

FUNDRAISING

FORUM™

Fundraising in tough times

If you're going to meet your fundraising targets when the economy takes a dip, keep calm, have a clear plan, tell your story and be sure to ask. Ed Laity, CEO of DVA Navion in North America, shares these guidelines.

A quick Google search (the source of all wisdom these days) on the topic of 'fundraising in tough times' yields an astonishing 1.1 million articles . . . more than enough to cover this subject from any perspective, in any situation and from any country around the globe; in fact, way too much information.

As my friend and colleague Terry Murray once said, 'anyone can learn the skills and techniques of fundraising . . . but so often it's the inability to apply them that creates failures'.

Getting the answers is the easy part, knowing what your organisation needs to do with those answers is much more important.

Within the last five years, our global economy has been hit, smashed, bruised, bloodied, collapsed, rescued, bailed-out, ignored and a whole host of other adjectives used to describe 'awful'.

Every country has suffered in one way or another . . . and every citizen and organisation of that country has suffered as well. Desperation and depression have become permanent parts of our family.

So what is the proper course of action? What should our organisations do . . . how should we act? Is there any magic that will make this all better?

Unfortunately, fundraising in tough times is *not* always about the global/local economy. Sometimes your difficult fundraising is about internal issues: leadership change (either positive or negative); financial irregularities and occurrences; or service/programme disparities.

Your tough fundraising may also be externally driven – such as image or branding issues, greater competition from other NGOs, or even a crisis of confidence.

Each of these areas creates a very difficult fundraising environment . . . almost always out of our control and at the worst possible time.

When times are tough, we recommend a ten-point checklist (almost a self-assessment that will assist you in applying the right skills and techniques that will ensure you survive your 'bump

in the road' situation.

1. Don't panic

The strategic and tactical decisions made by a charity will have more influence on their fortunes than the recession itself. Charities have more control than they realise as long as they focus on the fundamentals of their programmes and look to the future. (Lesson #1: Make sure your organisation has a current strategic plan in place.)

2. Be passionate about your mission

What are you in business to do? Does everyone from the CEO to the board to the staff to the volunteers to the donors to the recipients understand what your mission is all about and do they support it? No silos allowed! (Lesson #2: Make 'mission passion' part of every meeting and conversation.)

3. Work your plan

Successful organisations have annual fundraising strategies and plans. Adjust your forecast accordingly, but keep working your plan. (Lesson #3: If your fundraising plan is not in written form, it is not measurable . . . get some outside help quickly to build your annual and three-year plans.)

4. Tell your story

In tough environments, donors respond better to stories. Ensure that your facts and figures can 'live and breathe', that they are compelling and memorable. Make sure that all your ambassadors (board, staff, volunteers and donors) have a chance to cycle through your mission. (Lesson #4: Regularly publish 'fun facts' about what your organisation does – tell the stories.)

5. Ask for the gift

Basic fundraising fails more often because an organisation or an individual fails to ask for the gift. Never assume an answer for your donors (they will tell you) and polish up on your own personal fundraising tool kit.

(Lesson #5: Don't save money on training! Make sure everyone knows what to say, how to say it and then how to listen during a donor cultivation and solicitation event.)

6. To be continued . . .

. . . in the next issue of *Fundraising Forum*™.

INSIDE
INFORMATION

Now's the time to focus on growing your pool of potential donors	2
Philanthropy in focus	3
Database archaeology	4
Is there ever a 'best time' to fundraise?	6
Getting past your unprofitable fears	7
26 Fundraising tips from A to Z	8

Now's the time to focus on growing your pool of potential donors

Recent South African research advocates that not-for-profit organisations should diversify their fundraising strategies and start focussing more attention on 'individuals as donors'. Downes Murray International director, Jenni McLeod, explains.

Investing in growing the market of potential individual donors will show dividends in the medium to long term.

There is huge value in this advice as many of DMF's clients will attest. Individuals as potential donors have been the focus of many of their strategies and these organisations have enjoyed consistent income from this source, even when other charities have suffered because the global economy has been under continued strain.

