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### A Student Guide to Fundraising

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# Introduction

The most important thing to remember about fundraising is that it should never be about the money. I'm aware of the irony in this statement but it is the one thing I know to hold true; if you are blinded by dollar signs, you will be heading down a river without a paddle. That being said, raising money for a cause is not only a rewarding experience but something that those who do it should be very proud of. People make careers out of fundraising but that does not mean that high school and college kids can't be just as, if not more, successful than the so-called "professionals."

Before getting started, I would like to share my story. Being a college student myself, I know how important it is to obtain one's information from a credible source. I feel that by sharing my experiences, it will show that I know a thing or two about raising money. Throughout the manual there aren't any big words or fancy phrases. This is the first manual of fundraising that I have come across written by a student, for students, so I want it to be as easy to comprehend as possible. I hope that after reading it, you can not only understand how to put together a successful fundraiser with your school, but that you get up and actually put a plan into action to help out whatever cause it is that you truly believe in.

### **Hoops for ALS**

I was a junior in high school in the spring of 2004. Sitting in the back of a National Honor Society meeting with a friend, Shaun Hager, I discussed how I was going to have to work hard to reach the minimum number of community service hours needed to remain in the organization. Shaun was in a similar situation and after a few minutes of brainstorming, we came up with the idea of having a charity basketball tournament. What could be better? Being able to play ball and meet our requirement, we felt like we had beaten the system.

After the meeting, we approached our advisor, Don Strasser, with the idea. He loved the concept but was curious what cause we were looking to raise money for. Shaun and I had not really considered this. Not really sure what to say, the two of us hesitated. After a moment or two of silence, Don suggested we raise money for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), more commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease. A teacher in the high school, Dave Deutsch, had recently been diagnosed with it. He was the second teacher in the district as Chris Pendergast (former elementary school teacher and founder of his own charity organization, the Ride for Life), had been battling the disease for the previous 11 years. Shaun and I both thought it would be a good idea to help out someone in the school so we both quickly agreed.

Planning the tournament was not as easy as we originally thought. We had a goal of raising \$1,000 but we had no idea what we were in for. There were things that didn't take us too much time: creating flyers, getting teams together and finding referees. What we did not anticipate was what was involved in finding a

place to hold the event, deciding if we wanted to provide food/entertainment and whether or not we wanted to try to obtain sponsorships.

From the second we began working on the event, appropriately named “Hoops for ALS,” we knew it was going to be something special. Everyone, no matter his/her social status, was willing to help out. Students were eager to go around town looking for sponsorships and restaurants wanted to donate food for us to sell. School musical groups wanted to perform and teachers wanted to put in their share too. The district even let us use one of the local elementary schools as a location for the event. Everyone was rallying behind Dave; they were joining the fight.

The day itself was nothing short of magical. People from the school and the surrounding community came to play basketball and support the fight against ALS. There were a DJ, acapella groups and carnival set up for the enjoyment of those not participating in the tournament. Even people who didn't know Dave were stopping by because they saw the event as they passed by in their cars. At the end of the day everyone was exhausted, one of the basketball hoops had been broken and there was a great deal of garbage that needed to be picked up. Everyone's morale though, could not have been higher. What was once a stretch goal of reaching \$1,000 became a goal of \$25,000 that had been reached.

That summer really jumpstarted the fundraising effort. Hoops for ALS gained recognition throughout the ALS Community and Northport High School was quickly being credited for its work. The Robert Packard Center for ALS Research awarded us its 2004 Partners in Collaboration Award. While in Baltimore to

receive the award, we were able to meet a number of doctors who research cures for the disease, as well as members of the other successful fundraising organizations. One of the organizations, the Play to Win for Life Foundation, was running a bracelet campaign (similar to that of LIVESTRONG) which we were able to become a part of.

We were also invited to the Muscular Dystrophy Association's Wings over Wall Street event in New York City. This was our first time attending another ALS event (and one run by the “professionals”) and it really opened everyone's eyes. There was great food, tons of auction items (including a yellow Lance Armstrong-worn Tour De France jersey) and celebrities such as the host and current star of ABC's “Dirty Sexy Money,” Billy Baldwin, and former New York Yankee pitcher David Cone. Not only was it an entertaining evening but it was an eye-opening experience.

### **A Midwinter Night's Dream**

While we at Northport High School were proud of the \$25,000 we had raised, after attending Wings over Wall Street, we knew there was a lot more that we could do. A group of students whose work on Hoops for ALS had stood out was put together and given the responsibility of running our next event. Ideas began to be tossed around and we finally decided on having a dinner event with raffle and auction items, similar to Wings over Wall Street. Now that we had our idea, we needed to figure out a way to execute it.

One of the first things that we were concerned about was where the event

would be held. An original idea was to hold it in the cafeteria or gymnasium of the school. While this would have saved money, we thought that if we were going for an “elegant” feel, we would need to find the appropriate setting. After looking at a few halls and country clubs, we came across Oheka Castle. Often the location for weddings and other upscale events, we thought it would be the perfect place to hold what we hoped would be a “magical” evening.

The night turned out to be just that. We had a pricey silent auction room that we put together but knew that not every guest would be able to afford it. Because of this, we had a separate room for raffles. The auction room had numerous pieces of art and sports memorabilia. The raffle room had everything one could think of, from baskets of DVDs to a canoe. It was highlighted by a flight to Los Angeles and a guest appearance on *That 70s Show*.

As previously mentioned, at *Wings over Wall Street* some of us were fortunate enough to meet Major League Baseball player David Cone. We mentioned the idea to David and he was excited about helping us get our fundraiser off the ground. We decided to present him with the Hero for Hope Award - an award that we give out every year to a prominent figure(s) who have gone above and beyond in the world of ALS fundraising. He not only came to accept the award but offered autographs to the people in attendance. Having someone like David Cone at our event not only built up its credibility but showed that there are all sorts of people willing to help raise money for something that they believe in.

The next few years the event only continued to grow. The second year was highlighted by appearances from Billy Baldwin and former Major League

Baseball player Tommy John. While we may have been afraid that event would have remained stagnant, it garnered a total of \$137,000. The students working on it also became more active in the ALS-fundraising world. Not only did the high school build relationships with organizations such as Project ALS and ALSA, students also lobbied in Washington D.C. to Representative Steve Israel and Senator Hillary Clinton. During the summer, students also helped with research of the disease in different labs across the country, an activity that would become a trend in the following years.

The third year included a live performance by American Idol contestant Mario Vasquez. He performed two songs for the live crowd, adding a sense of star entertainment that had not been there the previous year. There was also an auction of a photograph signed by the 1980 Miracle on Ice Olympic Hockey Team that was sold for over one-thousand dollars. The summer that followed would perhaps be the best example of how the student organization had grown. First, the students placed 8<sup>th</sup> overall in the American Express Members' Project. Then, in August, all of the hard work was rewarded when the event became an official 501 (c) 3 charity, A Midwinter Night's Dream Incorporated.

In January of 2008, Emmy-Award winning actress Edie Falco made an appearance and was awarded the Hero for Hope. Originally from Northport, she was glad to help out the cause. The night also included a live auction of a trip to St. Maarten, as well as an autographed baseball jersey from Hall of Fame pitcher Richard "Goose" Gossage. In total, the night raised \$250,000, a goal set by the students a year in advance.

January of 2009 was an interesting time for the organization. Not only was it the fifth year anniversary of the event but it was also the culmination of the quest for one million dollars. Highlighted by Hero for Hope and former New York Ranger Adam Graves, as well as the auctioning off of a limited edition autographed Derek Jeter photograph, the event raised a record \$345,000 and reached the million dollar goal. We were also able fund a cryopreservation lab affiliated with Stony Brook Hospital.

