

Capital Campaigns: More Than Money

Capital campaigns are worthwhile not only to raise money for your organization but also for their many powerful secondary benefits. In this chapter we'll review the benefits of a capital campaign, outline the stages of a capital campaign, highlight the ingredients for campaign success, and delve into the basic work of creating a culture of philanthropy, which is vital to your campaign's success.

This chapter covers:

- Benefits of a capital campaign
- The capital campaign life cycle: two phases, six stages
- Ingredients of a successful campaign
- The foundation for your success: a culture of philanthropy

Benefits of a Capital Campaign

You already know that a capital campaign has the potential to raise a lot of money for your organization.

Many people embarking on a capital campaign make the mistake of thinking that the reason to launch a capital campaign is because they need a lot of money. While a capital campaign can raise money—and lots of it—if you dig a little deeper to ask yourself and your organization's leadership why the lure of more funds is so powerful, you'll discover that the real power lies not in the amount that can be raised, but in what those funds can make possible for your organization and the community that you serve.

And, if you think even further—beyond the work that your campaign will make possible in the near term—you'll find that capital campaigns result in nonmonetary benefits that will set you up to achieve even bigger changes over the long run.

Rejuvenated People, Renewed Vision

The possibility of raising lots of money can stimulate your board, staff, volunteers, and donors to think courageously about the future. A capital campaign gives you a chance to lift your organization's head out of day-to-day issues and

see a bigger vision—one that inspires you to invest in and improve many things about your organization beyond your bottom line.

Knowing there's a capital campaign on the horizon can galvanize even the most reluctant board and staff to make critical, much-delayed improvements such as strengthening your development office, training or adding staff, or upgrading your IT infrastructure.

Deeper Volunteer Program

A capital campaign will give your organization a multitude of opportunities to engage volunteers. Volunteers will play a key role in your campaign. They'll help with planning, identifying, and cultivating prospective donors, soliciting gifts, and more. When the task at hand is as large as a capital campaign, you'll find yourself tightening your volunteer recruitment process and being more strategic than you have been in the past. You'll put a lot of work into finding the right caliber of volunteer for specific tasks and making sure that each volunteer has the networks, skills, and time available to succeed.

If you do it right, a campaign will expand your organizational family with volunteers who'll continue to support you long after the campaign is over.

Stronger Fundraising Skill and Confidence

Your organization, like many nonprofits, may have been slow to develop the powerful major gifts program you'd like to see. If your annual fundraising relies heavily on small gifts from a broad base of donors, or from special events or grants, a capital campaign can help you build strong relationships with individual major donors and secure major gifts. Once you've successfully engaged major donors to invest in your capital campaign, your staff and board will have the know-how and skill to ramp up your annual major gifts program.

Increased Donor Engagement

People give more when they're actively involved. A capital campaign gives you many opportunities to ask donors for their help instead of just for their money. If you ask people for their input as you plan and implement your campaign, they'll be invested and feel ownership in its success—and will be more likely to give more money, helping to make that success possible.

Better Public Image

Your capital campaign will likely boost your organization's visibility and public stature in the community. Part of this is a result of the press coverage that your successful campaign will generate. But a big portion of this visibility boost will come through word of mouth among donors and volunteers as they talk about your campaign's success. Foundations and leaders in your community will also notice the success of your campaign and will see it as evidence of your organization's strength and capacity.

Healthier Year-Round Fundraising

The final (but by no means least important) benefit of a successful capital campaign is the impact it can have on your annual fund. A successful campaign will cement your relationships with current donors and build relationships with new donors. The financial benefit these strong friendships can generate will last for years.

The Capital Campaign Life Cycle: Two Phases, Six Stages

A capital campaign has two major phases—the quiet phase and the public phase.

You may be surprised to learn that well over half of the money you'll raise through your campaign will happen with no public announcement or fancy marketing materials. You'll ask for your earliest gifts with simple documents, treating the donors like your partners. You also might not announce those gifts publicly for quite some time.

