

## Fundraising Lessons and Strategies

Even successful people make mistakes and have to endure learning curves. What makes them successful is that they learn from their mistakes and seem to be able to shorten the learning curves.

The biggest mistake people make is not learning from their mistakes. The second biggest mistake is not to learn from others mistakes. This was told to me long ago. It has taken me a long time to understand the wisdom in these words.

Fundraising is not just like a business - it is a business. Business can not just be financially rewarding it can be rewarding in many ways that has nothing to do with finances. Business can be fun and fundraising must have a large fun element.

To help you along I have compiled a short list of one liners that carry messages and information not readily evident on first reading but is there if you are willing to be open to it. These are lessons and strategies learned from some very successful people who have taken the time to write them down so people like you and me can learn from them. Each one-liner could be expanded into a chapter of a book. However to do so would probably dilute it's impact and relevance to the reader. Better to keep it short so you can have the satisfaction of realizing all their facets like a well cut diamond.

## Lessons

1. Always plan as if you know you will succeed
2. Hire smart people that you like
3. Don't change your strategy based on whims
4. Be clear about your mission - easy to lose direction
5. Be flexible enough to adapt
6. Have fun and be creative
7. Pick your team with an eye to maximising the diversity of their skills and experience
8. Let criticism fall into a basket called market research not personal
9. Help your workers navigate the rollercoaster of trying something new
10. Never take no for an answer
11. Stay focused
12. Stay true to yourself and your founding motivation
13. People decisions are the most important ones you will make
14. Start with one big important idea, one that you are passionate about and people believe in
15. It's all about the team
16. Balance in everything you do
17. Learn how to think fast and make decisions fast
18. Have patience to find and hire the right person
19. Plans don't make success, execution does
20. It's never too late to try something new
21. Hire smart people
22. Execute. Execute. Execute.
23. Do not blindly believe the experts
24. Trust yourself
25. Listen to your end users
26. Never give up no matter how hard
27. Take it seriously but not too seriously
28. See the opportunity not the obstacles
29. Don't go it alone
30. Listen to your suppliers
31. Do something you enjoy
32. Get the blessing of your spouse or significant other before you plunge in
33. Expect a rollercoaster
34. Share the success, credit and plaudits generously- there should be enough for everyone
35. It's not just about the money
36. Don't be afraid to make mistakes
37. Collaborative decision making is critical
38. Execution is harder than discovering the opportunity
39. There are many types of investor
40. Great people are the scarcest and most valuable resource
41. It's lonely
42. People make it all worthwhile
43. Don't get too emotional about equity
44. It is easier to sell painkillers than vitamins
45. Allow people to grow

## Strategies

1. If you have savings, consider investing some of them into your organisation, equipment and people
2. Take advantage of programs available to you, take time to find them ie for women
3. Be careful that the benefits and perks you make available will not come back to haunt you
4. Look for innovative ways to distribute your message, services and benefits
5. Recruit insiders in areas you have trouble in ie media
6. Work with experienced personnel
7. Reach out to other like-minded people
8. Develop a uniqueness - service, fundraiser or method
9. Tap into your existing relationships - who do you know that can help
10. Don't automatically assume competitors can't be partners or customers
11. If you have a website, think local as well as global
12. At times you will need to reinvent the business as you go
13. Pick your audience carefully
14. Leverage the strengths of your partners
15. Don't rule out helpers who don't immediately have the skills you want
16. Be a people person and master net worker
17. Learn how to tell a good story
18. Have faith in yourself and learn as you go
19. Site performance is the key
20. Spend carefully
21. Reputation is priceless
22. Before you present get feedback
23. Expand your revenue source from one to multiple
24. Understand that life isn't always fair
25. Look for ideas that are scalable and have low overheads
26. Pay attention to trends
27. Solicit customer feedback and respond to it
28. You don't need an mba to make it
29. See the opportunity not the obstacles
30. Be realistic about your skills and abilities
31. Problems and frustrations can lead to really good ideas
32. Target your promotions
33. When it comes to customer service, the little things really count
34. Convey your organisations image and message at every opportunity
35. Analyse your customer segments and fine tune your actions to focus on the most profitable
36. Focus on people retention
37. Consider the benefits of outsourcing
38. If you can't be unique be better- much better
39. When you see a market opportunity move quickly
40. Reassure customers and helpers every step of the way
41. Don't give up on a idea even if you realise it is ahead of its time
42. Nurture an organisations culture from the start
43. Keep a lookout for missed opportunities
44. Keep a lookout for new opportunities
45. Be a sponge
46. Focus on the long term