



Seventh-day Adventist Church
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION



Philanthropic
Service for Institutions

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

Fundraising, development or advancement, just a few of the designations for this practice and career, is a fundamental part of the process that makes institutions successful. The genuinely committed professional feels a “calling” to the work of fundraising. The satisfaction is derived from results, often intangible as well as those that aren’t visible for some time in the future, not from recognition. Idealism and enthusiasm are balanced with accountability, businesslike behavior, and practical action.

At the bottom of all is this reality—most of the work in the nonprofit sector, whether it is advocacy, healing, educating, entertaining, preserving and many other types, just will not happen unless someone brings in money. And the more fundraising is integrated into the entire organization, the more successful it will be.

The fundraising professional plays a significant role in the operation of healthy, viable nonprofits which can face the challenges of this decade and century. It requires the use of skills, abilities and personal traits that match various roles and responsibilities of the fundraising professional.

Fundraising doesn’t take place in a vacuum. It is an essential function in the entire scope of the nonprofit sector which is supported by philanthropy. And philanthropy is a highly significant part of the fabric of American society, providing opportunities for fulfillment, meeting needs, addressing crises and disasters, and building sustainability for the future. A fundraising professional is the manager of a process that brings together peoples’ sense of caring with needs that must be met.

Fundraising is a critical element in the preservation of values. These values, inherent in our civic spirit, are fostered by philanthropic action—giving and volunteering.

Fundraising is not a technical exercise. It takes place within the larger framework of an organization and its mission, and therefore is crucial for civil society and the development or perpetuation of democratic values. Fundraising, therefore, is for the thoughtful professional, and not a mere fulfillment of a “to do” list. Next time we’ll continue with more perspectives on the meaning and practice of fundraising as a career.