



An Initiative of the Ecumenical Campus Ministry Team

- ◆ The Episcopal Church
- ◆ The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- ◆ The United Church of Christ
- ◆ The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- ◆ The United Methodist Church
- ◆ The Presbyterian Church (USA)



Affiliated with the Education and Leadership Ministries of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA

To learn more about the Initiative and apply for training or consultation services, go to the ECMT Web site at www.higheredmin.org

Ask & Receive

Raising Funds and Friends for Campus Ministry

Ask & Receive

March, 2012

ASK FOR FRIENDS OR FUNDS?

A colleague in the fundraising field is bold enough to ask the question that may be in the minds of many of us. If you had to choose between raising a “friend” for your organization or “funds,” which would it be? I like her answer (because it agrees with mine). “I’d rather have Friends to (add) to my organization than Donors.”

Gail Perry¹ makes the case for her answer by reminding us that, even though in hard times we think of money first, friends are really what save the day. This is because:

- ◆ They will stick with you
- ◆ They would be loyal no matter what
- ◆ They would bring other friends
- ◆ They will spread the word

When the going gets tough we want our friends around us. Certainly they will cheer us on, but they will also support us financially if they are *passionate* friends and really believe in our cause like we do. They will hang with us because we have built our relationship around common values and have invited them to share in our ministry at many levels. We have not just seen them as check-books. Gifts of support come when donors know that their ideas are valued, their time is rewarded, and their enthusiasm is channeled to move the ministry forward.

Friends who give to our ministries make it sustainable, because they provide sustainability through their relationships. They become family, not afraid to hear the hard stuff, even as they rejoice in the good that they know.

One danger, however, is that donors often become too closely tied to the staff person and have not had the opportunity to grow into a deeper friendship with the whole ministry. What often happens when a staff member leaves is that donors leave with him or her. True, they gave to the ministry, but

through the staff person, and when this faithful, long-serving person left, so did the faithful, long-giving donors. As friends are nurtured, they must be able to see through the staff person into the entire ministry.

Another reason for focusing on friends rather than funds is that board members will find this approach less threatening and more in line with what they may see their rolls to be as champions of the ministry. Board members, friends themselves, see the need for building a stronger base of like-minded individuals. Also, as board members give, they find it easier to ask others like them to do the same. It’s not cold calling and pocket picking, but friends inviting other friends to support what they both love and cherish. Of course board members need to give first, and that’s another benefit.

Ken Burnett has written a whole book on relationship fundraising.² He writes, “Really to thrive in the future, we have to *involve* donors even more: to make them more than donors and more than contributors. We have to be genuinely accountable to them.” They will develop relationships and “in the fullness of time, make their largest contribution to your cause by leaving you a bequest in their will.”

Certainly as you make these new friends you and your leadership will need to spend time with them, invite them to events, communicate, share your vision, touch their passion, encourage their ideas, and welcome their gifts. This year when you evaluate your ministry, look beyond the budget bottom line to see how many new friends you have made. They will make the difference!

¹ Gail Perry writes for *Fired Up Fundraising* at www.gailperry.com

² *Relationship Fundraising* by Ken Burnett, The White Lion Press, 2002, pp. 4f.

THE ANGLER AND THE ANGLE



“You’ll have more fun and success when you stop trying to get what you want and start helping other people get what they want.”
 Dale Carnegie

Those among us who love to go fishing know that it’s far more involved than just throwing a line into the water and hoping that something bites. You have to know the stream or lake. You have to know the what kinds of fish inhabit the waters, what they bite on, how deep they are, and if they are a prize worthy of the effort. The angler must know all the angles.

In fundraising circles, the annual fund process is often called a “fishing expedition.” The ever-expanding list of names on the database are seen as potential donors and the purpose of the appeal is to get them to “bite” on the “bait” dangled before them in the shape of a creative vision or urgent cause.

The problem is that fundraising done this way is that we use the same approach for all prospective donors. We have only one kind letter or newsletter, we have one message, and we assume that everyone who opens what we toss before them has the same interests and motivations. We need to work harder to understand the motivations of our various schools of donors and become more skilled in describing our mission in ways that connect with their hearts and values. How can we make an honest, appealing approach to a donor if we don’t know anything about them? What’s the angle that will work without being gimmicky or manipulative?

