

How to Screw Up Your Fundraising – Easy Steps to Financial Ruin

On her blog, Gail Perry (pailperry.com) provides recipes for fundraising disaster — and fundraising success. She urges nonprofit leaders to read Compass Point's recent report about fundraising challenges (compasspoint.org), share it with their boards, and then ask innocently, "What are your impressions of these ideas?" The resulting discussion might be the difference between triumph and defeat for your organization.

The report, "Underdeveloped: Challenges Facing Nonprofit Fundraising Today" (compasspoint.org) shares these disturbing findings:

- **Only 9% of those surveyed say their organization has enough capacity** to achieve fundraising goals.
- **Three out of four executives say board member engagement in fundraising** is insufficient.
- **Half of development directors are planning to leave their current jobs** in two years or less (mainly because they feel unsupported, undervalued, and not given the tools they need to create a sustainable fundraising program).
- **More than one in five nonprofits (23%) — and 31% of organizations with operating budgets of under \$1 million — have no fundraising plan** in place.
- **Less than half of development directors say they have a strong relationship with their executive director.** (Executive directors typically say the relationship is stronger than fundraising staff say it is.)

- **Nearly one third of development directors** say they've been charged with unrealistic performance goals.
- **One in four nonprofit executives report that they lack the skills and knowledge** to secure gifts.

Based on this survey and her own research, Perry offers this prescription for screwing up your fundraising:

1. **Expect big fundraising results, but don't take time to understand what it takes** — or spend money to make it happen.
2. **Isolate your staff into "silos"** with fundraising cut off from marketing, PR, and other communications (and watch your communications undercut your fundraising effort).
3. **Ask the fundraising team to produce miracles** (without investment, systems, or help).
4. **Cut your fundraising staff and distract them with additional responsibilities**, but still expect them to exceed last year's results.
5. **Let people who don't understand fundraising make decisions** about fundraising strategies, messaging, and investments (and watch those decisions bring in failure).
6. **Downplay board members' fundraising responsibilities.**
7. **Say "We can't afford it" when considering a fundraising project that will bring in far more than it costs** (and watch your organization never grow beyond its current scope).
8. **Consider fundraising expenses as a black hole of costs rather than as investments** that pay for themselves quickly — (with a nice multiple return, no less!) 

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What's the Best Way to Use Social Media?

If you're like many nonprofit leaders, you struggle with how to capitalize on social media to achieve your mission. *Social Media in the Public Sector Field Guide* (wiley.com) is an excellent resource to help you find the answers you need.

While the book is intended for government agencies, learning organizations gather information from diverse sources. Since government and nonprofits share a reliance on communicating with community, nonprofits can learn from government agencies seeking the best use of social media. In fact, most of the content of this book is relevant to nonprofit organizations.

Authors Ines Mergel and Bill Greeves match social media tools for common needs, such as public education, volunteer coordination, peer networking, complaint reporting, and other uses relevant and helpful to nonprofits. They include a section about building a social media strategy, starting with your organization's goals and identifying the audiences needed to reach those goals.

The authors also look at the future of social media, at least the near future. Crowdsourcing, for instance, offers a growing resource for collaborating, gathering diverse perspectives, building community, and developing leaders. Another example: training people through the use of virtual worlds.

Social media can increase participation and democracy if we know how to use it for these purposes. *Social Media in the Public Sector Field Guide* can prove valuable to the nonprofit sector in learning how.

—reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

TIPS FOR TURNING SOCIAL MEDIA TO SOCIAL GOOD

Use social media to support your organization's mission with these tips:

Approach social-media tools with cautious optimism. Be realistic about what they can do for your organization.

Do your homework. Learn how your peers are using social media; they're often happy to share their experiences and insights.

Match the tools to your mission. Consider carefully which social media tools will best help you reach your goals and enable your strategy.

Create a team approach. A team of people from many parts of your organization can help improve social-media use.

Start with controlled experiments. Demonstrate results with a test run before investing a lot into a method.

Guide (but trust) your people. Provide guidelines for staff but don't attempt to completely control their use of social media.