This quiet-phase solicitation of your major donors is conducted privately to give them time to explore the giving opportunities that best suit their interests. It also gives you a chance to secure the largest gifts before you finalize your campaign goals.

A successful campaign will cement your relationships with current donors and build relationships with new donors. The financial benefit of these strong friendships can last for years. When you do finally announce your campaign publicly, committed gifts from this lead gift group will set a tone of success and create a sense of inevitability for the campaign. (For more on the quiet phase, see *Chapter 14: Working the Quiet Phase* and *Chapter 15: Soliciting Other Insiders*.)

After the quiet phase has been completed, and you've raised 50%, 60%, or even 70% of your final goal quietly through large gifts, you'll host a high-energy kickoff event. This marks the beginning of your campaign's public phase.

During the public phase, you'll spread the word far and wide about your campaign. You'll attract broad public attention by throwing events, talking with the press, and launching email, mail, and crowdfunding campaigns. (For more on the public phase, see *Chapter 16: Going Public*.)

Of course, the quiet and public phases aren't the only steps in a successful capital campaign. These two broad phases are divided into six stages. (See the following *Phases of a Capital Campaign* diagram to understand how these six stages map across the two major phases.)

This book covers these six stages chronologically in detail, but here's a quick overview of each stage:

STAGE 1: Pre-Campaign Preparation

Before you solicit your first gift, you've got to invest the time to carefully prepare your organization for the campaign. You'll want to build a strong and involved board, strengthen your organization's development program, shore up your

EXHIBIT 1-1 Phases and Stages of a Capital Campaign

| | | Quiet Phase | | | Public Phase | |
|--|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 3 | Stage 4 | Stage 5 | Stage 6 | |
| Preparation | Planning | Lead Gift Stage | Advance Gift Stage | General Solicitations | Cleanup and Celebration | |
| Clarify Mission & Vision | Conduct Campaign Study | Review Lead Gift Prospect List | Review Inside Circle Prospect List | Review Midlevel & Remaining Prospect List | Solicitation Follow-up | |
| Define Need for Campaign | Assemble Steering Committee | Evaluate Prospects | Evaluate Prospects | Prepare Proposals | Reporting to Campaign Volunteers | |
| Strengthen Board | Outline Campaign Timetable | Develop Solicitation Strategy for Each Individual Prospect | Develop Solicitation Strategy for Each Category of Prospects | Train Volunteers | Celebration Event | |
| Cultivate Donors & Volunteers | Solidify Case for Support | Prepare Proposals | Prepare Proposals | Campaign Kickoff | Volunteer Acknowledgment | |
| Strengthen Staff | Establish Campaign Policies | Train Volunteers | Train Volunteers | Solicit Gifts | Extra Thanks to Donors | |
| Draft Campaign Objectives & Working Goal | Set Campaign Goal | Solicit Gifts | Solicit Gifts | Phone-a-thon | Reinforce Relationships with Volunteers and Donors | |
| Draft Early Case for Support | Identify Campaign Leadership | Identify and Enlist Volunteers to Solicit Advance Gifts | Identify and Enlist Volunteers to Solicit Midlevel Gifts | Direct Mail and Web Campaigns | | |
| Develop Prospect Lists | Review & Refine Gift Table | | | | | |
| Create Gift Chart | Draft Proposals | | | | | |
| Select & Hire Consultant | Establish Campaign Subcommittees | | | | | |
| | Identify and Enlist Solicitors for Lead Gifts | | | | | |

infrastructure and technology tools, increase your agency's visibility and reputation, and develop a sound plan for the future.

As if that list isn't long enough, you'll also take care of a few important campaign preliminaries:

1. Map out your working campaign objectives and goal.
2. Draft a preliminary case for support.
3. Identify and cultivate your best lead gift prospects.
4. Get your leadership on board and excited for the capital campaign.

Your pre-campaign prep will be a lot of work. But if you invest in this work before you launch your campaign, you'll be set up for success.

