



Seventh-day Adventist Church
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION



Philanthropic
Service for Institutions

Finding Meaning in the Mysterious—Careers in Fundraising (Part Six)

So, how would one go about finding a job in fundraising—besides contacting PSI for additional guidance and information?

A most important technique to use in developing job leads is using your personal contacts. It's been said that you're never more than six people (some optimists reduce that number to four) away from the individual you want to reach. Some job search specialists state that as many as 40% of all jobs are obtained through personal contacts. There is general agreement that networking--the word-of-mouth approach--is more effective than seeking a position through newspaper ads or by making "cold calls" yourself.

Join professional groups. Increase your contacts. Be genuinely friendly and interested in wanting to get acquainted with peers and colleagues in your field.

Find a mentor. Mentors may be senior professionals and often can be found through professional associations. PSI also has a mentoring program—check out this website or call us. An inexperienced fundraiser can also seek out a mentor by making personal contacts. Most people are willing to assist colleagues, whether inexperienced or established professionals. Be sure you are specific about what you desire from the mentoring relationship, and don't wear out your welcome!

Attend workshops, seminars, conventions and conferences. Determine to become acquainted with at least one person during the conference, and select this person carefully. College or university courses related to nonprofit management (which usually includes fundraising) will also bring a person in touch with established professionals. Students seeking information and contacts are often allowed access to organization and professionals to a greater degree than established professionals. Therefore students should be encouraged to do academic work in such a way that they draw on the community and professional resources.

Volunteer. Volunteering may provide valuable training for a new fundraising professional, although sometimes the experience does not reflect reality as much as it should. However, volunteering does provide visibility and contacts, and an overall view of at least some portion of the nonprofit sector. It can be included on a resume as credible experience. Sometimes

organizations are highly dependent on volunteers, and these individuals can gain actual job experience that serves as a basis for their resume.

Become an intern. Internships may be the best solution for acquiring “on the job” experience. Internships are available at many nonprofit organizations, some foundations, and some corporations. A number of students can state that their internships landed them jobs at the same organizations, such as foundations, or they were more marketable as a result of this experience.

In short, perhaps Pablo Casals, the renowned cellist, said it best. “The capacity to care is the thing which gives life its deepest meaning and significance.” This sums up the reasons why fundraising is, and can be, an exciting and fulfilling career—it is focused on caring, and in doing so with excellence.