

# Outline of a Capital Campaign

Capital campaigns take on many shapes and sizes, but each campaign has certain common elements. This outline of a capital campaign presents the most common components of a campaign.

## The Case for Support

This is a flexible document that provides details on what the capital campaign is about. It answers questions, challenges readers, and sells the effort. It is used to develop proposals and brochures, inform speeches and tours, and establish accountability with donors. The case will speak to fundraising for buildings, renovations, equipment, programs, research, and/or endowment.

## Campaign Readiness

There are many aspects to establishing if and how an organization is ready to conduct a capital campaign. They include the following:

- Prospect Analysis

Prospects need to be screened, rated, and reviewed according to four factors: financial capacity, relationship to the organization, interests, and personal network. Prospects are “divided and conquered” in order to align them with different phases of the campaign.

- Prospect Research

The best prospects require additional information in order to prioritize and build the best strategy for cultivation and solicitation. Prospect profiles are developed to inform the discussion for key prospects.

- Prospect Management

In a campaign, there is a need, from beginning to end, to manage prospects carefully. By recording information, strategies, and tactics, each prospect is moved closer to solicitation. Regular, disciplined prospect review meetings keep the focus on raising money from the best prospects. A Prospect Management System is required to track activity.

- Gift Table

This is a chart of gifts needed to reach a campaign goal. It follows a flexible formula, providing the best educated estimates as to how many prospects are needed at what level of gift. It also allows staff to assign potential prospects to

different tiers within the Gift Table.

- **Staffing**

A capital campaign involves all the development staff in one way or another. In some organizations, new staff is hired to do only campaign work. A fundraising consultant is another “staffing” option.

- **Timeline**

Based on information from various stakeholders, a Timeline for fundraising is developed and categorized. The Timeline generally follows sequential fundraising and outlines the entire effort, from pre-campaign work to wrap-up.

- **Feasibility study**

Conducted by a consultant, the study tests the case for support and the organization’s standing in the community, identifies potential prospects and volunteer leaders, and engages key stakeholders as insiders. It provides validation and/or correction to the Case for Support based on what the philanthropic market will support. Studies consist of 40 - 80 interviews, typically. The Feasibility Study Report recommends the campaign goal (if any) and addresses many issues relating to the conduct of the campaign.

- **Recruitment**

In the pre-campaign phase, many of the key volunteer leaders are recruited. These volunteers, including the Chairman of the Campaign, the Executive Campaign Committee, and others, are gateways to the community.

- **Recognition Opportunities**

Donor recognition is a crucial element in campaign planning. This work involves identifying ways donors will be recognized for their gifts. In general, the larger the gift, the greater the recognition. It is essential to develop gift acceptance and naming policies for this part of the work.

## **The Role of the Board**

The Board of Directors has several roles in a capital campaign. Those roles include:

1. Approving the case for support
2. Approving the capital campaign organization
3. Making a generous gift to the campaign up front
4. Identifying and rating potential donors
5. Assisting with solicitations
6. Attending campaign events

## 7. Serving as ambassadors for the organization and the campaign

### Public Relations and Communications

In cooperation with the other aspects of the campaign, a public relations strategy is developed, based on the Case for Support. Communication strategies and tactics are developed from the Public Relations Plan. This includes events, talking points, press releases, marketing, promotion, and so on.

### Gift Phases

Every campaign has a sequence in which work is done. These are typical for a capital campaign:

- Leadership Gift Phase

This is the first and most important phase of the campaign. In it, the best prospects are solicited before there is a public announcement. It's desirable to have at least 50 percent of the campaign goal already committed before "going public" with the effort. This phase involves soliciting relatively few prospects for the largest share of the campaign.

- Major Gift Phase

This phase involves gifts of \$10,000 or more. It's a difficult phase because so many gifts are needed for relatively little money. For organizations without a deep donor base already, it becomes even more challenging.

- Public Gift Phase

This is the final phase of the campaign in which many small gifts complete the financial goals of the campaign. This includes any gift of any size.

### Wrap-up and Celebration

As the campaign's fundraising goals are attained, it's necessary to "declare victory" and thank donors and volunteer campaign leaders. This involves public events and publications that demonstrate how the community has rallied around the organization's plan to solve community needs.

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