

# STRATEGIC PLANNING

## Fundraising Strategy

Financial SWOT Analysis  
Evaluating your Current Strategy  
Building a New Strategy  
Creating a Fundraising Plan



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# SWOT Analysis



A SWOT Analysis is a useful exercise to assess your current situation. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats for your organization. **S** and **W** are usually considered to be **INTERNAL** (things you can control), while **O** and **T** are **EXTERNAL** (things you can't control).

Take stock of where you are now - before planning any future changes. Keep this analysis focused on fundraising. Remember: Your nonprofit's fundraising strategy encompasses more than just earning donations from supporters. It involves your efforts to recruit new supporters, engage with existing ones, and grow your organization's influence, all to fund your mission more efficiently.

	Internal	External
POSITIVE	Strengths	Opportunities
NEGATIVE	Weakness	Threats

# SWOT Analysis

Now that you have everything written down, take your opportunities and threats and rank them. These are your Risks, some are larger than others, so rank them as greater risk to less risk.

GREATER RISK



LESS RISK

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Identify the actions and competencies needed to address the threats. How will you deal with these external forces?

**Threat #1** \_\_\_\_\_  
Action to address it \_\_\_\_\_

**Threat #2** \_\_\_\_\_  
Action to address it \_\_\_\_\_

**Threat #3** \_\_\_\_\_  
Action to address it: \_\_\_\_\_

**Threat #4** \_\_\_\_\_  
Action to address it: \_\_\_\_\_

# SWOT Analysis

Identify the actions and competencies needed to address the weaknesses in your organization. How can you use your strengths to meet these needs?

**Weakness #1:** \_\_\_\_\_

Action to address it: \_\_\_\_\_

**Weakness #2:** \_\_\_\_\_

Action to address it: \_\_\_\_\_

**Weakness #3:** \_\_\_\_\_

Action to address it: \_\_\_\_\_

**Weakness #4:** \_\_\_\_\_

Action to address it: \_\_\_\_\_

EXAMPLE	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Event	Ex: Polar Plunge	Ex: 5K		
Fundraising Campaign	Ex: Matching gift drive	Ex: Monthly donor push		
Stewardship Activities	Ex: Share annual report from previous year	Ex: Donor appreciation month		

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Event				
Fundraising Campaign				
Stewardship Activities				

# Current Strategy



Bloomerang.com (a trusted donor development platform) says there are 6 elements of a strong fundraising strategy. Use this to evaluate your CURRENT strategy.

## 1. Donor Stewardship

Donor stewardship is the process of developing strong relationships with supporters after they donate to your cause. When you build deeper relationships with them, you can turn one-time donors into ongoing—sometimes lifetime—supporters of your mission. Donor stewardship also helps you boost your donor retention rate, helping you earn much more over time.

**How are you stewarding your donors?**

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## 2. Major gifts

Your fundraising strategy should focus heavily on cultivating major gifts. Why? Because studies show that 88% of total dollars raised come from only 12% of donors; these are your major donors. When you create a tailored plan to build relationships with them, you'll earn more support for your mission.

**Who are your major donors?**

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## 3. Marketing

Your marketing plan describes how you will connect with your target audience and inform them of engagement opportunities. This involves recruiting new supporters and staying in touch with existing donors. Pursuing a multi-channel marketing strategy—communicating via social media, email, direct mail, and other communication channels—will allow you to expand your reach and promote your cause to the widest possible audience.

**Does your current marketing plan support fundraising efforts?**

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## 4. Online fundraising

No nonprofit fundraising plan is complete without an online fundraising strategy. Double the Donation's fundraising statistics show that 63% of donors in the U.S. and Canada prefer donating online using a credit or debit card. Your fundraising strategy should address how you will connect with supporters online.

**Do you use digital marketing? Do you use online platforms for registrations, sharing event plans, and sending personalized online communications? Do you have an online giving platform?**

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# Current Strategy

## 5. Events

Fundraising events engage supporters in person or online to offer a unique, exciting experience. Events like 5Ks, Giving Day challenges, auctions, peer-to-peer fundraisers, and galas should play a role in your fundraising strategy.