STAGE 2: Campaign Planning

Your campaign plan comes next. The campaign plan is your blueprint that details how your campaign will work, when you will roll out each stage, and who will be a part of your core team. You'll likely hire a consultant at this point to conduct a feasibility study or campaign planning study. This study will test your assumptions about what is and is not possible for your campaign and provide new information to help you fine tune your goals and plan.

Your full campaign plan will include all kinds of things—a preliminary timetable, a list of your campaign leadership, a table of gifts showing the number of gifts of different amounts needed to succeed, a communications plan, a design for the campaign structure, and written campaign policies.

During the campaign planning stage, you'll strengthen your bench, making sure that your staff understands and feels ownership of the campaign. And you'll train your board and committee members in the essentials of major gift fundraising.

This stage is likely to take you three to six months, depending in part on how long it takes to recruit your campaign's leadership and campaign planning committee. You should take the time you need to get these elements right from the start. The plan you develop will demystify the process and give you a step-by-step roadmap that will be your guide through every stage of your campaign.

STAGE 3: Lead Gift Solicitation

Once your campaign plan is in place, it will be time to start soliciting your lead gifts—the largest gifts of the entire campaign. These gifts will add up to as much as 70% of your overall goal. You might only conduct 20 or 30 solicitations during this process, but your campaign's fate rests on the success of these solicitations.

Securing these gifts will require flexibility, patience, and persistence. Each solicitation should bend to the needs of your donors. Although soliciting these lead gifts can feel harrowing because the stakes are so high, once these gifts are in place, your campaign will be relatively unstoppable.

Although success with your lead-gift solicitations is vital, these aren't the only requests you'll be making during the quiet phase of your campaign. You'll also be soliciting advance gifts.

STAGE 4: Advance Gift Solicitation

While you are soliciting the largest gifts to your campaign, you'll be soliciting advance gifts from the people who are closest to your organization. During this early period, you'll solicit your board, campaign leadership and committee members, and your most active volunteers—even if they can't give large gifts.

The advance gifts you receive won't be as large as your lead gifts, but they're equally important to the success of your overall campaign. Generous gifts from your inner circle show their commitment and set an example for the rest of your community to follow once your campaign becomes public.

Both of these processes—lead-gift and advance-gift solicitation—will continue until you have raised sufficient funds to take your campaign public.

STAGE 5: General Solicitation

Once you have raised one-half to two-thirds of your goal, you will kick off the public phase of the campaign and start soliciting a broader base of donors. By this time, you'll have recruited a small army of volunteer solicitors, and you'll be ready to push your campaign to a successful conclusion. A capital campaign's general solicitation stage can be as short as three months, or it could take a full year or longer. The length of this stage depends on your organization's geographic reach and on your staff and volunteer resources.

The general solicitation stage begins with one-on-one personal solicitations and usually ends with a combination of telephone, direct mail, and online solicitations.

STAGE 6: Celebration and Follow Up

Once you meet your campaign goal, you should throw a big party to bring the campaign to a public close. Your staff, board, volunteers, donors, and others will come together to celebrate the success of your campaign and thank everyone publicly for the roles they played in that success.

However, you're not quite done yet. Long after your celebration, you'll be tying up loose ends, thanking people, and making sure that your pledge payment system is functioning well. At the same time, you'll be building the foundation for your organization's further growth—every pledge reminder gives you a great opportunity to strengthen your relationship with your donors.

Ingredients of a Successful Campaign

Although capital campaigns vary in size, scope, and timing, your campaign needs a few key elements in place to succeed. Some of these elements should be in place before you launch your campaign, and you can develop others as the campaign progresses—but they're all important. (The ingredients for your successful campaign are summarized below, but in-depth discussions on each of these important topics appear throughout the text.)

