

# Not-for-Profit Industry

## Capital Campaign Fundraising Series #1:

### 7 Important Things You Need to Know About Today's Capital Campaigns

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This article, the first of our four-part series about the new trends in capital campaign fundraising, focuses on the seven important things you need to know about today's capital campaigns.

Massive undertakings like capital campaigns require all the tools in the toolshed. And with today's technology, the available tools have never been more effective.

Yet nonprofits are often behind the times when it comes to technology and business trends. They can be slow to invest in and upgrade their systems and practices. So while communication and business practices evolve rapidly, nonprofits are left in the wake, doing work in old ways that are less efficient.

Let's put a stop to that by highlighting seven important trends in capital campaigns. They spell out how technology is changing the very fabric of this important type of fundraising.

#### **1. YOU DON'T NEED CAPITAL CAMPAIGN CONSULTANTS ON-SITE**

For decades, nonprofit leaders relied on capital campaign consultants to guide them through the campaign process. Consultants were on-site frequently, attending meetings, interviewing donors, advising staff, and campaign leaders. They often flew in from their offices and spent a day or two on-site every month or sometimes even more frequently. Campaign meetings were often scheduled based on the availability of the consultant. The on-site presence of consultants gave confidence to the staff, the campaign volunteers, and the board.

### **Capital Campaign**



But improved communication technology has decreased the need and importance of campaign consultants being on-site. While there are some aspects of the work that require consultants to be in attendance, for example board training or feasibility study interviews, much of what they do can be handled virtually through conference calls and video conferences.

Considering the costs of time and travel, this change in the way you can use a consultant will make a significant difference in your campaign costs.

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### 2. HIGH-LEVEL VOLUNTEERS ARE EASIER TO ENGAGE

Changes in communications technology have also made a great impact on the ability for nonprofits to work with high-level volunteers.

Many high level volunteers travel a great deal. Some have multiple homes in different parts of the country or the world. As a result, they are often unwilling or unable to participate in capital campaigns even if they wanted to do so.

But today with the ubiquitous and easy use of computers, document sharing, and conference/web calling, entire campaign committees can participate virtually with no loss of effectiveness.

### 3. CAPITAL CAMPAIGN CONSULTANTS WORK DIFFERENTLY

While there are some consultants who are set in their ways and continue to run their organizations as though it were 2005, many are adopting new, powerful strategies.

The fundamental shift is that rather than positioning themselves as the only experts, consultants now share the best online information and resources with their clients openly and generously. By using online resources like the *Capital Campaign Toolkit*, consultants put a wealth of information, organized in a clear and effective manner, in the hands of nonprofits. They let their clients take the wheel.

### 4. TRACKING CAMPAIGN PROGRESS IS EASIER

With more sophisticated and user-friendly tracking systems, organizations no longer have to rely on creating separate spreadsheets to keep track of their campaign progress. Simple add-on software like *Above Goal* provides an excellent way to track volunteer solicitations against the gift chart, create powerful and accurate campaign reports easily, and create customized campaign dashboards.

### 5. FANCY CAMPAIGN BROCHURES ARE UNNECESSARY

The days of printing thousands of campaign brochures are over. Campaign materials today include a variety of media such as slide decks, videos, on-demand short print runs, and other material that can change as the phases of the campaign evolve.

### Cole, Newton & Duran's Not-for-Profit Practice

Our nonprofit team has years of experience providing assurance, accounting, and tax services to a variety of organizations. Clients receive up-to-date information on the latest accounting developments and industry regulations.

Cole, Newton & Duran's team of professionals are involved in every stage of our client's engagement to ensure they are receiving high quality, responsive service.

Clients enjoy working with experts who help achieve their objectives. Clients receive industry knowledge and solutions they need to not only reach, but to exceed their strategic goals.

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### 6. BARRIERS TO BUILDING DONOR RELATIONSHIPS ARE GONE

Simple email has transformed the way we communicate with donors. In today's campaigns, email is the primary way to schedule meetings, communicate simple updates that make people feel like insiders, share information of mutual interest, and more. Unlike the old-fashioned, more formal modes of communication, email communication reduces barriers and diminishes differences in status. Today's campaigns make ample use of this remarkable donor development tool.

### 7. ONLINE CAMPAIGNS DOMINATE THE PUBLIC PHASE

In the old days, organizations mustered large groups of volunteers to solicit their friends. Those days are over. Today, organizations use crowd-sourced fundraising platforms to simplify the way they engage volunteers.

### HAVE YOU KEPT UP WITH THE TRENDS?

These changes make capital campaigns less daunting and provide more pathways to success. But despite all of the changes rattling the field, some things stay the same:

- > Capital campaigns still rely on a few big gifts, just as they did decades ago
- > Capital campaigns still rely on a pattern of gifts that calls for 80 percent or 90 percent of the money to come from 20 percent or 10 percent of the donors

That is the nature of capital campaign fundraising. That is what makes it so powerful.

When you dive into this kind of fundraising, you are forced to build real relationships with the relatively small group of people who can shape the future for your organization. So grab onto what is new and use it to fuel those relationships and your campaign.

For more information on how to put yourself in the driver's seat of your capital campaign, visit [www.CapitalCampaignToolkit.com](http://www.CapitalCampaignToolkit.com).

*The preceding is an article co-authored by Amy Eisenstein and Andrea Kihlstedt.*

### Contact Us

If you would like to discuss how Cole, Newton & Duran's not-for-profit team can help your organization with your accounting, tax, or consulting needs, please feel free to give me a call.

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