



HOW TO BE A **SUPER- SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISER**

THE FAIL-PROOF METHOD

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This document is intended to help you become A Super Successful Fundraiser!

It is derived from the study of successful fundraisers over the years. In here is a recommended method that you can customize to make your own high impact fundraising campaign. We would be delighted to hear your thoughts/suggestions/inputs towards improving this document.

Your journey as a fundraiser and your learnings which you would like to share will be immensely helpful to future fundraisers to improve this guide.

Please write to us at tmm@unitedwaymumbai.org

CONGRATULATIONS!

There is only one mandatory requirement to be a fundraiser:

A Willingness to Ask!

Most people find it uncomfortable to ask others for money; for many it is intimidating. The key to be a success at fundraising is to overcome any reservations you may have about asking and build your ability to ask.



Whether you are a seasoned or a first-time fundraiser, our fail-proof, well-tested fundraising strategy will ensure your success. As with all useful things, this is a compilation of common sense steps to help you be as effective and efficient as possible.

As asking others to contribute to your cause is personal, no two fundraiser campaigns are exactly the same. Feel free to adapt it to what works best for you.

Although this is not a competition, it's good to see, learn and get inspired by others like you on the [leaderboard](#) on our website and it is good to know you are in the company of like-minded people who have put a cause above themselves for which to raise funds.

Remember, if you have raised even ₹ 100, you are ahead of at least 1000 non-starter fundraisers on the list; millions of others who wish to do good, but have not taken action and billions of others who don't care. This makes you a pretty special person.

First, the bad news - successfully fundraising for your cause will require an investment of time and effort on your part. The most important factor is your **motivation**. Now, the good news - it is not difficult; **anyone** can raise money for a cause. Easy peasy.

AS LONG AS YOU KNOW PEOPLE WHOM YOU CAN ASK AND ARE WILLING TO ASK.





If you know what you fear, it becomes easier to face and overcome it.

At its heart, fundraising gives others a means to make a difference through a person they trust. If they believe your cause matters and you are earnest about helping it, of course they will give! Only question then.. is how much to ask for.

It **won't** destroy your friendships, it **won't** diminish your social standing, Its **only** embarrassing if you overthink it as a rejection of you. You are **not** begging, you are bringing the attention of your friends to something you care about and giving them the opportunity to stand with you and help create a difference with you.

Above all, you are **achieving real world, real change** for a cause that desperately needs your help.

On to the nuts and bolts of fundraising! There are three components to a fundraising campaign:

The Plan, the Ask and the Thank You.

A plan gives structure and purpose to your campaign. It keeps you focused on the steps you need to take to reach your goal. We have the sure shot method to fundraise outlined in the next section. It comprises of the following:

1. There are a number of causes and charities that need support. To make your campaign impactful, decide upon which one matters the most to you and research the charities that work in that field.
2. Create a fundraising page on the UWM website, wherein you select your chosen NGO, set a target amount & add your appeal.
3. List down all the contacts you know that you can reach out to, to create a database.
4. Divide your contacts into lists of those who are most likely to donate, those less likely to donate, etc.
5. Ask them to support you.

(Each of these is explained in detail after 'The Thank You' section)

The Plan



The Ask



The Plan, **the Ask** and the Thank You.

Too many fundraising campaigns die in the planning stage because they somehow never reach the most important part – **asking** for contributions.

If you don't ask, you don't get. The number one reason why people don't give is because they were never asked.

People always give to people. If they give, it will be in response to your passion so avoid long, rambling appeals with information overkill. Provide them with all the necessary information you have on why it is a great thing to do.

Tell them it's ok to say no. Statistics show that more people give when they feel they have the freedom to make a choice about giving, rather than feeling they are being pressurized to do so

It could take 3 asks to convince a donor. Be mentally prepared to approach them at least 3 times. This can be done creatively each time. After three times, use your judgment on whether or not to pursue it.

The Plan, the Ask and **the Thank You.**

Make your donor feel valued and happy for having contributed to you. Express your delight. We recommend thanking the donor on at least 3 occasions

Thank them as soon as you can. Other times you can thank them is on race day, while sending them a physical print of their 80G receipt, in your general update notes to everyone, etc. you get a mail notification the instant you get a donation so you can immediately thank them.