EXHIBIT 1-2 Test for Campaign Readiness

Take this campaign readiness test by scoring your organization from 0 to 5 in each area, using the score key to the right for guidance. If your organization's total score is below 80, that might indicate that your organization is not ready to mount a major campaign and should work on each of the elements with a low score.

| | Your Organization's Score |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Our organization has a clear statement of mission, vision, and values. | _____ |
| We have an agreed-upon statement of campaign objectives. | _____ |
| Our constituency is well informed; people know what we do and about its impact. | _____ |
| We understand our organization's niche in the larger nonprofit ecosystem. | _____ |
| We have a prospect development plan and a prospect research system. | _____ |
| Our organization has an efficient record keeping and information system. | _____ |
| Our organization has a creative, effective communications plan. | _____ |
| Our organization has a strong history of major gift support. | _____ |
| Our organization has a sound strategic plan for the future. | _____ |
| Our organization has competent staff (especially development staff) with adequate time and training. | _____ |
| Our organization has an involved, contributing governing board. | _____ |
| Our organization has qualified potential lead-gift contributors. | _____ |
| Our organization has capable fundraising leadership. | _____ |
| Your total score | 0 |

(continues)

| Possible Scores | What Each Score Means |
|-----------------|--|
| 0 | This is completely untrue for our organization, and we haven't begun to deal with it. |
| 1 | We have discussed this and have a clear need for improvement in this area, but no concrete plan. |
| 2 | We have done some work in this area, but only the most basic elements are in place. |
| 3 | This is moderately true for our organization with some room for improvement. |
| 4 | We're in pretty good shape here with a clear plan to get better. |
| 5 | This is true for our organization. We are in tip-top shape in this area. |

An Organization That Is Ready

The readiness test will help you clarify where your organization is campaign-strong, and where there's room for improvement. In an ideal world, you'd be fully prepared in every area—but this is seldom (or never) the case, even for outstanding organizations.

If your organization is shaky in more than one key area, the campaign ride may turn hair-raising at times. If there are many areas that need a lot of work, you might need to temper your goals or delay your campaign to get ready.

Compelling Needs and a Credible Plan

Campaigns often stem from some pressing needs that are limiting the organization's potential to grow. For example, you may need additional space or equipment to meet the needs of your programs. Or, your building may be showing the wear and tear of years of service. If your program has grown quickly, you may be out of space.

A planning process will help you define and clarify your organization's needs. And a solid plan will be the basis for identifying your campaign's primary objectives—the list of things for which your campaign will raise money.

An Inspiring Case for Support

The case for support is a document that articulates the argument (or “case”) for why someone should contribute to the proposed campaign. And once you have your case right, it will be the North Star for your campaign communications, giving you the essential language everyone will use for both the quiet and the public phases.

A great case for support frames the vision and impact that your campaign will have. It's not about the money; instead, it highlights the difference your donors'

campaign investments will make in the world. A sample is available online so that you can see what an inspiring case for support looks like.

An Achievable, Yet Challenging, Goal

Successful campaigns have goals that make sense, for both the organization and the community—and your campaign-planning study will be a great resource to help you right-size your campaign goal.

If you set your campaign goal too high, you risk falling short. But if you set it too low, you'll leave money on the table. The right goal stretches your organization to reach new capacity but is still achievable.

Previous Fundraising Success

Although new organizations can in some cases raise money through campaigns, most campaigns rely on prior donor relationships as a springboard for giving. Your campaign will depend on donors and volunteers who have been engaged with your organization's annual giving program. Your well-cultivated relationships with these donors and volunteers will set the stage for your successful campaign.

A Sufficient Number of Qualified Prospects at Each Giving Level (Especially at Lead-Gift Levels)

Contributions to campaigns often fit into predictable patterns that you see in gift-range charts. Charts like these will help you figure out how many gifts you must secure to reach a certain goal—and how many prospects it may take to get each gift. If you apply the generally accepted estimate that your campaign will get one gift per every three or four prospective donors, you'll use this rough number in your gift range chart to help you estimate the number of qualified prospects you'll need at each level. (A qualified prospect is someone who has the capacity to give at the level you expect, a proven interest, and a connection to the organization.)

Great Staff Support and an Adequate Budget

Your campaign will be as strong as its leadership and budget. Both the executive director and the development director are likely to be very involved in the campaign, as will the campaign manager or director. You'll also need a budget to cover campaign staff and consultants, promotional materials, cultivation activities, and events.