This is evidenced by the withdrawal of international funders from South Africa as we are no longer the 'flavour of the decade'. We haven't been as hard hit economically as the northern hemisphere and we're seen to have an emerging middle class with sufficient income to support our own population.

Exciting times as competition picks up for every available charitable Rand

Research conducted by the Gordon Institute of Business (GIBS) and a publication by SA Good News: State of Giving estimate that R12 billion (67%) of charitable giving came from South African individuals in 2011/12.

This follows international trends. In the USA 81%* came from individuals and 77.1% from the same market in the UK**. Corporate Giving in South Africa was at R6.9 billion (25%) during the same period.

Individuals at their various stages in life have a larger or smaller capacity to give, and they need to be approached in the most appropriate manner at each stage. It's no good asking a school-leaver for a capital gift, but a 50 – something may well be in a position to make or influence a major gift.

Younger folk appear to love the on-line environment and using social media and e-mail is therefore a given. Your website must always be up-to-date, newsy and interactive to encourage repeat visits and it establishes the credibility of the organisation.

Special events and functions are also popular with this age group. They might not have a lot of money to give but they can participate and share their energy and enthusiasm. A passion for a particular cause established at this stage could show meaningful dividends down the line.

Once we get to 45+ most people have a good idea of what they need to maintain their lifestyle and their consciousness of the greater needs of society generally shows a shift in priorities. This is a generalisation but trends show that most individual donors to South African welfare organisations are over the age of 45 years. Here we are talking about many donors giving R50 – R1000 each time they're asked. The most cost effective medium of asking is direct mail as percentage responses are higher than in any other medium of communication and the length of tenure as a donor (the loyalty factor) is longer (higher).

Today, one's 'inbox' is overcrowded with

emailed invoices and statements from banks, insurers, and retailers.

Charity emails fight for attention and often get overlooked. It's so easy to 'delete' if one is overwhelmed. Contrastingly, people don't receive nearly as much direct mail now-a-days, and provided the charity mail is well constructed and employs the right techniques, there's no reason why it shouldn't bring results.

Reflection on some research conducted in the United States by Mark Mellman and Charles Pruitt further substantiate the age/lifestyle assumptions that older generations are more able to give and that, at this stage, direct mail is still a preferred motivator.

In a 1995 survey, Mellman predicted that direct mail solicitation would receive lower response rates as older generations of donors, who were used to relying on the mail, died. Instead he found that the response rates have remained about the same and that older generations are being replaced as direct mail givers by 'baby boomers' – people born between 1946 and 1963 – as they enter retirement.

It turns out that the generation of the donor is less important than the donor having time and discretionary income to respond to direct mail appeals.

Not only are direct mail campaigns still getting similar response rates but in both surveys 68% of respondents were aged 60 and older and 23% were aged between 40 and 59 years.

Younger donors are far more likely to respond to on-line appeals than direct mail (22% of on-line donors are under 40 years of age whereas 4% of direct mail donors are that young).

Money 'left behind'

Charities that are not engaged in both on-line and direct mail arenas are according to Mellman 'leaving money on the table'. But beware, in South Africa the average proportion of funds raised by charities doing both direct mail and on-line solicitation is 5% from on-line and 95% via direct mail.

This is a major generalisation because there are many factors that can influence this comparison – not least of which is the number of years each form of fundraising's been in place, the size of the respective databases or the frequency and nature of the appeals.

What's also interesting is Mellman's conclusion that there are many similarities in the donors. They tend to be spontaneous, flexible and re-active in giving. They prefer to support groups that educate the public, spend money on programmes rather than overheads and that demonstrate progress towards their goal.

Back then to the advice from the people at the coalface: Diversify your strategy to all potential donor markers and don't underestimate the power of the individual.

* Giving USA ** UK Giving 2011

MILESTONE THINKING

On-target observations in brief

Humble foundations know that small local grants are often better than large national ones.

With acknowledgement to
The Chronicle of Philanthropy
19 April 2012

What is the use of living, if it not be to strive for noble causes and to make this muddled world a better place for those who will live in it after we are gone?

Winston Churchill

Nothing is more important than in building and maintaining public trust than good governance.

