TOP TEN REASONS WHY CAMPAIGNS SUCCEED

Despite the volatility of the stock market in recent weeks, the number of congregation that are contemplating new capital and endowment campaigns is increasing if our phone and email inbox is any indicator. If you are among the increasing number of congregations that are planning such a major, once-in-a-generation endeavor, here are our top ten reasons—with apologies to David Letterman—to assure the success of your efforts.

10. **Your campaign has a definite timetable:** Mini-goals are crucial to keeping the campaign running according to schedule. If you set a goal such as “Raise $500,000 in the first two months,” you will be able to stick to your schedule much more easily than if you set only a goal such as “Raise $1 million no matter how long it takes.” Set challenges for yourself and your solicitors and reward solicitors when certain goals are achieved. Don’t save the praise until the end of the campaign.

9. **Your campaign has been planned out from start to finish:** Campaigns generally begin with a quiet phase and end with a celebration of achieving the campaign goal. You must, as we always say, begin with the end in mind. Work backwards from your celebratory event or groundbreaking and create a blueprint for campaign success and remember:

> Proper Planning Promotes Possible Positive Performance.

8. **Each campaign is created as a separate entity without compromising the efforts of concurrent campaigns:** If you are working with a membership campaign, an annual campaign, and a capital campaign plan, it is essential to realize each campaign’s individual importance. Each will require different marketing materials and specialized, coordinated approaches to donors. It is a fear of some campaign committees that a capital campaign will hinder the annual fund efforts. If done correctly, a capital campaign will often strengthen and grow annual efforts. Campaign committees must communicate openly and often with one another to aid in this successful process. Here is an example of one such successful effort [http://merskyjaffe.com/clients/case-studies/bnaiisrael.html](http://merskyjaffe.com/clients/case-studies/bnaiisrael.html).

7. **A Capital Campaign is very different from an Annual Campaign:** When soliciting funds for an annual appeal, you are asking donors to support short-term objectives. When soliciting funds
for capital improvements, you are asking donors to believe in your dream and to help realize your congregation’s vision. More often than not, successful capital gifts are realized over a period of 3-5 years, so you are truly asking a donor to make a significant investment in your congregation.

6. Solicitors agree to make their own gift before venturing out to ask others: The most compelling solicitation is one that includes the words, “Please join me (and my family) in making a meaningful gift to this campaign.” What better way to show how committed you are to a project than by making a gift that you feel good about and asking others to give themselves the opportunity to do the same.

5. A campaign utilizes brochures and other publicity in conjunction with personalized face-to-face appeals: While your marketing materials are important campaign tools, they are merely part of the whole campaign process. Personal, individualized appeals will generate more money and interest than direct mail or telemarketing ever could. Publicity is not a substitute for good planning and a strong volunteer effort to assure one-on-one engagement.

4. Solicitors ask prospects to make a contribution at the level for which they have been rated: Your campaign leadership and staff have worked hard to estimate how much a potential donor might be willing and able to contribute to your campaign. Trust their research and ask the donor for the rated amount, even if it feels uncomfortable to ask for so much money. Remember, your meaningful gift may not be at the same level as the meaningful gift of the prospective donor in front of you, but both gifts have importance to your campaign.

3. Your campaign committee realizes that it costs money to make money: Campaigns managed by development consultants statistically raise more money than campaigns run by volunteers. These externally managed campaigns take less time and the cost is in the range of 3-7% depending upon the total funds raised. Your personnel are vital to a successful campaign, but even the best of your staff may find themselves pulled in too many directions. A consultant can keep the campaign on track by strategically planning and managing the campaign while utilizing your knowledgeable staff and lay leaders to recruit and retain volunteer campaign leadership.

2. Solicitors never say “no” for the donor: This is a golden rule for fundraisers. A successful campaign is the result of asking everyone to participate and knowing how to individualize those requests for money. Your campaign goals are achieved one donor at a time. No two donors are alike and, therefore, no two approaches to donors are exactly the same.

1. Your campaign is based on dollars AND number of donors: Successful Campaign Committees recognize that it is just as important to receive $18 gifts as it is to receive $1,800,000 gifts to the campaign. Raising $1 million is never as easy as soliciting $1,000 from 1,000 people. 90% of the money will come from 10% of the donors, but you need a strong donor base to create a successful campaign and build a community of donors and funders who are deeply invested in the future of the congregation.

To assure the success of your next campaign, call me at 1-800-361-8689 or write me at david@merskyjaffe.com.