**What are your current fundraising events? Are they successful?**

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## 6. Strategic partnerships

Partnerships between nonprofits and for-profit organizations are more common and impactful than ever before. Businesses are looking for more opportunities to expand their corporate philanthropy programs to bolster their own reputation while giving back to the community. Nonprofits benefit from a variety of corporate philanthropy programs, from event sponsorships to in-kind donations to corporate matching gifts. Corporate partnerships are an effective, but often underutilized source of support for nonprofits.

**What strategic partnerships do you have? Have you used a corporate sponsor program or matching gifts?**

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As you begin to build your fundraising strategy, try to incorporate all 6 of these key elements. Consider which ones you are doing well and continue those. What elements can you improve and which ones can you incorporate?

# Build Your Strategy



- 1. Evaluate your current strategy.** You've done that already if you've followed the workbook.
- 2. Set goals.** We'll do that in the next session.
- 3. Assess your software solutions.** A modern fundraising strategy relies on powerful software solutions that consolidate fundraising into a centralized online system.
  - Assess your current fundraising toolkit and consider how your solutions work together to support your fundraising efforts. Are there any solutions or apps you're missing or that you'd like to replace with a different system or provider?
  - Basic tools of the trade:
    - CRM - store and manage donor information.
    - Email marketing software
    - Social media tools
    - Event planning software
  - Even better if these are integrated in one platform.
- 4. Determine your core fundraising initiatives.** Your fundraising strategy should describe your core fundraising campaigns that you intend to host throughout the year and relevant details for each initiative, including:
  - Type of fundraising campaign (5K, auction, gala, etc.)
  - Expected funds raised.
  - Date of each major campaign (at least a general idea)
  - Who is involved in planning and execution
  - We've provided a blank chart for you to complete
- 5. Conduct prospect research.** Identify prospective major or mid-tier donors that exhibit a willingness to give and capacity to do so. Fundraising is more about matching with donors who support your cause and less about a 'sales pitch.'
  - Especially helpful if you are planning an major fundraising campaigns, such as a capital campaign. This is where a good CRM or donor database comes into play. You might consider using a prospect research database.
    - Philanthropic indicators include past charitable giving to your nonprofit or similar organizations, political giving, and involvement as a volunteer or board member.
    - Wealth indicators include real estate ownership, SEC holdings, and the size of past charitable gifts.
  - Who on your donor list would be a good prospect for a major or mid-level donation?
- 6. Make giving easy.** Consider a virtual fundraising platform, update your website, streamline your giving page and include links to your donation form throughout your other marketing platforms.
- 7. Create a donor stewardship process.** This is crucial for long-lasting donor relationships and boosting donor retention.
  - Follow these steps to build your donor stewardship process:
    - Set guidelines for how often you'll communicate with donors.
    - Assign roles and responsibilities. For example, you might recruit some of your board members to meet with current or prospective major donors.
    - Personalize outreach. Use the information in your donor database to personalize your donor outreach.
    - Incorporate phone and Zoom calls and in-person meetings. This helps donors associate your organization with a friendly face and allows you to understand their motivations and interests.
    - Prioritize appreciation efforts. Donors should feel appreciated and valued by your organization as individuals.

# Build Your Strategy

**8. Plan your marketing approach.** You need to get the word out among your target audience members. Use multiple platforms, such as:

- Social media - research which platforms are the best fit for your target audience.
- Email - segment emails based on characteristics like new donors, long-time or monthly.
- Your website - should be a useful resource to help supporters learn more about your mission and engage with you.
- Direct mail - a more personalized form of communication. You can also send small items like stickers or a handwritten letter.

**9. Develop database hygiene procedures.** Cleaning up your donor database from time to time ensures that you're only using the most updated and accurate information when pursuing stewardship efforts or new marketing initiatives.

- Adopt ongoing data hygiene practices such as:
  - Regularly audit your database for inaccuracies.
  - Eliminate errors, duplicate data, or outdated information.
  - Create an ongoing data hygiene process so staff members know how to properly enter information and correct mistakes.
- \*If you don't have a donor database, now is the time to start one!

**10. Identify and track key performance indicators.** To consistently improve and evolve your fundraising strategy, choose and measure a variety of key performance indicators.

