

INNOVATIVE FUND RAISING

Monday, July 26 2010
Volume 1 Issue 2

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Special points of interest:

- **Next Issue - How to Start a 501(c)(3) Seminar in Aug.**
- **Demographic Research Tips for Business Planning**
- **Free Kool Jazz in the Park Concert Aug. 18 featuring Evolutionary Soul**

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**INNOVATIVE FUND RAISING
RAISING \$ IN A TOUGH ECONOMY**

While the jury is still out about whether or not we're really in a recession, now is a great time to recession-proof your fundraising effort.

Weak economies can be very helpful for nonprofits. During such times, organizations are forced to be leaner and more efficient. But economic downturns can also be perilous times for nonprofits. When faced with a recession, many nonprofits make bad choices that limit their growth. Some of these mistakes can prove fatal.

Whether we like it or not, asking for money costs money. When you're looking for budgets to trim, costly mailings and fundraising activities will seem like obvious opportunities. But exercise extreme caution. A fundraiser eliminated will never raise money.

Direct mail is still the most effective means of direct

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Date: Saturday, July 31st, 2010, 10am - 12pm
Location: Smooth's Music, Books & Gifts
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contact and fundraising. Some years ago I did a direct mail campaign with Elder Curtis Hamilton and Crown Financial Ministries. One of our first donations was a \$3000 check from an anonymous donor. **REMEMBER— Most donors are using discretionary income to support non profits**, so target donors 1. with income, 2. that previously supported your cause, 3. have supported other non profits, and/or 4. have a mutually benefi-

cial relationship with you.

Appeal to your donors', staffs', and volunteers' creativity and remember that people love competition. Give each donor or team seed money and let them compete (based on the parable of the Talents) and use their resources and network to raise additional money.

Ever heard that one man's trash is another man's treasure? Cont. on p.2

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INNOVATIVE FUND RAISING (CONT. FROM P.1)

Ask families not to donate cash, but instead to donate used goods from their homes that you can put into a large community garage sale. While I might not be able to write you a check for \$100 right now, I can certainly get rid of that couch in my basement, a couple of lamps, a dresser, and a television set.

When you combine all these items from the people in your community, you could rack up a really nice profit from such a sale. Families still get the sense that they are helping out, and they can still protect their personal financial situation, which may be a bit uncertain. Plus, they get to clean out the basement a bit and get a tax deduction. What a great deal for everybody!

One of the first things a person learns about money is that it would be nice if it went

farther. In hard economic times, we should approach our fundraising efforts like this. Why accept a \$100 donation, when it could be turned into \$200 with a matching grant. Makes sense, right? Ask donors on the higher end of the giving scale to make matching grants. Matching grants can be set up in many different ways, but the general idea is that for every dollar the group raises, the matching donor will give \$1, \$2, or whatever amount he/she decides upon ahead of time. Many donors will set a threshold figure that the group must raise before the matching gift will start. For instance, the donor may require that the non-profit raise \$10,000 and after that, there will be a two for one match.

You can also do a threshold

amount. For instance, a donor will give you no more than \$10,000 to match the money you raise within the matching campaign time frame.

Having a matching gift on the table is a powerful tool for a non-profit. First, it's a great enthusiasm builder. Those working on the campaign can see visible progress- a real goal. This is an extra incentive for them to give the campaign their best effort. Also, a matching gift sends a message to other donors that their contribution of \$100 could actually mean \$200 for the group. Or \$500 turns into \$1,000. People can see how this can add up very quickly.

For the original donor, there is a certain level of protection as well. If the
Cont. on p.3

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Helpful Small Business Seminar

INNOVATIVE FUND RAISING (CONT. FROM P.2)

non-profit can't meet the threshold, it tells him that the group potentially has problems that a single gift couldn't fix anyway.

Diversification works in the for profit world, so why not use it? Many nonprofit organizations are able to weather tough times by diversifying their income streams; and given the current times, every nonprofit organization, even those that have historically raised money from just one source, should consider expanding the ways it generates revenue. A fundraising plan with a broad reach typically targets contributed income from individual donors, corporations and foundations, and earned income from special events and the sale of products and services.