With acknowledgement to
The NonProfit Times
15 April 2012

Most charitable bequests originate from middle-class households . . . not from the aristocrats who occupy Downton Abbey, but from the generous hearts of the normal people who watch Downton Abbey.

With acknowledgement to
Tom Ahern
Visit www.aherncomm.com

At the heart of any great elevator pitch is a story. But in this data-driven age, the art of storytelling has largely been forgotten.

With acknowledgement to
Andy Goodman in
The Chronicle of Philanthropy
22 March 2012

Online and direct-mail donors tend to be two distinct groups of people – they give online or through the mail, but not both.

With acknowledgement to
Mark Mellman
on <http://philanthropy.com>

Only by taking charge of your day-to-day can you truly make an impact in what matters most to you. I urge you to build a better routine by stepping outside of it, find your focus by rising above the constant cacophony, and sharpen your creative prowess by analysing what really matters most when it comes to making your ideas happen.

Scott Belsky



What began as a 'vision' 16 years ago, for Tich Smith and his wife Joan, has grown into what will soon be a fully functioning, self-sustaining village.

It takes a village to raise a child . . .

As the founders of Lungisisa Indlela Villages (LIV) near Verulam in KwaZulu-Natal, Tich and Joan have committed their lives to championing the plight of neglected, abused and orphaned children by providing a safe haven where they can be nurtured and loved. LIV's core vision is to 'rescue a child, restore a life, raise a leader, and release a star'.

Working in partnership with donors, government, businesses and the church, LIV currently shelters 120 children with 28 housemothers in 28 environmentally friendly homes.

The house mothers, teachers and social workers provide unconditional love, spiritual discipleship and holistic care within a village setting. 96 homes have been completed and will house 750 children. The first phase of the school is in operation and includes a crèche, library, computer room and art centre. The second phase of the school, including an ECD Centre and multi-purpose hall is under construction along with the clinic.

In addition to life in the village, LIV is making a positive difference in the neighbouring Cottonland community where they support the local primary school with essential supplies, food and equipment.

To learn more about LIV and their passion for turning 'scars into stars' visit www.liv-village.com or 'like' LIV Village on Facebook. 'At LIV we focus on the solution. We need many Villages across our nation. Together we can,' says Tich.

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

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 is downloadable for free, 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

Database archaeology: Institutional memory is buried in your computers

Every nonprofit already has a mountain of data. The donor database often leads to an organisation's own high-potential names and undiscovered planned giving donors. The database is much more than simply an organisational LinkedIn.

When there is turnover of staff, it's your institutional memory that suffers,' said Bobby Dean, director of philanthropic resources at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Centre in Houston. 'I believe that the database is a development office's most valuable asset.'

Dean explained that it's important that all development staff members are reminded and held accountable for entering accurate and meaningful data. 'I can't stress enough how urgent this is in terms of follow-up with donors and ultimately the ask,' he said.

But where should you start? Start looking at donor age – that is, if you have it.

'One of the most important pieces of information that a nonprofit can be tracking in the database when it comes to planned giving is age, and, more often than not, this serves as the biggest gap in the donor profile,' said Faön M. Mahunik, director of research analytics at CCS fundraising and development consultancy in New York City.

'For some organisations – education, higher education, and sometimes healthcare organisations – age is readily available because of the nature of the relationship of the prospects to the organisation,' Mahunik said.

'Age is provided at the beginning of the relationship; for example, when a student applies for college. For other organisations – advocacy, arts, associations, cultural, global relief, religious – age is something that is rarely collected.'

Basic information

Age is often one of the best ways to begin sifting through the data to find potential planned giving donors.

'Investing in the resources to append age information to a database can serve as a jumping off point to identifying and segmenting prospects that are starting to think about planned giving,' she said.

Mahunik also recommended looking at recurring behaviours of donors to help sort out potential planned giving donors.

'The most common statement you'll hear about planned giving donors is that they are, more often than not, habitual annual fund donors,' she said. 'But, other behaviours can also help paint that portrait – yearly memberships, event attendance, ticket buying, volunteering – all of these behaviours identify loyalty to an organisation – and loyal giving is the key to planned giving.'

