First Things First

Do you sometimes get caught up in the minutia? Arranging deck chairs on a cruise ship comes to mind. Hey, I am all for managing details. They often make the difference in bringing good to excellent and acceptable to superb. However, addressing two (and only two) problems can provide smooth sailing with donors for decades.

So, what are the main problems for nonprofits everywhere AND what are some simple ways to address them?

If your nonprofit organization is like most, it struggles with the following two problems more than others.

1. How do we find likely contributors?
2. How do we deepen relationships with the donors we already have?

To answer these, let’s ask a few more questions. HINT: Gather a cross-responsibility team of staff and volunteers and ask for their honest feedback. Consider seeking professional help to lead the discussion and provide ideas. Then, get ready for some paradigm-breaking suggestions.

☐ Why don’t new people seek us out? What barriers or obstacles are in the way?
☐ Where are they giving their money now – and why?
☐ If they wanted to know more about us, who would they ask and what is the message those contacts give?
☐ How can we so enliven our staff and volunteers that they turn into raving advocates telling all of their friends about us?
☐ What happens now – exactly – when someone donates? – when someone inquires about us?
☐ What are the top five ways our top donors felt appreciated last year?
☐ Are there things we are currently doing that actually erode our relationship with donors?

Other important topics about securing larger donations from existing donors and differentiating your nonprofit from others remain secondary. Answer these main two and you won’t have to worry about sandbars or icebergs up ahead.*

Sincerely,

Blake Conover, President

* HINT: A multi-year Donor Development and Marketing Plan can help you navigate.