

FUNDRAISING PLANNING

TOP TEN TIPS
FROM RON MILAM
CONSULTING

1. **Engage your board.** Creation of a written fund development plan is a great way to get your board involved with fundraising. If they help create the plan, they are more likely to implement it.
2. **Decide how much you need to raise.** It's easier to get folks involved to raise funds to meet a specific goal, rather than just having some vague sense for how much you need to raise. It will also give you a sense for how much you need to ask from specific donors.
3. **Diversify your funding sources.** Healthy nonprofit organizations depend on diversified funding streams. In your fund development planning process, discuss different sources of income and choose at least three.
4. **Prioritize.** While there are lots of good ideas out there for fundraising, you can't do them all. Once you've decided whom you want to raise funds from, prioritize the ways in which you want to raise funds (for example, face-to-face asks, appeal letters, events, etc.).
5. **Create a workplan.** Once you have decided on funding sources and strategies, write out a basic workplan that contains the following details: What action will you take, when will that action occur, and who will be responsible for carrying out that action?
6. **Give yourself time.** Putting together a fund development plan can take anywhere from one to four months, depending on how frequently you meet with the other folks creating it and how much time you put into it.
7. **Evaluate your past fundraising.** Just because you've "always" done some fundraising strategy doesn't mean you need to keep doing it. Did it generate funds and build stronger relationships with your donors? If yes, continue and build. If no, either discontinue or do it better.
8. **Scrutinize your materials.** Have someone with fundraising experience review your past grant proposals, events, and results of your fundraising work. Use this opportunity to sharpen, target and refine your fundraising materials.
9. **Learn from this process.** A fund development planning process gives everyone the opportunity to build their capacity as fundraisers (something even veterans can use). Just hearing from an outside expert in a workshop can inspire old hands— and new ones.
10. **Don't forget about your plan!** Refer to your fund development plan at least monthly and make sure the workplan you created from it is still effective. Allocate time during your board meetings to review implementation of your fundraising plan.

TO-DO LIST

- Find a board member to champion fundraising.
- Make sure your board president is also involved in this process.
- Update the entire board about how the process is going at each of their meetings.
- Research how similar organizations raise money.
- Have your board and staff brainstorm possible individual donors based on existing relationships they have (a strong prospect 1) is someone you know, 2) believes in your cause, and 3) has the capacity to make a gift).
- Brainstorm lots of fundraising sources to approach and strategies to pursue before you prioritize.
- Consider hiring Ron Milam to help lead this process and/or lead a fundraising training for your board and staff.

Ron Milam has over 14 years of experience facilitating meetings and developing leadership for over 50 organizations.

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