

# ***Our Basic Primer for Campaign Fundraising***

## **Do Not...No, No, No...Don't Ever, Ever, Ever...**

- Finance everything yourself – even if you can afford it. Even Jesus talked about money and said that where the money is, there is the heart also. Make no mistake about it, **the hearts, minds and votes of people will follow their donations to your campaign.**
- Think that the state or local party will give you money because you went to a meeting and they all said they would support you. They probably won't and may likely leave you high and dry. It's not that they don't want to help. There is just never enough money to go around.
- Think that once you are better known, the money will automatically come rolling in. It won't
- Think that anyone will donate even when you don't ask them to. They won't. Even if you ask, they'll only give as much as you ask them to give.
- Think that your ideas are so strong that people will give without asking. No one will.
- Think that your friends will resent you asking for money. Actually, they will be honored and pleased that you trusted them enough to ask. They will come to feel that they are a part of your campaign.

**1. Proudly Ask for Money** If you are not PROUD about WHY you are running for public office and the difference you can make in the lives of people – you need to frankly ask yourself why you are running in the first place. Running for office can be a very humbling, costly and demeaning experience. You can't go it alone. Your own one vote doesn't matter much at all. You NEED to ASK, BEG, and PLEAD with thousands, hundreds of thousands or millions of people for their votes and money in order to win. No one will donate unless you ask them. If you do not believe that you should expect voters to give money, time or their votes to you – you have lost already. Outline what you plan to accomplish and why it is so important to everyone that they need to donate to this cause. You must also mentally prepare yourself to ask for money. LET EVERYONE KNOW YOU NEED THEIR HELP. When a voter donates to your campaign you can also be certain that they will vote for you and talk to others about you. Remember, where the money goes, the heart will follow. So fundraising is important on many levels. It gives you financial resources, is crucial to getting more votes, gets those who donate talking for you and it gives you a resource directory that you can turn to when you need additional help.

**2. Keep it Legal** Remember, no matter what political fundraising ideas you are using, be sure to keep your fundraising legal by knowing and following the relevant laws and regulations in your area! You may be certain that your opposition will review your campaign reports to try to catch you if you do anything illegal.

**3. Make the First Donation Yourself** YOU should make the first donation. If you are not willing to contribute seed money to your own campaign, how can you expect anyone else to donate?

**4. Go To Your Family and Close Friends First** and explain to them WHY you are running for office and ask for their help. Yes, YOU as a candidate must ask for help directly and not totally rely on others.

**5. Set Up A Campaign Website With Standard Credit Card Donation Levels** One of the best things that you can do is set up a website that will allow friends and supporters and others to make regular donations with credit cards. Have standard amounts for \$5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 500 and one thousand dollars. Although credit card companies take a small percentage of the fees raised, it is well worth the expense.

## 6. Develop Comprehensive Lists of Possible Donors – and Then More Lists!

- Get a detailed list of all donors to all previous campaigns in your region – of both parties. Target those most likely to donate. Major donors should be contacted with at least a four page letter AND a follow up phone call. Minor donors should be called, emailed and both.
- Get a complete voter list with phone numbers and addresses, voter history and income levels. You will need this list anyway to maintain a file of contacts and support. Glean through the voter lists and highlight anyone who knows you well enough to donate, especially high income voters. You will also be able to attach current phone numbers to the list of previous donors from a good voter list.
- Get a list of all members to all organizations to which you belong including churches, civic groups, marketing groups, chambers of commerce, business associations and more.
- Get a list of all political action groups which may be favorable to you based on your positions both locally and nationally. Caution: accepting money from some organizations may result in an unintended “Kiss of Judas” endorsement once your opposition reviews your financial disclosures.
- Get a list of your enemies’ enemies. Go to your opponent’s web site and find out their positions and/or past votes. Glean through newspaper and internet articles to find lawsuit information, etc. Your enemies’ enemies can be a rich source of campaign funds.
- Everybody-Every Day.... **Update email lists and update your voter list of supporters daily.**

**7. Monthly Donation Commitments** Especially from friends and family, you don’t want to ask for money over and over again during the course of the campaign when you can do it just once. Instead of asking a supporter to make one \$200 donation, ask them to make a \$100 donation for the next 6 or 9 months – or whatever they can afford during the course of the campaign. You will certainly need more money as the campaign progresses. Get their credit card numbers and bill them monthly. Often, people will give much more because it is spread out. Offer them great recognition for moving up to a higher level of giving.

**8. Friends of a Friend** Have your sister explain to everyone that you are running for state representative and ask her friends if they would be willing to help. Your uncle who owns a business can ask his suppliers and other business owners at the next chamber of commerce meeting if they can make a donation as his niece/nephew is running for public office. Your son belongs to a hunting club or your daughter belongs to a church group...you get the picture.

**9. Certified Mailings** Send out a mailing to your very top donor prospects and the largest donors from the past asking for a major contribution – include some breaking news, like recent poll results – and send it out certified mail (this costs more money, but generates excitement and gets through the clutter and straight to the decision maker). Invite them to an event. Tell your top contributors you need immediate donations to act on the breaking news you included in the letter. **\*\*Please note: only send these mailings to office / work addresses. If you send a certified letter to a residential address, and no one is home to sign for it, it will not be delivered to them. They will have to drive to pick it up and may resent it.**

## 10. Special Events with a Specific Goal

Walk-a-thons, pray-a-thons, dance-a-thons, dinners, events with already elected public supporters as speakers all work well. Set a doable fundraising goal for a concrete purpose (for example, raising \$3,000 to buy yard signs or \$7,500 to buy research polls or \$25,000 to buy TV ads and bill boards) and tell people why you want to raise the money. Promote this event for several weeks.

Finally, after raising all that you can, you still may have to fill in some of the necessary gaps in the budget from your personal money. However, you will probably also find that winning is just now coming into view.