A **thoughtful and sincere gesture of gratitude** goes a long way in assuring a donor and cements their decision to support you for future campaigns. It also validates their decision to support you.

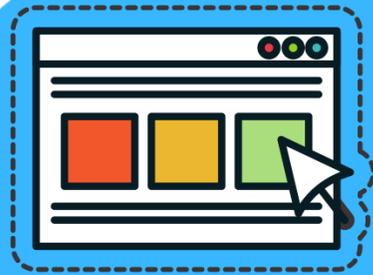
Examples are: A handwritten [note/card](#), a small gift, a thank you party, a special social media post, an invitation to the NGO program. Offering a service for the donor, etc.

The Thank You

IMPORTANT



Know the cause you are supporting, well. Visit them, meet the beneficiaries,. Understand the work and how the NGO helps change lives. Your informed sincerity for the cause is a critical factor in your success.



Create your page, write an appeal that is most likely to resonate with the people you are going to connect with. Focus more on the solution than the problem. Everyone understands the problem easily. It is the solution that interests them.

Add pictures; if you can, add a video appeal (if you can make it interesting and sincere). Only your friends are going to watch it so have fun with it; your phone camera works just fine.



The Plan (In detail)

On average, a fundraiser gets around 20 donors on their page. The most successful fundraisers manage 50+ donors. The highest we have seen is 585 donors! Set your donor target. This is actually a much more important target than the monetary one for your fundraiser. Aiming to get a certain number of people to donate is an easier approach.



Set the target carefully – too high and it will look like a huge, unfulfilled task; too low and it will be over before you know it and will have underutilized your potential. A good rule of thumb is to estimate an amount that you are fairly certain you can get from people who are close to you and set a target that is double or triple that amount (you can always revise target anytime).

You can also preset specific donation amounts- eg Rs 1000 towards X, Rs 2500 towards Y.





- Prepare your grand database of all the people you know. Pull out all your contacts into one document (eg:Excel). Download your social media friends' details. Export your contact list from your mails. Export your phone contacts. Add them all into one excel sheet.
- If you have a small list (less than 50), Add people who may be outside of these lists like relatives, co-workers etc.



- Select a list of 50 people from your database (A list) who are most likely to support you. Select 10 (A+ List) from that, who most certainly will (usually your best friends, close family, close colleagues). These 10 should have ideally helped you complete 20% to 30% of your target and built your confidence. Include yourself in the 10. The rest of your database comprises of the B list (people who might support) and C list (the world at large)



- Congratulate yourself when you're done. Your contacts database is a valuable document, irrespective of your fundraising effort and an affirmation of the large number of people you actually know. There is a high probability you are going to skip this because it is a time intensive step, but everyone who has done it, swears by it, since you often discover several people you would like to reconnect with.



**MAKE THE FIRST
DONATION YOURSELF.
LEAD BY EXAMPLE.
YOUR DONATION LENDS
CREDIBILITY TO YOUR APPEAL.**



- Write / Call / Message with your fundraiser link
- If needed, let them know the amount you expect, to help them out
- Request them to share your fundraising page with a small note, on their social network. When they do, re-share the post and thank them on your network.



- Write / Call / Message to tell them why you're doing this and why you're reaching out to them.
- **Asking in person is most effective, followed by a phone call, personalized messages & emails. Don't forget to WhatsApp them**
- Give your A-List 2-3 weeks at the most
- Include a thank you note for support received thus far
- Ask specific questions or advice on something. This is a good way to elicit a reply to your mail
- Tag them on your social media posts when they donate and thank them via email and publicly
- Typically, it may take up to 3 reminders for a contribution. Follow ups also show you are serious about your campaign and are writing to them specifically, rather than sending mass emails
- Follow up under the guise of updates / thank you messages, etc. to keep the tone gentle

NOTE

Consider revising your target if you haven't reached 60-70% of it by now.

The A list was your best bet. However, you may have left out people who should have been on the A list, from your database. Take a look at it again and prepare a B list of people who know you and can be described as friends. Casual acquaintances and general contacts belong to the C list, which is your last resort.



Personalisation is the key to successful fundraising. Depending on how large your B list is, use simple tools like [mail merge](#) to mail a large number of people, while making it appear personalised.

