

GREAT CASES, GREAT CAMPAIGNS!

Dear Friend,

Churches, schools, and organizations have big dreams and plans that, from time to time, need to be funded by a capital campaign. A successful capital campaign must begin with a great vision, plan, set of projects, or case. Let's call it a case. Some cases are more exciting than others; some cases are more "supportable" than others. For a successful capital you need to start with a great case!

Where does a great case come from? Ideally, your vision, plans, or case follow a formal or informal planning process. Many organizations go through a planning process and come up with some exciting plans, projects, and needs. Other organizations have had pressing needs for 10, 20 or 30 years. Sometimes there isn't much need for a formal planning process when the needs are apparent to everyone. Some organizations have their cases thrust upon them. The organization's campus is 50 years old, it is in need of major renovation, and it is apparent to all.

So, the case can come from a planning process or a long seen need, or it can be thrust upon you. It really doesn't matter how it develops as long as your leaders are on board, you can demonstrate the need, and your people will support it.

What are the most exciting cases or projects? As you'll come to learn, some cases and projects are more exciting than others. Very simply there is a hierarchy of things that people they will support. The hierarchy of projects for churches and schools is: 1) new churches and schools, 2) new parish centers, gyms, and additions, 3) campus modernizations, 4) new and important ministries and programs, 5) various significant maintenance projects, 6) tuition assistance, 7) debt reduction, and 8) endowments.

How should we think of our case? Think of your case as a basket of projects that you are offering your people. Have things in the basket that can excite people, if possible. Have things in the basket that most significant groups can support. Mix and match the projects. For example, your case may be church renovation, some building improvements, and some debt retirement. Or it may be a new parish hall, a STEM lab for the school, and some maintenance projects. You get the idea. Your case basket can have three to five main groupings in it.

How do we know what our people will actually support? Most all organizations should do a formal (with a report) or informal feasibility study. In a feasibility study, we interview 30 to 50 individuals and couples and some focus groups. Through these activities your people will tell us what excites them and what they will support. An outside company, such as VisionWorks, interviews your key donors and leaders to get their objective, unvarnished opinions. And once they tell you, listen to them. If they tell you they support A and B, but not C, put A and B in the basket. If they tell you they support traditional renovation but not the contemporary plan, go with the traditional plan. Following their advice will make all the difference to the success of your capital campaign.

What if we "must" include something unappealing in the case? If you have a \$50,000 monthly mortgage bill and that must be the main component of your case, then there are ways to make that more compelling. We will help you craft your exciting message. One way to turn something such as debt reduction into an exciting case element is for the organization to ask, "What are the things we can do with an additional \$50,000 a month? What new programs could we add?" Asking these questions means a church, school, or organization **must** begin to engage in real planning. Do you, for example, want to add a fantastic youth ministry program, or outreach program, or elder care program, or parish nurse-clinic, or food pantry, or job-interviewing program, etc? Loans must be repaid, but we can excite and inspire people --- if we have a plan!

**Case questions? Feasibility Study needs? Capital Campaign in your future?
Contact Mark Filips and VisionWorks today at 402.999.2970 or
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