

Strategies for Success

Smart fundraising ideas from Hartsook

Mind Your Mission



How well is your mission known and understood? Are your donors aware everything your nonprofit accomplishes? How do you know if your answers to these questions are perceptions or reality? Without knowing for sure, you will have difficulty reaching your fullest fundraising potential.

Here are tips on how to ask the right questions, gather honest feedback and use that information to raise more money:

Memorize your mission

Don't assume staff, board and donors will learn and understand the mission by osmosis. Having a clear, well-defined mission that everyone is familiar with not only underscores "what we do," but it keeps you from veering away from the mission. "Mission creep" happens—adding programs and activities based on a "good idea" or a grant possibility—unless a nonprofit intentionally adheres to its mission. Otherwise, outcomes are diluted, returns are diminished and donors are disappointed.

Solicit honest feedback

How well have you aligned your activities, outcomes and visibility with your mission? There's only one way to verify if that message has come through loud and clear: Ask. Granted, it is difficult to gather unfiltered information from supporters and community leaders. It may be necessary to enlist an objective, third-party to ask the questions, collect the responses and assess the information.

Adapt and improve

Receiving constructive feedback may not always be pleasant, but it is a smart strategy. You can't fix what you don't know. As difficult as it may be, you do want to hear what others have to say; perception is reality. Your organizational values should drive your outreach and activities, not the reverse.

When you are ready to move forward, Hartsook will work with you to gather private, objective insights from your supporters and community leaders. This assessment uncovers strengths, shortcomings, opportunities and challenges, so you can make targeted corrections and use best practices. Don't waste time looking around at other nonprofits who are "winning." Start by minding your own mission, soliciting honest feedback and getting about the business of raising money to your fullest potential.

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