Overall, what was done was not a typical student-run fundraiser. This does not mean that A Midwinter Night's Dream cannot be dissected and examined to see how specific parts of a fundraiser are done. With this manual, I am going to single out different steps of organizing a fundraiser in hopes that one day you can apply them to your own. I'll take a look at what I think is important as well as share some advice from the professionals. Six years ago I would have never thought that our fundraising could become what it has. This manual is to help you design a fundraiser of similar magnitude. As a student, I know the best way to learn a concept is to see it in action and I hope to illustrate the fundamentals of fundraising as clearly as possible.



## Planning

*Foster's Philosophy: Planning your fundraiser at the beginning is a lot like writing an essay. You can make it up as a go along, but things are easier and flow a lot smoother if you outline everything first. You want to have a good grasp on what you plan to do so you are able to figure out how much help you are going to need. People will also be more inclined to assist you if you can show them that you know what you are doing.*

*Make sure that whatever type of event you choose to do is the best one to benefit your cause. In my case, we started with a basketball tournament. We were fortunate enough to have a great response from the community and knew that we were capable of making much more money than we originally did. We also knew though, that as fun as the basketball tournament was, to make more money, we needed to take a different route. After sitting down and laying out our options, we decided an elegant dinner was the way to go. We ended up making the right choice as our funds raised almost tripled in the first year. It is important to keep in mind that just because a fundraiser is run a certain way one time, it cannot be changed in the future. In fact, if you aren't making changes (even small ones) every time you have a fundraiser, something may be wrong.*

*Perhaps the most difficult part of creating a successful fundraiser is the work that is done before it even takes place. The planning step is just as important, if not more, than actually carrying out the event. Poor planning can lead to confusion amongst those working on an event. The result of this can be an*

*insufficient amount of funds raised and potentially, even money lost. Before any actual work begins, you should sit down and plan out exactly what you want to do and how you want to do it. Specific details do not need to be carved in stone but you should have a strong idea of the direction that you would like your fundraiser to go. The best way to go about doing this is to focus on the age-old questions: Who, What, Where, When and Why? Taking a couple hours at the beginning of the fundraising process and figuring out the answers to these questions can make a fundraiser's life much easier and prevent problems that may arise along the way.*

### **The Why**

This is the reason that you started the process in the first place, the reason that you are out to raise money. In some cases, you may just be trying to raise money to be an “upstanding citizen” or a “good person.” This is perfectly fine and is actually very admirable. You should though, if you choose to get involved in fundraising, look for a cause that affects you and others.

Maybe your club or organization needs funding. Scholastic institutions can only give so much money to so many clubs. If you are just starting a club with friends or have joined one that is not very large, you may need money to really get things going and achieve the objectives of the group. Holding a fundraiser is the perfect way to do this. Everyone will be highly motivated to help because it will be affecting them and the club in the future. The more money you raise, the more you and your friends will be able to do in the future.

Another cause that students usually want to raise money for is assistance for a friend or colleague who is ill. While usually too young to donate much of their own money, a great way to help and show someone that you care is by helping to raise money for a cure for whatever he/she may have. In this example, the driving force is not yourself but somebody else. Knowing that what you are doing is going to make a big difference in their life and the lives of other victims of this illness will make you work harder and harder until you achieve your goals. It can also lead you to set goals that you normally would not. The desire to help someone often brings out the best in people and can really be the driving force behind your fundraiser.

Perhaps the most important thing when selecting your cause is making sure that it is something you really care about. This will lead to you wanting to work harder and harder toward reaching your goals. Finding a cause that affects you personally will also make raising the money more rewarding. You will be able to see how the money you raised affects the cause and the difference you have made.

Your passion is also the best fundraising tool you have. Things like knowing people who can donate and being a skilled speaker are definitely bonuses but if you have the drive, you will be surprised to learn that there is little you can't do. It will be the extra effort that you put in that will greatly improve results and the time and energy put forth that will make them even greater. If you are not passionate about the cause, you won't feel obligated to go above and beyond what was originally thought necessary and your fundraiser will not be as great as it could have been.

## **The Who**

First decide whom you are going to be working with (Klein p.27). Working solo on a fundraiser, while doable, is not recommended. Not only will multiple people be able to get more work done, it will be a much more enjoyable and rewarding experience if it is shared with others. Trying to do everything by yourself will lead to a buildup of stress as well as a limitation of resources. As will be discussed later, every new person who gets involved with the fundraiser brings possible contacts and donors with them. There is no need to look for an infinite amount of help but spreading out the work can only benefit the cause.

For students, obtaining help may not be as difficult as it would be to those in the professional world. In a scholastic setting, the first place to look for help can be friends and classmates around your school or campus. Depending on what you are looking to raise money for, there is a good chance that someone else shares your interest; you just may have to seek them out. Often people share a desire to raise money for a cause but because no one speaks up about it, nothing is done. Actively searching for fundraising help can be one of the first steps you take.

If you are currently in high school, a good place to start searching is your school's chapter of the National Honor Society. Often, chapters have a community service requirement for their members. You may find other students who are eager to help so they can complete their community service hours, as well as some students who may be genuinely interested. The latter group would be more useful for a fundraiser because, as explained later, it is partially the drive and enthusiasm that can make it truly successful. Also, mentioning your

fundraising idea in different classes can help. The more people who hear about it increases the number of potential people you will have helping you out.

College students are in a similar situation in that they can start by looking within their classes or around their campus for help. Not only can they actively seek out community service groups and clubs but most universities will offer them the option to begin their own. This could end up greatly helping a fundraiser get off the ground. Participation in student organization/club fairs can attract other students to the fundraiser; it's another way to get the word out. It can even open the door for future funding from the university itself. If the fundraiser is more than a one-time event, it can lead to great improvements in the future.

Aside from peers, you can look to adults for help. Teachers are a great source. They may have seen successful fundraisers in the past or even conducted one themselves. They can also assist in the previously mentioned strategy of making it a school-run event or a club. Advisors to a school's chapter of the National Honor Society may be eager for new projects and a faculty advisor to a club on a college campus can give it more credibility and increase its chance of receiving funding.

Parents should not be ignored. First, they may provide strong support if approached with the idea of a fundraiser. While it is nice to have a student-run event, having adult backing can never hurt. If you are too young to drive they can provide rides to places that you need to go. Also, parents can be a source of numerous connections. Their friends and family members can lead to donations for your cause, as can people who they may work with.

### **The What**

There are many different ways for students to make money, and you are going to have to choose the way that best suits your cause. While things such as bake sales and change collections have resulted in raising a few hundred dollars, this manual is aimed toward larger events. A dinner event or a sporting event are good places to start. To raise a lot of money you are going to want to do something that can get a lot of people involved. If it's something enjoyable you'll get more participants. This is where your creativity will truly be tested.

One thing to keep in mind is the resources that you may or may not have. Planning a baseball tournament and realizing the day of that you only have one field could be disastrous. Make sure that you are aware of things such as space that you have as well as budget. The amount of money it will cost to run the event is also something that should be planned ahead of time. You would not want to spend the time organizing an event to realize that you do not have the money to run it.

### **The Where and the When**

Once you figure out what type of event you want to hold and whom you are going to be running it with, the next step is to find a location for the event. Depending on the size of the event, one of the first places you should be looking is your school. This is a cost-effective location that is local as well. A scholastic institution would support its members trying to help others so there is a good chance the school would be accommodating and willing to work with you. Everything from a sporting event (that could be held in a gymnasium) to a dinner

event (to be held in a cafeteria or something of the sort) can be done at a school.

