

# Seven keys to a successful capital campaign



**A well-planned and well-executed capital campaign - by both small and large organisations - can attract new support. But what are the key factors for success?**

If a capital campaign can raise the most amount of money, in the most cost-effective manner and often in the shortest amount of time, why isn't everyone running capital campaigns?

For most organisations a capital campaign would seem to be the domain of larger not for profits. The reality is that smaller organisations have just as much opportunity to run a successful capital campaign as their larger cousins.

So, what is a capital campaign? Xponential's website offers a succinct explanation as well as many DIY 'EZY' tools for NFP's contemplating a capital campaign.

Xponential at [www.xponential.com.au](http://www.xponential.com.au) explains that, put simply, a capital campaign raises large sums of money for a one-off specific need outside of the annual operating costs of an organisation. It relies on influential volunteers undertaking peer-to-peer gift seeking.

Most commonly capital campaigns are used to raise money for buildings and refurbishments.

However, they can also be useful for endowments, expensive and mission critical equipment, and capacity building.

But a capital campaign is not just about raising large sums of money. When well planned and executed they can act to engage and excite donors and stakeholders and attract new support.

In trying to identify the factors that make up a successful capital campaign, I've identified seven key elements:

## **1. MARKET RESEARCH - due diligence**

Conducting market research prior to a capital campaign can offer rewards far beyond simply assessing risk. If well executed, such a research can provide focus and momentum for the entire campaign. Good market research establishes a confident foundation to build your campaign on. Xponential's website provides an online tool "capEZY" to help an organisation evaluate its campaign readiness.

## **2. CASE FOR SUPPORT- emotional strategy**

Is your case for support compelling, imperative, motivating and succinct? As fundraisers, we learn early this is the most important document that an organisation can have if it is seeking philanthropic support. We spend hours painstakingly honing this foundation document that tells the world why they should give to our organisation. However, we don't always get it right. Xponential provides "caseEZY" as a way of making sure your case for support is effective.

## **3. MARKETING COLLATERAL- tools that talk**

In a world of web-based fundraising and other social media and internet possibilities, is there still a place for printed marketing materials to support your Capital Campaign? How do you capture a donor's interest and how do you get attention grabbing impact on an often-laughable budget? Much of the success of a capital campaign can be related to its "prestige" value. Therefore, quality collateral is a must for most campaigns. The good news is that strong creativity and focused collateral can keep the cost down, remembering that it is the peer to peer ask that will provide 80 per cent of the motivation for a prospective donor to give.

## **4. LEADERSHIP- peer to peer strategy**

Choosing the right volunteers can make all the difference in the success of a campaign. The right volunteer can help ensure success by opening doors to potential donors that the organisation would otherwise not be able to approach. An effective campaign leader inspires others to succeed and helps the volunteer recruitment process by providing knowledgeable, exciting and committed leadership. Using the "leadEZY" tool on the Xponential website is an effective way of evaluating the leadership potential of your campaign advocates.

## **5. GIFT PROSPECTS- market strategy**

Is the BRW Rich 200 list really the ultimate big gift prospect list? The ability to identify, quantify and qualify gift prospects for a capital campaign is fundamental to campaign success. Today it is important to be confident that you know both who you are asking and how much you are asking for.

So how many prospects do you need and how much research should you undertake? The "giftEZY" and "prospectEZY" tools can help you identify that information giving you fundamental information on the number and size of gifts required for your campaign to be successful at the same time.

## **6. THE ASK - blending the science with the practitioner's art**

Are you ready to ask for \$1 million? When it all comes down to it, if you don't ask, you don't get. With every big gift prospect, there is a small window of opportunity to make "the ask" as effective as possible. That opportunity is made possible by skillful direction and knowing who should say what and when. The "askEZY" tool is designed as a quick and simple tool for you to check the effectiveness of your peer-to-peer asks.

## **7. CAMPAIGN MANAGEMENT- the fast track to success**

Behind every great campaign there is a great campaign director. Behind every great campaign director there is a great team. A capital campaign is a significant commitment of time and resources. What is the cost of a capital campaign and can you afford it? Even with the help of great tools like those mentioned, it is the human resources that are the most critical factor to a successful campaign. Experience, expertise and skill cannot be downloaded from "the net". Talk to experienced capital campaign practitioners. You can contact Xponential. They are happy to offer obligation free advice.

So why isn't everyone running capital campaigns? Well, not every organisation has the urgent need for a large sum of money and instead needs to remain focused on raising funds for its day to day operating costs.

Further to this, capital campaigns are a highly specialised and resource-demanding form of fundraising. However, the tools available online today will help to provide significant confidence to those organisations asking the question: Can we run a successful capital campaign?

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