The Fund Raising Cycle

01 Build your Prospect List

02 Qualify your Prospects

03 Build Trust

04 Ask for Support

05 Close

06 Steward

07 Report

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When does this apply?

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- When you are seeking funding from more than one donor in a category, such as:
  - Foundations
  - Government grants
  - Corporation donations
  - Sponsorships
  - Event sales
  - Auction/In-Kind donations

- When you know who you are approaching, such as:
  - Names
  - Organization name
  - Contact information
  - Interests

- When you are creating specific funding requests:
  - Support this grant request
  - Sponsor this opportunity
  - Donate to this project
  - Buy a ticket to this event

Less applicable to mass appeals such as a telethon, advertising campaign, or generic direct mail program.

01
Build Your Prospect List

Create a list of prospective donors:

- foundations
- corporations
- individuals
- government agencies

02
Qualify Your Prospects

Rank your prospects:

- aligned interests
- proximity to your organization
- decision-making timeframe
- ability to give/ amount

You don't need to qualify every single prospect before you start fundraising.

03
Build Trust

Nurture relationships with prospective funders:

- introduce yourself to create brand awareness

- get referrals/ testimonials to build credibility

- get to know the funder and their priorities

Try meetings, conferences, media, social media, and email updates.

04
Ask for Support

Once a funder is receptive, make a clear and specific request for support:

- grant proposal

- sponsorship pitch

- direct ask

05
Close

If the funder says yes, then you negotiate or clarify the terms of their support and receive the funds. Move to step 6.

If the funder says no or there is no response at all, they return to your Prospect pile (Step 1). Move to Steps 1 and 2 with other prospective funders.

💡 Try meetings, conferences, media, social media, and email updates.

Then what?

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06
Steward

Financial support is the beginning of a new phase of a relationship, not the end of the process. Stewarding a grant is part of maintaining trust and preparing for a future ask:

- Implement your project well

- Fulfil the terms of the funding agreement

07
Report

- Fulfil minimum reporting requirements specified by the funder

- Share impact information and stories often through emails, meetings, and social media.

- Use your reports to set up the next ask by showing need, impact, etc.

Then return to Step 4 (Ask)

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Meanwhile …

Repeat Steps 1 - 5

Build relationships with more funders to increase revenue, replace old relationships, diversify your support.

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Challenges

Time

- You probably don't have enough time to identify and qualify every possible funder
- You definitely don't have enough time to build personal relationships with every funder
- The more successful your fundraising is, the more work you need to do
- You can't control when funders make decisions

Finding Funders

- There may not be enough funders with aligned interests
- You may not know how to reach funders or have connections to them
- You may not be aware of the opportunities that are out there (you don't know what you don't know)

The "Right" Ask

- When a funder doesn't tell you their budget, you may not know how much to request

You need help at every stage of the cycle.

You can't grow faster than your cycle capacity allows.

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Stuck?

01
Build your Prospect List
Focus here if you don't know who to ask.

02
Qualify your Prospects
Focus here if you don't know which relationships to prioritize

05
Close
Focus here if you don't know when people will be funding you, how much they will give, or what you need to do to in return.

06 Focus here when you are spending funds.
Steward

07
Report
Focus here when spending funds, finishing projects, or preparing for a new ask.

03
Build Trust
Focus here if you don't know who is likely to support you, how much to request, or whether they are likely to say "yes".

04
Ask for Support
Focus here if you don't know how many or how much $ you have in out-standing asks.

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Goal

Minimize year-end surprises. You can predict your fundraising results using this cycle.

If your **goal** is $100,000, you should have 3x or more in Steps 2-4.

If your **qualified** list has 10 funders and a maximum value of $100,000, you are likely to have have fewer than 10 and less than $100,000 to steward (Step 6).

01 Build your Prospect List

E.g.,. $5-million potential

02 Qualify your Prospects

Eg,. $1-million potential

05 Close

E.g., $100,000 in funding approvals

06 Steward

07 Report

E.g., $100,000 in renewed support potential

03 Build Trust

Eg,. $500,00 potential

04 Ask for Support

E.g., $300,000 in requests for support

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