If you want to go for a more “up-scale” feel to the event, local halls are another option. Arrange a sit-down with the owner of wherever you want to have it. Explain to him/her what it is you want to do and the cause you are trying to raise money for. Hope that he/she is willing to work with you. Possible discounts for the event are an option. Maybe for a certain number of participants you get money taken off. For example, if you have fifty guests, it will be \$25 per person but if you have 100, it will only be \$20. Another possible “money-saver” could be the owner can put you in touch with people who can help out at the event (such as a company to cater it for less). Just as you want good public relations for your event, the owner of the hall will also want good PR and having a student-run fundraiser is definitely a way to do it.

Another thing to consider in the logistics of your fundraiser is when do you want to have it? If you want to have it outside, it should obviously be done in the warmer months but you need to be careful in your planning. Many students have tests and finals in May and June so you would want to check with whoever is helping you plan to make sure that the date works.

You should also take a look and make sure there are no other community events going on the day that you want to have your event. If you want a large turnout, you do not want people having to choose between what you are doing and something else going on around town that day. If it is going on at your school, you need to make sure that there is space available for you to hold it. Checking with administrators is the best way to go about doing this as they

usually know what is going on and where. On a college campus, the first place you may want to look is the Office of Student Life.



# LEADERSHIP

***Foster's Philosophy:** I went back and forth whether or not to include a section here about leadership but after looking back on my own experiences, I realized there was no way that I could not. Throughout all the fundraising I've done, one word that is always tossed around is leaders. As students, many viewed us as leaders of our grades and schools. We were taking the initiative to go out and raise money for a cause that we truly believed in and it was our way of trying to make a difference in the world. I've always defined a leader as someone who sees a problem and instead of sitting back and hoping it fixes itself, does whatever needs to be done to solve it. This is how my friends and I felt about ALS. We saw what it was doing to people and decided we were going to do whatever was needed to fight it.*

*That being said, there are also going to be leaders amongst leaders in your fundraiser and this section points out a few things you should note. First, there is always going to be some sort of power scheme. If there aren't people telling others what needs to be done, everything will be greatly unorganized. This does not mean that it should be done in a rude way to make others feel inferior. In fact, this would harm your fundraiser. You really want to gain power in a referent way; you want to set the example and have others respect you enough to want to listen to whatever it is that you have to say.*

*As far as the approaches to leadership go, all of the ones listed I think can be*

*useful. It is up to you which you use as it will depend on the situation. One thing that is important though is the idea of charisma. Especially in fundraising, if you can get those working with you to rally around you, you will be surprised at the response that will show up in your work. A key theme throughout this manual is the idea of passion and if you can create it in people, their productivity will skyrocket.*

*Leading well requires the power to lead. Being in charge of a fundraiser will definitely give you a certain type of power and you will have control over people working with you. Ricky W. Griffin, author of Fundamentals of Management, defines power as the ability to affect the behavior of others. Below I have included summaries and analysis of the different types and models of power and leadership that he describes. Power can be both a useful and dangerous tool to have. Knowing the extent of the power you have is very important. You want to be sure not to overstep your limits, but you also want to be able to keep things organized and flowing smoothly. The first thing to determine is exactly what kind of power you have; then figure out which approach to leadership you will take.*

### **Legitimate Power**

According to Griffin, in this scenario, power is based on a hierarchal structure. Those involved with the fundraiser will know who is “in charge” and who is a “subordinate.” It is basically another way of saying that one person has authority over another. Simply being the creator of a fundraiser will not give you this

power, though. While it is definitely a way to obtain it, maintaining legitimate power is a completely different story.

This is especially true in your setting because in most cases, many of your “subordinates” are going to be your peers and friends. This means that you cannot go around giving orders and insisting that people do certain things. You are going to want to assign certain jobs to certain individuals, but it would be a good idea to explain why the job that he/she is doing is important and how they are a valuable part of the team. This idea is explained later on in referent and expert power.

### **Reward Power**

Griffin defines this type of power is exactly how it sounds: the ability to reward those for the work that they do. The simplest way to use this power is to create incentives for raising money. If some type of reward is created for the fundraiser who raises the most money, people may put in an extra effort. This can be especially useful if you are working with people who are not related to the cause but simply want to help out. Now, not only do they feel as though they are doing a good thing but they are aiming to try to be the best. Things like awards, prizes and giftcards are a great place to start. Recognition at the fundraiser itself can also motivate people to try to raise money.

### **Coercive Power**

This is the one type of power that never makes sense in fundraising. Coercive power is forcing compliance through psychological, emotional or physical threats. You will be working with friends so there is no need to use coercion. If at any point the thought, or even worse, actual use of coercion is implemented, that is when you need to reevaluate your fundraiser. If you always keep your purpose in mind, you'll avoid this kind of power.

### **Referent Power**

This type of power is really given to a leader by those who are following him/her. It is fairly abstract compared with the other types of power. Someone obtains referent power when those who are following him/her give it. Usually, people feel comfortable giving others this power when they can identify with them. The leader usually makes his/her followers want to imitate him/her or makes them feel a sense of loyalty. The leader also tends to be very charismatic (Griffin). People are drawn to the leader because of his/her personality; it can be a motivating factor for those involved.

A main idea behind referent power is leading by example. With your fundraiser, show people what you need done by doing it yourself. If you are able to show people that what you are doing will help, they may want to do it too. If you can motivate others to work, there is a good chance that they will look up to you and follow you.

### **Expert Power**

This type of power may not be available to you at the beginning. Even if you are an expert at the cause you are working for, if it is your first fundraiser, you may not have much expertise at raising money. As a result, this type of power may be hard to obtain. Take notes of what you are doing, though, and improve your tactics in the future. This way, if your fundraiser becomes an annual event, people will eventually look to you as the person who knows what he/she is doing and this power will be difficult to obtain.

### **Approaches to Leadership**

While there are a number of approaches to leadership, Griffin brings up a few that I think are applicable to a student-run fundraiser. The first is path-goal theory. The main idea behind this is that it is the leader's job to make rewards or valued goals readily available to those following him/her. Using this kind of leadership, the best thing you could do would be to set a goal of how much money you want to raise. This gives everyone working on the fundraiser something to strive for and if they succeed, a feeling of achievement.

This type of leadership model contains four different leader behaviors: directive, supportive, participative and achievement-oriented. Directive involves telling those under you what is expected of them as well as making a schedule for how things should be run. Supportive is a more friendly approach. You show respect for those under you and treat them as equals. The participative approach really gets those who are under you involved. You look to them for advice and suggestions, as well as ask for their help in decision making. Finally, there is the

achievement-oriented leader behavior. This relates the most to path-goal theory. Here, as a leader, you are responsible for setting challenging goals for your subordinates, but encouraging them and showing confidence in their abilities as well.

This model of leadership is an interesting one. While it is viewed as being incomplete, it can still be useful. Selecting one of these types of leadership behaviors is not what you should be doing, in fact; you should be doing just the opposite--figuring out a way to apply them all. Which leadership behavior you use should depend on the current environment as well as the task at hand. When considering what needs to be done, participative leadership may be the most useful, the more suggestions the better. On the other hand, when actually carrying out the tasks, you may need to take a more directive leadership role. This can be intertwined with achievement-oriented leadership as you can reward those helping you out. Finally, when evaluating the work that has been done, as well as looking at how it can be improved in the future, your best bet may be supportive leadership. Here, you can relate to your subordinates and suggest how they can improve, instead of criticizing what they have done.

