Fundraising During a Pandemic: Lessons Learned From the Recession, Katrina & Other Crises

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OVERVIEW

• Presentation Based on Past Best Practices
  • Tactics for donor communication, emergency campaigns, & managing virtual events
  • Strategies for longer-term donor engagement

• Q&A and Group Discussion
IMMEDIATE TACTICS

• Communication
  • Yes, written pieces likely won’t be read, but are necessary
  • Key messaging: empathy & you are “one of us”
  • Combination of data & storytelling
    • Utilize email blasts with embedded video
    • Involve program staff & social workers: your frontline people
    • Describe your vulnerable populations

• Large sponsor & donor management
  • “Credit” toward future support
  • Supplemental support (especially if donor has a DAF or foundation)
  • Leverage & matching
  • “Asks”
    • Phone, Zoom & FaceTime
TACTICS, CONT.

- **Small Donor Management**
  - Focus on current donors
  - You should keep asking, but timing is everything
  - Text messaging & social media
  - Recognize the scope/complexity of the crisis, but stress that “your gift will make a difference” ("Your $100 can pay for....")

- **Case for Support**
  - Your unique value proposition
    - How you are uniquely addressing client & community needs
    - Address social disparities & the most vulnerable: op-eds & blog posts
  - Expressing urgency but not panic
    - You have serious need, but are not in immediate jeopardy
  - Demonstrating good citizenship
    - E.g. become a meals distribution site
• Board member deployment
  • As fiduciaries, board members are obligated to help you preserve/gain revenue
• Board/staff steering committee
  • Cannot stress this enough! Staff cannot do this alone
• Initially “require” phone calls everyday, especially related to canceled events (provide talking points)
• Special board campaign
• Budget discussion: if/how reserves should be used to bolster fundraising. (It might be a good time to hire....)
VIRTUAL EVENTS

• Zoom & YouTube events
  • Combined events
  • Value of videos & testimony
  • Feature list of virtual supporters. Update daily

• Table captain & other “competitions”
  • Adopt-a-program

• Roll-up gifts
  • No baby-sitters, no salon visits, no Ubers, no parking...

• On-line auctions
  • Post-pandemic fun
  • Roll-out slowly. Add gifts everyday
POST-IMMEDIATE STRATEGIES
(FOR THE SHORT-TERM, LONG-TERM IS TOO HARD TO PREDICT....)

• Stewardship
  • Service provision updates
    • More storytelling & data
    • All communication platforms
    • Segmentation, if possible
  • Offer services (& continued empathy)
  • Fundraising updates
  • Major donor assessments
STRATEGIES, CONT.

• Diversification
  • If resources allow, begin new prospect identification, cultivation, & solicitation. (Ask institutional donors to recommend you to peers)
  • Renew lapsed donors

• Institutional Donor Management
  • Most grant-makers want to help. Some have established emergency funds
    • Start communicating when you’re ready
    • Combined emergency grant proposals
  • Provide “good” corporate citizen acknowledgement to corporate supporters
ADDITIONAL IDEAS & MORE

• These ideas served as a platform for brainstorming & problem solving

• Let’s move on to discussion/Q&A

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