

Three Non-Negotiables for Raising Funds for the Church

When it comes to raising funds for your church, consider the following three actions to be non-negotiable.

1. Trust in Leadership

Integrity is doing what you said you'd do and operating true to your stated mission. When people sense that men and women at the top are solid leaders, one of the chief obstacles to financial support is overcome. When leaders have character and consistently operate with professionalism and kindness, the likelihood of garnering support goes up. As well, leadership can exude a humble confidence that gives calm because of a steady hand at the helm of the ship.

Additionally, when there is demonstrated effort and hard work, it communicates the health of the organization from the top down. It says, "we are not presuming anything about your support – we know we have to work hard and demonstrate results or you will give your support to another worthy cause and we don't blame you." Financial audits also ensure the squeaky clean professionalism that is a must as well. All of these things show that the leaders can be trusted.

2. Clear and Compelling Vision

There are a few questions that need to be answered by any organization with absolutely clarity and unity. This is the classic elevator pitch – the idea that if you cannot articulate your vision in the time it takes to ride an elevator (30 seconds to 2 minutes), then it isn't honed enough. And if the people that speak on your behalf aren't saying something strikingly similar, then confusion will be the result:

Where are we headed?

What must be answered is the big idea – what is the goal, project or plan that has captured your attention and for which you are working so hard? What do you want? The listener needs to hear in your passion and see in your eyes that you are undeterred in your focus and know what you are aiming for.

Why is that worthy or important?

Out of all of the things in which someone could invest their time and money, why is your cause the one that they should support? Is it important because people will be helped or society will be impacted - will needs will be met? Are you addressing something for which you are uniquely qualified?

How do we intend to get there?

In the vision, there needs to be a brief sense of how you intend to accomplish your goal.

Otherwise, it sounds like you are dreamer without a plan. “We are taking on child hunger in Detroit” is not as powerful as “We are partnering with every elementary school in Detroit Public Schools to make sure that each child has breakfast before the school day starts”. This doesn’t reveal intimate detail about the plan, but if you said this on an elevator ride, the other passengers would have a very good idea of what you are all about.

What will be the result?

Help me understand how the future will look different if this vision is fulfilled.

Before a person is willing to support something financially, they want to know that you are committed to results. Can we measure the impact and how are we intending to do so? Will we hear a report on the success (or failure) of the attempt? Ideally, we can paint a picture that seems emotionally or spiritually satisfying when we cast vision. And in the best case scenario, the prospective funder will be able to align their personal desire for impact with what you are doing. So, give them a sense for what it will be like when it’s all said and done.

3. Sense that we are part of a Winning Team

This is an intangible “gut feeling” that people will get about a church. More than just winning as a generally positive vibe, it is about a sense that God is at work through this church in visible ways. People don’t want to re-arrange deck chairs on the titanic or align themselves with something that feels like its dying or losing. It is more than just public relations. People tend to look for early indicators that a proposed project or ministry is on the right course and that the church has a proven track record for Kingdom impact. Positive emotion also comes from hearing the endorsement of others (who have credibility) who are supportive of the vision. The ministry track record of the church will be the primary driver of this hunch that is hard to describe.

The most important of these three is **Trust in Leadership** without a doubt. In an age of well-founded skepticism about leaders run amok, integrity at the top is the key.

With that, however, the other two items mixed into the recipe will make for certain success. (This all presumes that an organization has a sense for the best practices and tactics associated with raising funds). So, with solid strategy and approach and the three non-negotiable concepts mentioned, increased funding is on the way.

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