Full and Early Commitment by the Board

Even if your board isn't full of wealthy, experienced fundraisers, the people on your board must be excited about your campaign and this project, and they must believe in its vision.

Your board also must support the campaign financially to the fullest extent possible. Their commitment sends a strong message about their belief in the campaign. On the other hand, a lack of support from the board will undermine your campaign.

Effective Volunteer Leadership

As mentioned earlier, your campaign will be as strong as its leadership. Some campaigns have one chair and several committee chairs. Others have honorary chairs or co-chairs, as well as campaign steering committees. Whatever the configuration of your volunteer leadership, some key volunteers should be people who have stature in the community and are able to make a lead gift. They all should be willing to commit the time to follow through on their volunteer commitments.

Clear Campaign Organization

Your volunteers and donors will need a well-organized campaign. Volunteers have limited tolerance for ineptitude or fumbling. They operate at their best when they know what they are supposed to do and how to do it and have the tools they need to perform well.

Your job is to make sure they understand how their work fits into the larger campaign plan, when their role begins, and when it will end. Everyone else connected to the campaign should also have the experience of strong, clear communication, an understanding of what's ahead, clarity about their roles, and a sense of their importance.

Relevant Campaign Policies

Your capital campaign will need a well-considered set of policies that answer basic questions about how the campaign will work. You must determine which gifts count toward the campaign goal, when the campaign counting begins and ends, what kinds of noncash or deferred payment gifts you're going to accept, what sorts of naming opportunities will be available to donors, and a whole host of other questions.

Drafting relevant campaign policies protects you from having to make on-the-fly decisions about sensitive questions that may arise about large gifts.

A Realistic Timetable

A realistic campaign timetable is crucial for a successful campaign. A timetable that is too short undermines confidence as your team sees deadlines sail past. That said, a timetable that extends for too long threatens the momentum of the campaign and may result in volunteer burnout or waning energy.

Your timetable should be just long enough to get the job done right and just short enough to create a feeling of excitement and keep the finish line in sight.

Top-Down, Inside-Out Solicitation

Personal, face-to-face solicitation by a skilled and succinct solicitor—often (but not always) a volunteer—is the single most effective way for you to raise money. In today's busy world, everyone's schedules are more hectic than ever before. Your face-to-face solicitation meetings will take different paths depending on each donor's available time, geographic location, and preferred way to communicate.

The Power of Moving Ahead

When we first looked at the long list of things that should be in place before starting a capital campaign, we felt discouraged. Even if we made big changes in some areas, there were some problems we just couldn't imagine solving.

Our board, for example, had just a small handful of active members. Those few board members had been running the board for years while the rest of the members tuned out or lost interest. The staff had, over time, just accepted that this was the way our board is and given up on trying to change the pattern.

Once our plans for a campaign started to become more concrete, however, some of those inactive board members were inspired and saw this campaign as a chance to get involved. Some others dropped off, and we filled their seats with new board members, one of whom had capital-campaign experience.

Just having the courage to begin working on a campaign to move our agency to a higher level of impact helped us solve some long-standing problems.

—Development Director

Your solicitation strategy should be personalized to respond to the donor's relationship with individuals and the organization as a whole. Your strategy should be top-down and inside-out. This means that solicitation sequencing will start with donors closest to your organization (inside) who can make the largest (top) gifts.

All the requirements for a successful campaign listed above represent the absolute ideal. The reality, though, is that none of us live in a perfect world.

Frequently, it's necessary—and right—to move ahead with the imperfect set of conditions in your organization. But if you know your weak points, you can work around them. Leveraging your organization's strengths—a superstar board, an excellent reputation, some long-time major donors, or a truly inspiring case for support—can make up for shortcomings in other areas.

The Foundation for Your Success—A Culture of Philanthropy

In addition to the elements just described, there is another crucial aspect to conducting a successful campaign. Your organization's culture of philanthropy has a powerful and often subliminal impact on every person inside and outside the organization.

