



8 STEPS TO CREATING A RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN NOW!!

Sure, we hear it at least once a month in all kinds of contexts...how will you know if you've gotten where you were headed if you didn't say/know where you were going? Whether you are planning a trip to Timbuktu, going to the market, or planning a staff meeting, you usually commit to paper that which you believe will help you to achieve your goal.

So wouldn't the nonprofit organization you're working for benefit from such planning? I've often heard it said, "We're not ready to plan, there are too many other things we need to take care of first".

I've also often heard development professionals and Executive Directors of small to mid-size organizations, who wear more than just the development hat, say, "How can I juggle one more fundraising activity?"

I contend that if you commit to a planning process first, many of those "other things" will be taken care of along the way and the "juggling" will be controlled by you. The plan, when developed with "buy-in" from key stakeholders (including board, staff, volunteers, constituents) will actually empower those responsible for raising dollars to focus on that task. Using the plan as a reference point for all fundraising activities throughout the year will, hopefully, eliminate side-tracking by those last minute ideas which someone is sure will raise at least a 'zillion' dollars. So let's get started...and, I promise, it really won't be very painful if you follow these steps.

STEP 1. Decide on Philosophy, Mission and Vision Statements

These three statements provide the building blocks or foundation for all your planning; they typically emerge out of focused discussions and deliberations of Board and staff:

- **Philosophy (core values)** articulates the values & beliefs of the organization;
- **Mission** sets forth what business the organization is engaged in and for whom;
- **Vision**, the "dream", envisions where & what the organization will be in 3 to 5 years.

STEP 2. Establish Resource Development Goals

Goals define what you want to accomplish for the big picture; each should be measurable and have a benchmark date. Examples of resource development goals include ones related to fundraising and people resources, and can be as simple as the following:

- Goal A - To ensure financial stability for Worthy Cause, we will raise \$100,000 in donations by December 2008.
- Goal B - To increase Worthy Cause's ability to serve our constituents, we will create a volunteer program with a minimum of 50 active volunteers by February 2009.
- Goal C - To strengthen organizational capacity, we will create and actualize a comprehensive Board Development Plan by December 2008.

STEP 3. Determine Strategies To Attain Goals

These are the methods used to attain your goals. Each goal may have one or more strategies. For example, using Goal A, we could delineate several fundraising strategies or methodologies to raise money such as:

- Strategy 1 - Continue the annual giving appeal by mail.
- Strategy 2 - Create a golf outing special event.
- Strategy 3 – Establish an active Grantseeking program.

STEP 4. Set Resource Development Objectives

Sometimes we tend to confuse goals and objectives; so when I plan I remind myself that objectives are like mini-goals: each objective relates to a pre-determined strategy, making that strategy measurable and with a deadline.

Usually, it takes two or more objectives to achieve a goal. Let's convert Strategy 1 into three objectives:

- Objective 1 - Conduct the annual giving appeal between January 2008 and December 2008 to raise \$35,000 from 500 donors.
- Objective 2 - Create and run a golf outing in May 2008 to raise \$25,000.
- Objective A3 - Conduct comprehensive Grantseeking to raise \$40,000 from 20 foundations by December 2008.

When setting goals and objectives decide if your figures are to be net or gross. Typically, I set gross figures and a standard related to overall expenses, such as 20% (without staff time). You may want to include a percentage for staff time as well. If you have previous experience with any of these strategies, you can use historical information to set income and expense costs. (See Step 6 below as well.)

STEP 5. Determine Target Market(s) for Each Strategy/Objective

Ask yourself: "Which individuals or groups of individuals will be the most likely to respond to this particular strategy?" This is also known as market segmentation. For example, while the annual appeal would be sent to most of your constituents (board, staff, former donors, former and current clients, vendors, etc.), an

invitation to the golf outing would be best received by people who play golf and companies who want to promote themselves to this audience.

STEP 6. Establish a Projected Budget for Each Objective

Budgets are very helpful to those of us who raise charitable dollars, often providing us with a reality check relative to what we thought we could raise. Using the *KISS* principle, the budget should be kept quite simple. Include assumptions made in determining your projected amounts. An in-house annual appeal budget might look something like this:

Revenue Sources	Projected/Assumptions	Actual
Current donors	\$28,000 (represents an average increase of 10% with a current donor retention rate of 75 %)	
New donors	\$ 7,000 (represents an average gift of \$50 from 140 donors)	
Total	\$35,000	

Expense Items	Projected/Assumptions	Actual
Design/printing	\$2,000	
Postage and mailing house	\$2,400(1st mailing to 5,000; follow-up mailing to LYBUNTS & SYBUNTS and thank you letters- all 1st class postage)	
Donor gift	\$500 (post-its w/agency logo and phone number enclosed in donor acknowledgment letters)	
Total	\$4,900	

NET PROJECTED: \$30,100

NET ACTUAL: \$ _____

The budget exercise is an excellent aid to your planning process in several ways: deciding on tactics such as sending a gift with the thank you letter, whether you will use first class or bulk postage, lists to be used (e.g., list rentals), how many letters will be sent in each mailing, phone call follow-ups, etc. (Incidentally, LYBUNTS/SYBUNTS refers to previous donors: *Last Year But Unfortunately Not This Year & Some Year But Unfortunately Not This Year*).

STEP 7. Determine the Key Players

Who will do all this work? Who will take charge? This part of the plan helps to answer those queries. While the annual appeal is usually staff-driven, a volunteer committee should lead the golf outing with a staff liaison. Even Grantseeking work can have a partnership that blends the time and talent of a staff member and a volunteer.

STEP 8. Create an Action Plan to Achieve Each Objective

This last step delineates what will be done, by whom and when for each objective. I usually format it in three columns:

Action Steps	Key Person(s)	Timeline
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

Each action step can also be viewed as a tactic, a piece necessary to get the job done. The key person column should not only reflect the Executive Director's and/or Director of Development's name. A few hints about putting this piece of the planning in place: first list all important steps (no minutiae) in a logical sequence; next, put down the final date in the timeline first; then work backwards to determine other deadlines along the way; and lastly, decide who will do what based on talents and availability.

SOME FINAL WORDS...

Now you have a formula for putting together a workable resource development plan. But, if you want to achieve results don't just sit on the plan ... once completed, refer to it on a regular basis at staff and board meetings -- to monitor progress, to remind you and others of what will need attention soon and to make modifications along the way. As an added bonus, the same steps used to create a resource development plan can easily be applied to marketing, management and program planning, enabling you to approach and achieve organizational planning in a coordinated way.

In the final analysis, the Resource Development Plan is nothing more than a carefully crafted road map to assist you in successfully reaching your goals and advancing the mission of your organization.

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Susan Lee Walling is President & CEO of PhilanthropyWorks, LLC. This article was initially published in *Atterbury's Pennsylvania Nonprofit Report* in 1998.