

## Top 10 Ministry Fundraising Boosters

By Mike Buwalda

What are other Christian nonprofits doing to improve their development programs and ministry to donors? A recent survey of Christian nonprofits yields the top 10 fundraising best practices:

**1. God.** Christian nonprofits acknowledge that God is the source of all that we need. Practically, that means we pray first. Gather staff and volunteers and ask God for the funds. Thank Him for the support received. Pray for your donors and their needs. Give your development efforts to God. Practice biblical stewardship and help others understand God's way of handling money.

**2. Staff.** By far, the factor cited most often by Christian nonprofits in improving their development efforts was staffing. This includes hiring gifted new staff members as well as training existing staff. The benefits of hiring good staff include multiplying the impact by involving more people (including staff, volunteers, and the president), asking "more and better" for gifts, and better allocating the work load.

**3. Plan.** Be intentional, strategic, and consistent. Review your data and plan accordingly to reach your various constituencies. Find ways to become more efficient in your daily operations. Invest in software for record keeping and relationship building.

**4. Relationships.** Ask your major donors for more than money, and suggest other ways they can become involved. Build on past work with foundations. Be in touch and consider asking more often.

**5. Consultants.** A number of people said consultants were very helpful to them. Some were even mentioned by name. Consultants are helpful in planning, executing special projects, and bringing fresh motivation to bring their programs to the next level.

**6. Communications.** Ministries that are happy with their development programs tend to be very visible. They have a well-thought-out message, send out many mailings, often contact donors by phone, and get creative with media like the radio. In short, they look for ways to reach more people with more information about their ministry.

**7. New Donors.** Begin with a strategy to expand your base of support. Get out of the office and speak to new groups about your ministry. Develop "points of entry" events to make it easy for people to meet you and learn about you. Be sure to follow up with the new folks who come your way.

**8. Special Campaigns.** There is a double benefit in doing capital, endowment, and estate gift campaigns. Not only do they raise a lot of excitement and money for a specific cause within your organization, but they also create a ripple effect that translates into more visibility and more dollars down the road for other parts of your ministry.

**9. Volunteers.** Involve supporters directly in your ministry. Ask them to serve on a development committee or to provide help in your development office. Train volunteers to make phone calls for you to raise funds and thank donors. Be sure to keep your volunteers informed.

**10. Christian Stewardship Association (CSA).** *Please note – as of April 1, 2008 CSA merged with CMA to become CLA (Christian Leadership Alliance).* CSA was cited several times as an important resource to ministries and Christian schools. CSA's Annual Conference and Institute provide valuable training from highly credible speakers. Those who responded to the survey mentioned how CSA introduced them to people and consultants that gave their ministry development programs a big boost.

*Mike Buwalda is the president of Money for Ministry ([www.MoneyforMinistry.com](http://www.MoneyforMinistry.com)) and wrote this article in cooperation with the Christian Stewardship Association (now Christian Leadership Alliance [www.ChristianLeadershipAlliance.com](http://www.ChristianLeadershipAlliance.com))*