

## Fund-Raising Consultants

Fund-raising consultants can be a godsend to non-profits. For organizations with an inexperienced, small, or nonexistent staff, they can do everything from mentoring a budding development director to designing specific campaigns and tools to setting up the organizational structure for an ongoing fund-raising effort. Larger organizations with considerable experience in fund-raising and a fully professional development staff can benefit from a consultant's mastery of the process of initiating new types of fund-raising efforts and reorienting the development department.

A) Basically there are two types of consultants:

- 1) National or regional firms offering a full range of services and a large staff experienced in all facets of fund-raising and well versed in the needs of all types of non-profits.
- 2) Locally based individual consultants or minimally staffed firms that know a particular community's fund-raising climate and resources and perhaps specialize in one or more broad types of non-profit organizations---the arts, education, health care, etc.

B) A proposal from a first-class consulting firm, large or small, to act as counsel in a fund-raising campaign would likely include the offer to help determine:

- 1) The case for support
- 2) The campaign plan
- 3) Key prospects and their suggested giving levels
- 4) Individual strategies for major-gift solicitations
- 5) Volunteer leadership
- 6) Volunteer solicitors
- 7) The proportion of gifts to be sought from corporations, foundations, & individuals
- 8) The campaign goal

C) There are four absolute caveats in engaging consultants:

- 1) Never hire consultants whose regimen and methodology are unyielding. Consultants should be flexible in the services they provide and willing to adapt to an organization's processes.
- 2) Never hire consultants who request that they be paid a percentage of the funds raised in a campaign. This is regarded as unethical by the industry.
- 3) Never hire consultants unless you are committed to taking their advice and following their counsel. To do otherwise is to throw your money away.
- 4) Never hire consultants to ask for the money. That's the job of your volunteers.