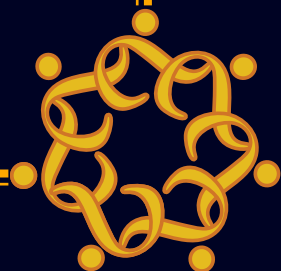


SEVEN SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING

A Handbook & Manual for the
Professional Fundraiser

AMAL ABDALHAKIM-DOUGLAS



Seven Secrets of Successful Fundraising

*A Handbook & Manual for the
Professional Fundraiser*

Amal Abdalhakim-Douglas

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Preface

BISMILLAH

In some respects i've always been around money. Whether it's been working in my parent's shop and bar in the Caribbean, being a bus conductor in the family business, running the box office for my sister's theatre company or running the gate at a big sound system clash. I've also spent a lot of time teaching a variety of subjects to both children and adults, something I seem to have a natural disposition for.

A few years working in the 'City' (of London) as a junior accountant also proved useful in helping develop those skills that have given me an advantage in terms of the ease I have with budgets, financial forecasts and general monetary analysis which led me to becoming a partner in another practice.

So in essence, for 20 years my introduction to fundraising has been through projects that I've been actively (and emotionally) involved with, whether theatre productions, teaching programmes, artistic performances or enterprise training. Of course I never thought of these things as fundraising, even though it involved seeking sponsorship, grant applications, face to face soliciting, selling tickets, fundraising events, written appeals and more. In my mind these were just things one had to do. I suppose in many ways we were the forerunners of what is now commonly recognised as true social enterprise.

I've also been able to recognise that i'm not a natural salesman, I don't have the gift of the gab, i'm not a 'closer.' Therefore my business affairs and my fundraising have had to be built on substance, on research, on reading the signs, covering the bases and being absolutely clear on what i'm talking about. In short it's made me a formidable fundraiser and an absolutely great fundraising consultant, and through this book I'm going to share with you some of the great secrets I've learned over the years.

(Haji) Amal Abdalhakim-Douglas

5. Developing the Generic Fundraising Statement

Be honest! Why should anyone give money to your organisation?

Come on! I want a short concise answer.

If you were able to give a short concise answer then that was probably your generic case for fundraising. A clear reason why your organisation is worth giving money to. The Generic Fundraising Statement or Generic Case for Support is that statement that once heard has the effect of people immediately dipping into their pockets and donating to your cause. The great thing about money generated in this way is that it will be unrestricted, meaning not tied to any particular project and so can be used for general overheads or core work.

For successful fundraising to take place it is important that everyone involved in an organisation is aware of, and able to articulate, the fundraising case for support. This is exactly the same as everyone knowing the phone number, postal address or website address and should be seen as such.

The 'case for support' actually comes before the 'statement' but I'll deal with them both together. As a charitable organisation you have to be clear on three things

- (i) What you actually do or were set up to do;
- (ii) Who benefits;
- (iii) How they benefit.

In an earlier example I mentioned the man who swept the floor at NASA who when asked what he does for a living, replied, “I help to send astronauts into space.” Similarly the Generic Fundraising Statement makes it clear who benefits from your work and what problem you are tackling. For example something like *“helping people out of the poverty trap”* or *“providing life experiences for people with cerebral palsy”* or *“using your donations to help victims of war.”* They don’t necessarily have to be as short as that, but you want something that is memorable, has a strong impact and can be easily used on websites, stationery and all printed materials, and perhaps even as part of a logo.

The aim is to make sure that the person reading or hearing it is in no doubt that you are in need of donations, and that the money will be well spent helping others. So the key things to try and get into a statement are the benefits, the beneficiaries and perhaps how you work.

A good exercise to do in generating a generic fundraising statement is first of all to look for great examples via websites and publications and then to gather together individuals with varying connections to the organisation (e.g., trustees, staff, volunteers, beneficiaries) and put certain questions to each of them, demanding a list of their top three one word (or short phrase) answers to each. Questions might include:

- Where do we operate?
- Who do we serve?
- What do we do?
- What benefits do those we serve get?

A correlation of the top words might give an indication of what might be in your statement. For example if the following came up as the most common to the four questions; **Scotland, Disabled, Trips, Experience**, then a first draft of a generic fundraising statement might read something like. *“Helping Scotland’s disabled community sample life changing experiences through day trips and excursions”*

You can see how something like that could be re-drafted a few times to make something really good. Why not have a go at re-drafting it yourself and sending me your final draft via email.