

10 STEPS IN A CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

PART 1 – THE PRINCIPLES

“Fundraising is like cooking – keep to the recipe until you are good at it”

In many appeals most of the target comes from a few large donors. This is just the well known Pareto effect but it begs a question. Why do we raise so much money from mass marketing techniques and why do we need so many fundraisers?

We should be concentrating more on big gifts and capital appeals. According to Merrill Lynch’s “World Wealth Report 2000” 1 million new millionaires were created globally last year and Europe is the second fastest growing region. Germany and the UK, for instance, lead the way in selling family businesses.

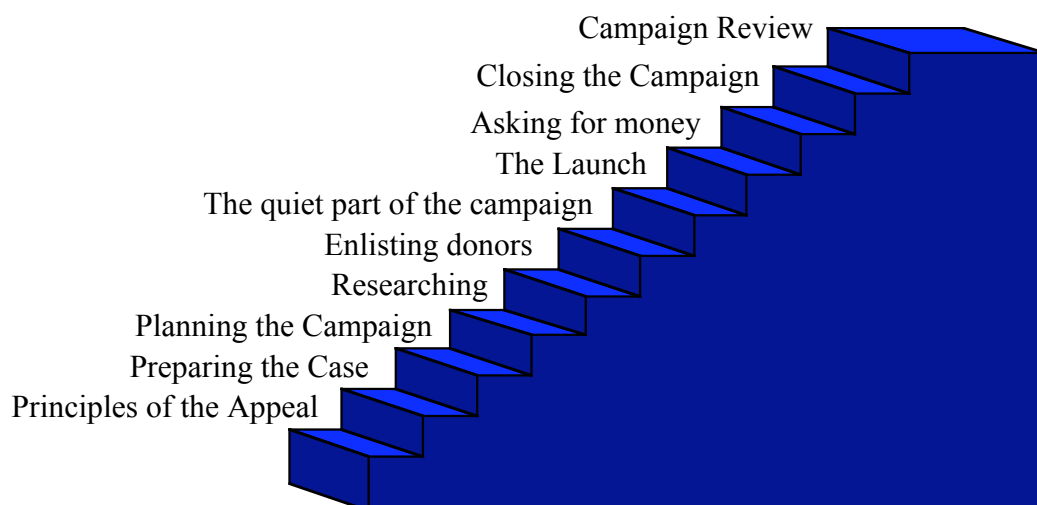
Whether we are big gift, major gift, donor development, legacy, or capital fundraisers we all share one thing in common; we want those big donors.

So to celebrate our tenth birthdays Charity Consultants Ltd and Professional Fundraising are launching a series of articles and seminars looking at the 10 Steps in a Capital Campaign.

I think three things hold us back. Some people are frightened by big gifts. We see NSPCC, the Royal Opera House, and the Tate Modern raising huge gifts and suspect that only the established players raise large gifts.

Secondly nobody tells us how to do it properly. The ICFM course, for example, is too short and only the brave run a campaign just with that behind them.

Thirdly many organisations ignore the principles and practice of capital fundraising. So Charity Consultants Ltd and Professional Fundraising are planning ten articles and seminars on the 10 Steps in a Capital Campaign to put the record straight..



Each seminar is preceded by an article so month by month you can plan and review your campaign. Attend all the seminars and we provide a free email and telephone help line.

Today we start with the basic principles; not rocket science but ignore them at your peril.

FACE TO FACE

All big gift fundraising should be face to face since people only make large gifts to people they know. The only exception I know is in Native American fundraising where the Apache believe looking someone in the eye is pretty rude so you risk losing your scalp!

BIG 'UNS BEFORE LITTLE ONES

Get larger leading donors in before seeking smaller ones. Leading gifts set levels for giving, persuading trustees to invest in your plans. Wealthy individuals give far more than companies and trusts and even these need a face to face contact to unlock them.

ROLE OF FUNDRAISERS

Volunteers have the status so get them to ask. Our job as staff fundraisers is target prospects, do the legwork but they ask. We will talk about exceptions at the seminars.

THE CHAIN GANG

People give to people more than causes so who you are, and how you relate to people is crucial. Few volunteers know more than three or four rich folk so each new donor needs to open doors as well. Ask your friends; they give more and say no so much more politely, usually before you ask them.

Amazingly trustees expect people to give without themselves giving. People who give get big gifts. If trustees refuse to give you probably need a Development Board to fill the gap. Ignore this and your campaign may collapse.

WE ARE NOT THE NSPCC

Few charities appeal to everyone so concentrate on natural supporters. That is what Spurs and the Opera House share in common; their Boards and supporters are fans and committed.

FRIENDS BEFORE FUNDS

"Hello, we haven't met but you might be interested in the Teapot Rescue Trust. (By the time we leave this reception I expect you to give us £100,000)." Not a typical

conversation perhaps but many causes expect money before they make friends and involve people.

THANKYOU IS INVESTING IN FUTURE GIFTS.

Yet appeals close with trustees so exhausted that they just thank people once. Keep thanking and try asking for some practical help occasionally so they feel like human beings not cash dispensing machines.

NO DOES NOT MEAN NO

I have a Canadian fundraising friend who insists “no” does not mean “no” until said seven times - ask the man she eventually married. So follow this example, if someone says no why are they saying it and try again?

ONE STEP AT A TIME

Big gifts come by moving two steps forward and one step back so keep climbing the rock face. There are footholds there somewhere.

PLANNING IS EVERYTHING

The biggest big gift campaigns succeed because they plan in detail so next month we will ask the question, “Are you ready to fundraise?” with a hard look at planning a big gift campaign. That’s all we have space for this month so if you want to learn some more I will see you at next seminar.

Andrew Thomas is Chief Executive of Charity Consultants, and ICFM Fellow. He is happy to offer a free half day consultancy to organisations planning a serious capital campaign and can be reached on 0118 9401016 or email to andrew.thomas@charityconsultants.co.uk .