

Strategies for Success

Smart fundraising ideas from Hartsook

Stop. Look. Listen.



Fundraisers have faced new challenges with COVID-19, but with challenges come opportunities. The seriousness of what we have gone through together can give fundraisers fresh eyes, attuned empathy and more creativity.

Let's retain whatever insights we can to help donors achieve their goals of making a difference while helping nonprofits advance their missions of service.

Remember and repurpose the cautionary advice for crossing a street or railroad track: Stop. Look. Listen.

Stop.

Whether on the phone, online or in person, pause a minute, before every donor meeting, to remind yourself about the individual. Is this person celebrating a birthday or special event this week? If so, remember to give your regards. Check your notes from your last meeting to ask a follow-up question: "How did it go with your family reunion? Were you all able to meet as planned?" Resist the temptation to run past opportunities to let donors know, you know who they are and, even more importantly, you care.

Look.

Being away from the office for months provides us with a window of opportunity for objectivity. Objectively review your organizational infrastructure including its strategic development plan. Look at schedules and systems with fresh eyes and make determinations on what should continue, because it works and what was done only because it was "...the way we've always done it."

Listen.

What have you been hearing from donors, volunteers and the community during this unusual season? Appreciation, complaints, questions, requests for help? Don't tune it out. Take that information to heart, and use it to formulate your next steps.

It is human nature to adapt to our circumstances, and that can be good. But let's not lose the opportunity we have to stop, look and listen to the insights we've gained and leverage them for good.

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