

## FUNdraising Good Times: Three tips for fundraising success

Written by Mel and Pearl Shaw  
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Proper planning can set you up for fundraising success. Visualize your success, feel it in your heart, and then make sure the prerequisites for fundraising success are in place before you start soliciting. Here are three tips to launch your 2014 fundraising in the right direction.

First, create a clear, concise, and compelling **case for financial support** that ties back to the organization's strategic plan. Your case should be a short, and easy-to-read, forward-looking document that communicates what you are raising money for and how the funds will be used. It should communicate the projected impact of your organization and how a donor's or funder's support will make a difference in the lives of those you serve or advocate for. The "case" is used as the basis for verbal and written introductions and solicitations of time, services, goods, and money. It should drive the content of your marketing campaigns. Fundraising is a competitive endeavor — if you are not raising funds for your organization, someone else is raising money for theirs. It is important that your nonprofit can make the case for its impact, value and what makes it unique.

Second, complete a **fundraising feasibility study** or survey. You know the value of your nonprofit, but do your current and potential donors feel the same way? Are you sure that the fundraising priorities you set match the priorities of the giving community you seek to engage? Can you count on your donors for continuing – and increasing – support, or are they in the process of revising their giving priorities? A fundraising feasibility study or survey will provide you with information from those who have the finances and influence to impact your fundraising in a positive or negative way. This should be conducted by an outside firm for confidentiality. There are many reasons why people can't or won't personally share with you their true assessment of your nonprofit and their willingness or capacity to give. An outside firm can talk with current and potential donors and provide a confidential report. Such a report typically includes an assessment of how much your nonprofit could expect to raise, how your nonprofit is perceived by the giving community (including strengths and challenges), what would influence increased giving, and who could provide volunteer leadership and funding.

Third, develop a time-phased **fundraising plan**. This should be more than a spreadsheet. While spreadsheets can track activities your plan should be more robust. It should include roles and responsibilities for staff, board members and volunteers; the fundraising methods you will

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use and expected revenue (and costs!) for each; a gift chart; and milestones that hold all parties accountable for consistent progress.

Next week: How to recruit fundraising volunteers. In the meantime, we invite you to assess your fundraising readiness for free at [www.saadandshaw.com](http://www.saadandshaw.com)

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*Mel and Pearl Shaw are the authors of " [Prerequisites for Fundraising Success](#). " They position nonprofits for fundraising success. Visit them at [www.saadandshaw.com](http://www.saadandshaw.com)*