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## FINANCIAL FOCUS



Lane Gorman Trubitt, L.L.P.  
Accountants & Advisors

## Your Accounting for a New Economy

# 5 Fundraising Don'ts

There have been innumerable articles exposing what not-for-profits should do in order to have a successful fundraising campaign. However, this article will help you successfully sidestep the hazards most often responsible for unsuccessful fundraising attempts.

It would be wise to avoid the following 5 don'ts when orchestrating a fundraising campaign:

### 1. **Don't prematurely announce your campaign**

The Biggest advantage you have when planning a fundraising campaign is excitement. It's what gets people involved. It's what inspires them to donate their money and time, and it's also what encourages them to learn more about your mission. However, while excitement is your most valuable fundraising tool, it's also a very limited resource. It can take a long time to gear up for a fundraising campaign, and the longer the public knows about something, the less excited they are. It's vital that you strike while the iron is hot, when interest is at its peak.

### 2. **Don't overly rely on your volunteers**

Between their jobs, personal relationships, homes and families people today have substantial demands on their time. Without a doubt your fundraising efforts will require additional staff, but rather than entrusting this temporary help with the most critical aspects of your campaign it might be better to give them less demanding tasks that are not as time sensitive and allow your personnel with more experience and knowledge of the day-to-day operations of your organization to handle the fundamental aspects of your campaign.

### **3. Don't select a campaign director lightly**

Your choice of campaign director is vital to the success and failure of your fundraising efforts. No other single individual will be as responsible for determining the outcome, and all too often organizations choose a director based upon personality rather than the skills necessary to complete the required tasks. Running a large fundraising campaign is similar to running a business, with a need to balance resources, time, and results. When interviewing candidates don't be afraid to ask them hard questions, you'll need a professional; don't be afraid to hire one. If you do hire a professional, remember there are special disclosures in your 990.

### **4. Don't be afraid to go after the BIG gifts**

All too often organizations fall into the mindset of, "If we can just get 1,000 donations of \$100, we'll meet our goal!" While the math is solid, this isn't always the best tactic to take. Small donations are just as time intensive as larger ones, but wield considerably less reward. Work smarter, not harder. Go after the big fish first. Then after you've brought in the larger donations, circle around for the smaller ones. This way, you've focused your energies where it will do the most good, and you can use the smaller donations to fill in the gaps.

### **5. Don't forget to show your appreciation**

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, America is the most philanthropic country in the world, donating an estimated \$22.739 billion dollars a year. This is almost double the amount given by the second highest country. However, over the last several years, this amount has held steady. The primary reason for this lack of growth can be traced back to the donors who have expressed a feeling of under-appreciation. The general consensus is, "Why should we give if it really doesn't make a difference." In order to survive in today's economic climate not-for-profit organizations need to show their donors that their donations do make a difference. That they are appreciated, and that it's only with their support that your organization is able to continue its mission. By showing them, you care that they care; you can secure donations, not just for today, but tomorrow as well. Don't forget to illustrate to them how their support is making a difference.

Before beginning any fundraising campaign it's as important to know what not to do as it is to know what you should do. Keeping in mind the potential pitfalls outlined above can keep you on the right path and help your organization to find the donations you depend upon.

For information on how Lane Gorman Trubitt, LLP can help your not-for-profit organization, do not hesitate to contact Neely Duncan, NFP Manager at (214) 461-1437 or by email at [nduncan@lgt-cpa.com](mailto:nduncan@lgt-cpa.com).