A second leadership model Griffin brings up that I think is worth taking a look at is the leader-member exchange approach. This idea, created by George Graen and Fred Dansereau, focuses on individually specific relationships with each of your subordinates. As a leader, you would then take these specific relationships and, with a select number of members, create special, or closer ones. This group of people becomes your "in-group" with the other being your "out-group." You

give your in-group more time and special attention. When delegating responsibility, they are the ones you turn to first for help with things like delegating and supervising. It should be kept in mind that even though you have these two groups, it is still recommended to have specific relationships with every member of the fundraiser.

### **Other Approaches to Leadership**

One extra approach to leadership that Griffin talks about is charismatic leadership. His discussion on the idea shows that charisma is an important part in becoming a leader. It can help you in relating to your subordinates and gaining their support. Having charisma can also help to influence those under you. Leaders with charisma often have such traits as self-confidence, a firm conviction in their beliefs and a strong need to influence people.

According to Griffin, many experts today acknowledge three characteristics of a charismatic leader. The first is to be able to envision the future and set high expectations. You need to know where you want your fundraiser to go and be able to set a high, yet attainable goal for it to reach. The second characteristic is the ability to energize others. To do this you can show personal excitement, confidence and patterns of success. If you can't get excited about your fundraiser, how do you expect others to be able to? Finally, you need to be able to support your subordinates, empathize with them and show that you believe in them.

Another approach to leadership is transformational leadership. This type of leadership is defined by Griffin as going beyond ordinary expectations. It transmits a sense of mission, stimulates learning experiences and inspires new

ways of thinking. This can apply to your fundraiser in a few ways. First, you want it to be a learning experience for everyone involved. The more you can take away from the experience, the better you will want to do next time. Second, new ways of thinking are important. Encouraging subordinates to think creatively can lead to new ideas and innovative ways of raising money.

An article in popular press that Griffin writes about identifies seven keys to being a successful leader: trusting one's subordinates, developing a vision, keeping cool, encouraging risk, being an expert, inviting dissent and simplifying things. He believes that these underlie transformational leadership. It's important to take note of these ideas because they are all important to running a successful fundraiser. You need trust in those who you work with, you need to have an idea where things are going and you need to know what you are talking about. It also cannot hurt to invite criticism of what you are doing (so long as it is constructive!) as well as make things easy for everyone to understand. Taking risks is vital as well as you will never take the next step unless you are willing to make a leap first. If the risk does not work out, you need to be able to keep your cool and remain calm in a stressful situation.

A third new approach to leadership is strategic leadership. The basis of this is understanding your fundraiser and its environment and being able to make changes based on the relationship between the two. Did things work out? What can be done to make things better? This is more applicable to a fundraiser that you plan to make an annual event. Taking note of what worked and what did not can lead to successful future strategic management. You will have a better idea of



what can be fixed and how.

The last approach to leadership that Griffin mentions is ethical leadership. It is important that no matter what, you remain ethical. You are raising money for a cause that you believe in and if you were to take an unethical approach, it would take away from all the good work that you are doing. You may come across choices where the unethical option is an easier selection, but you need to think long and hard about whether or not it is worth it. Making one unethical choice can give your fundraiser a bad name and potentially ruin it.

## **Klein's Top 10 Things NOT To Do**

*Foster's Philosophy: As I mentioned earlier, there really is not anything written on student fundraising. This does not mean that the topic of fundraising in general is an untouched subject. There have been a number of books written in the area, some of which may even be applicable to what it is that you are doing. The key though, and what I'm trying to do in this manual, is take what the professionals suggest you do and apply it to student use.*

*Perhaps the most famous fundraiser is Kim Klein. Often looked at as a guru in the industry, she has published many books including Fundraising for Social Change and Fundraising for the Long Haul. Klein also edited the book Raise more Money: The Best of the Grassroots Fundraising Journal. In this book, she has an article of ten mistakes one can avoid while fundraising. I have listed them below with some commentary that I hope can be helpful.*

*While all helpful tips, pay close attention to numbers three and nine. These are both two things that could really hurt your fundraiser. As I explain, you want to have good relationships with your donors, especially ones who make significant contributions. If they are viewed as nothing more than dollar signs, they won't be donors for long. Also, if someone says they are going to give you money, make sure that he/she does. It hurts both your cause and your credibility if you are saying that you have raised more money than you have actually received.*

### **1. Looking for money in all the wrong places**

The first thing to avoid on Klein's list revolves around whom you are asking for money. It should be noted that 90% of all money given in the United States is done so by individuals. One would think that the best place to start fundraising is with companies and organizations. While this may seem like a good idea, it will most likely not be your major source of donations. While it cannot hurt to try getting a few organizations to sponsor your event, the main source of the money will come from individual people.

One reason that an individual can be more beneficial to "go after" would be because of the approach you can take towards him/her. By singling out somebody, you can attempt to form some type of relationship (or build on an existing one) when asking for money. This personal communication may cause people to be more inclined to donate. Also, individual donations can lead to corporate donations. If you pitch somebody who is high up in the company that he/she works for, he/she may be able to bring in a corporate sponsorship along with a personal one.

### **2. Asking people for gifts of \$500 and more who had not been properly qualified as prospects**

Once you learn that individuals are the key to fundraising, you need to make yourself aware of whom you should be looking to get money from. The first thing to be done is figure out who will qualify to make this type of donation. Just because someone is willing to donate \$500 to cancer research does not mean that

they are willing to give you the same amount to help restore parks in the area.

You need to search for people who are not only able to give the amount of money desired but those who would be interested in doing so as well. Finding people who are in some way connected to your cause can help or look for people who just believe strongly in it.

It is also important to have some sort of connection to a prospect. If you do not know the person or know someone who does, it will be very difficult to get in touch with him/her, let alone get some sort of donation. Klein is quick to point out that doing the research on prospects (and making sure that they actually are prospects!) is important. It may take up some of your time but in the end will be worth it because you'll have a more concentrated strategy and plan of attack.

### **3. Seeing donors as water faucets: turning them on when I want money, and leaving them off otherwise**

One of the most important things that you will do while fundraising is build relationships. This may not be very important if your fundraiser is only a one-time deal but this manual is designed to help you create annual events. Having strong relationships with your donors can only benefit your cause as time goes by. The one thing you do not want to do is make donors feel as though all that you want from them is their money. If this is done, they may eventually not be so generous. On the other hand, if a good relationship is formed, they may become more generous over the years.

One thing that you can do to build your relationships with donors is to ask

them for their advice on certain things. Maybe they have some input on how you can make your fundraiser better. If you are running the same event annually, maybe you can ask some of your donors what they like and do not like from year to year. Not only will this make them feel important but it can help to improve your fundraiser as well.

If your fundraiser takes off and does become an annual event, you may want to look into creating a board of directors (as discussed later on). If there are a few donors who are actively involved in your fundraiser, you may ask them to sit on the advisory board, either as honorary or official members. This will keep them involved and let them know that the donations that they have made have not gone unnoticed. Be careful with this option though; you would want members on an advisory board who you believe would be beneficial to the fundraiser. Just allowing anyone to have a say could end up causing more problems in the long run.

Two other ways that you can show your appreciation toward donors involve keeping in touch. The first is thank you cards. This is a necessity for any successful fundraiser. After it is complete and you have taken the time to enjoy your accomplishments, it is vital to thank those who helped make your event a success. Personal phone calls or simple thank you cards will do but you should definitely let donors know that their donation was appreciated. No recognition at all may leave a sour taste in their mouth and prevent them from donating in the future. Another thing that can be done is periodic updates throughout the year. You can let your donors know what is being done with the money that they have

given or new things that will be occurring with the next fundraiser. While this may be information they could find out on their own, making the effort to tell them yourself will show that they are appreciated and that you care about keeping them “in the loop.”

