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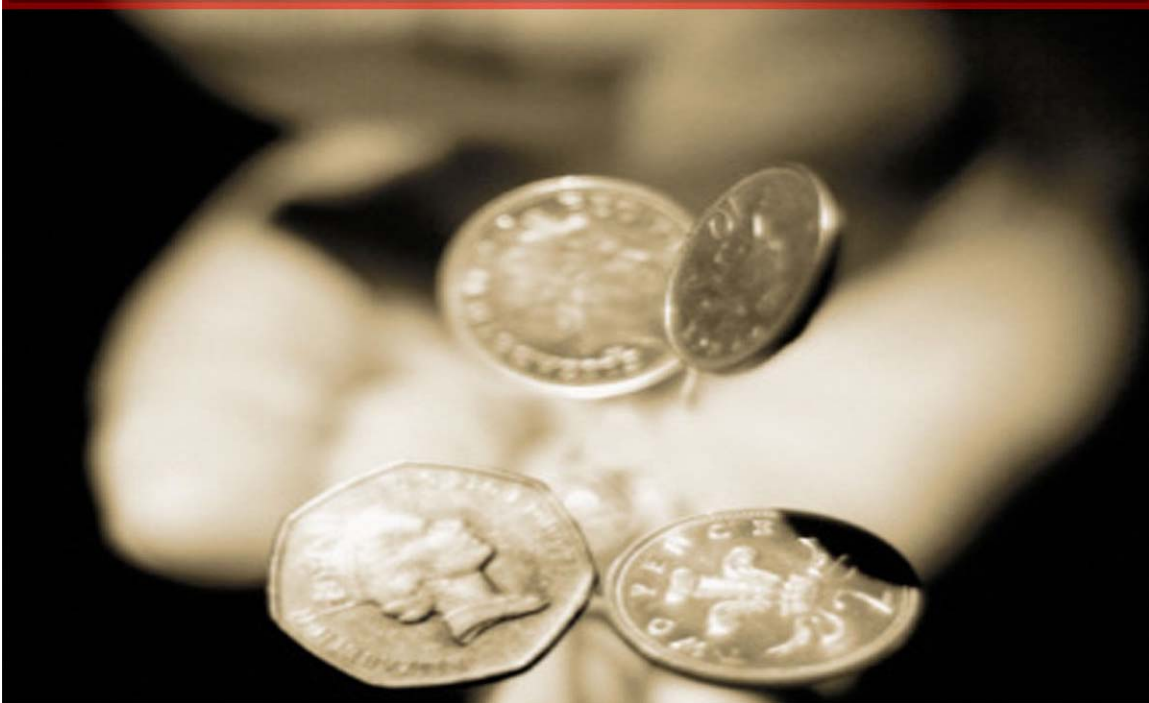
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Seven Things You Need to Know About Fundraising



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Fundraising has long been a very popular tactic of money making. It has been used by organizations who wish to earn profits or raise funds for whatever purposes they may have set. However, fundraising is not just about making money and all that. There is something deeper to it than its being a way of raising profits – it's more on building relationships.

Yes, you heard me right. Fundraising is a very effective way of connecting people from different walks of life, with different personalities. Through it, the fundraisers and the members of the non-profit organizations meet. Once the bond is made, it starts to relate the fundraising crew with the volunteers, and later with the public. It is this relationship actually that makes fundraising worth investing.

There is still more to fundraising than what is previously mentioned. However, this time I will focus much on the most important things to know about the concept. These things are stressed below to make you aware about the most necessary ideas to remember when it comes to fundraising. However, it is best to note and understand that these things are presented not in order for I know that what would be the right order for me may not be the right order for you. This is a pretty good idea especially if you want to remain safe, right?

Anyway, if you want to know exactly what these necessary fundraising things are, I suggest you to please relax and enjoy reading. After all, knowing all the most important things to know about fundraising is worth the risk.

