

“Major Gifts: The Key to Capital Campaign Success!”

One of the most important keys to capital campaign success is the strong support of your lead donors or major donors, and many people overlook them! There are a good number of people who believe that a successful capital campaign is only a matter of distributing a good brochure and commitment card, after which the gifts will come flowing in. That is just not true, no matter how good your project is. As one organization director told me, “Mark, if that were true, we’d all be doing it, we’d all be successful, and we wouldn’t need you!”

The **personal approach** to the major gift prospects gets the ball rolling for the whole campaign. **A successful lead gifts effort will raise 35-50% of the financial goal for small and medium-sized campaigns and 50-75% of the financial goal for larger campaigns!** As a fundraising truism goes, “For every dollar you can raise through a letter, you can raise \$10 through a phone call, you can raise \$25 through a party, and you can raise \$50 through a personal visit.” There will be fewer people contributing major gifts (five, six, or seven-figure gifts), but a successful major gifts effort is essential to a capital campaign’s financial success.

The cultivation of major donors needs to start as early as possible. Consider involving major donors in these key moments of your process:

- Involving major donors in the strategic planning process by asking for their ideas and feedback
- Having a special lunch with them to ask their opinions on the plans and get their feedback
- Giving you major donors leadership positions in the strategic planning, feasibility study, and capital campaign processes
- Considering sincere friendship-building activities with the major donors such as lunches, cocktails, and dinners
- Conducting special capital campaign information gatherings with major donors
- Implementing a major gifts solicitation strategy during your capital campaign, which will include:
 - A) Identification of major donors
 - B) Evaluation of major donors
 - C) Recruitment of major donor solicitors or gift seekers
 - D) Meeting with major donors to share the vision, answer questions, and make the “ask”
 - E) Tracking all gift seekers through the solicitation process
 - F) Providing ample thanking opportunities for major donors

Capital campaign in your future? Contact Mark Filips and VisionWorks today at 402.999.2970 or markf@VisionWorksCo.com for expert advice with your needs!