

How to Be a Good-Guy Fundraiser and Avoid the Bad

To raise money, you need not luck but know-how, as this delightful book points out.

BY JILL MUEHRCKE

Fundraising: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly (and how to tell the difference)

By Bill J. Harrison. 200 pages. Ring binder. Step by Step, P.O. Box 4705, Mesa, Arizona 85211. Available through the Society for Nonprofit Organizations' Resource Center, 6314 Odana Road, Suite 1, Madison, Wisconsin 53719 (800-424-7367).

Every year, nonprofits receive billions of charitable dollars. What separates these lucky organizations from others that struggle and fail from lack of money?

Luck has little to do with it, as Bill Harrison tells us in his splendidly readable, newly revised book. Raising money is not a mysterious, arcane process but something anyone can learn.

It's hard to imagine a better way to do so than through Harrison's common-sense advice. Using worksheets, checklists, and sample forms to solidify his points, he leads the reader through the principles of fundraising.

For example, it's the executive director's duty to educate board members about their fundraising role, he explains. To that end, he provides a sample job description for the board, including the following duties:

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- Help identify, cultivate, and solicit individual, corporate, foundation, and government prospects who have potential for supporting the organization's fundraising efforts.
- Become a regular contributor to the annual giving program.
- Participate in the special events of the organization.
- Board members are ultimately responsible for attracting funding

sources to ensure the financial viability of the organization.

- A board member, employing his or her own skills and interests, is required to do something useful to support the fundraising efforts of the organization.

If potential board members receive such a job description, they will not be surprised or dismayed to find that fundraising is an integral part of their job.

Other teaching tools abound. Harrison lists the best ways to solicit contributions, select board members, create a fundraising plan, and obtain corporate philanthropy. He provides sample budgets, questionnaires, timelines, telethon scripts, corporate research worksheets, and mailing list sources.

For each fundraising type—special events, planned giving, donor clubs, grants, capital campaigns, memorial giving, individual solicitation, and so on—Harrison gives a list of pros and cons. These lists make it simple to zero in on the best methods for your organization.

The title of Harrison's book is inspired, for all his suggestions and self-assessment tools focus on how to be a good fundraiser and avoid being a bad or ugly one. To be a good-guy organization, you need well-defined goals, high standards, a professional board, and a meticulous set of records. You need to evaluate fundraising options carefully in light of your mission and the people you serve. In the long run, that's the best way to make your own fundraising luck. ■

What Are the Pros and Cons of Writing Grants?

Pros:

1. Potentially large dollars.
2. Recognition—large grants are often publicized.
3. Operational, as well as capital, dollars.
4. Wide variety of uses of dollars.
5. Obtaining one grant builds credibility and leads to other grants.
6. Grants force organizations to be organized, to be schedule-conscious, and to be budget-sensitive.

Cons:

1. Time-consuming.
2. "Strings attached."
3. Fierce competition.
4. Low success ratio.
5. Short-term dollar commitment.
6. Excellent writing, research, and coordination skills needed.

From "Fundraising: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly."