

10 Keys to a Successful Foundations and Advancement Programs!

1. Create a Foundation Board or Advancement Council – Simple fundraising has not been able to keep up with the growing need of resources for many organizations. A comprehensive Foundation or Advancement Program is necessary for many organizations today.

Start by creating Blue Ribbon Foundation Board or Advancement Council, a body that will oversee the various activities of your Foundation/Advancement Committees. Recruit leaders who 1) Share the mission, 2) Are respected and prominent in the community, 3) Are people of means, and 4) See the bigger picture. The Foundations or Advancement Councils should 1) Meet quarterly, 2) Stay abreast of organizational and Advancement Committee activities, 3) Give oversight and support to the various Advancement Committees, and 5) Provide long-range planning for the future.

2. Create Advancement Committees – With the Advancement Council as the overseer, create committees to implement the work of the Advancement Program through 1) Major Gifts, 2) Estate Planning, 3) Annual Fundraising, 4) Marketing, 5) Student Recruitment (If you have a grade school or high school), and 6) Planning.

3. Create a Major Gifts Committee – Major donors are critical to an organization, to a campaign, and to fundraising. In order to engage your major donors, you must have a relationship with them. Your relationship with your major donors involves 1) Friendship and 2) Information. Identify your 50-100 major donors (more if you can), and engage them regularly for informational lunches, dinners, and socials.

4. Create an Estate Planning Committee – In the next 20 years 40+ trillion dollars of wealth will be transferred. Much of this will go to families and organizations. If your organization is not making your case for support, you will not receive any of those estate gifts. Rest assured, others are eager to take your place. Institute an Estate Planning Committee and hold periodic Estate Planning Workshops for your organization's members, supporters, friends, and alumni.

5. Create an Annual Fund(raising) Committee – Create an Annual Fund Committee to oversee all your fundraising activities each year. These activities need to be planned, coordinated, and improved upon for maximum effectiveness. These events would include such things as golf tournaments, fundraising letters, dinners, galas, auctions, raffles, long distance runs...

6. Create a Marketing Committee – Create a Marketing Committee to communicate with the various segments (publics) of your organization. Your publics include such groups as major donors, organization leadership, staff, members, parents, students, alumni, civic leaders, and business leaders. Keep it simple, but communicate monthly or quarterly with at least a 1-page news bulletin or a newsletter to these various groups.

7. Create a Student Recruitment Committee – Schools will want to create a Student Recruitment Committee. The committee can sponsor on-site events such as open houses, scholastic contests, Buddy Days, various summer camps... These are in addition to media campaigns involving radio, TV, social media, billboards, mailings, literature...

8. Create a Planning Committee – Create a Planning Committee that coordinates a 1, 3, and 5-year plan for your Foundation/Advancement Council and committees. Your plans can include the activities your committees will be involved in, various targets/goals, and ways to improve.

9. Review Advancement Council and Committees' Plans Each Year – Planning is the key to a successful Advancement Program. Planning moves everyone efficiently toward the attainment of goals and success. In fact, good planning on the front end will reduce the time, energy expended, and costs on the back end.

10. Consider a Foundation or Advancement Review – Foundations and Advancement Programs can benefit from 1) Outside Assessments, 2) Board Orientation, 3) Strategic Planning, and 4) Advancement Program building.

If you have found the 10 Keys to a Successful Advancement Program! helpful, then contact us today at VisionWorks - 888.948.1113 or markf@visionworksco.com.