Working Together for a Better World

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for tools and guidance

Through Strategy, Teamwork, and Leadership

I'll take you on a journey to new places

Guidance and Exercises on Information, Education, and Advocacy

This guidance and its worksheets on fundraising support are based on what I present more fully in my book on *Trust, Impact, and Fundraising for Nonprofits*. You can refer to the book, available on my website, for more information on each of the topic listed below.

To support your own fundraising plans, you will benefit from understanding more about how **information, education, and advocacy (IEA) can increase donor loyalty and increase their donations**.

I know from countless interviews with fundraisers and donors that the three destabilizing concerns the public has about NGOs are: "I don't trust them. I don't think they do much. And all I get are fundraising appeals." It is those apparently unanswered concerns that have led to what I consider crisis levels of low trust in nonprofits. Giving USA 2022 reported that only **39% of the public trust nonprofits**.

Comprehensive communication about all you do needs to be raised in priority and implementation.

You can be doing amazing work, but if you fail to communicate effectively what you are doing, donors will associate you and your organization only with fundraising.

Vision · Mission · Values · Culture · Goals · Strategies · Impact · Trust

+ Communications +

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Three Important Concepts to Support Fundraising

Fundraising by itself is insufficient to win the loyalty and continued support of donors. You can **build their trust and respect through <u>meaningful ethics</u> and <u>strategic evaluation</u>, plus <u>communications</u> that are not just fundraising**.

Three Key Issues for Nonprofits

1. The Trust Issue – Assuring Integrity and Accountability
2. The Results Issue – Assuring Impact on Participants
3. The Communications Issue – Assuring Loyalty by Donors

We can find solutions to these!

It is not just the services you provide; it is also the other components of information, education, and advocacy that will build donor loyalty and continuity.

A developed NGO prioritizes the program services it provides and also works to promote its vision for a better world to increase awareness and receptivity by its priority publics of potential donors and volunteers. It educates its current donors so they better understand the value and accomplishments of its program work and initiates advocacy efforts to increase support by partners, government, and corporations, which also engages donors as advocates. All of these activities support fundraising, understanding, and retention of donors.

What a Developed NGO Does

1. Provides services ➡ A better world
2. Promotes the vision ➡ Awareness
3. Educates people ➡ Understanding
4. Advocates to others ➡ Action
5. Has a powerful voice ➡ Independence
6. Private not-for-profit ➡ Volunteerism

These six attributes support the vision.

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==Key Finding:== **NGOs must communicate more about IMPACT and all they do for those they serve and their partners, and for the broader society in general – not just fundraising.**

Information, Education, and Advocacy that Supports Fundraising

Excerpts from *Trust, Impact, and Fundraising for Nonprofits* by Ken Phillips

The 2022 Edelman Trust Barometer confirms that "Information quality [is] now most powerful trust builder across institutions" and "Restoring trust is key to societal stability." The report elaborates with important conclusions:

- "Demonstrate tangible progress – Restore belief in society's ability to build a better future: show the system works."
- "Leadership must focus on long-term thinking – Solutions over divisiveness; long-term thinking over short-term thinking."
- "Every institution must provide trustworthy information – Clear, consistent, fact-based information is critical to breaking the cycle of distrust."

A new mandate for nonprofits: Send communications that do not ask for money

Ed Williams, chief executive of Edelman UK and Ireland said at the launch of the public relations firm's 15th annual trust survey: "There's a feeling that NGOs are now acting too much like business. They're too focused on fundraising and the money."

When I worked as fundraising VP at Save the Children US, we did everything we could in our branding, public relations, direct mail, volunteer committees, print and TV advertising, and communications to donors to increase public awareness of our work. Through these **information** efforts, we increased public awareness as measured by Gallup from 15% to 80%. As I saw it then, our information activities were an important element as we tripled our private sector income.

When I worked at Plan International USA, we developed excellent and involving **educational** materials. The first educational program was called, "*See me. share my world,*" which was designed to give children in American classrooms (and their parents) engaging information about children in other, less affluent countries. The initiator of that program, Jaya Sarkar, then developed

a program called "*Buffalo Banks & Borewells*" about overseas development. A series of eight newsletters, each describing a project in detail, went to a test group of donors. It informed them about the complex but important process of development in less developed countries. There were no fundraising appeals.

The project also had a control group of similar donors who did not receive the educational materials. The donors who received the educational, non-fundraising communications developed a much better understanding of the program and responded with higher giving levels and higher retention rates than those in the control group. The project continued after the grant and the organization provided similar information about the importance and complexity of international development in ongoing communications. The educational program enhanced fundraising through communications using the four components (transparent, under-promise, consistent, competent). It demonstrated that non-fundraising, educational materials are important in their own right and have positive influence on donor engagement and fundraising results.