So here they are:

1. There's No Room for Shyness in Fundraising

Are you the shy type? Do you usually find yourself hiding somewhere while your peers are asking for a gift? If you want to fundraise, then you should start eliminating your shyness.

In fundraising, the ability to ask for gifts with no shame is the most important ingredient of fundraising success. The event wouldn't be possible without this ability found on the members of the group hosting the fundraising event. Those who volunteered to do the job must have the guts and the ability to ask for gifts no matter how awkward the situation will be. Note that the common targets of the fundraisers are the public. So it follows that whether you know them or not, you need to persuade them to donate even just a little piece of their blessings by asking.

Yes, ASKING is the term. Although there are some people who tend to simply send organization money without being asked, it is not enough for them to create a donor base around. As you may know, most of the people out there won't think of giving you money or gifts unless you make them aware of your purposes and needs. Well, according to some researches, this behavior might be the result of them not being aware how the non-profit organizations obtain support from the people and how do the costs run to the organization. So if you don't make yourself brave enough to ask them, they will simply assume that you don't need money anymore or you've already gotten the money from somewhere. This is just the same with asking if you are hungry or not, or if you need a piece of advice or not.

See the difference? That basically is the importance of asking when it comes to fundraising.

2. Most of the Money Comes from People, and Most of these People are Not Rich

In the United States, it was found out that three sources of funding are available for the non-profit organizations to choose from. The first is the so-called “earned income”, which simply involved the products and fees for whatever services was offered to the public. The second is the public sector or the government, and the third is private sector, which is to some degree covers the foundations, corporations, and the individuals.

Speaking of individuals, it is interesting to know that certain surveys have found out that about 80% of the total funds accumulated from those above mentioned sources have been shown to be given by the individual donors. The donors are people, of course, and it is important to note that they are not grouped according to how big and how small they have provided to the organization. They are not even grouped by age, gender, race and even by their status in life, whether they belong to the middle class, working class, or the grassroots. For most of the fundraising organizations, those factors don't matter to them. What matters is they have known people who are generous and willing enough to support their needs.

There are some members of the non-profit organizations, however, who do set targets for their fundraising events. Most of these people made the rich as their targets. But the truth is, fundraising is not designed to create a gap between the rich and the poor. It is not considered to determine which of the population is rich and which is deprived. As what many fundraising experts have said, fundraising is for all. It must not create barriers, and you might be surprised to know that most of those who have supported the non-profit organizations are poor.

So when you hear the term “fundraising”, don’t think that the people who donate are all rich. That’s not the real case.

3. No One is Obligated to Support Your Group

Many of the fundraisers make mistakes of believing that people will always say “Yes” to their request. You may have committed this mistake at some point in your life. Well, the truth is, fundraising does not set certain rules and obligations for the people to follow. It doesn’t dictate the people to always say “Yes” and no one is obligated to support your group or organization no matter what you have done for them, and no matter how financially blessed they are. It doesn’t even obligate the people to support your group regardless of how much they give to the other non-profit groups or how close they are to you. Although you may think that they are a potential giver, don’t believe that they will give and will always give.

The most important thing to note here then is that people has the right to say, “No”. They utter this word for several reasons. One of the most common is that they have no extra money to support your group. They may not be in the good mood, or perhaps they don’t understand what your group does. In this case, it is important on your part to do what you have to do in order to win them and persuade them to give. If they want more information about your group and what you are after, then throw the information to their faces. Explain everything and let the power of your tongue do the work. If they’re not in the good mood, make them feel better. There is a great chance for people who know how to make someone better to obtain good results in the end. But if after all your efforts they decided to say, “No”, you have nothing to do but to respect their decisions.

But before you leave, make it clear that the person you are soliciting with is saying no and not something else like “Not now” or “I don’t like special events”. Those phrases may entail something positive.

4. Donors are Not Objects Like ATMs

Aside from the mistake of believing that people will always say yes, many fundraisers commit the biggest mistake so far when it comes to fundraising – treating their donors as ATMs. Do you get what I mean?