Keep the conversation going. For each tool you master, develop an audience for it, build a trusting relationship with members of that audience, and facilitate their input. Don't become complacent. Constantly listen to your audiences and their needs.



Leadership Lessons

Frances Hesselbein's lessons of leadership have been hard-won through a long career in the nonprofit sector, beginning as a troop leader with the Girl Scouts of the USA, becoming its CEO, founding and leading the Drucker Foundation, and transitioning the foundation into the Leader to Leader Institute. In *My Life in Leadership* (Jossey-Bass, josseybass.com), she tells her fascinating story and shares her wisdom. Tapping into Peter Drucker's genius for creating short, inspiring messages, she offers these definitions of leadership:

A leader is someone who has followers.

Having great ideas and a beautiful vision doesn't make you a leader unless you recruit others to your cause.

An effective leader is someone whose followers do the right things. Results, not popularity, make you a leader.

Leaders are those who set examples for others.

Leadership is responsibility and accountability, not title or status. 

Help Your Workers Shine

You can use brain science to help everyone in your organization attain peak performance. Research shows that people's brains can change and grow if they're encouraged to improve at specific tasks over time. In *Shine: Using Brain Science to Get the Best from Your People* (Harvard Business Review Press, hbrp.org), Edward Hallowell outlines these steps:

1. **Help employees select tasks** that they like, that they're good at, and that add value to the organization.
2. **Create an environment** that inspires and motivates.
3. **Promote a playful, creative culture** that engages people's imaginations.
4. **Support employees as they grapple** with their tasks and, in time, gain mastery over them.
5. **Give people praise, rewards, and the knowledge** that their work is valuable and that they're doing it well. 

Become the Person You Want to Be

The key to realizing your full potential is to make one small change every day. That's why *Waking Up Happy: A Handbook of Change with Memoirs of Recovery and Hope* includes "365 Steps on Your Journey" — a different exercise for every day of the year.

Waking Up Happy (available at WakingUpHappyBook.com) combines exercises and to-do lists with memoirs of people who have changed their lives. As well as her own memoir, author Jill Muehrcke includes the memoirs of her daughter, granddaughter, and over 30 others. Each time these memoirists describe how they learned valuable lessons in their lives, there are activities you can do to make those same changes in your own life.

There's also a chapter titled "What Works and What Doesn't." Combining all the lessons in the book, this summary explains which strategies for change have worked for almost everyone—and which common tactics simply don't work.

Half of all proceeds from *Waking Up Happy* are being donated to the Recovery Foundation (recoveryfoundation.net), helping people build new lives every day.

Here are a few of the exercises from *Waking Up Happy* to get you started. Remember, over time, such tiny shifts in perspective can add up to profound change. Try one of them today!

- **Be a detective**, and find out one new thing about each person you talk to today.
- **Think of something you've been putting off**, and do the minimal amount to get started. If you've been meaning to read a book, read the first page. If you want to tidy your desk, sort one pile. If you have a list of people to phone, call the first one. That's how all projects get done — by starting small.
- **Choose a Waking Up Happy Buddy** — someone who will do the same exercises you're doing. Plan to get together regularly and discuss each other's results.
- **Find out how well you read people's emotions**, using the BBC's 10-question "Spot the Fake Smile Test" (bbc.co.uk/science/humanbody/mind/surveys/smiles/).
- **Write out a statement** of what you believe to be your fundamental purpose — the thing you most want to accomplish in your life.



Jill Muehrcke signs her book *Waking Up Happy* at the Arcadia Bookstore in Spring Green, Wisconsin.

- **Find a thesaurus online**, at the library, or at a bookstore. Use it to find a synonym for a word you often use. Sometime today, use the new word instead of your usual one.
- **Strive to be fully present** in one situation today. If you find your attention wandering, gently bring it back to what you're doing.
- **Make room for one hour of pure**, sweet silence.
- **Start a creative-failure notebook**. Write about times you failed at something. What did you learn? What creative lessons does failure teach?
- **Set one goal for yourself**, and write it down. Think of one small thing you can do that will put you closer to it. Be sure your goal isn't too big or too vague. If it is, break it into manageable chunks, and focus on just one piece at a time. The way to make big, transformative changes is to start with one finite step. Begin today.