In larger, capital campaigns a considerable amount of time and energy are given to donor research. Once prospective major donors are identified, we must know as much about them as possible to make the match between their interests and our mission. Without being invasive, we can find out property holdings, income of persons in their profession, what they have contributed to recently, etc. Although it’s expensive, you can have this done by professionals. Then, when it comes time for

the first of probably several visits, you can listen more carefully to what might encourage these donors to invest in your organization.

The larger pool of unknown names on your database is more difficult. How do you get to know them? Why do you have their names in the first place? Can they be grouped according to generations, interests, networks, connections with the ministry? Baby Boomers give for different reasons than Millennials, for example. Alums active in the ministry have different angles than generic members of the local church. Each subgroup could then be approached differently.

There are six common methods of doing research on individual donors according to author Ken Burnett.¹

1. Postal questionnaire. A questionnaire is mailed to a defined segment of persons.
 2. Telephone research. A random group is contacted and asked to reply to a similar set of questions.
 3. Personal interviews. Leadership holds formal conversations with donors one on one. This is one of the reasons for doing a feasibility study, by the way.
 4. Focus groups. Donors and potential donors are invited to reflect on your organization, its vision and the plan for moving forward.
 5. Omnibus surveys. Your questions are included with a whole range of other unconnected issues in a questionnaire addressed to the general public.
 6. Meeting supporters. You simply talk with persons face to face without an agenda.
- To this list we might also add online surveys if email addresses are available.

These days, because of the power of the Internet, potential donors may be researching our organizations while we are researching them. They search our websites, Google us, talk with their friends about us on FaceBook and Twitter. They are looking at our credibility and at our potential as a place where they might connect their values and their gifts. As it turns out, they are anglers too.

¹ *Relationship Fundraising* by Ken Burnett, The White Lion Press, 2002, p. 63

BOARD RESEARCH

Every three years BoardSource¹ compiles a survey of boards ranging from small non-profits to larger corporate boards. The results of the 2010 survey are in, providing us with a perspective on the struggles and successes of boards across the country. Not surprisingly, much of what is mentioned in the report relates directly to the functioning of campus ministry boards/committees. See what you think.

The survey asked questions about board size, membership, giving, diversity, frequency of meetings, and committees. While the answer to some questions might be “it depends,” the non-negotiable item was board performance. While 85% of board members and chief executives rate their respective boards as effective, only 35% rate them very effective. The study asks, “Is that acceptable for the governing body that has the ultimate authority and accountability for the organization? What if more board members were better informed, and in turn, more deeply engaged? Imagine what we could accomplish!”

Understanding mission, along with financial, legal, and ethical oversight, received the highest marks on the board report card, followed by the support and evaluation of the CEO/director (may we say campus minister?). Monitoring performance, setting strategic directions, and recruiting new members received mid-level marks. At the bottom, graded as a C or below, were community relations and fundraising. No surprise here. How does your board rate on the report card?

Board members are most comfortable with signing solicitation letters or providing names for contact than they are actually meeting donors face to face and asking for a contribution. The larger the board, the more members seem to understand that responsibility of fundraising and are willing to engage in it. Also on larger boards, 93% of members give, while only 75% do so on smaller boards.

“There is not adequate staff to do the work of the agency, and I am so busy writing grants and trying to raise money to pay the mortgage and keep the doors open I don’t have time to get out and develop relationships, cultivate donors, etc. The board has got to become more involved and committed to its fiscal responsibility.”
Chief Executive cited in the report

Board members are concerned with funding threats on the horizon, increased need for services, paying an adequate wage, and the capability of the board, as it currently exists, to negotiate through the changes ahead. Board members come to the table passionate for mission, but they don’t necessarily know how to govern, the report states. Time often stands in the way of education, with lack of money for training and low board interest being other impediments. Boards that hold annual retreats and evaluations are stronger and more engaged, resulting in a healthier organization and stronger leadership.

Share the study with your board/committee and ask how better recruiting, training, and evaluating could make your ministry stronger and more prepared to face the challenges ahead.