Simple! There are certain fundraisers who do find donors who are willing to give them the support they'll need. Their supporters, after knowing the worthy cause, try to give them what they need. The error now occurs when the fundraisers who are first given the chance to be supported and who really have gotten the full support turn out to be treating their donors as their only source of money. They ask and ask for more support, making their supporters then feel like they are being treated as ATMs. This, of course, will create great holes in the supposedly established relationship between the supporters and the fundraisers, and if this happens, the fundraisers are losing one of their better sources of raising funds.

So to avoid it from happening, discover the real key which actually found within in you. Make yourself aware that your donors are people, they have the right to say no, and they are not only the potential source of support. So make them feel like you are not treating them as objects. Instead, think of your donors as the ambassadors for your groups. You can design your materials so that your donors will be proud to give you the support you need. Send them thank you letters, easy to understand newsletters and occasional respectful requests for extra gifts. In this way, you will not only receive support from them, but they may even recommend you to their circle of friends, thus increasing your chance to raise more funds. The key here is respect.

5. Say "Thank You!"

Let's see if you are familiar with this situation:

*A little girl offers you a handful of strawberries and you take two or three from it. Minutes later, she approaches you again and says, "You want more?" You just smiled, and she says in a teasing manner, "I'll give this to you if you'll guess what the PASSWORD is". You then start thinking about it and end up blanked. Not a bit of idea occurs to you. After few minutes, the little girl asks, "So, what's the password?" You say, "I don't know", and she smiles, get near your ear and whisper "**Thank You!**"*

"Thank You" is by far the most favorably uttered word I've ever heard. It is "favorably uttered" in the sense that people love to hear and utter it every time they do something great or even not great to someone or somebody. Well, this is also true in fundraising. Your donors, who are people, love to hear "thank yous" from you. So if you want respect and support from your donors, say "Thank You" before you bank the money they provided. You must utter the "password" once you receive the money. But remember that when thanking your donors, you should not make your thank yous so fancy. It shouldn't be so long. Believe me; a simple thank you will work.

If possible, include a personal note. You can add something as simple as "Happy Holidays!", "Hope to meet you sometime" or "Thanks again. Your gift really helps." And if you find a bit late for you to thank the person who gave the gift to you, still send a thank you note. Late thank yous are better than no thank you at all.

So if you are not used to uttering the most favored "password", then start practicing it as early as now, before you begin fundraising.

6. Fundraising is a Sort of Exchange

I bet you have heard some people saying that when you fundraise you are expecting donors from the public. Well, this is true. But there are some instances when the act of asking for help or support from the public is considered as an act of “begging”.

Begging on its purest sense is performed when someone is asking for support he or she doesn't deserve at all times. It's like asking for an unknown cause. This is basically the difference between fundraising and begging comes in. As for fundraising, you are doing a good work and you are asking for a worthy cause. It then follows that you deserve the help or the support.

Since many people associate fundraising to begging, it is then wise for you to make your cause known. Explain to them what you are doing and why you are doing it. Share them your values in the best possible way, and you'll be happy to know in the end how much they are willing to exchange their money for your work. As what most fundraising experts say, the public pay you to do the work they cannot do alone.

7. Fundraising Requires Proper Planning

Planning is in the first place the most important part of fundraising. Without it, the event wouldn't be successful. So if you want your fundraising event to be so successful, then you should start setting your plan, think about everything that must be involved, and in the end make your plan work.

Take the plan seriously. Note that you are working on it for a worthy cause. Set your goals and make sure that what you desire meets the goals of your organization. Also, when planning, don't be ashamed to ask for help. I am sure that your friends are willing to help you make your plan work. If you do not find yourself an expert in fundraising, then ask for the experts' help. And, most of all

don't haste. Just take your time and make sure that when you retire from it, everything is finalized and settled. That's simply it!

Having said all that, I now expect you to obtain great results out of your fundraising efforts. Simply note all those things and be open to whatever is possible to happen. Do your fundraising in the best possible way. Most of all respect your donors and learn from your mistakes.

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