

In Preparation for Fundraising

Fundraising professionals echo the things that non-profit organizations need to have in place to get fully funded.

- **A positive mindset.** Your organization and your volunteers must think positive and you must believe that support for your organization or project is possible.
- **Passion for the cause.** If you don't care deeply, how do you expect others to care and donate?
- **Strong Leadership.** Without a strong director or a strong board, fundraising will be tough, if not impossible.
- **Compelling mission.** You must believe in your mission and learn how to communicate it to others.
- **Donor-based fundraising.** All fundraising must be focused on your donors. Your fundraising activities must focus on building relationships.

4 Steps to Fundraising

Sandy Rees, CFRE, suggests that nonprofit organizations need four steps - which we have heard before - to raise the money of their dreams. She says the key to success is making sure you are doing the best job you can possibly do with each of the following four steps:

Tell Your Story

For byways, this should be easy. Telling your story must engage your listener and educate them about your fundraising goals or project at the same time. The 3 - 30 - 3 rule for communicating your message works well with fundraising as well as interpretation.

- 3 seconds to get someone's attention
- 30 seconds to share your main idea
- 3 minutes to get your message across to your potential donor

Leave out the jargon and share a story about a specific project where your byway has added value to the community, and how your current project will benefit others.

Ask for the Gift

The number one reason that people say they didn't give is **"I was never asked."**

No matter how wonderful your byway is, you must ask for the gift. Most suggest that you ask several times during the year, and use a variety of strategies. Events, letters and face-to-face asks are all strategies used most often.

Two tips:

- **Be as creative as possible** - one of a kind events, letters with more pictures than text, and finding the right time and place to talk to someone face-to-face.
- **Tie the ask to something tangible** - "For \$100 we can replace a sign along the byway trail easement. With six \$1,000 donations, we can repave the parking lot of the byway interpretive center."

Thank the Donor

If you only get one of these things right, get this step right. It is recommended that a hand-written thank you note or letter is sent within 2 days if possible. A timely, warm thank-you letter serves multiple purposes. It lets the donor know you got their check, it builds trust and relationship, which are two keys to fundraising. You can include a short paragraph about how you will use the donor's gift to further engage the donor.

Build Relationships

It is important to engage our donors as partners in our byway work. We need to treat them with respect and maintain regular communication. Create a plan for how and when you will communicate with your donors.

REFERENCES

Rees, Sandy, CFRE. April, 2017. [4 Simple Steps to Raising All the Money Your Nonprofit Needs.](https://www.501c3.org/4-simple-steps-to-raising-all-the-money-your-nonprofit-needs/)
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