¹The BoardSource Nonprofit Governance Index 2010 can be found at www.boardsource.org

WORKSHOPS FOR 2012

The Ecumenical Campus Ministry Team has two scheduled workshops remaining for the spring of 2012. One is in **Billings/Bozeman, MT on April 19-21**, and one in **San Jose, CA on May 12**. For more information about the ECMT workshops go to the ECMT website at higheredmin.org or contact the workshop leader, Galen Hora, at ecmtconsultant@hotmail.com

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

Ask & Receive is a newsletter designed to supplement the Fund Raising Initiative of the Ecumenical Campus Ministry Team. It presents a series of ideas and resources on a monthly basis to address the challenges of fund raising and board development, focused on the particular context of campus ministry. *Ask & Receive* is published on behalf of the Ecumenical Campus Ministry Team at 2358 151st Avenue NW, Andover, MN, 55304. The editor is Galen Hora. Phone: 763-350-3898 E-mail: ecmtconsultant@hotmail.com

“Trustees and staff, working together, must have the will, the fortitude, and the resolution to dare. There must be a systematic pursuit to plunge, to speculate, to inquire, to imagine, to doubt, to explore.”
 Jerry Panas

A BOARD BY ANY OTHER NAME

Say the word “board” and immediately everyone within hearing distance has a different construct in mind. The immediate reference point, of course, is the organization they work with that provides guidance and support for the work that they do. Some may have a “directing committee.” Another might have a subcommittee of the church council. Another might have a council for ministry, trustees, a coordinating committee, or a program advisory group. While titles vary from place to place and from denomination to denomination, there are several elements that these variously described entities have in common.

The first common responsibility is to define and promote the **purpose** of the organization. It is a missional focus shared by board members, stakeholders, staff, and even participants in the ministry. As core values are identified and affirmed, the mission of the organization becomes clear and takes center stage. It is missional purpose that both defines and drives the organization. When purpose is ignored or overwhelmed by penultimate concerns, the ministry can easily drift and programs unrelated or even counter to the core mission will rule the day. One way to keep the focus is to relate some action at every meeting to the mission and purpose.

The second common responsibility is to **steward the resources** provided by a gracious God and by generous supporters for the work of the ministry. Resources are obviously financial, but they also include facilities, and personnel. Some boards may have responsibility for hiring, directing and evaluation staff. Even loosely formed committees, however, have responsibility to support and encourage staff and each other. If campus ministry is guided by a subcommittee of a church council where the ministry is located, there is need for oversight and care of the facility used by the ministry. Financial responsibilities may be a subset of another set of books, or they may be fully in the hands of the governing board. In which case there is the additional need for a financial review or audit annually. Whatever the governing structure, there should be regular conversation that identifies the resources provided to the ministry and how they will be taken care of and even expanded by the leadership group. Fundraising

for the ministry falls under this rubric. It is within the purview of the board/council/committee to seek the financial support for the mission of the ministry as they have defined it. Also, they must contribute.

The third common responsibility is to oversee the **effectiveness** of the ministry. When goals and measurable objectives are set forth, it is the board’s work to see that these are carried out and evaluated. This is not done for punitive reasons or to micro-manage staff and programs, but out of concern that the mission be maintained and the vision moved forward. Verbal and written reports can be given to church councils, congregations, synod bishops, and church-wide offices. Results can be published in newsletters and on web pages. Donors of all kinds need to hear the stories of how the ministry has changed lives and been faithful to the mission set before it.

Jerry Panas defines the “Seven Deadly Sins of Trusteeship” as follows:¹

- ◆ Acceptance without commitment
- ◆ Membership without attendance
- ◆ Affiliation without dedication
- ◆ Meetings without participation
- ◆ Decisions without integrity
- ◆ Involvement without advocacy
- ◆ Association without giving

Regardless of how the governance of the ministry is structured, those who have been elected or appointed need to turn away from the “sins” named above and embrace the qualities of commitment, dedication, and integrity. They need to attend meetings and participate in the conversation and decision-making. Because of their passion for the ministry, they will give generously and be ardent advocates of the mission set before them, telling the story and inviting others to share in the joy of the ministry that they do.

When a job description is built around the ideas in the above paragraphs, it begins to sound more like a calling and less like work. It might even be referred to as “organizational vocation.”

¹ Jerry Panas, “Work, Wisdom, Wealth & Wallop,” *Contributions*, Sept, 1999.