

Six pillars of fundraising

“Short-term gain equals long-term suicide ... fundraisers today tend to concentrate on short-term issues and income, often at the expense of laying lasting foundations for their fundraising ...” Ken Burnett (2006: 6)

The big idea

Fundraising has become increasingly sophisticated in recent years. It has grown in breadth and depth and donors and funders have also become more discerning. The current economic environment has meant that the spotlight is now on fundraising as never before. This is forcing enterprises that undertake fundraising to re-appraise their approaches. To expand their strategies and be realistic about what they can achieve. The days of the notional ‘balancing’ fundraising figure are long gone.

Auditing fundraising achievement and the extent of your portfolio is a fundamental part of the fundraising planning process. The approach presented here is based on the [Six Pillars of Fundraising](#), which includes:

1. Donations
2. Grants
3. Community-business partnerships
4. Membership/Alumni/Friends
5. Special events
6. Earned income

Purpose

The Fundraising Dashboard¹ has been designed to encourage you to build on every area of your fundraising and to be able to compare targets side by side. This supports internal benchmarking and provides a basis for external comparison where the data is available.

¹ Adapted from DZO Strategists LLC, [The ‘Beyond Cash’ Fundraising Management Dashboard](#)

The tool

The dashboard is specifically designed to allow you to set out your fundraising targets and intentions on one page. Use the template below to outline your targets in all areas of your fundraising activities.

Your fundraising strategy may not include all the areas listed; feel free to adapt it as you need to. However, you might want to consider whether you need to increase your portfolio into new areas. The final column includes future commitment to ensure the strategy is not just past and present-focused. It must also look to future needs and aspirations.

As most people know, fundraising is often about long-term relationships. People give to people, which means fundraising takes time to gestate.

Take the next step

What aspects of your fundraising activity do you need to improve? What activities do you need to stop doing? Where might you personally make a stronger contribution?

Top tips

- Be clear about the messages your fundraising activities deliver and ensure they are consistent with the rest of your delivery
- Be honest about the resources you have available to commit to fundraising
- Ensure your fundraising activities are compatible with your constitution
- Report regularly on achievements to dispel fundraising myths. Often the areas people think are making a big contribution are not as lucrative as assumed

References

Burnett, K. (2006). *The Zen of Fundraising: 89 Timeless Ideas to Strengthen and Develop Your Donor Relationships*. London: Jossey Bass.

Donations	Grants	Community business partnerships	Membership/ Alumni/ Friends	Special events	Earned income	Brand strength	Future target – total
Last year actual £	Last year actual £	Last year actual £	Last year actual £	Last year actual £	Last year actual £	Last year actual £	Next year £
Current year target	Current year target	Current year target	Current year target	Current year target	Current year target	Current year target	Following year
Next year	Next year	Next year	Next year	Next year	Next year	Next year	In 2 years
In 2 years	In 2 years	In 2 years	In 2 years	In 2 years	In 2 years	In 2 years	
Retention rate: % of prior yrs' donors % of donors who increased/ decreased/ maintained gift Median gift size % of new donors recruited through existing donors or volunteers Cost of running	% of grant/s to turnover Level of contribution to core Trends Single/multiple sources of grants	Retention rate: % of partners retained % of partners who increased/ decreased/ maintained support % of partners recruited through existing partners Ratio of in-kind to cash support Trends	% of prior yrs' members retained % of new members recruited through other members or volunteers Cost of running scheme/ programme etc Return on investment Legacies/bequests	Number of events to be held Return on investment Contribution to brand awareness Direct and indirect costs Capacity	Analysis of all strands – merchandising, catering, bar, consultancy etc Return on investment % contribution of new activity introduced Trends	Reflects internal and external confidence in the brand Every 6 months ask staff and governing body to score on 1-10: Is the brand consistent? Is the message compelling? Does it explain what you do and why? Every 12 months undertake external research on brand and	List value of potential and confirmed income payable over the next 2 years Set goals for additional funding to be secured

scheme									
What inspires people to donate?									

marketing