

ASK AN EXPERT

How can my club get organized for our fundraising efforts?

Are you and your club members feeling overwhelmed by trying to raise money for your projects? Don't worry — a plan makes any daunting task easier. Use these five steps to create a fundraising plan that keeps you focused and organized:

- 1 **Set your goals.** First, determine what you're raising money for and estimate how much you'll need. Consider your existing projects, new projects your club would like to start and any long-term club goals. List a cost alongside each project. The total is what you'll need to raise.

And don't forget, it costs money to raise money. We recommend budgeting an additional 35% of the program cost for fundraising activities. This is a nonprofit industry standard and includes administrative expenses, such as event expenses, marketing and more.

- 2 **Identify possible investors.** You want to raise money to offset the expenses identified above. That means you need investors.

Don't feel limited to fundraising within your club membership. Make a list of other potential investors in your community. Consider former club members, family and friends, and people who attend your events. Would any local businesses, private foundations or churches support your causes?

>> **HERE'S A PRO TIP:** Think about other organizations that serve kids in your community — or corporations who have identified children as priorities. These are great prospects for Kiwanis clubs.

- 3 **Prioritize these prospects.** Narrow your list of investors to your best prospects. There are two criteria: The prospect's engagement or interest in your cause — serving children — and their financial capacity to make a gift. The "sweet spot" in fundraising is an intersection of highly engaged people with the financial ability to make significant gift. These should be your top-priority prospects.

>> **HERE'S A PRO TIP:** In most cases, 10% of people will account for 90% of the gifts you receive.



- 4 **Identify the what, when and how of asking.** Now that you know who to ask, set target amounts for each revenue source. How much do you aim to raise from club members? How about local businesses and foundations? Put all of this together in a chart so that you can easily track your progress.

The time to ask for a gift is when you have enough information and a strong enough relationship with the prospective donor that it won't feel like arm-twisting. Select the club member who has the strongest relationship with the potential donor and, if possible, have that member ask for the gift in person. If not, opt for a phone call first, then a personal letter or email.

>> **HERE'S A PRO TIP:** How often do you ask? Well, churches ask 52 times a year so don't be shy!

- 5 **Know what success looks like.** At the end of your year of fundraising, how do you know if you've been successful? Yes, the amount you raise is important. But sustainability is also key.

Did you increase the number of prospects you ask each year? Are you continuing to engage with donors after they make a gift? (Don't forget, past donors are key prospects for future fundraising.) Are you fundraising from diverse sources of revenue? Answering "yes" to each of these questions means your fundraising efforts are sustainable — which means you can build on them for next year!



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