



Strategic Planning • Annual Giving • Capital Campaigns

FUNDRAISING: THREE QUESTIONS TO ANSWER!

Dear Friend,

After churches, schools, and organizations have substantially developed their vision and plans, and as they then prepare to pitch it to major donors in a feasibility study and the general membership, there are three questions that they must answer for all members.

All that stakeholders and donors ask is that whatever is being proposed fulfills the mission, is bold and compelling, and makes sense. The making sense part of the answer again aligns with the organization's mission and attempts to further that mission. When an organization attempts its **next steps** to implement its plans, not all stakeholders and donors are on board. Why? Because stakeholders and donors have varying levels of commitment to the organization.

For example, if a school with a long and celebrated history has an alum that had a bad experience in his/her the school, then, of course, he/she is not going to be supportive of increasing the school's expansion project. As long as the major donors and two-thirds of the members are for the school expansion, the school is on its way.

In all the campaign messaging – personal interactions, committee meetings, town halls, homilies, donor visits, pre-commitment parties, video, social media, etc. – these three questions must be answered unabashedly.

WHAT are we going to be doing? – What is the organization's vision or plan, what are we attempting to do? Build a new church, renovate the campus, increase school size, increase the number of programs and impact, complete a series of projects, repay loans, etc. This is the easiest question to answer. After a formal or informal planning process, the organization's leaders have foreseen certain **needs** and **opportunities**, and they have a plan to address them! Does the basic plan make sense to most of the committed members?

HOW are we going to get it done? – The answer to this question is the simple financial plan. If an organization is proposing to build a new \$15 million church that seats 1,500 people, then the basic question is, "How will we finance this?" The basic answer may include:

- Money in the bank
- Land to sell
- A loan from the bank or synod or diocese
- One, two, or three capital campaigns
- The planned increase in size and monthly payoff through increased Sunday giving

Does the basic financial plan make sense to most of the committed members?

The plan will probably involve some complexity, but make it as simple as possible for the ordinary member.

WHY are we doing this? – This question is the most critical to answer. Every church, school, and organization has a mission or purpose. These organizations were founded to fulfill these missions. These organizations have carried out these missions for 10, 25, 50, and 100 years. In fulfillment of the mission, the organization is now attempting to build a bigger church, increase school size, modernize, add additional parts to the campus, add additional programs, repay loans so that it may get on with increasing program size and adding programs, etc.

So, does the answer to "Why?" flow from the organization's mission and history.

Answer these three questions for your major donors and committed members, and you are well on your way to a successful fundraising campaign!

If you have found Fundraising: Three Questions to Answer! helpful, then contact Mark Filips and VisionWorks at 402.999.2970 or markf@VisionWorksCo.com. Let us put our expertise to work for you!