- A few effective metrics to track include:
  - Donor retention rate
  - Average gift size
  - Email open and click-through rates
  - Event attendance rate
  - Social media follower growth
  - Social media impressions/reach
  - Donor lifetime value
  - New donors acquired
- If certain metrics aren't performing as well as you thought they would, you can adjust your approach and test out new strategies.
- You can use these metrics to create a [transparent, well-rounded annual report](#), giving supporters and other stakeholders a deeper understanding of your organization's current situation and plans for the future.

\*10 Steps was copied from a free resource on bloomerang.com. You can find other resources and more detailed information on their [website](#). I've also included links to some of their specific resources throughout this document.

# Setting Goals

Consider the overall goals of your organization as you begin to think specifically about your **fundraising goals**. Don't just look at dollars raised; consider other factors as well. Remember, you can't control the outputs (how much money someone donates), but you can control the inputs (how many donors you will call).

Consider other factors, such as donor engagement, return on investment, event costs, and expanding your donor list. And remember the **6 key elements** of a good fundraising strategy as you begin to set your goals.

1. Donor Stewardship
2. Marketing
3. Major Gifts
4. Events
5. Online fundraising
6. Strategic Partnerships

## Make your goals SMART

- S** **SPECIFIC**  
Who, what, when, where and how?
- M** **MEASURABLE**  
How will I know I met my goal?
- A** **ATTAINABLE**  
Is my goal realistic? Is it tied to inputs or outputs?
- R** **RELEVANT**  
Does my goal align with our Core Values?
- T** **TIME BOUND**  
When does the goal start and end?

Now take your goals and write 1-2 activities to achieve those goals. This is an important step to ensure you know what steps to take to reach your goals.

Goal #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal #4: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity #2: \_\_\_\_\_

# Diversifying Income



Before you begin planning, consider how diversified your sources of income currently are. Diversifying income is crucial for nonprofits to ensure long-term sustainability, reduce financial risk, and maintain resilience against economic uncertainty. By cultivating multiple revenue streams, organizations can achieve greater financial stability, expand their reach and impact, and foster innovation that might be stifled by reliance on a single funding source.

**First, determine what types of funding you are currently receiving.**

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Then think about how you might diversify your income streams. Consider the following:

- Individual giving
  - Annual giving, monthly giving, major gifts, one-time gifts
- Grants
  - Project needs, capital, operations
- Corporate sponsorships
  - Employee giving, matching gifts
- Fundraising events
  - Ticket sales, auctions, sponsors
- Planned giving
- Earned Income
  - Some nonprofits charge a fee for certain services, or have membership dues, etc.

## Updated Fundraising Timeline

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Event				
Fundraising Campaign				
Stewardship Activities				

## Fundraising Plan Specifics

List every fundraising initiative from the previous chart then fill in the details:

Fundraising Initiative from previous chart	Estimated Cost	Est. Revenue	Team in Charge + Point Person	Staff Hours + Volunteers Needed

# Grants



We did not cover grants in this Fundraising Plan. However, grants are a great way to diversify your income streams. At the Center for Nonprofits, we have a free grant database you can use. We also have recommendations for grant consultants and best practices based on the size of your organization.

As you write grants or start looking more into them, it can be helpful to keep track of them, especially those you can apply for repeatedly. It may be helpful to create an Excel or other spreadsheet to track the following:

- Name of grant
- Application timeline
- How often can you apply
- Link to the application or directions on how to apply
- Due date
- Contact information
- Website
- Main areas of interest
- \$ amount won previously (by you)
- Highest \$ amount they've given (to anyone)
- Geographic reach
- Notes or information shared by the funder
- Reporting requirements
  - If nothing is required, it is still a good idea to follow up with a thank you or an update on the grant's impact.
- Date for public thank you

Please reach out to Emily at the CNP if we can offer any guidance or answer questions. We are here to help you reach your goals and fulfill your mission as you serve your community.

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Scan the QR code or visit [uafs.edu/ced/cnp](https://uafs.edu/ced/cnp) for more information.



We have provided these resources as a quick reference and we hope you find them helpful. If you'd like to schedule a more robust full-day Strategic Planning workshop led by one of our expert trainers, please complete the [Training Request form](https://uafs.edu/ced/training-catalog.php) (uafs.edu/ced/training-catalog.php). Our nonprofit members receive a discounted rate, for the Course Description, put 'Nonprofit Strategic Planning' and someone will be in touch with you soon.

