

Fundraising Essentials

1. Fundraising is not about money. It's about necessary work that urgently needs doing. Money is the means to an end.
2. Fundraisers need to be able to see things through their donors' eyes. Or, to put themselves in their donors' shoes.
3. Fundraisers need to really understand their donors. If they are to understand you, you must first understand them.
4. It helps if you are a donor yourself. No one should be a fundraiser without first being a donor.
5. Friend-making comes before fundraising. Fundraising is not selling. Fundraisers and donors are on the same side.
6. Fundraising is about needs as well as achievements. People applaud achievement, but will give to meet a need.
7. Fundraisers need to learn how to harness the simple power of emotion. Fundraising has to appeal first to the emotions. Logic can then reinforce the appeal.
8. Offer a clear, direct proposition people can relate to. For example, 'make a blind man see. \$10.00'.
9. First open their hearts and minds. Then you can open their wallets.
10. Don't just ask people to give. Inspire them to give. Fundraising is the inspiration business.
11. Share your problems as well as your successes with your donors. Honesty and openness are usually prized more highly than expert opinion and apparent infallibility.
12. Bring the need close to the donor. To help this idea stick I was taught the adage 'One needy old person next door equals ten needy old people in Manchester equals 100 needy old people in Maharashtra.' (Of course I was living in London at the time. If you live in India, then it would be the other way around).
13. You don't get if you don't ask. Know whom to ask, how much to ask for, and when.
14. Present your organization's 'brand' image clearly and consistently. It'll pay you if your donors can readily distinguish your cause from all the others.
15. Successful fundraising involves storytelling. Fundraisers have great stories to tell and need to tell them with pace and passion so as to inspire action.
16. Great fundraising is sharing. Share your goals and encourage full involvement. When donors become truly involved in your campaign, great things happen. Share your problems too, as well as your successes.
17. Always try to turn complaints into support. The most loyal donor is the donor who has complained and has then been satisfactorily responded to.
18. The trustworthiness of a fundraiser and his/her organization is a reason both to start and to continue support. Trust appears to increase in importance, as people get older.
19. Great fundraising requires imagination. Too much fundraising looks like everything else.

20. Great fundraising is getting great results. If your results are mediocre, your fundraising probably is too.
21. Always be honest, open and truthful with your donors. Donors will not forgive you if you are less than straight with them.
22. Avoid waste. Donors hate waste.
23. Technique must never be allowed to obscure sincerity. As all actors know, you can't fake sincerity.
24. Fundraisers have to learn to talk to their donors where they are, not where the fundraiser might want them to be.
25. Fundraisers and donors have a relationship of shared conviction. This is much more important than their shared commercial interest.
26. Great fundraising means being '15 minutes ahead'. To keep just a little bit ahead you have to learn to spot opportunities and take (careful) risks.
27. Fundraisers should learn the lessons of history and experience. Anyone who would be an effective fundraiser needs first to do some homework.
28. Always say 'thank you', properly and often. And accurately (few things are less forgivable than thanking a donor for something he or she hasn't done). It's also a good idea to be brilliant at saying 'welcome!'