Mahunik suggested nonprofits expand

the age range in most reports. 'It's also important to realise that the average age of those people making their Will keeps dropping. Nonprofits should make sure their list of planned giving prospects expands to those donors who are under the age of 50'.

'In the past, people would only reach out/market to donors 70 years or older for planned giving. We've found it makes the most sense to send planned giving education pieces to those who are significantly younger.'

Putting good data in will make you have the best results when searching for planned giving donors. 'Always enter clean data. If you do data overlays, when you upload the data into your database, place it into an additional field if possible and notate where that data came from,' said Dean.

'I can't tell you how many times a donor gave me their date of birth or a phone number, and a random data overlay replaced the data,' he said.

Deciding what should be in a database shouldn't be an issue. 'Everything,' is what should be in it, according to Phyllis Freedman, president at SmartGiving in Washington, and author of *The Planned Giving Blogger*.

Nonprofits should try to populate the database with as much personal information as possible. 'Beyond giving information, being able to track event attendance, appeal response, family status information – Are they married? Do they have children/grandchildren? – are all important,' said Mahunik.

Outside of age and familial connections, Dean recommended asking donors for their motivation for giving and what other organisations they support.

'The number one thing to look for is evidence of passion for your cause or organisation,' said Freedman.

Tracking as many touch-points as possible will help you see a clearer picture of your donor. Peter H. Hansen, vice president of development at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJ PAC), explained that as a performing arts organisation, having a holistic database that tracks multiple contacts with donors is essential.

'In analysing prospects for upgrades, the frequency of attendance is a critical indicator along with current level of consistent giving,' he said. The organisation adapted an open source software programme to pull data from its financial

Continued on page 5

Continued From page 4

and event software to help them understand which donors, other than major donors, were their best customers, he explained.

Hansen explained that he looks at consistent annual supporters. Patrons giving for 10 years or more are most likely to make a planned gift.

From small to large

Hansen pointed to one long-standing member he met at a reception who was giving at a very modest level. 'She had been giving consistently for over 10 years. It turns out that she was not married and had no heirs. When we mentioned providing for NJPAC in her estate plan, she became very interested and subsequently named NJPAC as the primary beneficiary of her estate,' he said.

Freedman also pointed to consistent giving over the years through various methods as one of the largest indicators of planned giving potential.

'Giving across multiple channels – mail, online and events – can also be predictive. Monthly givers and major donors are also good prospects. It's always best to combine giving with other indications of passion, to refine your audience.

'Most organisations have a limited budget to invest in planned giving so finding the best of the best is usually important,' she said.

Mahunik pointed out that the essential piece to mining your data is to track historically how planned givers were different from other donors – not other planned donors.

'It's important to look at your database as a whole, not just at a specific segment of your database,' explained Mahunik.

'You want to make sure to look at planned givers compared to other donors, as opposed to just planned givers to find out what makes them tick. That's the key to data mining and modeling. It's not predictive, important or helpful to know that 80% of your planned givers gave to a certain appeal. If 80% of your donors did as well.'

Also, don't make the process too hard for yourself, recommended Freedman. 'Don't overcomplicate it,' she said.

'Don't try to use every bit of data you might have. Pick the fields you have most populated. If you don't have many people who have given you an email, that might not be a valuable element to use as criteria. Just start by combining loyalty and age with at least one other factor, if you can.'

Hansen said that nonprofits should constantly mine databases and run reports that look at patterns of giving, not just the size of the donations. 'If you have a larger database, for example, over 25 000 records, conducting periodic wealth screening is very helpful.

'We did this during our last capital

campaign and discovered some hidden donors,' he said. 'Create a rating and ranking system so you can pull reports that make sense and help you establish cultivation and solicitation plans.'

Understanding your donors

There are a few key trends when finding the reasons donors are interested in planned gifts, explained Mykolas D. Rambus, chief executive officer of Singapore-based Wealth-X, which find qualified prospects in the ultra-high net worth (UHNW) category of at least \$30 million.

Planned giving is about leaving a legacy, but the word legacy means different things to different people, said Rambus. For one donor, that might mean honouring family roots and connections to an organisation. 'To another donor, the vanity aspect of a legacy may mean naming the biggest building on campus or the biggest scholarship – having their name in lights,' said Rambus.

