



How to Find New Donors

This new, entrepreneurial way of raising money makes sense in today's world.

BY TERRENCE FERNSLER

Raising More Money

By Terry Axelrod. 259 pages. Hardcover. Published by Boylston Books, Ltd, 1315 Madison Ave., Suite 434, Seattle, WA 98104.

Donors are more caring than ever before. They're also more sophisticated and demanding than they've ever been. They insist that nonprofit organizations be more responsive to them, spend as much of their income as possible on programs, and not waste time on ineffective fundraising. Supporters want to decide how they will participate in an organization—often in ways we hadn't considered.

Still, most organizations are raising money the same old way they learned many years ago. That won't cut it anymore. We must shift to a new way of attracting donors.

The most successful development programs have a systematic way of raising support. Terry Axelrod offers a system that is simple and responds to what donors want, while at the same time addressing organizational needs.

Axelrod's model has three steps: First, you educate people. Then you cultivate them. Then you ask them.

In step one, you create points of entry—well-orchestrated events that provide information about your organization, including its impact on individuals. Points of entry may take the form of site tours, office visits, speaking engagements, or visits to your Web site, but they all follow the same pattern. Axelrod details ways to create effective points of entry, including testimonials, wish lists, and fact sheets.

In step two, you find out what each guest thought about the point of entry. You ask them how they would like to help your organization and who else they think should attend a point of entry. During this step, you recruit supporters for your fundraising event.

Finally, in step three, you hold your fundraising event. Everything at the event is geared to inspiring guests to pledge, from the time they're greeted to the time they leave.

Axelrod's technique is pure genius. It meets the needs of both donors and organizations by person-

alizing their contacts with each other and drawing out each person's unique resources. It brilliantly adapts familiar methods to create a new, entrepreneurial way of gathering support. It educates supporters better than ever before. It even has a built-in system of establishing goals.

Axelrod clearly understands that we're in the business of developing relationships with supporters. Her method assures that supporters feel good about their involvement with an organization. Such an approach simply makes sense in today's society, and her book unambiguously shows how to implement it. This is a 21st-century system for raising more money. ■

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