



12 Principles of Big Gift Fundraising

1. Face to Face is best

Effective major gift fundraising is face to face, donors give more to people they know, like and respect. Few large donations come from writing letters.

2. Peer group influence is vital

A request from someone you respect is hard to refuse, especially if they have given generously themselves. The North Durham Hospices Appeal needs to get its closest supporter and friends to give early on and get them to do the asking amongst a community they know well.

3. Involvement is the key

It is necessary to involve people before asking them for money. People usually need to understand before they give money especially as some will feel that money for a hospice should come from the health service, clients or have government subsidy.

4. Your best fundraisers are your donors

Most people find it much easier to ask other people for money if they have already given themselves. It boosts their confidence, and allows them to share the pleasure of philanthropy, with people they know, in a common purpose.

5. Focus on the leading, largest gifts first

Large 'leading' gifts, help to generate other gifts. Nothing stimulates fundraising like one or two large leading gifts, to set the level for other donors, and demonstrate that the appeal is succeeding.

6. Spend most of your time finding the right leader

A volunteer leader of the right calibre who can lead by example with a big gift, or use contacts to unlock doors is essential.

7. Staff don't ask for money

As far as is practical, it is the responsibility of the Appeal's own volunteer leadership to ask for the large donations. Fundraising staff, or consultants, are more appropriately used to:

- Research and identify potential donors
- Find ways to reach them
- Prepare an approach strategy for each one
- Orchestrate the approach of one or more volunteers to secure a major gift
- Follow up that approach providing the detailed work which secures it
- Keep in touch with donors

Staff fundraisers are the last people who should be doing the asking.

Therefore you will need to build a Campaign Board of volunteers prepared to ask people to give substantial donations to the appeal.

8. Large gifts come from individuals, not institutions

Large gifts come from individuals who can unlock gifts from their own personal wealth, associated trusts, companies, or close friends who can reach out to other potential donors.

9. Trustees should support the appeal

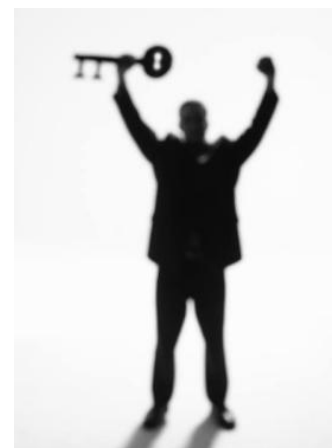
Experience suggests that where trustees give personally to capital campaigns the campaigns are more likely to succeed. The simple act of deciding to support a campaign financially shows leadership, commitment and seems to encourage trustees to ask others. We recognise that most trustees are not wealthy but the important act is to give according to one's ability to give. For some this may be cash donation now and for others to pledge a sum as a legacy.

10. Gifts are not always of money

Most individuals and organisations find money the most difficult thing to give away. Often they can give far more in 'gifts in kind' and access to facilities or opportunities.

11. The network is the thing

It is a rare volunteer leader who can secure personally more than four or five gifts. Successful campaigns are therefore, usually based on the creation of an exponentially growing network.



12. Group pressure and spheres of influence should be exploited

As the campaign involves ever widening networks of volunteers talking to large numbers of prospective donors, so building a volunteer organisational structure, often called a Campaign Board, is crucial. In such a structure groups of people feel an obligation to raise their share of the target. It is difficult to create a sense of obligation with volunteers reporting to staff, for the prime obligation is to the Campaign Board and its Chairman. Since most people on the Campaign Board will only be able to approach a few people personally it is sometimes helpful to group them into a loose structure of working groups, concentrating on specific spheres of influence such as the Professional and Corporate sectors, which report regularly to the main Campaign Board.

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