

Summer reading can increase revenue in the fall

Written by Cynthia Bond Hopson, Ph.D.
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To be the best, learn from the best – and in fundraising, Pearl Saad and her husband Melvin B. Shaw, have the creds to not just teach fundraising essentials but to literally "write the books" about it. In an updated version of *The Fundraiser's Guide to Soliciting Gifts*, first published in 2008, everything you need to know is laid out in this small but powerful compilation in the form of how to's for the novice and gentle reminders for the veteran.

These amazing 33 pages are a quick but empowering read from an accomplished couple with more than 30 years of experience in innovative fund development, capital campaign research, planning, design and implementation. Topics covered include the language and philosophy of the "ask," how to cultivate, honor, recognize and involve donors, preparing for solicitation visits, and the importance of personal and meaningful interaction with potentials.

As someone who has to inspire gifts and investment into my cause, (I manage The Black College Fund which supports the 11 United Methodist Church-related historically Black colleges and universities) I felt better prepared, even inspired to go out and "win friends and influence people" to share. While I never try to sell anything I don't invest or believe in, their "It's an honor to be selected as the person who asks others to give" philosophy was refreshing and empowering. I am all the things listed in the title of their new book, *Prerequisites for Fundraising Success, 18 Things Every Fundraising Professional, Board Member, or Volunteer Needs to Know*, so reading it was a logical next step.

Prerequisites, is a homerun, slam dunk and a touchdown! Whether you're trying to figure out which way is up or down, this is **the** book you want to get this year. "Fundraising is a competitive endeavor" was my favorite quote and if you are ill equipped for the competition, get this book and then proceed. They cover funding your fundraising, the importance of teamwork and commitment to the cause, and every chapter has a checklist and action steps to keep you on course. If you're serious about improving your fundraising success, and who isn't these days, this resource will be a blessing for everybody who goes out in your name to raise money. Fundraising is an art and a science and those who excel at it must understand the processes and intricacies that lead to success. Again, this roadmap will enable the newcomer and provide additional tools for the pro—either way, you're bound to learn something new.

Pearl and Mel are consummate professionals and they continue to impress and amaze me with their creativity, insights and extensive knowledge of all things fund related. With these two books, they take comprehensive fundraising, development and management to a new and more accessible level. Both are available from their website, www.fundraisinggoodtimes.com, and are economical enough to get one for each team member.

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