

## The Extreme Fundraising Ezine, Vol. II Issue 21

Welcome to the October 19<sup>th</sup> edition of Extreme Fundraising!

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### ***I. Fundraising Follies: Do Your Homework!***

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Regular readers of Extreme Fundraising will know that we've invested most of the year in exploring how our innate talents and abilities affect the way we ask people for money. I'm encouraged that many of you have experienced "ah-ha" moments as you've begun to strategize your work to align better with your hardwiring.

Today we're starting on a very different, and pretty funny, series looking at some of the top "Fundraising Follies." For the next few months, I'll be highlighting some of the most common mistakes I see fundraisers make. How do I know? I've made them! In studying what *not* to do, we'll draw some memorable pointers on *what* to do.

If you've ever heard me speak, you'll know that my first professional fundraising ask was for \$100,000. Today you'll hear the story behind that ask. (I've changed the circumstances a bit to protect the anonymity of the donor.)

As always, all the previous issues in the Extreme Fundraising Ezine are available in the archives at <http://fundraisingcoach.com/ezine.htm>.

### ***I. Fundraising Follies: Do Your Homework!***

Back when I was cutting my teeth as a paid development person, my mentor kept intending to take me on visits as part of my training. But one thing always led to another and it never happened. Plus, being a first-born and an extrovert, I didn't want to wait. The organization was in an exciting time of growth and I wanted as many people as possible to get in on its success.

I love matching up donor interests with institutional needs. It's like plugging an electrical cord into a wall outlet. When you find the outlet that matches the prongs, *power* is released! Obviously, to make sure the plug and prongs fit, you need to do your homework in advance.

As I did my homework, I noticed one of the naming opportunities in the campaign that would probably fit quite well with a particular donor. His son loved the computer lab of the newest building on campus. His son even volunteered in the lab to teach others how to use the computers. Even though the building was built, the lab was still a naming opportunity in the campaign.

I know some parents may feel odd about naming a building while their kids are still at the school. And I understand that. In this case, the donor's wife had died tragically in a car crash a

few months before. The entire school was shocked and gave lots of support to the student. I knew the student and felt that naming the lab in honor of his mother might be a fitting way to remember her life.

Since I had no idea of the financial capacity of this family, I decided to structure the ask around the wife's former employer. I knew she had been on a business trip when the accident occurred and I knew the company had done worked hard to help the family. The naming opportunity for the lab was \$100,000 which I felt the company could probably do, especially if spread out over a few years.

So for my first official ask, I set up an appointment to talk to the donor about the school and the campaign. I drove to his house and had an amiable visit. We talked about his son, his acclimation to school life, and his love of the computer lab. Then I shared with him my idea about asking the company to donate \$100,000 to name the computer lab in his wife's memory and asked him if he'd be willing to approach the company himself.

He cringed a bit at the \$100,000 and started listing all the company had already done for his family. In the end, although he saw the natural fit, he decided against asking them.

It wasn't until I got back to my office that I realized I'd asked him on the 1 year anniversary of his wife's death. My heart plummeted into my stomach. What had I done? Fortunately, the donor wasn't offended and we were able to keep an amiable relationship. But I've never forgotten to go over the details one more time before making a solicitation!

The lesson: As fundraisers we need to live in the tension between doing our homework and getting out there and taking action. Researching is crucial but can be overly comfortable. Don't get caught up in "analysis paralysis." Remember, the #1 reason people don't give is...they are not asked! So get out there and ask someone for money today. But make sure you check on a few crucial details before you make a complicated ask!

We all make mistakes. Often we learn more from our mistakes than from our successes. Have you made some outlandish mistakes too? I'd love to hear about it! You can email them to me at: [marc@fundraisingcoach.com](mailto:marc@fundraisingcoach.com).

## ***II. Resource Spotlight: Gift Range Calculator***

I'm adding the "Resource Spotlight" as a new feature in the Extreme Fundraising Ezine. As a fundraising coach, I get to see a lot of the various tools fundraisers are using. This section will be dedicated to highlighting some of the best. If you have tools that you think should be considered for inclusion, please email me at [marc@fundraisingcoach.com](mailto:marc@fundraisingcoach.com).

In this issue, I'm highlighting the Gift Range Calculator found in the "Nonprofit Library" section of Campaign Associates website (<http://www.campagne.com/>). You simply put in the amount of money you want to raise and the calculator gives you an idea of what levels of gifts you should be seeking and how many prospects each gift will require.

I use this tool as a guide with all of my clients. It immediately helps them move away from the "if everyone just gave a dollar" mentality and gets them focusing on some real goals and expectations. While personally I would err on the side of seeking larger gifts, the results of these

calculations represent the combined wisdom of decades of fundraising experience. Give it a try for yourself!

### **III. Creating Donor Evangelists: The Audio Program**

The final touches are getting done to my new audio program *Creating Donor Evangelists*. In this exciting audio program based off of my popular special report of the same name, I show you how to apply some relatively inexpensive but high leverage processes that will move your donors from simply being virtual ATMs to being raving fans of your nonprofit.

This CD will sell for \$14.99 but I'm offering a special pre-publication price of \$10 to you since you're an Extreme Ezine subscriber. I'm already heartened by the advanced sales! I'm convinced these principles can have a profound positive affect on your fundraising program. To pre-order, click on this link:

<http://www.fundraisingcoach.com/cmd.php?cmd=cart&ProductID=2065335>

or if that URL is too long try:

<http://tinyurl.com/429q3>

To your extreme fundraising success!

Marc

PS Be sure to reply to this email and send me your favorite fundraising follies!

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Marc A. Pitman is an executive coach to nonprofit leaders. An expert in helping people identify their natural abilities, he provides his coaching and training clients with down-to-earth information that decreases stress and puts the "fun" back into fundraising!

The Extreme Fundraising Ezine is a free newsletter of The Fundraising Coach. Pass it on!

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