An organization with a strong culture of philanthropy respects, values, and appreciates everyone involved in carrying out the mission. It combines structure and clarity with flexibility and openness. The following realities can be felt throughout the organization and underpin every decision, practice, and project:

- Every employee knows and believes in the mission and understands the vision for the future.
- Everyone—board, staff, volunteers, and donors—feels part of a special organization that frequently gives back to those whose energy supports it.
- Everyone is dedicated to providing excellent service and equally dedicated to the clear and open communication that makes such service possible.
- Every sort of generosity is celebrated—staff work, volunteerism, extra efforts, financial contributions, and more.

In organizations with a culture of philanthropy, no one thinks of fundraising as arm-twisting. You don't "hit people up" or try to edge out other organizations in the community to secure a big gift. Instead, staff and donors alike understand that asking for money is the process of working with donors to make their world—and ours—a better place.

Because generosity goes both ways in this kind of culture, everyone involved knows they are appreciated. The simple experience of being appreciated

I've Created a Culture of Philanthropy!

I work for a healthcare alliance. Although it's officially a nonprofit, it's also, in many ways, a big business. I am the only development officer, and the board and CEO function like those of a big corporation. All of this business-style culture felt about as far removed as possible from anything resembling a culture of philanthropy.

When we started preparing for a campaign to raise money for a new hospital for women and babies, I set about doing whatever I could to create a culture of philanthropy. I spent as much time as possible getting to know our hospital's donors. I had breakfast, lunch, and dinner with people who might be interested in our cause. I asked questions and really listened to their answers, especially about their interest in the new hospital we were planning. I asked their advice. I thanked donors personally, taking the time to be really grateful for their gifts and finding ways to make that show.

It was a lot of work, but it was a lot of fun, too. In my little corner of this big agency, I built an office that really loves and appreciates our donors. Now, 18 months and \$7.5 million dollars later, I know my efforts were worthwhile!

—VP of Development

inspires individuals to a greater level of commitment and giving. This is true for staff, board, volunteers, and donors.

Does Your Organization Have a Culture of Philanthropy?

A Quick Test

Where does your organization's culture stand? Here's a quick assessment checklist to find out. You can also download this checklist from my website, capitalcampaignmasters.com/strategies.

1. Does everyone who walks in feel welcome?
2. Do your front-desk staff—those answering the phones or greeting people who walk in the door—know your organization's mission? Can they summarize it in a way that shows that they, too, believe in it?
3. Are the donor plaques from prior fundraising campaigns well displayed and cared for? Or are they tarnished, hanging at odd angles, or tucked away in back corners?
4. How long does it take for a donor to receive a thank-you note after sending a contribution? Are the notes warm and personal, or pro forma and impersonal?
5. How many times in the course of one day do you say or hear someone in your office say something negative about fundraising?
6. How much nonmeeting time do development staff members spend catching up on the organization's programs?
7. Is personal contact with donors seen as a way to build mutually beneficial relationships or just as a way to raise money?
8. Do your development officers know what your major donors are passionate about?
9. Does your board view fundraising as an important part of their work? Are they invited to have a role in fundraising? Expected to? Required to?
10. Does your organization regularly invite major donors to see the outcomes of their contributions?
11. Do the executive director and the board chair play an active and willing role in the development process?
12. Are key volunteers, staff, and donors meaningfully involved in shaping your organization's future?

In addition to using this checklist, consider inviting a few friends or relatives to be “secret shoppers” and check out your organization's culture. To do this, ask someone to call your organization and ask about making a gift. This will work best if the person you ask is actually willing to consider a gift; otherwise, you risk disappointing a willing development staffer or making them feel as though you're spying on them.

If possible, have three or four people “secret shop” your organization over the course of a few months so that you know the information you get is not just a description of a one-off experience. You might have one friend test the online-giving experience, have another call to donate over the phone, and another

We Failed the Test!

I asked my mother to call our main number to test my organization’s culture of philanthropy and say that she was interested in making a donation.