#### **4. Not asking for money**

Wayne Gretzky once said “You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take.” This applies perfectly to fundraising. If you are afraid a donor will not give you any money and do not ask, you definitely won’t receive any. On the other hand, if you take the initiative and at least give it a try, you may be surprised with your result. It is always better to have a chance at getting a donation than to not even try. Not having faith in yourself is the only way to guarantee that you fail every time. Even if your pitch is not going well, an attempt should still be made. It can be frustrating to you and your prospect if you try to sell your fundraiser and then get cold feet at the last second. It also wastes time that could have been spent talking to other prospects or doing other work.

Klein also relates failing to follow-up to this concept. If you speak to someone and tell them that you are going to be in touch or send more information, you better make sure that you do it and that you do it quickly. If you put off a follow-up, other matters may arise and you could forget to do it completely. Also, the person you spoke to may forget what you originally talked about, thus making your first effort meaningless.

It is important to remember that if a person is giving you the opportunity to

pitch to them, there is a good chance that he/she is interested in donating, otherwise he/she would not waste his/her time. If you get cold feet, the prospect may be puzzled. There is a small chance that anyone is ever going to just throw money at you so you need to ask for it. Many people are often eager to help, sometimes they just need a little push.

### **5. Using war-like language to describe asking for money**

This is something many fundraisers are guilty of but is something that should try to be avoided at all times. A list of common war terms that Klein provides includes, but is not limited to: “hitting up donors,” “twisting their arms,” “sitting on them,” “making them ‘cough up,” “going for the jugular,” “twisting the knife” and “getting the donor to pop.” Using words like this, as Klein puts it, can “dehumanize” what you are doing. You need to remember that you are still trying to raise money for a cause, not trying to attack people. The point of fundraising does not need to be about winning or losing and will be more enjoyable if you can avoid this mindset.

Using words and phrases like these with those working with you can also have a negative effect. It can lead to your fellow fundraisers being very aggressive when pursuing possible donors. While it is good to have ambition, you do not want people approaching prospects and looking to “go for the kill.” The last thing that you want is to hear from a prospect that he/she was made to feel uncomfortable by someone working with you who was just too over the top. As stated earlier, you want a good relationship with donors and aggression is not a

way to form one.

## **6. Exaggerating the importance of any one interaction**

While fundraising, you are going to make mistakes. In a perfect world, things would run smoothly but unfortunately, there are going to be times when things simply do not work out as you have planned. The key is not to get hung up on what you have done and instead, concentrate on the future.

After an interaction with a prospect, try not to constantly think about something that might have gone wrong. Klein provides examples of how she felt as if she may have been too pushy with her donors or how she thought if she made a mistake, whomever she was talking to would hold it against her and not make any type of donation in the future. She believed that the best way of solving this problem was to lower her sense of own importance.

What I think Klein is trying to say here is that whomever she had been speaking to most likely was not hung up on her mistakes so she should not be either. Having the view that you are so important that people you interact with are caught up with your every move can be detrimental and will lead you to wasting too much time about what others think. The work you are doing is important but not to the extent that people grip onto every word you say and everything that you do.



## **7. Being afraid to disagree with donors**

At first thought, most people think that donors should be treated with a “customer is always right” attitude. While this may avoid confrontation, it is not the best strategy for you or for your fundraiser. You are going to want to form strong relationships with your donors and I hope are in a position where disagreeing with them will not be seen as a negative. You want to understand their point of view but you also want to try and explain how you see things to them. You may even end up changing their opinions.

That being said, any type of disagreeing that you may do should be done in a very respectful manner. You need to remember that they are still donating money to your cause and you need to be sure not to be in a rude way. If you are disagreeing with them, be sure to explain that you understand where they are coming from but that you see things a little differently. Try to explain your perspectives; why you think a certain way and the reasons behind whatever your opinion may be. This type of open discussion could yield great results. Disagreeing could lead to new ideas arising, as well as ways to improve old ones. You may even change your opinion on the issue after hearing what your donor has to say!

## **8. Knowing it was easier to do it by myself and being certain I could do it better**

There is a chance you may pick up the art of fundraising very quickly. Sometimes it just comes naturally to people and from day 1, they are very good at

it. If this is the case with you, one of the best things that you can do is teach others what you know. This has a number of benefits for your fundraiser with the only negative being that it may take a little time to do.

First, while it may take time to teach others what you know, it can save time in the future. If you do not have to do work for people that they can do themselves, you will be able to concentrate on other tasks. If you are both doing the same work it can still help, it just may get done two times faster. A second positive to approaching others with work is you may find yourself in a situation where you are not the best at doing it. You might think that you know everything about a certain task or idea but if brought up to others, you may realize that there is a different way of going about doing things. This way, even though you are trying to teach others, you may learn a thing or two as well.

A final way that delegating the work can help is it will provide a backup plan if you are not around. If you are the only one who knows how to do something and you are not available for any given reason then no work can be done. Klein uses the example of being hit by a truck. In a less drastic sense, if you find yourself bogged down with homework on a given weekend where certain things need to be done for your fundraiser, there are hopefully a handful of other people who can step up in your absence and do what needs to get done.

## **9. Not holding people to the commitments they made**

Something I consider one of the cardinal sins of fundraising is getting a pledge for a donation and then not actually receiving the money. While pledges are

important, they show that people are supporting you and your cause. One of the main purposes of a fundraiser is to raise money. As stated earlier, it is not entirely about the money but if you are not “raising funds,” what exactly are you doing? Oftentimes people say that they will give money and then either forget or someone does not follow up with them and the money is never donated. These are funds that can be used toward whatever cause it is that you are working for so if you don’t get them, you are only hurting it.

You will run into situations where people will say that they are going to donate and then don’t. It is unfortunate but it is a reality. Just because someone says they will give you money and you never receive it, does not mean that this is one of these situations. The follow-up is just as important as the original pitch. It is your job to get a commitment for the money, but it is also your job to make sure that you get it. You cannot assume that someone has changed his/her mind about making a donation until you have gotten a clear-cut rejection. You do not need to badger people about money that they said they would give but a reminder phone call or e-mail could not hurt; in fact, it may even show the prospect how much you really care about the cause you are fundraising for.

#### **10. Letting lack of knowledge stop me from trying new things**

Fundraising is something that there is not a ton of information on, and even less for someone your age. A lot of the key parts of it are something that you cannot learn in books. Sure, manuals like these can give you a good place to start but a lot of the important parts of fundraising come from inside. You learn more

and more from every donor you approach and every pitch that you make.

Because of this, you cannot start a fundraiser expecting to know everything. You are going to run into hardships along the way but you will be fine as long as you believe in yourself (as cliché as that sounds). Do not let a lack of knowledge stop you from pitching to a new donor or trying to open your fundraiser to new markets. Many things you learn will be from experience and these are the best lessons that you are going to be taught. Klein mentions questions such as “How can you raise money from a population on Welfare?” and “Can people raising money for a gay/lesbian cause actually get money from heterosexuals?” She did not have answers to these questions and I doubt that you do either. The point is though that they did not stop her from trying to raise money. The old adage “where there is a will, there is a way” fits perfectly here. If you want it badly enough, you will find answers to the questions that you yourself cannot provide a solution to.

