

Fundraising: Winners and Killers

While fundraising should be kept simple it does not mean that fundraising is a simple matter. There are some fundamental factors that fundraisers should keep in mind when going about their business. These factors have been proven over time in many different ways from personal lives to professional success. Keep them in mind and you will reap the benefits and probably enjoy the fundraising experience more and enjoy the more long lasting success. Like when setting out to learn any new skill you should do your research and be patient - Rome was not built in a day.

- Remember you are dealing with living, feeling people so treat each customer and volunteer as such.
- Look the part! Appearances can help you or sink you before you even get to introduce yourself.
- When dealing with people, sometimes your greatest asset is your integrity. Use honesty in all you do and integrity helps create positive public opinion for you and your group.
- If there is no positive public opinion for you and your group - your chance of success is virtually nil.
- Avoid hard-sell tactics; sell the benefits and your customers will feel good about buying from your group and donors and sponsors will feel good about supporting your group.
- The best fundraisers have fun and enjoy what they do.
- Be conscious, alert and focused on each fundraiser as it is occurring. Do not become robotic or complacent repeating a previously successful fundraiser.
- Remember a major part of your job is to help people feel good about helping your group's fundraising effort.
- Do not fear getting a 'no'. When you get a "no", remember it is only a word. It is not a personal rejection, everyone gets 'no's. Try to see as a numbers game, you will get so many 'no's to every 'yes'. Remind yourself everytime you get a 'no' you are closer to a 'yes'. See if you can lower the ratio by learning by each 'no'. Say, "Thank you for your time," and move on. Think about when you say no to someone and consider how you were feeling towards the person you said no to.
- People feel best doing something they want to do, not something they're forced to do. This is true for customers as well as salespeople. Relax. Be friendly, feel good about what you're doing.

- Plan and where possible rehearse your sales technique with others members. Switch roles as buyer and seller. Imagine you are the buyer. How do you feel and respond to the items offered and the sales pitch used? Also ask friends and relatives for their opinions about sale items and sales pitches. Discuss what you are doing right and wrong. In each role visualize a successful conclusion. When you're out selling, your confidence and preparedness will show in your improved level of success and enjoyment.
- Beginners are usually uncomfortable with selling or approaching strangers for support. Start them with relatives and friends and pair them up with a veteran. With a few of these sales under their belt, their sales pitch will be polished and their confidence up. Time, understanding and support will pay off in the long run.
- While you can't totally create your own reality, you can influence it considerably by focusing on all the things that can go right. Be aware of what can go wrong and make a plan to minimise the risks and maximise the chances of the best outcome.
- Ask people who successful in fundraisers for their suggestions and tips. Find out what works for them, what doesn't and for any other help they might be able to offer.
- Treat others, i.e. volunteers, buyers or donors as you would like to be treated.
- When dealing with people, be honest and treat them with respect. Sometimes they will buy because of this and not because they need nor want what you have to offer.
- Remember you are dealing with a person with feelings just like you, treat each person as you want to be treated.
- Remember to sell the benefits to your prospects not the benefits of your organisation.
- Only have those who want to be involved doing the fundraiser, it is very noticeable when people are not enjoying what they are doing and this will hurt your returns.
- Practise makes perfect or at least gets you a whole closer. Practice, Practice, Practice - you owe it to yourself and those around you.
- Set goals. Goals are a guide, a way of setting out your expectations, and these guides will aid in your success by keeping you on track.
- Last but not least, if you want to be success then look around and find someone local who is successful. Then go talk to them and ask them what they have found to be good and what they have learned not to do. Ask them to be your mentor. Learning from others mistakes is a better way to go then learning them on your own.

It is far better to copy success then create mediocrity