Finding out where your potential donor is on that spectrum can help you understand what gift would be best.

When it comes to UHNW individuals, understanding how these donors came into wealth often defines them as a person and their giving.

Another key component is finding out how the donor got to your organisation. Often donors interested in the cause will seek out the organisation – whether they want to know more about cancer or water projects in Africa.

The donor's wealth and the connection to the organisation will lead to donor engagement. But for planned giving, sometimes 'it's about catching people at the right time of their lives,' he explained. Rambus said some donors will have a psychological trigger that leads them to think about planned giving, whether that is age, tax laws or a level of wealth.

It's not as essential to find the trigger as it is to be there when the trigger happens.

'For all organisations, make it as easy as possible to become a part of the community. That could be signing up for a newsletter or collecting email and contact information to stay in touch – that's vital,' he said.

Your data and the ask

Once you have a list of prospective planned giving donors, you can use the same information in your database to help you tailor a solicitation plan that works best for that donor.

'The database can help inform, most importantly, when you should solicit your donor – do they give at a specific time every year or do they only respond to certain appeals?

'Paying attention to the behaviour of your most loyal donors can help in both the cultivation process for planned giving and the stewardship of those recurring gifts,'

Continued on page 6

Getting past your unprofitable fears

'We can't afford it.'
'I'm not a writer.'
'But I don't know a thing about design.'
Tom Ahern tackles common excuses organisations make to avoid producing newsletters that will delight their donors.

Let's tear down some common barriers . . . the barriers that stand between your organisation . . . and creation of a newsletter that improves retention . . . thereby boosting the lifetime value of your donor list.

Because when you get right down to it, newsletters are all about the money . . . eventually.

The rogue's gallery:

- We did a newsletter before. It didn't work for us. This conclusion implies that some organisations are just not 'good newsletter material,' when in fact most newsletters are built to fail, not to succeed. Learn to do your donor newsletter the right way, and it will work.
- I'm a fundraiser, not a journalist. You don't have to be a great writer to create a great charity newsletter. Paradoxically, your newsletter isn't really about getting people to read your articles. Your newsletter is actually about delivering joy to your donors repeatedly. You can swiftly accomplish that profitable feat in a handful of headlines. So mothball your 'writer's block' anxieties. You don't need to write exquisite articles. You will need to learn how to write a competent headline. But that's about it. And it's an easily acquired skill.
- I have other priorities. I hear you: my to-do list always outpaces my workday, too. So the question becomes (especially in a small or one-person fundraising shop): Is a newsletter worth making time for? Should it be a top priority or an also-ran? Well, that depends. If your organisation believes (as I do, because I've seen the proof repeatedly) that donor-centricity is the surest route to increased income and retention, then you need a tool to help you nurture relationships with all your donors – not just those lucky few whom you can reach

one on one. The proper tool for mass cultivation is the donor newsletter.

- I don't have any stories. 'There are eight million stories in the *Naked City*. This has been one of them,' the narrator intoned at the close of each episode. *Naked City* was one of the first TV crime dramas, set in New York City. They knew they'd never run out of stories. Nor will you. At Health Care for the Homeless (Baltimore, USA), director of development Keiren Havens makes a practice of regularly trolling the front-line staff for true-life stories. She's also educated the social workers there about the financial good it does the agency to have great stories to tell. As a result, social workers have become eager 'story gatherers'. You're not asking them to write up polished 500-word summaries, either. You're asking them to send you 50 rough words in an email.
- I'm not a designer. You don't have to be. Even the most graphically challenged can send out to donors a simple (yet soul-satisfying) 'newsy-letter' created in Word. Trust me: if you can write any kind of letter (to your son at camp?), then you can create a successful newsy-letter. Fancy-pants design is NOT what makes a donor newsletter work.
- I can't justify it to my boss. Look: the financial hurdle for newsletters is really low. If you break even – if you bring in enough gifts to cover your postage and printing – then you're already beating the odds. Donor newsletters aren't about current income, after all (though they can produce miracles in that department). Donor newsletters are about retaining donors for the long haul. Which is just smart business.