Many individuals, small businesses and corporations have

decreased their philanthropy budget. **But they have not decreased their personal entertainment or advertising budget by the same margin.** With that being said, have creative special events that reach a broader audience, are affordable to attend, and increase awareness and your donor base. While you are increasing your base, you are also increasing your business or corporate sponsor's base, which is what advertising is supposed to do, right? Show the ways you are going to help someone else, and it will always help you. If you expect 500 people with an average household income of \$70,000, show that to your sponsor in your appeal letter. The same demographics you are looking for appeal to them to. If your admission price is low enough and the event is fun, all household income levels have a chance to attend,

and the networking opportunity for sponsors and other non profits is immense.

Create exciting and unique fund raisers that are affordable. The CFLF does a formal Fall Ball each year for children 12months - 12 years of age, complete with limousine rides, red carpet announced entry, a complete formal meal, dance, and souvenir book. Designed three years ago, the book we put together the first year was less than 50 pages. This past year (3rd) it was over 200 pages, and expected to be 400+pages in November 2010. Each child from the CFLF and the general public is eligible to compete for King, Queen (CFLF students), Prince, and Princess (general public)

Cont. on p.4

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INNOVATIVE FUND RAISING (CONT. FROM P.3)

by raising money selling ads to their network. One child raised over \$3000. Needless to say, their picture was all over the book with congratulations from many relatives, friends, and businesses! In addition, instant posed pictures are sold to capture the moments, and a donation box is always placed at the registration check-in table for additional sources of income.

Honoring donors, volunteers, and key people is always an excellent fundraiser. Volunteers drive the non-profit community, serving at all levels, from board membership to clerical tasks. In good times, volunteers may be plentiful and enthusiastic. But because they also feel the effects of an economic downturn, they may be scarce, choosing to give their time and effort to personal and/or professional commitments. In response, consider demonstrating to volunteers just how and why their altruism is worth it. An awards banquet is a way to offer kudos and give an opportunity for networking and donations. Demonstrating appreciation for volunteers goes a long way in fostering loyalty.

And last but not least, **solicit the help of some creative minds that think outside the box.** In South Carolina, though inexpensive to implement, raffles are illegal. Games of chance are not legal in SC (although the lottery is, but that is another soapbox). Games of skill are. THG, LLC is currently putting together an unusual legal gaming tournament that is fun and harmless, but will appeal to many real estate agents, banks,

insurance companies, and mortgage brokers. The tournament and game is perfectly in alignment with the non profit's mission and objectives and reiterates their purpose. It is going to be a multi-week tournament concluding in a dynamic final round that will surely garner attention.

Be creative, and solicit the help of other consultants and non profits. We are working on a two day celebrity golf tournament with a hole-in-one competition, pre-tournament reception casino night with celebrity meet and greet, spa treatments for spouses during the tournament the next day, a silent and live auction (live and online), and live entertainment during the culminating awards presentation. The difference you ask that makes this creative? It will be held at an affordable resort, the players will have one celebrity on each team, everything is done on the same property, and **the general public can participate in all of the events even if they can't play golf!**

People are still talking about Eddie's Second Chance, a fundraiser we planned and implemented two years ago that had 7 concerts in 7 days at 7 venues that included a \$35,000 limited edition Harley-Davidson giveaway (a donated moped was won) for Eddie Gomez, a Hodgkin's lymphoma cancer survivor. We organized it in less than two weeks and all the acts performed for free! T-shirts were sold, and the TV media covered it four

times (great for HD dealer)!
Other Ideas:

1. Festivals with a Big Dollar Game of Skill to win car, house, cash, etc. (football toss, Frisbee throw, soccer kick)
2. Concerts, Talent
3. Cruises / Bus Trips
4. Unique Competitions
5. Tournaments
6. Contests (skill based)
7. Consulting / Seminars
8. Products/Services

Sales guru Zig Ziglar said, "If you have enough push, you don't have to worry about the pull." No matter what you believe about the current economic outlook, if you are a not-for-profit, **cutbacks on the part of grant makers and donors will likely affect your ability to raise funds requiring you to push that much harder to maintain financial stability.**

In the end, many consultants agree and think that the greatest piece of advice in fundraising is the need to be understanding of where your donors are coming from. Ask yourself what each donor's reality is. Tailor a strategy for each demographic group, so that you can demonstrate to the entire community that you realize one size does not fit all. If you try to put yourself in their position and think about the most respectful and practical way to approach each person, you will find success even in tough economic times.