



# fundraising tips that work

Type 'fundraising tips' into Google and you'll find literally millions of links worth of ideas on how to raise money. We've saved you the bother of reading them all by providing you with this definitive list of fundraising tips that work – follow these and you'll be fine. Really, you'll raise plenty.

## understand your donor.

**(they're just like you)**

Events like the WALK are common. I mean sure, the idea of freezing your butt off walking at night is kind of unique, but a walk is a run is a ride, right? Last year in North America over 1.6 billion was raised from the top 30 walk/run/ride events. For example, Relay for Life raised over \$400,000,000!

All this to say, millions of us give and will give to these types of events this year, so when we get asked, we aren't surprised or annoyed – especially when we know the person asking. Understand that most of the people you ask have given before to other friends and will likely give to you too – so relax!

## make it personal.

**(or, ignore what I just said)**

While your friends and family may 'get' the whole event-based donation thing, they expect to be treated right. They expect you to ask them personally (whether by email, letter or face-to-face). If you send out a 'Dear Nobody Specific' letter (just because you're too lazy to invest the extra 5 minutes to write their name and include a personal greeting), then don't be surprised when they don't give you a dime. Would you?

If your email or letter isn't personal then it isn't worth reading. Now, don't make it a long fork-in-the-eye letter either – get to your 'ask' early on and make it easy for them to know where, how far, why and when you are walking. And make sure you include an online link so they can act in the moment.

## set a goal.

(but don't be stupid)

Everyone needs a goal. It's okay to stretch for it, but be reasonable. If you hang around lots of people with money, you should expect to raise larger denominations. Fine. The average donor to events like the WALK gives \$50. Can you get 5-6 donors like that? Sure you can. So why not set a \$500 goal? If you hit it the first week, you can edit your goal in the system and raise even more. Be sure to include that goal in your letter to your donors – it helps them to have some context on how much it is you are trying to raise when they are writing the cheque.

## give to yourself first.

(if you won't, why should your donor?)

This is basic. If you don't have the conviction to sponsor yourself why are you asking me to support you? Give to yourself first. Give for the right reasons, but don't give anonymously – it helps when the people you ask see that you've dropped some coin too. Note: it doesn't matter how much you give generally (as long as you do), but if you're not cash-strapped, a \$20 gift will seem a bit cheap when the average is \$50. So live and give generously. It will do your heart good and encourage your donors.

## begin now.

(starting is half the battle)

Don't wait to be in the mood to ask people for money. That mood isn't likely going to hit you anytime soon. Begin now. Draft your ask letter using our [DONOR EMAIL TEMPLATE](#), identify your 30-40 prospects you want to hit up, send a test email to yourself to be sure everything works good and just begin. Send three personal emails by 4 pm and then go home. Tomorrow ask a co-worker to lunch and hit them up for \$50. Nice, you've got momentum. Next day fire off a nice letter to your mom or dad – that will boost your morale. Got it? Make it a daily campaign and you'll be good - enjoy the process, but whatever you do, begin now, don't wait until the night before.

## be bold.

(but never pushy)

People don't mind being asked, but don't be pushy. Stalking and 4 am calls: bad. If you've connected personally and made it easy for them to give & follow up, then give it a rest. People don't usually forget. They get busy or bothered or burdened or distracted – just like you. So ask, remind them once, and then send everyone one more email 48 hours before your WALK and leave it at that.

## share your story.

(because people give to people)

People know the world is broken. They get that there is a homeless issue. So don't flood them with endless data. Data won't help. The best thing you can do is to share your story about why this issue matters to you. Be authentic and transparent – they'll find it refreshing and attractive. Share your story and let them respond to *you*, because in the end, people give to people.

## say thank you.

(and follow-up)

Mom was right. Good manners go a long way in life. We need to say thank you, especially to your donors. So make sure you do it – say thank you and follow-up with a short, fun report on how your walk went and how your campaign ended up. This closes the loop appropriately in your donor's eye and sets you up nicely to connect with them next year.

## two favorite fundraising links

**The good:** how to write a great fundraising letter

<http://nonprofit.about.com/od/fundraising/tp/fundletters.htm>

**The ugly:** A case study on a really bad fundraising letter (this is helpful)

<http://changematters.blogspot.com/2006/10/on-asking-for-money-without-shame.html>