

# Not-for-Profit Industry

## Capital Campaign Fundraising Series #4:

### The Future of Capital Campaigns Fundraising: The Writing is on the Wall

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In the first three articles in this series ([Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), and [Part 3](#)), we highlighted the changes taking place in how people get expert, professional advice and the ways those shifts are playing out for capital campaigns. We discussed the changes that are shifting the practice of capital campaign consulting as well as new challenges and opportunities for building relationships with donors and volunteers.

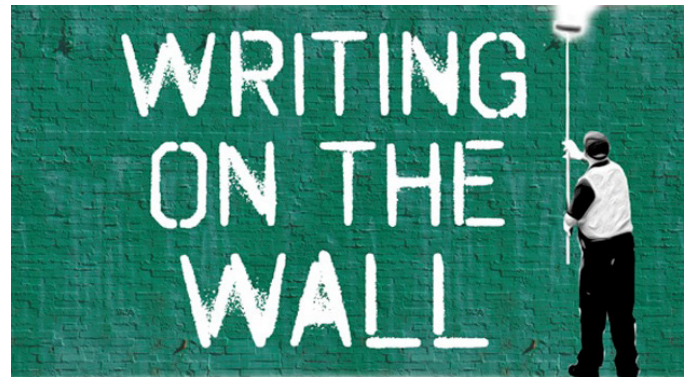
Now, in this fourth and final piece, we will give you a window into how we have adapted our professional practices to keep up with the changing world, and its likely consequences on the rest of the field in the foreseeable future.

#### **FUNDRAISING IS A TRUE PROFESSION**

For the first time in history, fundraising can finally be called a profession. In the last 10 years, it became possible to “major” in fundraising and earn a degree in this field. You can be certified in fundraising with the CFRE, and even achieve an advanced certification, ACFRE.

Not only that, for the first time, we have fundraising data to prove or disprove “best practices.” Fundraising is no longer about hunches and instincts, but about data-driven results.

So, with all these resources, information, and access at your fingertips, why shouldn't professional fundraisers have the tools and ability to lead their own capital campaigns?



#### **THE CLOSELY HELD SECRETS OF CAMPAIGNS CONSULTANTS**

Until recently, campaigns usually took place only once every 10 or 20 years, so even seasoned, long-time development staffers had only minimal experience planning and running them, and little access to expert information beside capital campaign professionals.

Many development directors have worked for organizations while they were in campaigns, but few have run a campaign from start to finish. And even fewer have deep experience with multiple campaigns. As a result, experienced consultants held a lock on the ability and experience of running multiple campaigns from start to finish.

Since campaigns are such high-stakes fundraising endeavors, board and staff members do not feel confident “winging it.” And, until recently, the “formula” for leading successful capital campaigns has been a closely held secret of consultants.

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### **PANDORA'S BOX IS OPEN: CONSULTANT SECRETS ARE OUT**

Almost two years ago, we decided to create a toolkit that provides nonprofit staff and board members with access to resources necessary to guide their own campaigns. In that process, we would make available the closely held expertise and information of campaign consultants on a dedicated website.

Thus, the [Capital Campaign Toolkit](#) was born—a comprehensive online resource that makes essential professional tools available for organizations planning capital campaigns.

The Toolkit provides a step-by-step guide for running a successful campaign. Each step provides downloadable tools, worksheets, checklists, and resources an organization needs for a successful campaign in a format that can be adapted and branded to the specifics of the campaign.

With the Toolkit, in-house, professional fundraisers can guide their organizations through a capital campaign.

### **CHANGING ROLES OF CAPITAL CAMPAIGN CONSULTANTS**

As in-house expertise gets more and more professionalized and access to online information becomes more readily available, consultants' roles are changing to adapt to the new professional world.

We see the Toolkit as an opportunity for staff and consultants to work together. They will finally be on the same page, literally and figuratively. And, they will use a shared roadmap for their campaign, provided by the Toolkit.

The Toolkit will not eliminate the need for consultants. In most organizations, a seasoned, experienced, outside expert will still add important value. Nonprofit organizations using the Toolkit, however, will use campaign consultants in more targeted ways.

We see campaign consultants of the future being hired for:

- > Feasibility studies
- > Developing a case for support
- > Ongoing virtual coaching
- > Solicitation training for staff and volunteers
- > Board training

### **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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Consultants, by virtue of their deep campaign experience, will continue to provide important, well-informed judgment and advice. In their roles as outside experts, they will lend credibility to the campaign design and process. But they will serve more as trusted advisors than as the sole source of expertise and information.

### HOW YOU CAN COMBINE ONLINE INFORMATION WITH EXPERTISE

Some consultants are convinced that nothing can replace their full-on expertise. But others are exploring new ways of providing services to their clients.

Yes, the writing is on the wall. People will get expert information about capital campaigns online, just like they get legal, medical, and accounting advice.

While the online resources will not eliminate the need for capital campaign consultants, it will most certainly bring new practices and opportunities to both organizations and consultants.

With essential material of capital campaigns now available at a fraction of the price of a full-service consultant, organizations will now be able to use consultants for what they do best—guidance informed by deep experience, on-site training, and the power of outside expertise.

*The preceding is an article co-authored by Amy Eisenstein and Andrea Kihlstedt. Amy Eisenstein, ACFRE, and Andrea Kihlstedt have developed the ground-breaking Capital Campaign Toolkit, an on-line step-by-step guide to capital campaign fundraising. Visit [www.CapitalCampaignToolkit.com](http://www.CapitalCampaignToolkit.com).*

### 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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