

## “10 Q&As ABOUT SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGNS!”

These are some capital campaign questions we have seen over the years.

**How do we know if we need a capital campaign?** If 1) your projects are more than 1X your regular yearly income, 2) you can't pay for the project(s) with savings, and 3) you don't anticipate other kinds of income to cover the cost of the projects, then you most likely need a capital campaign.

**How often can we run a capital campaign?** You can run a capital campaign every three years, but be aware that there can be some fatigue or drop-off. We have seen organizations run five capital campaigns in a row. Your capital campaigns will be more successful if you add new elements to your case each time you conduct a capital campaign.

**How much money can we raise?** Good question. A feasibility study (“study”) will tell you what can be raised. VisionWorks likes to set three (small, medium and large) financial goals: 1 – Celebration Goal, 2 – Challenge Goal, and 3 – Transformation Goal. In a study, we will interview your top donor prospects and leaders. With these interviews and focus groups, and our experience, we can tell you how much can be raised. Depending on the vision, we have seen organizations regularly raise two to six times their yearly giving. And some exceptional campaigns have raised 10 to 18 times yearly giving.

**Does an organization need a feasibility study?** Generally, yes. The bigger the vision, the more complex the funding, and the more necessary the funds, the more important a study.

**How long does a feasibility study take to conduct?** For many organizations, six to eight weeks is usually sufficient. For larger organizations, a study can take three to six months.

**What does a study provide us?** A study provides you with all kinds of **information**, which is the basis of a successful campaign. Without a study, an organization is flying blind. A study:

- 1) Pre-informs/sells your key donors and leaders
- 2) Tells you what key donors think of your vision and gives you time to improve your plans
- 3) Plants seeds for larger gifts: \$100,000 gifts can turn into \$500,000 gifts and \$1 million gifts can turn into \$2 million gifts
- 4) Tells you who other large donors might be
- 5) Provides names of good chairpersons and team leaders
- 6) Tells you when to prepare for and launch the campaign
- 7) Provides concepts and language to craft your message and hit your target

**Can we do other fundraising while doing a campaign?** Yes, most organizations have to continue their normal fundraising. But when an organization runs a capital campaign, the capital campaign must be the priority for that period.

**What are the characteristics of a successful campaign?** A successful campaign needs: 1) a good vision, 2) realistic and yet challenging financial goals, 3) enthusiastic leadership, 4) an optimal calendar, 5) a very strong major gift effort, 6) plenty of information and publicity, 7) plenty of opportunities to pledge, and 8) a strong pledge fulfillment plan.

**How long does it take to run a campaign?** The campaign's length depends on the organization's size. For most organizations, it is around five to six months. For larger organizations, it can take nine months to eighteen months.

**Is professional guidance necessary?** **Yes! You only have one chance to get it right. There are no do-overs.** A friend of mine at a large non-profit likes to say, “You either hire professional counsel, or you fail.” Strong – yes, but true. A professional will raise you **at least two to four times** what you can raise on your own. And he/she will help you overcome the obstacles you will face. The increased money raised and the expert counsel provided will more than pay for themselves!

**If you have found “10 Q&A About Successful Campaigns!” helpful, then please contact Mark Filips and VisionWorks at 402.999.2970 or [markf@VisionWorksCo.com](mailto:markf@VisionWorksCo.com). Let us put our expertise to work for you!**