## **Side Projects:**

### **Fundraising for your Fundraiser**

*Foster's Philosophy: Before your event even occurs, you may want to look into organizing some sort of side project. This is some sort of "mini-fundraiser" that you put together to get people involved who won't be able to attend the actual fundraiser. These type of events often do not bring in as much money as the actual fundraiser but can still play a large role in the total amount raised. Side projects are often some of the more fun parts of fundraiser. They allow you to be really creative and think outside the box. They are also nice because they allow everyone to get involved. As a student myself, I know that I don't have hundreds and hundreds of dollars to donate to a fundraiser but when presented with an opportunity to give a few dollars I jump at the opportunity because I want to be able to help out in some way.*

*Don't underestimate how important it is to get a large number of people involved. If you can get your fellow students to rally behind you, you will be able to work wonders. One of greatest things about the ALS fundraising I did was seeing both the school and community come together. Social status and cliques did not matter; the students knew that there was a problem and were willing to work together to fix it.*

*Don't let your side project overshadow the fundraiser itself. You want it to be successful but remember, everything is gearing toward the actual fundraiser. If*

*your side project is gaining more attention than the event itself, it may be a sign that your event needs some work. This does not mean that you should limit your side project but do keep in mind that you are fundraising for your fundraiser.*

Most of the work that you do is going to go toward the fundraiser itself. To run smoothly, it will take a lot of preparation so putting all of your focus toward it is justified. One thing that you may want to consider, though, is holding what I like to consider side projects or pre-events. These would be smaller “mini-fundraisers” that lead up to your event. They can help to raise money as well as help to publicize the main event. These events can be whatever you want them to be but there are a few things that you should keep in mind when brainstorming your pre-fundraiser step.

First, you do not want your side project to be a one day-event. You are already going to have a day dedicated to your fundraiser and adding another may take away from the special feeling or aura that it might create. Also, if it were to be only on one given day, you are now asking potential donors to set aside two days instead of one. This may be a lot to request and if people end up feeling that they only need to attend one event, it can result in more negatives for your fundraiser than positives.

Another thing that you will probably want to do is ensure that whatever the pre-fundraiser is, it costs less than the actual fundraiser. If you plan on taking in a lot of money at your fundraiser, it may not be the cheapest of events. This is not

necessarily a bad thing but because of it, you should still look for a way that others who want to help can still contribute. Having some type of pre-fundraiser will enable more people to get involved and enable those to help who otherwise would not have been able to afford it. If your fundraiser will cost entrants/participants \$10, your pre-event should only cost \$1 or \$2. While this is not an exorbitant amount of money, it is money that you would have otherwise not raised.

A final characteristic of your pre-fundraiser is that it should be simple for people to partake in. Because it is going to be a side project, the last thing that you want to do is overcomplicate things. The whole point of the pre-fundraiser is that it is going to be a bunch of smaller donations that will amount to, hopefully, the equivalence of a large one. If things are complicated, it may be a deterrent for some people. Remember, the whole point of this pre-fundraiser is to get people involved who otherwise would not have been.

### **Raffles**

One way to get people involved who will not be at your event is through raffles. While having them at your event can certainly help, holding one leading it up to can be successful as well. You need to be careful about what you are raffling off though. It needs to be a “better” item than what will be raffled off at the event. This is because you want to get people excited about it. If prizes at the event are much more impressive, not many people may care about the pre-event raffle but if you can get them excited about the first raffle, it may not only get others involved but it may increase the hype for the event as well.

You do not want these raffle tickets to be very cheap either. Because whatever you are raffling off is going to (you hope) be of great value, people should be willing to pay a somewhat significant amount of money for a raffle ticket. This is where things can get tricky. I already stated that one of the reasons for holding a pre-event raffle is for those who cannot afford to go to the event in the first place. This is why if you do choose to hold a pre-event raffle, you need to make sure that while the tickets still have a fairly high price, they still cost a significant amount lower than it would to actually go to the event itself. For example, if a ticket to your event is \$50, you can sell raffle tickets for \$5, possibly even \$10. Be sure whatever it is that you are raffling off is a desired item so people who can't attend but still want to help not only give money but feel as though they have the potential to get something back from it.

This can also lead to the best-case scenario of people attending the event entering the pre-event raffle as well. If the item is something truly great, people will want to win it regardless of whether they are spending money to come to the event. This is why you need to be certain that, should you decide to hold any type of pre-event raffle, there is a strong desire for it. Otherwise, you would be better off holding off raffling the item off until the event itself.

### **Awareness Week**

Something that you can do that will hopefully get a lot of people from your school involved is create an awareness week for your cause leading up to your event. Not only will this help to publicize the event, it will get everybody involved and give them an opportunity to help in any way that they can. If you



can get something like this approved, it can greatly improve both the atmosphere and success of your event. If you are taking the above advice and selling raffle tickets, this is the perfect opportunity for the last chance hard-sell.

One thing that you can do is create buckets or bins for people to throw their loose change into to help support your cause. Leaving these in a popular place at your school can ensure that other students see them and hopefully encourage them to donate. They may not have enough money to attend or participate in your event but if they have a few dollars left over from lunch one day, they may want to give it to your cause. Even though these are small donations, they can amount to a lot of money over the course of time.

Another thing that you can do is sell what I like to call “awareness-raisers.” These are anything that people can buy that relates to your event. An obvious example of this is T-shirts. If you buy them in bulk, you can usually get them for under \$10 each. If you were to sell them for only \$15, it would be at least a \$5 profit if not more. Think of it this way, if you sell a hundred T-shirts to your classmates, family and friends, you already have raised \$500 before your event even begins!

Awareness-raisers, like many other parts of fundraising, also give you freedom to be creative. When my friends and I started out with a basketball tournament as our fundraiser we did whatever we could to try and raise money. Aside from the T-shirt idea, we also created something that we called the Dunk 4 a Dollar. We had paper basketballs printed and sold them in our school for a dollar. People were able to buy as many as they wanted and write their names or a message to

our sick teacher on them. It was a cheap way to get everyone involved and the idea really flourished. We ended up selling over 3,000 basketballs in total because they were so cheap and easy for students to buy.

You would be surprised at how much creativity can sell. If you can find something relatable to your event, people will not mind buying it. Most people won't refuse the opportunity to help and if you can make your fellow students feel a part of something, they will hopefully jump at the opportunity to join the fight. If T-shirts are too expensive, you can even sell pins, or take the route that we took and give people the opportunity to show their support by writing their name on something and having it posted. This type of support will not only provide monetary success but can also show you, as well as those you are trying to help, just how many people support their cause and how many people want to do what they can to make a difference.

### **Make Contact with Professional Organizations**

Leading up to, or even after your first fundraiser, something that you may be interested in doing is trying to get in contact with professional organizations that are working toward the same cause. This may be tough if you are raising money for something local (such as a club you are in) but if your fundraiser is geared toward a more global cause (such as finding a cure for cancer or feeding the hungry) there are most likely established organizations and foundations who are doing the same thing.

Getting in touch with these organizations will prove to be one of the most useful steps that you take while fundraising. First, they may be able to provide

advice for your fundraiser. They have been raising money for the same cause for years so they may know things such as successful target markets that you might not be able to find out anywhere else. Also, this type of organization may have a number of resources at its disposal for you to use. It may be able to provide pamphlets for you to hand out at your event. It might even offer some tips on how its organization started and what you can do to make your event bigger and better. One thing I suggest doing is inviting a representative from the professional organization to your event. If it becomes an annual fundraiser, this can be the beginning of a partnership that ends up being very beneficial for you both.

