A Beginner’s Guide to Fundraising

Fundraising can sometimes seem confusing, even scary... but it needn’t be. You see... great fundraisers aren’t born. They are made. Anyone can become a great fundraiser by learning the principles behind raising money, then practicing over and over again. While some people are naturally gifted fundraisers, for the most part, everyone in the fundraising world started off feeling confused and awkward.

In this section, we present a beginner’s guide to fundraising. The articles on this page represent the basic knowledge you need to get started with raising money for any church, school, or non-profit organization. Your best bet is to read through them in the order they are presented, because the later posts build on the earlier ones:

**How Anyone Can be a Superstar Fundraiser** – Great fundraisers aren’t born, they are made. See how anyone can learn how to be a great fundraiser.

**Fundraising Isn’t Evil!** – If your organization’s mission matters, then fundraising isn’t evil... it’s necessary! Without the money to carry out your programs and vision, your organization will not be able to succeed.

**How to Build Your Prospect List** – O.k., you’re ready to fundraise, but where do you start? How to build your first prospect list.

**What is a Fundraising Ask?** – Not all asks are for money. Learn the different types of asks and what makes an effective ask.

**How to Ask Anyone for Anything** – Whether you’re asking for money, time, talent, volunteer hours, or anything else... this article shows you how to make a great ask... for anything!
The 10 Steps to a Successful Fundraising Event – Fundraising events can be a great way to raise money. Use these ten steps to make sure your event is fun and profitable.

Building Fundraising Networks – Grow your fundraising virally by building strong and sustainable fundraising networks.

Effective Fundraising by Mail – Learn how to use direct mail to raise money for your non-profit.

Getting the Crowd Involved with Participatory Fundraising – Walk-a-thons, change bowls, candy sales, and other mass-fundraising efforts can pay off big for your school, church, or charity.

Fundraising on the Internet – How to stay in touch with your donors over the web and raise money effectively on the Internet.

Demystifying Grants – Do you understand the grant-writing process? Here’s how to find and apply for grants...

What to Look for in a Fundraising Database – Four essential features you’ll need in your organization’s next fundraising (or donor) database.

How to Write a Successful Fundraising Plan – Every non-profit, no matter how small, needs a written fundraising plan in order to succeed.

The Fundraising Authority on Twitter – Get great tips on non-profit development every day through Twitter at @FundraisingAuth.

Raising Money Without Going Crazy: The Basics of Non-Profit Fundraising – Check out Fundraising Authority founder Joe Garecht’s book on the fundraising basics.
Additional Resources: More Great Sites

For more information on raising money for your non-profit, check out our Article Archives, and also be sure to check out these fantastic fundraising sites:

A Small Change – Fundraising Blog presents great information on fundraising and non-profit development, edited by Jason Dick.

Step by Step Fundraising offers articles from lots of different authors, including The Fundraising Authority's own Joe Garecht.

Michael Rosen Says... is a great source of information on non-profit management and current events as they relate to non-profits, written by the author of Donor Centered Planned Gift Marketing.

Non-Profit Resource Center – Lots of free fundraising ideas and tips, from fundraising software provider Dojiggy.

Local Victory – If you are interested in raising money for a political candidate, campaign or party, check out Local Victory.

Remember, before you start a new on-profit or new fundraising activity/campaign, check with the organization you are working with and, if necessary, a lawyer in your area to learn the laws and regulations that apply to your fundraising efforts. Laws on fundraising vary by country, state, and municipality. Check with the non-profit you are working with and/or a lawyer before you start.