Top Ten Lessons for Building a Major gift Program

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Nov 27, 2019
10:30 am – 12:00 noon
Toronto, Canada
My Declared Bias

Those who practice major gift fundraising without appreciating the importance of donor-centered relationships are poor stewards of philanthropy.
But ...

the reverse is even more true
Those who talk about donor-centered relationships without mastering the practical techniques do a disservice to themselves and philanthropy overall.
#1 - Know Your Reality
MONEY DRIVES MISSION
Government Funding Is not a Growth Industry
“Culture eats strategy for breakfast.”
– Dr. Peter F. Drucker
What’s the state of your fundraising culture?
Let’s rate your organization’s Fundraising Culture

**How important** is fundraising to your organization?
(Five Finger Scale: 0=not important … 5=very important)

**What is the current state** of your organization’s fundraising culture?
(Five Finger Scale: 0= pathetic … 5=tremendous)
#3 - Know Yourself
ENTJ
Which Tool Best Describes Your Communications Style as a Fundraiser

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#4 - Apply Fundraising’s Fundamental Truth
People give their money to things in their life that they are closest to.

If you believe in this fundamental truth, then our job as fundraisers is all about one key thing ...

**BRINGING PEOPLE CLOSER TO OUR ORGANIZATION (… and its MISSION)**

Activating this fundamental truth allows for the systematic bringing of people closer to us and our organizations.
A-B-C

(Geneva)
COMPELLING URGENT
Emotion vs Logic

The essential difference between emotion and reason is that emotion leads to action and reason leads to conclusions

Donald Calne,
Neurologist
University of British Columbia
Emotion and Movement

• “There can be no transforming ... of apathy into movement without emotion”
  – Carl Gustav Jung
US Wealthy Cite Lack of Passion for Cause, Other Reasons They Don’t Give More to Charity

The Huffington Post, By Jessica Prost, Posted March 14 2013

• Wealthy giving is deterred by three factors:
  • uncertainty around how long wealth will last;
  • shaky markets; and
  • lack of passion for a specific cause
#6 - Donor Centricity
I Didn't know our relationship was supposed to be going anywhere.
#7 – Build Your Prospect List
Qualifying Prospective Donors

L: Linkage (connection)
A: Ability (capacity)
I: Interest (concern)
Prioritizing Prospects

- Linkage
- Ability
- Interest
#8 – Know When to Ask?

1. Amount
2. Timing
3. Project
4. Who’s Asking
5. Who’s Being Asked
#9 – Use Power of the Peer
#10 – Know & Use Your Metrics
Fundraising Metrics
Start with the Nuts & Bolts

• Dollars raised
• Spread of donation sizes
• Average Donation size
• Number of donors
• Renewal rate
Fundraising Metrics
Major Gifts

• Benchmarks
  ○ $0.10 - $0.15 to raise a dollar
  ○ 1:3 close rate on proposals to qualified prospects
  ○ 1 FTE can manage 120 qualified prospects
  ○ 1 FTE can conduct 20-25 moves/month (2-3 asks/month)

• Lead Indicators
  ○ # of qualified prospects
  ○ # of assigned prospects
  ○ Moves per month
  ○ Close rate

• Lag Indicators
  ○ # and value of proposals pending/planned
  ○ $ pledged

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Thank You

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