

Fundraising Success is Not Accidental – It's About Engaging Communities

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Abstract

Fundraising success needs innovative strategic planning and community volunteer engagement as competition for donor dollars increases between not-for-profit community organisations both in Australia and overseas.

The importance of an organisation's mission, vision and values to engage community financial and volunteer support of its activities together with the introduction of TEACH (Transparent, Accountable, Ethical, Community-focussed and Humanity Benefiting) fundraising principles encourages donors to become more engaged with causes and organisations they support.

Using case studies from Australia (Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia), Brazil (Society of Anglo-Saxon Speakers) and Israel (two large multi-campus Tel Aviv High Schools) this interactive workshop presentation will explore:

- why and how people donate
- why and how volunteers actively support these organisations
- how to encourage long term donor and volunteer relationships
- organisational and personal storytelling for ongoing community support
- the need for contrarian strategic fundraising to ensure organisational continuity

Participants will be able to take away practical strategies to maximise donor and volunteer support to ensure their organisation's continuity through creative and innovative engagement activities.

Relationships — the key to successful fundraising

Possibility Australia's Fundraising Philosophy

Possibility Australia's fundraising philosophy is based on more than 15 years professional experience in the not-for-profit sector in hands-on fundraising and executive leadership positions, which have resulted in more than \$92 million being raised for a wide range of Australian community-focussed organisations.

The rationale of our philosophy is to develop a strategic program that establishes new fundraising and philanthropic income generating streams and enhances existing fundraising activities through active community engagement.

The focus of fundraising activities should focus on the premise that “fundraising is logic and commonsense – it is not rocket science.”

It is our belief those organisations who have targeted mission, vision and values are more likely to receive a positive response from existing and potential donors through community engagement especially if they publicly incorporate TEACH Principles into their everyday activities.

TEACH Fundraising and Philanthropic Principles are a strategic action guide to maximising the mission, vision, values and action for organisations whose governance is committed to fundraising and philanthropy that is:

- transparent
- ethical
- accountable
- community-focussed
- humanity benefiting.

So what makes ‘a cause’ popular?

Popularity could be related to a ‘feel good’ relationship such as:

- children
- animals
- ‘current/sexy’ causes.

It could relate to yourself such as:

- cancer
- heart
- multiple sclerosis
- mental illness.

It could be a humanitarian connection through community tragedy such as:

- bushfire
- cyclone
- drought
- tsunami.

Popularity could be related to mutual community/personal/organisational benefit such as:

- Rotary/Lions/CWA
- school council/parents' association
- Saturday market/traders' association
- sporting clubs/opportunity shops
- corporate social responsibility.

It could also relate to strong branding and/or celebrity endorsement such as:

- Royal Flying Doctor Service
- Red Cross
- Heart Foundation
- Dawn Fraser
- 'Bud' Tingwell
- Olivia Newton-John/Kylie Minogue
- Uniting Church Connections
- Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal
- Legacy Badge Day
- RSL Poppy Appeal.

The fundraising process and strategies for success

Derived from The Fundraising School at the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, the fundraising methods, from most effective to least effective, are:

- will/bequest donor (personal contact only)
- capital campaign donor (personal contact only)
- special/major gift donor (personal contact, letter, phone call)
- renewed/upgraded donors (personal contact, letter, phone call)
- first-time donors (direct mail, telemarketing, special events, door-to-door, Internet, advertising coupons, raffles, etc.)
- the world of prospects (all potential donors).

The fundraising communication ladder

Derived from The Fundraising School at the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, the communication methods, from most effective to least effective, are:

- personal face-to-face (team of two people/one person)
- personal letter (on personal stationary with/without telephone follow-up)

- personal telephone call (with/without letter follow-up)
- personalised letter/Internet
- telephone solicitation/'phonathon
- impersonal letter/direct mail/Internet
- impersonal telephone/telemarketing
- fundraising benefit/special event
- face-to-face in the street or door knock
- media/advertising/Internet.

Why People Give

According to research conducted by the American organisation Independent Sector, these are the most frequently stated reasons why people financially support not-for-profit organisations:

1. Being asked to give by someone you know well
2. Because you volunteered at the organisation
3. Being asked by clergy to give
4. Reading or hearing a news story
5. Being asked at work to give
6. Receiving a letter asking you to give
7. Receiving a phone call asking you to give
8. Reading a newspaper or magazine advertisement asking you to give
9. Seeing a television commercial (Independent Sector, *Giving and Volunteering in the United States*, 1996).

People also don't give or don't increase their giving for various reasons which have also been researched. These are:

1. I could not afford to give money
2. Because I already give as much as I can
3. Because I'm making less money this year than last
4. Because I'm unsure about having a job next year
5. Because I lost my job
6. I would rather spend my money in other ways
7. Because no one I knew personally asked me to give
8. Because no charitable institution contacted me asking for a contribution
9. Because I didn't get around to it (Independent Sector, *Giving and Volunteering in the United States*, 1996).

Fundraising methods today

The range of fundraising methods include:

- direct mail (e.g. Red Shield Appeal, Royal Flying Doctor Service, Kidney Health Australia)
- telemarketing (e.g. Surf Lifesaving Australia, Heart Research Institute, RSPCA)
- face-to-face dialogue (e.g. UNICEF, Australian Conservation Foundation, Amnesty International)
- special events (e.g. Jeans for Genes, Shave for the Cure, World's Biggest Tea Party)
- capital campaigns (e.g. Royal Flying Doctor Service, Montefiore Homes for the Aged, Melbourne University Graduate Union)
- bequest programs (e.g. Baker Medical Research Institute, RSPCA, National Heart Foundation).

Innovation in fundraising through community engagement

When approaching a new campaign what do you already possess?

What can you let go of?

What do you need to pick up on the way?

What do we know about organisations and people?

Case Studies

Three case studies of the organisations listed below will discuss:

- why and how people donate
- why and how volunteers actively support these organisations
- how to encourage long term donor and volunteer relationships
- organisational and personal storytelling for ongoing community support
- the need for contrarian strategic fundraising to ensure organisational continuity.

The following organisations will be discussed:

- Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia
- Society of Anglo-Saxon Speakers (Brazil)
- two large multi-campus high schools in Tel Aviv.