



# Planning for Fundraising

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There is a saying in folklore, “If you don’t know where you are going, how will you know if you’ve arrived?” This is certainly true in fundraising. While sometimes we manage to raise funds without much planning, eventually we will find that, if we don’t have a clear plan, several results may occur. For example:

- Donors will lose confidence if they don’t see that we clearly know what we’re doing and where we’re heading.
- There will be confusion and lack of confidence in the organization.
- We could be asking the wrong donors for the wrong cause.
- We might suddenly find ourselves against deadlines we hadn’t anticipated.
- In short, we aren’t very credible if we don’t plan.

There are many ways to plan, and also various formats that can be appropriate and comfortable to use. This is also one part of the campaign with which PSI can readily help you in many ways. Please contact us with any step of the way in planning.

Some people don’t like to plan because such a document holds them accountable. Others simply aren’t organized enough or dislike actually putting something on paper (or on the computer) and would rather “just do it.” Still others don’t know how to plan. This chapter should help you to at least take the first step in formulating a good plan you can live with, and live by, and which promises results.

Those who should be involved in the planning include the organization’s board, the campaign committee members, the leadership, volunteers and others who carry out the plan, and advisors or consultants whose help might be needed in the planning. This, of course, represents a large and probably unwieldy group, so the suggestion is that representatives of these groups be included, with plan input and approval accorded to the larger body. This group formulates the plan and periodically shares it with a wider group for suggestions and approval. Finally, the board reviews and approves the plan.

Regardless of what format is used for a plan, it should have these components:

- *Mission statement.* A review and clear understanding of the organization’s mission is essential because all other planning components must relate to this.
- *Internal and external assessment of positive and negative factors.* Determining

what inhibits or promotes fundraising is vital so that unrealistic expectations aren't set.

- *Goals and objectives for each program.* This could include programs for which specific amounts are to be raised, fundraising descriptions such as direct mail, or goals that relate in some way to fundraising, such as board training.
- *Possible donors.* Who might give, how likely are they to give, and how should they be asked?
- *Timeline and assignments.* Who is responsible for what, and when must that be done?
- *Budget and gift-range chart.* The fundraising budget should clearly describe efficiency and effectiveness factors. The gift-range chart describes how you will raise the money and is congruent with the “possible donors” list.
- *Monitoring and evaluation.* How will you check on yourself and your department, and to whom will you report?

The benefits of planning are obvious and these most stand out:

- Improve performance
- Stimulate forward thinking
- Clarify future direction
- Survive—even flourish—with less
- Build teamwork and expertise
- Influence rather than be influenced

Finally, consider how you will stick to the plan, motivate and urge others to do so. Revise the plan as needed, and work with it as part of your daily operations.



## **Basic fundraising steps for organizations: A planning and implementation tool**

A successful fundraising program in any organization is based on principles that have been proven over time through best practices and verified by research. In summary, these principles state that fundraising is a team effort; investment of resources and time is needed; appropriate personnel are required; a fundraising plan to reflect the organization is essential; and strategies for fundraising that are appropriate for the organization have been included in the plan.

The form that follows should be considered a starting point and is best used in conjunction with the services of PSI personnel who will assist as needed along the way toward developing a successful, mature program.





## Planning Form

Area or Function	Current Status	Future Projections
<b>Communications</b>		
1. The organization has a clear mission.		
2. Or constituents believe they receive adequate information regularly.		
3. The capability to prepare communications materials exists or can be outsourced.		
4. It is predominant in representing the organization appropriately.		
5. Volunteers take a key role in promoting the mission of the organization.		

<b>Case for Support</b>		
1. Fundraising goals are clear and substantiated with facts.		
2. There is agreement on fundraising purposes and goals.		
3. There is broad-based involvement in providing information for making a case for the campaign		
4. Materials that explain and express the case are prepared.		
<b>Organizational Leadership</b>		
1. Top leadership understands fundraising processes.		
2. The leader is supportive and involved in fundraising.		
3. The board is the backbone of the process and involved appropriately.		





<b>Additional Persons Involved</b>		
1. There is adequate personnel support to carry out the goals of the fundraising plan.		
2. There are personnel needed for record keeping, communications, and other campaign details.		
<b>Board</b>		
1. The board understands the fundraising process and is committed to taking action.		
2. The board gives to organization (percent of board giving—goal: 100 percent).		
3. The board participates in identifying, cultivating, and soliciting gifts.		
4. The board is willing to be trained.		



<b>Campaign or Building Committee</b>		
1. The committee is representative of the full spectrum of the organization and not dominated by a special-interest group.		
2. The committee is active and participates in fundraising planning and implementation.		
3. The committee members ethically identify funding prospects.		
4. The members are involved in contacting donors appropriately.		
<b>Budget</b>		
1. Sufficient resources are allocated for fundraising in the organization.		
2. The leadership team (including board) recognizes it takes money to raise money.		
3. There is clear accounting of gifts according to promises made to constituents and donors.		





<b>Funding Prospects</b>		
1. The fundraising base consists of the constituents of the organization who consistently support it.		
2. New funding sources are being developed according to capability and plan. If feasible, funding sources are diversified; donors come from all possible sources and types of donors.		
3. Attention is given to getting acquainted with prospects and donors before they are asked.		
<b>Fundraising Strategies</b>		
1. The range of tools available for fundraising is considered and evaluated. Donors and donor groups are matched with appropriate asking strategies (e.g., face-to-face versus a written proposal or direct mail).		
2. Appropriate selection of tools according to prospects, goals, and internal capability is made.		

<p><b>Gift Receipting Acknowledgement and Thanking Donors</b></p>		
<p>1. Donations are handled immediately and a Thank-you is sent within 24-48 hours.</p>		
<p>2. Thank-you letters are personalized when appropriate.</p>		
<p>3. The team members are all involved in the acknowledgment and thanks.</p>		
<p>4. A process of appropriate recognition strategies for various gift levels is in place and active.</p>		
<p>5. The database is kept current and updated as information is received.</p>		





<b>Gift Reporting</b>		
1. Gift history is recorded and tracked.		
2. Care is taken that all donations are used exactly as promised or designated by the donor.		
3. Appropriate reports are provided periodically to the leadership and board.		
4. Gift income is appropriately reported to constituents.		