



# Honing Your Fundraising Skills

Raise more funds with the tips in these books.

By Terrence Fernsler

## The Influential Fundraiser: Using the Psychology of Persuasion to Achieve Outstanding Results

By Bernard Ross & Clare Segal. 319 pages. Hardcover. John Wiley & Sons, [www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com).

This book provides nonprofits with the skills to inspire and motivate donors. Going far beyond basics, it describes five ingredients you need to achieve fundraising results:

1. **Passion** must exist before you begin asking for funds. Once you focus your passion, you can work to understand people's motivations so you can stimulate their passion for the cause.

2. A **proposal** is how you define the problem and solution. Sometimes the proposal is written, sometimes oral. In either case, the authors recommend using powerful metaphors in the proposal to spur emotion.

3. **Preparation** builds confidence. It's important to have a preferred outcome in mind, then set boundaries for acceptable alternate outcomes.

4. **Persuasion** comes about by building rapport through skilled use of language. Find and match the communication preferences of your prospect.

5. **Persistence** is the final ingredient. Most "no's" are qualified. Continue communicating while maintaining rapport.

The authors present exercises to hone your skills in each step. While the tools aim to make you a better fundraiser, they'll also make you a better advocate for your cause.

Use powerful metaphors to spur emotion.

## FUNdraising: 50 Proven Strategies for Successful School Fundraisers

By Frank Sennett. 148 pages. Softcover. Corwin Press, [www.corwinpress.com](http://www.corwinpress.com).

In this short book, Frank Sennett offers ideas and lessons for raising funds to support schools, although other organizations will find these fundraising strategies effective, too.

All the fundraising events involve volunteers and are especially appropriate for young volunteers. When involving youth in fundraising efforts, Sennett urges, find opportunities to instill good habits that will carry forward into their adult lives, such as recycling printer cartridges and cell phones.

Sennett advises specializing as much as possible when planning an event. If putting on an auction, for instance, offer only one type of item, such as getaways or meals with celebrities.

Creativity is the key to all of Sennett's suggestions, to make your event stand out. Also be sure to make your event fun so that participants will want to continue to be involved.

Find opportunities to instill good habits in young people's lives.

## How to Write Fundraising Materials That Raise More Money: The Art, the Science, the Secrets

By Tom Ahern. 192 pages. Softcover. Emerson & Church, [www.emersonandchurch.com](http://www.emersonandchurch.com).

Tom Ahern gets to the point with each topic he discusses in this book, writing just the way he believes fundraising materials should be written. He provides trade tips that will spur people to action.

First, make sure your written materials are focused toward the donor (or prospect). Use the words "you" and "your" a lot. Show readers how they can play a part in your organization's success.

Next, be clear about your message. Know what you do well, and why, so you can explain it clearly and simply. Know your goals, and why help is necessary to reach these goals, so you can influence how the reader will respond.

Remember to repeat your message. This is something nonprofits tend to be timid about. Each time you repeat your message, open with something new or interesting to grab attention.

It's okay if your donors don't read everything in your material (in fact, few will!) Don't set your expectations too high; each new fundraising channel may result in just a trickle, but, as Ahern writes, those trickles grow and converge into a river of support to help raise more money. ■

Remember to repeat your message.

Terrence Fernsler has been a nonprofit professional for nearly 30 years.