



TOOL | FRIENDRAISING: FROM RAISING FUNDS TO MAKING FRIENDS

At the core of a good organization is a set of ideas and a vision. What is the relationship between the vision you have and the money you'll need? How do you engage funders early in the idea-development cycle of an organization? And how do you build the relationships that will sustain your organization?

1. FIND YOUR PASSION AND ARTICULATE IT

People invest in passion. The correlation between vision, ideas and money starts with passion. If you don't believe in what you're doing, you aren't doing your organization any favours, and you won't be able to attract support from funders. Before you approach a potential donor, be able to answer three basic questions about your organization:

- What are you doing and why is the world a better place because of it?
- What do you want to do and how will the world be a better place because of it?
- How are you going to involve the donor in your organization?

2. GET YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER

People do not invest in confusion or incompetence. Build an organization that fills potential donors with confidence. Have a well-developed mission, an identifiable strategic plan, solid financial plans and a process for monitoring your results. Ensure that your organization has the right leaders to implement its strategies? Make sure you have the correct systems in place so that when you receive an investment you can process it professionally. For new and emerging organizations, investing in proper money-management systems (and a bookkeeper) is the single best thing you can do. Finally, understand donors' funding cycles, so you can be in the right place at the right time.

3. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND THEN BUILD THE RELATIONSHIP

People donate to people they trust. When you are talking to someone who is willing to give or has given to your organization, use the '80-20' rule: spend at least 8 percent of the conversation trying to understand what a funder wants and needs, and never talk more than 20 percent of the time about your organization. Keep detailed notes of these conversations to rely on in future communications. Build relationships from

within your organization. Start by asking your board members about their own relationships with key community members, and use those as a foundation for further engagement. Large donor gifts require a minimum lead time of several years. A donor's receptiveness to making a large gift will depend on two key considerations: will and ability. Will refers to how much a potential donor knows about your organization and the depth of trust they have in you. Ability refers to the donor's liquidity – how much cash they have available. A fundraising maxim: do you want a quick 'no' or a slow 'yes'? Be patient and take the time to cultivate relationships.

4. ENGAGE FUNDERS IN THE WORK AS IT UNFOLDS

From the outset, frame the opportunity to invest as an invitation to learn. Projects seldom go as planned. Involve your funders as your organization develops and projects progress, so they will be better able to recognize your successes while also understanding the challenges you face. When you hit road bumps in a project, engage with your funders as part of the problem-solving process. Seek their opinions and stoke their interest. If a donor proposes an idea that doesn't entirely dovetail with your plans, don't reject it automatically. Engage the donor in conversation and research potential alternatives.

5. USE YOUR GROWING CREDIBILITY AND CAPACITY TO BUILD MOMENTUM

It takes time to build relationships. As you grow, let your donors share in your successes. Involving funders as spokespeople, for instance, will boost your organization and strengthen their sense of connection with you. Create a culture of gratitude within your organization: thank funders, volunteers, and staff on a regular basis.

FIVE GOOD RESOURCES (ALL EASY TO FIND ON GOOGLE)

1. Friendraising: Raising Funds, Finding Friends to Realize Bold Community Visions, by Paul Born
2. Relationship Fundraising: A Donor-Based approach to the Business of Raising Money, by Ken Burnett
3. How Today's Rich Give, by Harvey McKinnon
4. Face to Face: how to Get Bigger Donations from Very Generous People, by Ken Wyman
5. Fundraising for Social Change by Kim Klein