Her report back was an eye-opener! First she was put on hold, and then someone from our development office took her contact information but didn’t ask her anything about herself or her interests—or even what had inspired her to make a donation that day.

Since then, I’ve spent time training our staff to be sure that the next time someone’s mother calls to ask about making a gift, everyone she speaks to will be truly interested in her.

—Executive Director

physically visit the organization to give in person. Hearing about each of these different experiences will help you understand what donors at your organization are likely to experience when approaching to make a gift.

Building a Culture of Philanthropy

As you get ready for your capital campaign, it’s a good idea to explore ways—even small ones—to develop an organizational culture that models the generosity you ask of your donors.

A board chair or executive director, or even a development director, can reshape the culture of an organization in remarkable ways just by consistently raising awareness of generous practices. Many businesses and organizations have adopted a practice of “Appreciative Inquiry” to create more successful outcomes in business and personnel matters, and the same principals can work well in leading capital campaigns.

In an Appreciative Inquiry approach, you focus on the best of what is currently happening and use that to extrapolate a vision of what is possible.

Whether you follow an Appreciative Inquiry approach to the letter or just work to incorporate some positive leadership practices, here are some tips to get you started:

- Be meticulous in the way you communicate with those around you. Respond promptly to every e-mail; go the extra inch or mile to help a staff member or volunteer; notice and acknowledge positive behavior and little successes; and thank people for the little things they do.
- Pay more attention to what goes right than figuring out who made things go wrong.
- Assume the best of people even when things go wrong.
- Develop the ability to describe behavior rather than judging it.

Lessons in the Details

As a consultant, I've learned to take very seriously the small things I notice when I'm talking with a potential new nonprofit client. For example, the VP of advancement at an organization called me many months ago wanting me to meet with the president of his organization. He asked me for some potential dates to schedule the meeting, but then never got back to me—and all those dates came and went without a word.

Several months later, his assistant called me to try and schedule the same meeting. We set a date, and then a few days before the meeting, the VP of advancement called me because he was unsure of the date or time, and let me know the president wouldn't be joining us. After I met with him, he told me that he'd like to set up a meeting with the president, and asked me again for dates when I might be available to meet. As of today, I've not heard anything back.

What does this interaction say to me? It tells me that people in this organization haven't yet thought about generosity in a larger sense. If I do end up working with this organization—and I have my reservations about whether I even should—my first task will be to help the VP of advancement see how every (and I mean every!) interaction is an opportunity to practice generosity. And among other things, that means not wasting people's time, following up, and following through.

—Consultant

Believe it or not, your simple, everyday behaviors can change everything about the way your team works. Even if you're not aware of it, your small actions deeply influence the behavior of those around you.

Capital campaigns are exercises in courage, faith, planning, and hard work. They provide opportunities to unite the energies and talents of a large group of people to accomplish something meaningful for the community. When well designed and executed, campaigns will give the staff, board, donors, and volunteers who have helped create that success a powerful sense of pride. They also feel amply rewarded by the opportunity to help a worthy nonprofit grow and thrive.

These days, people spend more time in passive activities. Neighborhoods are not the unifying forces they used to be. In this increasingly impersonal era, capital campaigns provide the excitement and rewards that come from individual responsibility, effective collaboration, service to others, and shared goals.

This book may seem full of a daunting collection of rules, guidelines, and requirements. But, all this information is built on one of the most inspiring facts

about human nature—all it takes is a relatively few astute, generous, and hard-working people who are committed to a cause to start a capital campaign. Once they jump in and make a wholehearted commitment, others will follow.

Additional Resources

The following resources from this chapter appear on my website, capitalcampaignmasters.com/strategies under Chapter 1.

- Exhibit 1-1: Phases of a Capital Campaign
- Exhibit 1-2: Test for Campaign Readiness
- Annotated Case for Support
- Culture of Philanthropy Questionnaire

You can learn more about Appreciative Inquiry by reading the works of David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva, some of the founding thinkers on this approach, or by searching the term online for a myriad of resources and applications.