

# Fundraising 101: How to Acquire Donors in the Context of Ministry

In order to have sufficient funds in your ministry, you must learn how to build relationships and acquire donors. Learn more about better donor acquisition for your ministry!

## Introduction

Brad: Many of the people on this call are natural pastors. They're wired by that.

They're wired by God that way. They're gifted. They're gifted friendship developers, nurturers. That's just what they do, and God has given them great skill in that.

But acquisition, research, connections, all of that is somewhat of a new skill. And of course, that opens up a whole funnel that allows their natural skills to just flourish.

And you have a lot of natural pastoral skills. How do you, and then I'm assuming once you kind of learn some acquisition skills all of a sudden you kind of got flooded with pastoral opportunities, which you love, and you're good at.

Give a little coaching on where do you move as a pastor to something that feels very unnatural. That acquisition and how do you build teams for that? Any advice you'd have on that?

Because it does feel a little foreign to somebody who's wired as a pastor. The nurturing, friendship building relationship building, does not feel foreign. Any thoughts on that?



## Pastors Are Already in the Acquisition Business

Rob: Yeah. Well, I'll begin with a facile thought that you should shoot down if you don't like it, Brad.

But it seems to me, pastors are in the acquisition business. They are acquiring disciples for Christ.

How do they do that? They do it with warmth and personality and connection and love and teaching. Don't they? I mean, this is what pastors do. That's how they build congregations.

They make you feel welcome. They draw you in, they see you sitting in the back pew and they go out after you after church and say hi.

Or they send somebody to you if it's a big church. Or they call down, you know, they get you to sign things. All of that is acquisition where there's no difference here. Pastoring is at the root of God's love for our fellow humans.

**And if you don't approach your fundraising that way you're going at it transactionally rather than transformational.**

As a pastor, you're wired to look for the good in other people, period.

And to nurture it and to build it out and to help them see it in themselves and to teach them how God's economy works and how he's available to them and what the penalty of sin is and what the reward of forgiveness is.

And all of that is...those skills transfer almost perfectly to this.

**People often think of fundraising as selling. It's not. It's explaining.**

It has elements of selling. So somebody that's been a salesman, a good salesman, and think about the good salesman that you have purchased something from in the past.

Whether it's a pack of gum at a tienda or a car from a dealer. You know the ones that really care about you, that want the best for you and are working the best deal and are being honest and transparent with you.

You know. Well, that's the same thing it comes to in your fundraising.

And so, the best fundraisers I know out there have, from their nature, nurturing skills and acquiring skills.

They do it in all sorts of personality types. So, you know, there's the outgoing personality type, the backslapper, the hand grabber, the come on in, what're you doing out in the rain? Get in here, get in dry. You know, that kind of pastor.

And then there's the introvert who prefers his prayer closet but still does the exact same thing. He just learns, or she learns, how to work through.

Some of the best fundraisers are introverts that really aren't that comfortable in groups, but have learned to take what gifts God has given them and tailor them to the task He's given them to do.



## Create a Culture of Generosity and Fundraising in Your Ministry

Brad: But a church has a natural, often they may have a building, they have people that are out doing that initial acquisition work.

And a pastor inherits that system. To some degree, what you're helping them do, is helping them to build the systems that would help what a church maybe already naturally does. That. That makes sense.

Rob: Yeah, exactly. So in your case, let's say you're leading a large group such as the Caribbean or in India where you've got just a huge group, you're really going to spend most of your time building into your staff.

Remember, [everybody in your orbit](#). That is, everyone from your board to your volunteers, to your staff, to your stakeholders, your givers all have to be engaged in fundraising.

And you don't call it necessarily that. You call it friendraising, whatever you want to do. If you have people that might be afraid of the term.

Nonetheless, you have to create a [culture of generosity](#) in your own team and a culture of fundraising so that everybody, even if you've got a receptionist that's working just the front desk answering phones and filing papers. That person is often the first person anyone sees of your organization.

They need to be as prepared, as bodient, and as polished as necessary to present a good face of your organization.

Everyone needs to be aware that the groceries they're eating are dependent on their part in the fundraising.

This is not a one person task. This is not a, "Let me do my job and let the big boss go get the money."

We all have to be responsible for it. And you can build that culture into your organization.

Everything you're doing here is building, which means you're not there yet. You're assembling the supplies. You're assessing the plan. What are you going to attack first?

If you paint a house, you have to scrape the paint first. You got to go through all these processes to get to where you're going, but you have to understand everyone on your team.

You are different than a church. However, you have connections. That's why we want to do an asset map. You may be surprised at the connections you have.



## Using the Words "Acquisition" and "Assets" in Ministry

Brad: Okay, so just a thought, the word acquisition could feel a little bit like, you know, like [Gary Hoag](#) said, "Don't use the word 'donor'. They don't own said giver".

"Acquisition" feels like you're getting out there and getting stuff and getting it for yourself. And even assets kind of puts the idea that these are people that you're collecting as your assets, as your collection.

Are there words that are better? Or why do you use those words? Maybe help us with that. Or do we just say those are the best?

Rob: Yeah, no, I'll tell you what. Some of you may have begun to experience this. When you get older, you start lacking in assets, and memories of those assets perplex you.

When I was a 20 year old, I could run a mile in combat boots in five minutes and 30 seconds. I can't run a mile in combat boots in five minutes and 30 seconds today.

You would all be attending my funeral at the end of that time.

So what are my assets? My asset then was a strong body and a gift for running, right? My assets today are wisdom and pattern recognition.

And I've had to sit through this COVID-19 and actually go through this exercise for myself, cause I found myself being depressed at what I didn't have.

And so I started just doing what God asked me to do. Stop paying attention to what you don't have. Live contently with what you do.

And I started just looking at all the positive things. Psalm 103: "Count the blessings." So if I had to use another word besides asset I'd use blessings.

And what was the other word that you struck- oh, acquisition.

Brad: Acquisition. And again, people, a lot of the people in this group are going to be retraining it in their context during this.

Rob: And so I want to watch them wrestle with correct language in their settings. But for me, you know, all fundraising does begin with the transaction.

And so there is a transactional nature to the word acquisition, but you're always [moving from transaction to transformation](#).

That's what that work of nurturing is.

And so acquiring a donor I don't think should be a pejorative. I just see it as the transaction that brings them from the [discovery field](#), into the orbit of the mission.