With acknowledgement to Tom Ahern on www.aherncomm.com ■

Database archaeology (continued)

Continued From page 5

said Mahunik.

Freedman also explained personalisation is key for communicating to different audiences and advocated her mantra: 'Show 'em that you know 'em.'

'If your monthly donors are going to receive planned giving communications, the copy should reference who they are and acknowledge what they are already doing for the cause,' Freedman explained.

This approach will emphasise that you already know what the donor is doing for the organisation, and highlight the relationship they have already created.

'Analysing the data in a donor/prospect record does help in structuring an ask along

with personal knowledge of the constituent. Consistency of giving, age, level of giving (especially increasing over time), type of gifts (securities versus cash) – all of these help to make an intelligent request to a donor or prospect,' explained Hansen.

'Besides having accurate records of gifts, tracking your relationship with donors and consistently entering contact reports is so critical,' said Hansen.

'If a prospect manager for a major donor leaves tomorrow, you must have institutional memory stored in a database to continue an effective relationship.'

Michele Donohue is an award-winning reporter and former staff writer for The NonProfit Times. ■

Is there ever a 'best time' to fundraise?

Paradoxically, based on personal experience, I am firmly of the opinion that it's what you do in the tough times that determines your results when the going 'gets good'.

So there we were, having come off the back of what was arguably one of the most successful university fundraising campaigns in South Africa – even Africa – and we thought, 'This is it, we've cracked it. We're on a roll'.

Well, like golf, just when you think you're on top, we soon learnt differently! The markets had crashed, the USA was on the hunt for Bin Laden, they had invaded Afghanistan and Iraq and they and their allies were at war on multiple fronts. And this was when Rhodes decided it needs R20 million for a new library!

Our traditional supporters in the corporate world were probably a bit tired of us at this stage, and were also taking a pounding in the markets in general. Consequently, their funds available for philanthropy were also on the decline. The SA Lotto was in turmoil and everyone was looking to a much smaller market for much greater support.

Traditional drum

So we decided as much as we should continue to beat a traditional drum, we also needed to lift our thinking and look to other markets if we had any hope of meeting our employers' expectations.

A big difference between universities and much of the NGO sector is that we 'own' one of our major constituencies – our Alumni – and so it seemed logical then that we should be looking at these individuals to help us out.

The trouble was that even though we had gained some support during the Centenary Campaign and had established fundraising programmes centred on our Alumni (for example a Bequest Association and a tele-mail programme) these were spluttering and we needed to do significant re-engineering.

The first thing we did was to begin thinking of the relationship with our Alumni as a journey – from point of first contact to that time, unfortunately and inevitably – where they arrive at their final destination.

So we developed plans for beginning an interaction at the point of arrival i.e. as new students. We then implemented a series of engagements – communication and fundraising – while they were on campus.

We actively sought to cooperate with the Student Representative Council and we introduced a student-to-student fundraising campaign – Give 5. Here students ask their fellow students to commit just R5 once a year to a good cause, the aim being to instil a culture of philanthropy within our future Alumni.

It also provided a platform that we used to leverage our Alumni to commit to the next step of the journey – the Annual Fund. We

redesigned this programme and put a full time coordinator in charge. We now have over 1000 Alumni actively contributing to this programme and are raising over R1m each year – and many of these regular donors started donating towards the library.

And there was also the Bequest Association. We re-launched this as part of the communications strategy around the library – never losing out on an opportunity to remind our seniors that many of their relationships – and later – marriages – started out on the steps at the entrance to the old building. Small donations and bequest pledges resulted.

So what did we learn? Well, no surprises here. Based on the results of our library project, you should never expect to raise money from constituencies that you have neglected in the past.

We didn't raise great amounts of money from our alumni, but what we did do is to build the relationships with this constituency from which we are now benefiting. Most of the cash we got came from traditional sources and this success was based on the fact that we had established good relationships previously.

But it was made clear to us that significant donations from our corporate friends were coming to an end. This alone was a good reason for looking towards our Alumni and now the next time we have a major project, our recent work is going to make it so much easier to make that 'ask'.

