

What is the Role of Counsel in a Capital Campaign?

You're considering a capital campaign. It's been recommended that you seek Counsel for the campaign. What is the role Counsel might serve for you?

1. Resident Counsel vs. Retained Counsel

Some consulting firms offer Resident Counsel. With this model, a consultant is brought in to staff the campaign effort Monday through Friday. Other firms offer more project-based or Retained Counsel. With this model, a consultant is available in more flexible but regular ways. Obviously, there is a large cost difference between the two models.

2. Advice and coaching

The first thing Counsel offers is sound judgment based on experience adapted to the local situation. Counsel's advice and coaching are designed to help staff learn and move more quickly to achieve campaign goals. This relationship provides the organization with seasoned thinking for changing situations.

3. Assess readiness

Counsel evaluates the organization's ability to conduct a campaign. Sometimes this evaluation delays a campaign until the non-profit is ready. Other times, this evaluation simply fine-tunes the approaches needed to be effective.

4. Develop the case for support

It's efficient to engage Counsel to develop the case for support, otherwise known as the case statement. Counsel dedicates time and talent to gather information, conduct informational interviews, and write drafts of the case.

5. Feasibility study

This involves 40-80 interviews of key stakeholders and community members. Counsel conducts the interviews, reviews pertinent information, and makes a series of recommendations based on the study, including whether or not to conduct a campaign, goals, timing, and potential leadership.

6. Problem solving

Anyone can read about a capital campaign in a book, but conducting a campaign rarely follows such a script. Every situation is different. Sometimes situations become quite complex or change dramatically in a short period of time. Experienced Counsel can help the organization sort through problems and help them find the right solutions.

7. Asking the right questions at the right time

Sometimes it's most effective to help people learn the right answers on their own. Counsel can do this as a coach and teacher. *The right question is the most valuable tool of Counsel.*

8. Pushing

Some organizations need someone to step on the gas. Counsel can help with this. By keeping the focus on the tasks of the campaign, staff remain engaged and accountable. Because Counsel has a specific role, he/she can use that to the organization's advantage by being single-minded about the campaign.

9. Creating a stronger development program for the long run

When a campaign ends, the development program should be much stronger and better positioned for future success. Counsel will serve as a catalyst to make this happen during the campaign.

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