

3 Time Management Tips for Busy Ministry Fundraisers

Learn how to improve time management with these 3 strategies: create a physical calendar, be persistent in your regular recurring tasks, and delegate away important tasks.

Introduction

Rob: Time management. This is the most basic task of fundraising and this is the one that hangs up most people.

This is the one where you got to take a deep look at your calendar and decide whether fundraising is important or not.

Because if it's important, if local fundraising is important if breaking from dependency is important, if teaching your constituents to break from dependency is important, then time management is important because it takes time.

Fundraising is hard work, all three aspects, we talked on [discovery](#), [acquisition](#) and nurturing.

Each one of those is a separate strategy with a separate set of responsibilities and outcomes and materials and approaches and strategies and each has to have time and somebody responsible.



Create a Physical Calendar and Stick to It

And so the best way I know how to do that is to create an actual physical calendar.

And what that calendar says is what's gonna happen, let's say there's some daily routines, my development calendar when I fundraise, when I've been in charge of fundraising for something, it shows me what I'm gonna do every day.

I may not actually get to it, 'cause I'm one of those people that love to plan and then ignore them. And so it always gets me into trouble but you gotta start with the plan, the actual calendar.

So one of the things that I did at the [Rescue Mission](#) which really helped me figure out fundraising, 'cause I didn't know my way around was when the mail came in, I had my secretary and I always had a secretary no matter how poor the operation I was working in because I had an administrative assistant, they're called today because I was useless on details.

Even though I tried, I was klutzy with them, but the actual calendar... I used to have a report on my desk every morning at 10:00 AM of all the gifts that came in the day before. And my staff knew I had to have that report at 10:00 AM.

And that time was blocked out as best I could, I'd review the report, I'd sign receipts and I'd make sure that everybody on that report was acknowledged in one form or another.

And because the mission was so small then I was able to contact people and get back to them and thank them for the gift. And I did it immediately because if they made the gift on Monday, I knew about it on Tuesday by Wednesday they knew that their gift had been received.

That is important in fundraising. [Being trustworthy, being known, being connected](#). So here the person made the gift it's in their mind you let a week or two go by before the receipt they're possibly gonna that they made the gift.

Let's say they were at one of your events and they gave you a \$20 bill in the offering plate that went by at a concert and you somehow have their name.

If you thank them within days of them having attended that concert, it's a double reminder and it puts you in their mind again and gives you the opportunity to write again a third time and a fourth time and a fifth time until they tell you stop writing.

That's how persistence... **calendar teaches you persistence** because it gives you deadlines and deadlines are critical in fundraising.

So let's say you're gonna do a direct mail piece, that is you're gonna send letters out to your constituency, to prepare a correct donor response letter takes at least three months. And I'll explain that.

That means in your calendar, if you're gonna send a letter out in March, you have to start in December because you have to get your story right, you have to gather your materials. You have to know your strategies, you have to know where your funding is, you have to create your letters of inquiry.

You have to create your proposals, you have to launch your fundraising approaches. All of that's going on and you're keeping track of it in your calendar.

And it's telling you, your deadlines that I have to have this. So let's say you have a letter that's going out March 1st, you have to have it written.

That means you have to gather the story materials. You have to gather the art, you have to line up the printer, you have to have the thing written. You have to have the address, you have to figure out how you're gonna send it. That's just the old fashioned letter writing way.

You can go through all of this but your calendar gives you deadlines. Deadlines means you're dead if you miss them and a person like me, if you can believe it working in newspapering we were nothing but deadlines and I was the anti deadline person.

I'm the guy that likes the shift deadlines to move stuff around. But in newspapering my paycheck was dependent on me getting the story in at 10:00 AM for an afternoon paper and 6:00 PM for a morning paper.

And if I was at 6:01 I was fired. That's how bad, that's how demanding it was in the days of print journalism.

And so I want you to bring that vigorous discipline to your fundraising and it is time management. **You have to carve time out, you have to set priorities. If you don't, you will not succeed.**

This is the eagle and the fish story. [This is the going and finding the bugs.](#) This is diving over and over again into the water for your fish. You don't do these things, it won't happen.

God will bring in love gifts to get you across your ignorance, to get you across your weakness. He will bring all kinds of miraculous things into your life like that load of frozen steaks when the Rescue Mission had no food to feed the hungry that night. God's love for the least of us is breathtaking, isn't it?

When we start doing things for Him we see breathtaking things like watching a 100 people get fed through a miracle gift because our name was in the phone book, okay.

And just getting in the phone book, you have to make the phone books deadline. You have to have your copy ready, you have to have all of this stuff in a calendar.



Be Persistent in Your Regular Recurring Tasks

What's gonna be a regular recurring feature of your fundraising work?

So for example, as a leader you probably should make three phone calls a day that are related to fundraising and just schedule them out and just be persistent.

Make sure if you've got staff engaged that they're doing five or 10 phone calls a day and we'll go through how to set up the math.

But you're actually going to know that it takes... Sometimes if you're a particularly you all as national alliance leaders particularly national alliance leaders you deserve international funding.

There's a very important and appropriate place for others outside of your countries, outside of your regions to fund you as long as you have a [local fundraising initiative](#).

So you don't become dependent on those people bringing money into you. You want to have a cooperation.

You all will be doing international fundraising with international protocols. And so you'll be melding the funds in your... Many of you are already doing this, receiving gifts from the US or the UK or neighborhood partners, or partners in your region and others, major donors in your country, that you have a handshake agreement with.

All of that is it has to be shown as regular features. The things that you do on a daily basis it's like brushing your teeth. Yeah, you just do it because this is what you do.

These are the elements of fundraising, and then you break these out by each week, each month, each year.



Delegate Away Important Tasks

And then last again, who's responsible. So every calendar item that has a deadline has somebody that's watching that deadline.

Same person that's watching the feedback loop could be the same person in your organization, handling them all, it could be a number of different people.

We'll work on that through your cohorts and as you organize what staff, you have to be engaged, but if you're interested in local funding you are going to have to say no to some things that you're doing today.

Because I think if we were to look at the schedule of every one of you we would see a schedule that's too busy.

We would hear from a spouse, a husband, or a wife or a daughter or son that says, "Hey mom, dad's too busy."

That's how God uses you. He takes busy people and makes them busier and then forces them to start doing time management because He gives you things to do, you're busy because you get stuff done.

That's why you're busy. And so you have to face into this busy-ness with some very hard prioritization.

You have to delegate away important tasks that you love doing to take on the fundraising, it's the only way to make it possible.

I've observed this for way too many years, time management is critical.