The second lesson was that there is never a good time to fundraise or introduce new programmes – just do them when you can, know that they are necessary and the benefits will come in time. More importantly (ask a stockbroker), you invest in the bad times and reap the benefits in the good ones. I personally am looking forward to the next 'library' at Rhodes University. ■



Is there ever a 'good time' to be a fundraiser? Instinctively, those of us already in the trade know the answer to this. If it isn't an election, a war, a financial meltdown or just luck of the draw, there's always an excuse for not biting the fundraising bullet. Guy White, Director of Development and Alumni at Rhodes University, ponders this eternal question.



26 Fundraising tips from A to Z (part Two)

It's a simple message for each new year. Stick to the basics and fundraising success will follow. It's as easy as A, B, C!

N – is for NEEDS; you should have a clear idea of the present and future needs within your area of service . . . and you should prioritise them before presenting them to potential donors.

O – is for OPPORTUNITIES; give donors more opportunities, reasons and seasons to support you . . . and you will encourage multiple gifts.

P – is for PLEDGES; often the best way to raise more money than you would with one-time gifts. Encourage pledged support over three to five years or monthly gifts to sustain your organisation.

Q – is for QUESTIONNAIRE; one way to find out more about your donors. Ask them to help you find others like them . . . by telling you about themselves, their motivations, what credit cards they use, what publications they read and so on.

R – is for RECOGNITION; major donors and some corporate donors enjoy the public acknowledgement of their gifts. And some even want to honour a family member by putting their name on a building.

S – is for STEERING COMMITTEE; that very important group of volunteers that will help you prepare for your fundraising campaign by developing the Case for Support and listing potential donors to the campaign.

T – is for THANKING; the most important task that is often the most neglected.

Thank you letters should go out within 24 hours of receipt of the donation.

Donors of larger amounts should also receive a telephone call or a personal visit.

U – is for URGENCY; if you can instill a note of genuine urgency into your fundraising efforts . . . you will get more people donating and more quickly!

V – is for VOLUNTEERS; volunteers come in all shapes and sizes. Some will help you with the delivery of your programmes and services; others will help with special events, sit on your Board, or give to your fundraising efforts and influence others to give.

W – is for WILLS; the very substantial gifts you can get from bequests.

X – is for XENOPHOBIA; or the fear of things foreign. Don't be afraid to try something that worked in another country because your organisation is 'different'. Fundraising experience is exportable – across continents, countries and cultures.

Y – is for YEAR PLAN; before each new year begins, look at your budgets, list your fundraising activities and estimate income before developing a plan to achieve your targets.

Z – is for ZERO; the amount of money you might well raise without a fundraising plan.

Z – is also for ZEAL . . . defined as "hearty persistent endeavour" – a quality all successful fundraisers need. Remember only about 50% of the people you expect to give will actually give – and 50% of those will give less than you hoped for. So the more people you ask and the more often you ask them, the more money you will raise.

A. B. C. Simple and easy as 1. 2. 3. Just remember your basics. Have a great year.

With acknowledgement to the late Terry Murray. ■



FUNDRAISING FORUM™ is edited by Richard Solomon and published by Downes Murray International. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the publisher.

DOWNES MURRAY
INTERNATIONAL

Downes Murray International are fundraising consultants, working with non-profit and non-government organisations of all kinds, to increase their fundraising effectiveness.

We offer feasibility studies, strategic planning workshops, direct mail fundraising, mail/phone, corporate and capital fundraising campaigns, Internet fundraising and website design, church fundraising and bequest promotion programmes.

In addition, Downes Murray International has close links with a number of fundraising consultancies across the globe, and represents DVA Navion International Consultancy in Africa, enabling us to keep a finger on the pulse of international trends and techniques. For more information, contact us:

Durban
Tel. 031 584-5000
Website
www.dmi.co.za
E-mail
info@dmi.co.za

Subscribe online at
www.dmi.co.za/subscribe.asp

"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 Fundraising**, 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 – per annum at \$95) website: <http://philanthropy.com>
 - **Successful Direct Mail, Telephone and Online Fundraising.** Subscribe for free at www.malwarwick.com/newsletter
 - **Ahern E-News.** Subscribe for free at www.aherncomm.com