Intentional Fundraising for Small Organizations: Building an Annual Plan

NAMMA Conference
Wednesday, August 14, 2019
Who do we ask?

- Current donors
- Local community
- Industry
- Trustees
- Volunteers
- Church community
- Foundations
How do we ask?

• Personal solicitations
• Special events
• Direct mail
• Newsletters
• Special campaigns
• Social media
• Grant proposals
• Unsolicited
Annual Fund

• **Purpose** - seek donations on a recurring annual basis for programs and services

• **Source** - everyone (all markets - individuals, corporations, foundations, churches)
Annual Fund

Functions & Benefits

• Ensures annual income
• Develops and expands donor base
• Identifies future sources of funding with giving patterns
• Maintains awareness of your work and value
Annual Fund

- Funds current operations
- Creates a habit of giving with donors
- Helps identify your most engaged supporters
- Provides the opportunity to educate supporters and prospects about your mission
- Stewardship
Annual Fund

What makes it up?

- Revenue from Direct Mail
- Revenue from Special Events
- Unsolicited gifts made to organization
- Income from successful grants
- Legacy gifts
- Any revenue that supports general operating of organization
Annual Fund
Creating a plan

• Organizational budget – know your goal
• Create a gift chart to guide you
• Create a calendar with activity (direct mail, special events, social media posts, etc.)
• Quarterly reviews of financials with forecasting
• Engage your board (if you have one)
• Follow up: plan and schedule
• Thank donors (write personal notes, call)
Direct Mail

• Mailhouse vs. in-house production
• Who do you send to?
• How often should you send?
• How do you manage costs?
Direct Mail

Purpose & Benefits

• Renew annual support from current donors
• Acquire new donors
• Build constituency and broaden donor base
• Build awareness of your work & your brand
• Provide a source of income that is renewable and dependable
Direct Mail

How to get started?

• Set a goal
• Set a target delivery date
• Work backwards from target date to create a schedule and workplan
• Stick to your plan!
• Decide on a message or theme you want to focus on
• Evaluate past performance
• Use what you have and build from there
Direct Mail

How to get started

Consider
• Where is your list coming from?
• Are you using a mailhouse or producing in the office?
• If producing in-house, how much help do you have?
**Direct Mail**

**Components**

**Envelope - First impression**
- What will make someone open your letter?
- Color, size, message banner

**Letter**
- Create sense of urgency
- Clearly state your need and how your organization will meet that need
- Ask for specific amount based on past giving
- Call to action

**Response Device**
- Opportunity to ask if interested in monthly giving or planned giving
Direct Mail

The Letter

- Creates an interest - tells a story
- Creates a sense of urgency
- Connects with the audience
- Communicates a need
- Demonstrates how your organization is uniquely positioned to help
- Asks for something specific
- Includes a call to action
- P.S. is opportunity for final appeal
Direct Mail

What makes a good letter?

• Decide on a topic or a specific story or theme
• Edit yourself. You don’t need to tell everything your organization does in one letter
• Be genuine
• Give specifics (not just stats)
• Tell how your organization will address the stated need
• Ask for something specific
• Let them know how they can be part of the solution
Direct Mail

The List

• Size of mailing, staffing and budget will determine if produced in-house or at mailhouse
• Target list vs. everyone
• Personalized vs. general
• Specific ask for specific donor
Direct Mail

The Targeted List

- Lapsed Donors
- First time donors to secure renewal
- Board of Trustees and former trustees
- Donors who have given at a certain level
- Local businesses
Direct Mail

Tips

- Proofread multiple times
- Tailor your message to intended audience
- Get the salutation correct
- Check your data
- Inspire confidence in the great work you do
- Don’t be afraid to connect personally
- Evaluate the performance
- Be creative! It doesn’t always have to look the same
- Timely acknowledgements
Conclusion

- There is no magic bullet in fundraising
- The only guarantee to fundraising success is to make a plan with activity and timelines and FOLLOW the plan
- Follow up! Follow up! Follow up!
- Evaluate the work ASK - if you don't ask, you will not get
- Be thankful and be sincere
- Schedule time to do the fundraising activity