You could ask for their support through either contributing to your fundraising effort or supporting it by sharing your campaign on social media. Follow up the first mail with an update and then with an outline of what could be accomplished with the funds.



Leverage your social media presence (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) If you can get people to share the appeal link, that's worth a lot and will greatly expand your reach. With each share, the

social media algorithms judge it higher on relevance parameters and push it to appear on more newsfeeds. If you have contacts, consider PR help from journalists. The C List may not generate a big leap in your collection, since, fundamentally, people give to people. However, if you take it as an **attempt to champion and create awareness** for the cause to as many people as possible, you are creating goodwill and familiarity for the NGO.

Other things you should know.



A typical fundraiser campaign lasts 4-5 weeks, after which it totally depends on your motivation to keep it going.

The success of your campaign depends critically on your motivation, zeal and drive.

Invest in keeping it high.



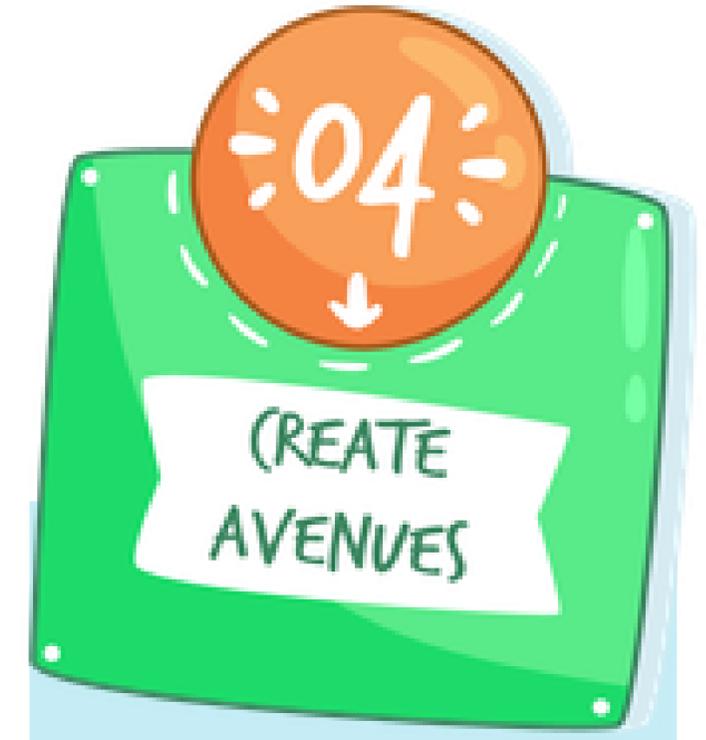
Remind everyone about your campaign through all the media available to you: profile pictures (WhatsApp/Facebook/Twitter, etc.), email signature, badge, custom t-shirt, etc.

Make it impossible for people to miss your fundraising campaign.



Innovative campaigns, which are quirky, touching, thoughtful and fun do very well, for e.g. Can you promise to do something very unlike you, if people help you reach your target? Like, run in a silly costume?

A willingness to embarrass yourself works even better



Can you consider throwing a party, with games that contribute to the fundraiser campaign? Or offer your skills for cash? Sell stuff you don't need and add the amount raised to the fundraiser campaign.

(Teach something, Do something, Monetize an ability)



Giving to a charity benefits the giver deeply. All the research conducted on the psychology of giving lists the emotional benefits, positive reinforcement and sense of feeling good that comes from giving to a good cause. The overarching conclusion is that donors feel happiest if they give to a charity via a friend, relative or social connection rather than simply making an anonymous donation to a worthy cause.

ALL THAT IS NEEDED IS FOR YOU TO ASK FOR IT

There may come a time when you might feel demotivated by unresponsive people, or take it personally. **DON'T**. It is natural for some people to be cynical, unwilling to contribute or just have a different attitude about giving to charity. Like we said before, the most important factor is your motivation. You must protect and nurture it. Every Rupee you raise is funds that did not exist for the beneficiary. Without you, those funds will never be raised. It is incredible how even the smallest of amounts can create transformative changes in the lives of the less privileged.



Good luck from all of us at United Way Mumbai



THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