Sometimes professional organizations forget that they are fighting the same fight and end up competing with one another. You have an advantage as kids. If you are putting in hard enough work and your fundraiser becomes a success, people will take notice. They will be doubly impressed because you are not adults or professionals. This may present you with the opportunity to bring these different professional organizations together. They may not be willing to work side by side but if you can get a number of them to support your fundraiser, they can at least realize that they are all raising money for the same cause.

From my own experience, one sign that showed we were growing was when other ALS organizations took notice of us. We were able to form relationships with a number of them (some stronger than others) and now, we help each other out whenever we can. We attend each other's events, do research together and do what is necessary to ensure that the other has success in whatever it is they are trying to do.

## **Grants**

A final side project that you can take up is applying for a grant. Billions of dollars are given away both to non-profit and for-profit organizations so what is stopping you from being one of the ones who receives money? Applying for a grant used to be somewhat difficult but in today's day and age, things have become much easier. You now have the internet at your disposal where you can search grants that may apply to your fundraiser. This makes it easier for you to sort through which grants may be beneficial to you and which ones would be a waste of your time applying for.

One of the most important things about applying for a grant is doing your research. You want to know what type of grant it is you are going for. This way, you will be able to communicate whatever it is your fundraiser is about better and gear your application toward the grant itself. You want to be able to communicate with a potential funder, showing them what it is that you want to do and why you deserve his/her/their grant money (Bauer).

To obtain a grant, you normally need to write some sort of proposal. This can be tricky and I suggest looking for some sort of outside help before completing this step. As a student, one thing that you can do is approach a teacher or professor and ask for assistance. Especially if you are on a college campus, there is a good chance that there are a number of adults who have applied for their own grants before. You would be surprised at the response you would get from writing a professor a quick email explaining that you are trying to raise money for a fundraiser and you were wondering if he/she could help.

Another thing that you can do is go to your local library and take out a book on grant proposals. These usually have step by step methods that you can follow and also offer great advice. Do keep in mind though that you can read as many books as you want, but if your proposal is not well written, none of them will matter. If you yourself are not a strong writer, there is no problem in asking a classmate for help. To help with the basics, I have included a list of books at the end of this chapter that may assist you with your grant searching and proposal writing.

Applying for a grant is a big step. For starters, to do it, you need to be an official 501 (c) 3 charity (which in itself is a process). This is obviously something you will not be doing for your first fundraiser. If it becomes a successful annual event, then you may want to start looking into applying for grants. Even though getting to the point of being able to apply is a lot of work, applying for the grants themselves is a low-risk high-reward action. It cannot hurt your fundraiser to apply for one and the rewards can significantly increase your funds raised. Just by filling out a proposal and sending it in, A Midwinter Night's Dream was able to receive \$10,000!

Winning Grants, Step by Step by Mim Carlson

Designing Successful Grant Proposals by Donald C. Orlich

Grant Writing for Dummies by Beverly A. Browning

Secrets of Successful Grantsmanship : A Guerrilla Guide to Raising Money by Susan L. Golden

The Foundation Center's Guide to Proposal Writing by Jane C. Geever

## Budget

***Foster's Philosophy:** One of the most important things about your fundraiser is your budget. If you do not figure it out ahead of time, you may actually end up losing money. You want to know exactly how much money you have and how much money you can spend. The last thing you want is to spend a lot of time planning your fundraiser and then not make anything, or even worse, have to cancel the entire event.*

*The budget is not something that is estimated; it needs to be exact. If there is no one helping out with your fundraiser who knows how to create a budget, turning to one of your teachers or professors is a great idea. They may be willing to teach you what to do so you can teach others in the future. You may also want to assign someone to be the treasurer of the fundraiser whose main job is to look after and control the budget. This way that person is not consumed with other work and can stick to making sure that all of the numbers are correct.*

*The second half of this chapter describes a way to potentially increase your budget. This is important because the more money you have to spend, the more you can do. Pay special attention to the idea about the creation of a program. This is something that, while it may take time to create, can end up being of great benefit to you. It can lead to a lot of money in sponsorships and may, over the years, become one of the, if not your main, source of donations raised.*

### **Creating a Budget**

Of course, there are going to be costs associated with your fundraiser. It would be nice if everything was free but there are going to be things that you need to pay for. One of your jobs is to figure out how to keep this cost down while still getting what you need to. The way to do this is to set up an organized budget so you can keep track of all of your expenses. I suggest creating an Excel spreadsheet to do this. It will make things clear and assist you in keeping track of the money that you are spending.

When deciding what it is that you need to buy, you should do some sort of cost-benefit analysis. Create a list of what is absolutely necessary to have and then search out options where you can get it. Make sure that whatever you buy is absolutely necessary to have. What is the cost of not having a certain item? What is the benefit of purchasing another? Remember that every dollar you spend in your budget is a dollar you raise that won't be going toward your cause.

One of the more obvious costs of your fundraiser will be its location. If you are going to have it in some type of hall, try to work out a deal with its owner. As mentioned earlier, a cheaper alternative to this would be having it at your school. While the venue itself may cost significantly less (if anything) there will still be costs that you need to keep in mind. For example, there will probably be a fee for the extra janitorial and security work. The school may cover this but may request that you pay for some of it.

Another cost is food. People are going to need to eat at your event so you are going to have to find a way to feed them. Determining the type of atmosphere

you are trying to have at the event will determine what type of food you decide to serve. Stay within your budget but also make sure that you are complementing the rest of your event. You do not want your food to seem as though it is out of place and ruin the entire aura.

### **How to Increase Your Budget**

Fortunately, there are ways to increase your budget. They may take a little bit of work but in the long run, you want to lower your overall costs any way that you can. We already spoke about a few ways to keep costs down, such as having the event at your school instead of a hall. Also, it will likely be run by volunteers-- your friends and family-- so the labor cost is one that you will not have to endure.

As previously mentioned, food is a cost that you are likely going to have. One way of solving this problem is to have the food donated. This sounds a lot more difficult than it actually is. The best place to start is local restaurants. Go in and ask to speak with a manager. If he/she is not there, go back at another time. Once a meeting is set up, explain what you are doing. Tell the manager how you expect a large turnout from the community at your event and you would love for his/her restaurant to be a part of it. Also make sure that the restaurant will have some type of recognition at the event. One way of going about this is to have some type of signage for it at the event. Another idea would be to give the restaurant recognition in a program that you create.

Another way to increase your budget is to obtain sponsorships for your event. Eventually, this may even become the main source of donations for the fundraiser. People donating money to a fundraiser is one thing, but sponsoring it gives the



donation a whole different meaning. This is just another reason to create a program. You can create different sponsorship levels (monetary amounts) and list those who give it inside of the program. This will allow them to see that their donation is appreciated and will also create incentive for people to give. If you want, you can even give things away with certain sponsorship levels such as tickets to the event or even special recognition for a very large donation.

## **Quick Hits**

***Foster's Philosophy:** This final chapter is full of a number of ideas that I believe to be important but did not warrant a full chapter all unto themselves. It is a compilation of quick notes that will help out your fundraiser and things that you may not have thought of. Even though the ideas may not go into as much depth as other chapters, read them carefully as they are very important. They could be the difference between your fundraiser being good and your fundraiser being great.*

*Some of the ideas presented may be difficult for your first fundraiser. Things like becoming 501 (c) 3 and having celebrities attend are not easy without credibility. You should still keep them in mind though as possible steps for the future. They can help your fundraiser grow once it seems as if it has reached its peak.*

*The other ideas mentioned are just things that you should keep in mind while organizing and running your fundraiser. They are little tidbits that may end up being useful. Even though some may seem obvious, thinking about them and how they can work to your advantage can prove to be a big benefit.*

### **You are a student. Use it to your advantage.**

One of my biggest advantages during all of my fundraising was my age. The fact that I was a high school student trying to raise money for a good cause really

impressed people. I was seen as a leader and a “model young adult” by many. This made calling companies/individuals and asking for money a lot easier. When I would explain what I was doing, people would concentrate on the fact that I was trying to help out other people, rather than the fact that I was asking for money. Then, when it came time to ask for a donation, the person with whom I was talking had already complimented me so much for giving them hope for the youth of America that it was almost impossible for him/her to not give a donation.

