tough things are when approaching donors, others believe it's important either to postpone asking for money or, for an indeterminate period, to stop altogether.

This is quite possibly the biggest fundraising mistake you could possibly make.

A decision to put off asking for money comes from the same impulse that makes many non-profit folks apologise for asking.

Never forget that a request for funds for your cause is an opportunity for your donors to validate their cherished values and beliefs. Ask!

Your donors are grown-ups (presumably). If they can't give at this time, you'll find it out soon enough. Chances are, though, many of them will be more offended if you don't ask than if you do.

Your donors want to support you. Don't get in the way.

Conference date to diarise

The South African Institute of Fundraising's ninth biennial convention – *Making Waves* – takes place from 26-28 May at the Protea Hotel Karridene Beach.

Besides a host of sessions during the three-day event, there are also two optional master classes on 25 May, conducted by Bernard Ross from the UK, and Professor Adrian Sargeant from the USA. Newcomers to fundraising will benefit from a full-day class covering the basics of fundraising on 25 May.

For more information visit www.saifundraising.org.za ■

"Reprinted with acknowledgement to ..."

Fundraising Forum prides itself on keeping South African fundraisers right up-to-date with developing attitudes, trends and techniques, both here and overseas. We are grateful to the following international publications, which are regularly quoted and highly recommended:

- *Successful Fund Raising*, PO Box 4528, Sioux City, Iowa, 51104, USA, (12 issues per annum $159) website: www.stevensoninc.com
- *The NonProfit Times*, 190 Tamarack Circle, Skillman, NJ08558, USA, ($129 per annum) website: www.nptimes.com
- *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, PO Box 1989, Marion, Ohio, 43306, USA, (24 issues – one annum at $95) website: http://philanthropy.com
- *Successful Direct Mail, Telephone and Online Fundraising*. Subscribe for free at www.malwarwick.com/newsletter
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