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Top Tech Trends for Nonprofits

What new technologies are nonprofits around the world embracing? According to surveys, research, and literature reviews, here are some of the most popular and useful. Take a careful look at your organization to decide which of these tools might work best for you:

- **Use mobile phones in the field.** Nonprofits are doing more field work using mobiles and apps that help them deliver programs by collecting and entering data from anywhere. Smartphones and tablet computers are reshaping the nonprofit environment.
- **Reap the benefits of cloud computing.** In a TechSoup Global survey of nonprofits in over 80 countries, 90% of respondents said they use some type of cloud technology. Several surveys show that lack of knowledge about cloud computing is a large barrier to its complete adoption. See “Know the Risks Before You Head to the Cloud: A Primer on Cloud Computing for Nonprofits,” *Nonprofit World* (Vol. 30, No. 6), NonprofitWorld.org/members.
- **Attend networking groups such as hackathons** (events that pair nonprofit leaders who have good ideas with volunteer techies who can put those ideas into action). Check out techsoup.org, which has hosted several hackathons and will hold more in the future.
- **Make your Web site viewable on mobile phones.** A good resource is the webinar “Optimizing Your Web Site for Mobile Devices” (techsoupcanada.ca/learning_centre/webinars).
- **Use social media to raise funds.** Many nonprofits are finding success in raising money through the use of Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. The average donation through Facebook is up to \$59. Online crowdfunding platforms, like Kickstarter and Indiegogo, are also getting serious traction. Money raised on crowdfunding sites is estimated to be 91% higher than it was in 2011. To make the most of social media, see “How to Make Social-Media Fundraising Work for You” (Vol. 27, No. 2), “Don’t Take Risks with Social Media” (Vol. 29, No. 1), and “Using Social Media to Advance Your Goals” (Vol. 27, No. 1). These and other helpful articles are available at NonprofitWorld.org/members.



— compiled by Jim Lynch, TechSoupGlobal, techsoup.org

Who Are Text Donors, and How Can You Reach Them?

Donating via text message has gained popularity and credibility within the last year. The “Text Giving Study” (mgivefoundation.org) finds that text donors are a passionate, highly educated, and fairly young group: 26% are millennials (ages 16-33); 28% are gen-Xers (ages 34-44); and 25% are boomers-2 (ages 45-55). Most (70%) are female. Other research findings about text donors:

They like donating through their mobile devices because it’s an easy, convenient, and “no pressure” way to give.

They hear about text donation campaigns mostly through TV, radio, and social networking.

They want to receive text messages on many different topics, not just donation information.

Most of them give over \$250 a year through multiple donation channels, are loyal to the organizations they support, and want to continue to give via text. Over 80% would like the option to give \$25 or more at a time through texting.

One out of every four respondents would be interested in automatic monthly recurring text donations.

Most (60%) of mobile donations are made after 5:00 p.m. 

What’s Your Leadership Style?

There are six basic leadership styles, according to *Your Leadership Legacy: Why Looking toward the Future Will Make You a Better Leader Today* by Robert M. Galford and Regina Fazio Maruca (Harvard Business School Press, hbsp.harvard.edu):

- **The ambassador** encourages people to break new ground.
- **The advocate** champions a cause.
- **The creative builder** innovates.
- **The truth seeker** assures that things are equitable.
- **The people mover** focuses on helping others.
- **The experienced guide** advises and coaches people.

Assess your leadership style at <http://www.yourleadershiplegacy.com/assessment.html>. After taking the test, list your personal strengths and talents. Then consider how you can use those proficiencies to enhance your main leadership style.

Most people combine the traits of several leadership styles, with one or two dominating. Each will reinforce the others. When deciding what you want your legacy to be, it’s helpful to concentrate on the style that’s most natural to you. 