Even though you want whomever it is you are talking with to know that you are a student, you still need to make sure that you are organized and know what you are talking about it. It is one thing to impress someone with how you carry yourself and what you are saying; it is another thing to actually come across as a kid who does not really know what he/she is doing. The mindset I would have is as follows: sound as if you are a professional but let it be known that you are not. This way, the potential donor will know that you are serious about helping your cause but still take notice that you are “breaking the mold” of young adults today and trying to make a difference in the world.

### **Networking: Creating and maintaining**

What separates big and little fundraisers is generally how much money they bring in. Because you are looking to create one of the big ones, you’ll need to find ways of bringing in large amounts of money. Strategies to do this have already been discussed but one thing I did not touch upon is the network that you are going to create (and maintain) while raising all this money. Your network is the group of people you know and feel comfortable calling. Just because you

meet someone once does not mean that they are a part of your network; you need to establish some type of relationship.

I was once told that anyone you want to get in contact with is never more than three phone calls away. While this might be a little bit of a stretch, it is a statement worth looking into. Use your resources. If your parents know potential donors, contact them. Not only can they donate money but they may potentially know others who might be interested. This is a prime example of building your network. As previously mentioned, always be sure to keep in touch with those who have donated in the past. You should also be getting to know new people as well. Fundraising is a very big “who you know” business and getting to know the right people can make your event very successful.

One way to establish a better relationship with those in your network is to offer to help them out. By this I mean instead of only contacting them to ask and thank them for donations, offer assistance to them if they ever need it. This is especially important with people who make large donations. If you are offering to help them with their lives in some way, they may be inclined to donate to your next event, possibly even a larger amount of money!

### **Celebrities: Getting them to your event.**

In the introduction to this manual, I told my fundraising story and mentioned that there have been a number of celebrities who have attended my fundraising events. It would have been nice to have simply invited them and had them accept, but things were not this easy. First, it should be noted that there were none in attendance at the original basketball tournament. The chance of your having

someone famous attend your original event is probably very slim. This does not mean that it is impossible for the future though.

Once you have an established event, try thinking of celebrities who may be interested in attending. Are there any who are interested in the same cause? Maybe you have seen clips on television of a celebrity attending an event similar to yours. No matter how you decide which celebrity you are going to target for your event, you need to figure out a reason for him/her to be there. The route that we chose to take was to give the celebrity an award, the Hero for Hope. The idea of honoring someone famous is definitely a way of getting them to your event; who doesn't like recognition? Another thing that you can do is ask the person to speak at your fundraiser. This will show him/her that his/her opinion on the issue at hand is valued and that people care what he/she has to say. Offering a celebrity recognition at your event will not guarantee that he/she attends but definitely cannot hurt the chances of it occurring.

**Don't only follow dollar signs.**

While a large part of fundraising involves actually raising money, there are other things that you can do to increase your profits. As mentioned earlier, you can build relationships with other organizations related to your cause. This can lead to the opening of resources to your fundraiser that the professional organization may be able to provide.

Another thing that you can do is contact your congressman/woman about your cause. If you believe that whatever you are raising money for is not receiving enough federal funding, you can lobby your congressional representative in hopes

of gaining his/her support. We were fortunate enough to lobby our representative as well as state senator, both of whom supported our cause and voted in favor of it when the time came.

A third thing you can do is research your cause. This can be a very important task, especially if you are fundraising for some type of sickness or disease. You can search online for a laboratory near you that is doing research and try to contact it about a possible internship. If you yourself are not interested in research, try to find a peer who loves science and may want to do it. This can not only help to further your cause but can help you make many connections as well.

A final thing that you can do besides raise money is try to attract as many people to your cause as you can. First of all, this will raise awareness. The more people who know about your cause increases the number of prospective donors. People may also be interested in joining your cause. This will give you more help with your fundraiser as there is rarely not enough work to give out to people. Finally, the more people involved with your fundraiser the more there is an opportunity to receive constructive criticism or new ideas. There will always be room for improvement and the more minds that are thinking about it, the better chance there is of an idea sprouting up.

### **Coach K's Fist**

In his book *Beyond Basketball*, Hall of Fame coach of the Duke Blue Devils Mike Krzyzewski writes about the importance of words. He mentions how you need to not only know their definitions but own them—be able to apply them to your life. All of the words in the book have to do with leadership and how to lead

a group. Examples of them are adaptability, trust and pride. At the end of the book, Coach K talks about taking five words that you find most useful in leadership and treating them like a fist. Separately, these qualities can be useful but put together, such as fingers in a fist, they are much more productive.

What you should take away from Krzyzewski is that it is important to find out what leadership qualities you possess and how you can use them. There will be times when your fundraising is difficult and you need to take a step back and examine what you are doing. At this point, knowing yourself is going to be very important. You are going to have to play to your strengths and focus on these qualities. Knowing your most effective way to lead will enable you to gain better control of situations and help you out when you are struggling.

### **501 (c) 3**

One final step that you can take once your fundraiser has expanded is to make it a 501 (c) 3 official charity organization. To do so, you will need to research whether or not the name you want for your organization is already in use. Once you find an original name, you will need to begin the process of declaring yourself an official organization. The process usually takes about 6 months and you should have a lawyer that you can consult as well as an accountant to handle financial issues (Strasser).

There are a few benefits to becoming an official charity organization. First, donations made become tax deductible. This may make people and companies more likely to donate. This usually plays a role in larger donations. Also, some people's jobs will match charitable donations that they make to official

organizations. To have this matching done, an identification number is needed, one that you obtain once becoming 501 (c) 3. Finally, becoming an official organization can help you pitch your organization to possible donors. They will see that your event is legit and be more inclined to make a donation. They may also be impressed that a group of students were able to begin an official charity organization.



## Conclusion

At this point, you should have a good idea about how to organize a fundraiser. Keep in mind though, that the ideas mentioned in this book are just that, ideas. You need to be able to put them into action and adapt them to your own event. They should provide you with a strong base and help guide you in the right direction. Remember, this manual is designed to help you plan a large-scale money-making fundraiser. If you are only looking to raise a few hundred dollars, you would be wasting your time following all of these steps. This is for those who are willing to aim high, hopefully achieving higher.

It is also important to remember that you are just a student and the task you are going to be undertaking is no easy one. You are doing something for a good cause and that should always be your focus. Try not to let things frustrate you and also be sure to have fun doing what you are doing. At the end of the day, whatever money you raise will help and the effort you put in will truly please those you are trying to help.

The final thought I want to leave you with is that no matter what happens, your greatest tool will always be your passion. If you aren't passionate about your cause, you'll never be good at fundraising for it. Speaking from personal experience, when things got rough and difficult, it was my enthusiasm and desire to find a cure for ALS that got me through them. My motivation came from my teacher and forced me to be passionate about what I was doing. I was once told that there is no sense in playing not to lose, you should always play to win. This

applies to fundraising. Aim high. Set goals. Work not to achieve, but to exceed them. Good luck and happy fundraising!

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