A third example is about **advocacy**. When portions of the U.S. Congress were vowing to reduce or even eliminate the USAID budget for foreign assistance, I decided to ask all our donors to write to their representatives in Congress, urging them to maintain and even increase the USAID budget because they cared about children and families in other countries. Working in a consortium, we got the heads of other NGOs with global programs to do the same. A few months later, the budget had been protected and even increased. I recall walking the streets of my neighborhood with Senator Claiborne Pell (RI) when he said: "I receive many communications about fixing potholes, but I never get communications about foreign assistance. It was amazing. People in Congress came to understand that many of their voters supported helping people in other countries." I don't have hard data about how that impacted our donors except I know that many thousands of them wrote those letters and later heard that what they did was successful. We conducted regular donor satisfaction and feedback surveys, provided a quarterly newsletter, engaged in extensive TV and print media information and education, supported volunteers around the country to do local promotion, and involved our donors in helping as well.

The result of these kinds of information, education, and advocacy efforts – along with consistent fundraising – enabled us to triple our income from $10 million a year to $30 million a year, the equivalent of $64 million today.

Your non-fundraising communication can elaborate on all six key attributes of nonprofits:

1. Programs, services, strategies, and evaluation used to achieve impact
2. Public relations and media promotion of your vision for a better world
3. Educational materials and programs you provide about your cause
4. Advocacy you do with government, business, and others for the cause
5. Independence in the vision, mission, values, and culture and the board of directors
6. Activities in civil society as a private, voluntary, non-governmental organization

If donors just keep getting more fundraising appeals without the other communications, they can easily say, "This is just a fundraising organization."

1) To be trusted, your code of ethics must be *meaningful*, not just words. Essential components are to create and define your core values and ethical principles in a code of ethics and then establish and implement the requisite monitoring, assessing, enforcing, and sanctioning to give the code meaning and credibility. When this is communicated, it shows donors that your nonprofit can be trusted for its good behavior.

2) To be respected, your program evaluation must be *strategic* to confirm and demonstrate what you are achieving, not just what you do (your outputs), but the benefits received (outcomes) and the longer-term results (lasting impacts). When your nonprofit does this, it confirms to donors that their support is successful.
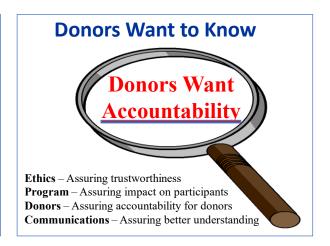
3) To earn the loyalty of donors, your communications must report all you are doing to fulfill your mission and be far more *accountable* than what is usually included in fundraising appeals. When you communicate more fully, your donors will be more responsive to your requests for donations.

Key point: The first of my Iron Rules of Fundraising is that "Fundraising is not about money. It's about who you are, what you do, and why I should trust you."

Enable Donors to Have Their Dreams Come True

1. Find donors who share your concerns.
2. Get to know them better.
3. Know more about what they dream of doing.
4. Enable them to achieve their dreams.
5. Exceed their expectations.

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Donors Want to Know

Donors Want Accountability

Ethics – Assuring trustworthiness
Program – Assuring impact on participants
Donors – Assuring accountability for donors
Communications – Assuring better understanding

Worksheet: Developing Your Plans – What will you do?

Name_____ Position _____Date _____

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1. **DEVELOPING PLANS FOR INFORMATION**
   Issue, audience, strategy, implementation, assessment, and communication to donors

   a.

   b.

   c.

   d.

   e.

   f.

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2. **DEVELOPING PLANS FOR EDUCATION**
   Issue, audience, strategy, implementation, assessment, and communication to donors

   a.

   b.

   c.

   d.

   e.

   f.

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3. **DEVELOPING PLANS FOR ADVOCACY**
    Issue, audience, strategy, implementation, assessment, and communication to donors

    a.

    b.

    c.

    d.

    e.

    f.

The key messages here are to learn from others and to step up to lead within your organization, to assure you are attractive to donors in order to retain and involve them – so they will continue and increase their support for your programs.

YOU must learn from what you are doing wrong to get results you want!
It is not that hard to do. You have the tools.

"Hey guys, here's what you need to do!"

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Chief Fundraiser Steps Up to Lead for Increased Funding for Programs

1. Meaningful Ethics for trust
2. Strategic Evaluation for results
3. Transparency to answer queries
4. Information to attract new donors
5. Education to inform current donors
6. Advocacy to engage donors in mission
7. Primary focus on Mission and Program
8. Value to donors to increase their funding

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