

FUNdraising Good Times: Fundraising Reflections for 2013

Written by Mel and Pearl Shaw
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Part one of a two part series

The yearend can be a perfect time to reflect on your 2013 fundraising activities and to anticipate 2014. If you are a nonprofit CEO, board member, staff or volunteer we have three questions to focus your reflections.

#1 - What have you done well? Reflect on your nonprofit's fundraising successes. Approach this from a feeling level – which activities brought joy or excitement to you and your team? When did you feel you worked well together? Were there unexpected moments of joy – perhaps when receiving an unanticipated gift, or upon viewing a room full of donors and supporters at your annual event? Was a new staff person hired? Did she inspire good feelings as she implemented long-delayed projects? Feel the good feelings and record a few notes.

Now approach this from a fact-based place. Pull out fundraising reports and look at the year-end numbers. Identify areas where revenue increased. Perhaps your nonprofit saw an increase in annual giving. Maybe more donors increased their giving from the prior year. Did the number of grants increase?

Finally, reflect on new programs, events or technology. Was a program to engage younger donors launched? A new database implemented? Remember to list activities that brought in revenue for 2013, as well as those that plant seeds for the future. For example, while a planned giving program may not yield revenue for years to come, implementing the program is a current year success.

#2 - Which activities or strategies didn't meet expectations? Reflect on those things that didn't go as well as planned. Don't sweep them under the rug. Take time to remember the outcome you had sought and compare that with the results. What could have been done differently? Where did you feel disappointment, fatigue, anger or failure? What brought these feelings on? Dig deep. Were you disappointed in yourself? In volunteers, board members, the CEO or staff? Write down your thoughts. Look again at the fundraising reports. Which activities or strategies did not yield the anticipated revenue? Take notes.

#3 - Were your 2013 goals realistic? Reflect on your goals and outcomes. As 2013 began, did

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you feel your fundraising goals were achievable? Did you feel expansive, empowered and energized, ready to talk with donors and funders and share the organization's vision and fundraising goals? Or did you feel overwhelmed, worried and isolated? Go back to those feeling places and take a few notes. Pull out your 2013 fundraising plan. What were the financial goals and timeframes? What resources were allocated to achieve the goals? Did staff, board members, the CEO and volunteers fulfill their commitments? Did you? What went "according to plan?" Where did challenges arise? As you think back over the year, were the goals realistic? Take notes.

Next week: use your reflections as you plan for 2014

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Mel and Pearl Shaw are the authors of " [Prerequisites for Fundraising Success](#) ." They position nonprofits for fundraising success. Visit them at www.saadandshaw.com