Welcome to LeadTime!

It's Spring: Time for Renewal.
This issue we look at Fundraising, Failing, Mission, and Money.

Redeeming Collaboration

How is it that 73% of over a hundred surveyed nonprofits have increased their clientele, while only 50% have increased their revenue in any way?

The answer: Collaboration.

Bridgespan Group's recent study reveals a cooperative trend that has greatly benefited nonprofits of all capacities, in one case saving the two collaborators over $270,000. But make no mistake, despite the economic downturn, these partnerships are not being formed out of economic distress as it is often assumed, but economic strategy.

Obviously, the sharing of facilities, resources, and personnel alone can result in attractive savings, but organizations are finding that collaboration can also become a powerful fundraising tactic. After all, the unity of service providers (especially dissimilar ones) creates a more holistic package, making pitches to potential donors all the more appealing. Maybe it's time for us all to seek out some local partnership potential.

To read more, check out Ben Gose's full article here.

Staying Afloat in a Financial Crisis

Kim Klein recently adapted her book, Reliable Fundraising in Unreliable Times into an article on crisis management, particularly financial issues. She focuses first on identifying the crisis and the subsequent steps to take, starting with the creation of a "crisis task force" for which she outlines important roles and responsibilities. Beyond the structural responses, Ms. Klein shows us some pitfalls of financial crisis management and appropriate approaches. For example, she emphasizes a shift in the crisis management paradigm from cost cutting to income raising. The need for proper communication with the donors, board, and public is expounded upon, and the article even gives valuable advice for a scandal-driven financial crisis.

This excellent resource is made available for download by the Grassroots Institute for Fundraising. Click here to read more.
Learning from Others' Failures

Nobody wants to admit their failures, let alone share them with others. It's associated with weakness, shame, mistakes. But one website is redeeming nonprofit and NGO blunders by instead turning them into learning opportunities. AdmittingFailure.com allows those involved in the nonprofit sector to hear about, examine, and learn from the failures of other organizations. The site is just getting off the ground, but the group hopes to become a grand database of What-Not-To-Do's and provide a transparency that prevents future repetition. Their tagline: "Learning from what’s not working. Creating space for what is."

Smart Stewardship

What sets NPO's apart from most businesses is that mission is the bottom line not profit. But, as Peter C. Brinckerhoff show us, profit is not the enemy, and is necessary for any healthy 501(c)(3). Aiming to just "break even" is the downfall of many organizations as it creates a tumultuous and exclusive relationship between growth and sustainability.

Mr. Brinckerhoff focuses his concise two-part article on good stewardship, examining the balance between mission and money, current and prospective programs. He suggests a great tool called the Smart Stewardship Decision Tree which can be tailored to your organization's values. The process: a question is posed and if the answer is "yes", you move to the next question, but if the answer is "no", the issue must be addressed first and the decision should be halted. By the end, issues of growth, capital, sustainability, and consistency are addressed.

To utilize this resource and read more check out the "Management Tip" section here.

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