

INFP

Building Better Teams

**Nonprofits Plan to
Maintain Staff Levels in 2010**

Mobile Giving: Is It Right for Your Organization?

In the wake of the recent earthquake in Haiti, many were moved by the images of suffering and devastation. Millions of people of all ages, some of whom never contributed to a charity before, used their cell phones to “text” micro-donations of \$10 or less to relief organizations. While it’s clear that people are eager to contribute to well-known charities in the aftermath of a major disaster, you may be wondering if mobile giving would be an appropriate means of fundraising for your organization.

Appeals for mobile giving have been made by international relief organizations in the past, but the power of this fundraising channel was not fully appreciated until news spread of the generous response to the Haiti earthquake in January 2010. While one-day records for mobile giving totaled \$200,000 in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami in



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Building Better Teams

Most workplaces—in both for-profit and not-for-profit organizations—encourage “teamwork” among staff members. However, employees and volunteers who are assigned tasks that are to be completed individually may lose sight of the value of cooperating closely with co-workers. If teamwork is not occurring spontaneously in your organization, or if specific projects require more cooperation than is normally required, you may want to consider building teams focused on specific objectives.

While managers and staff members at nonprofits understand the concepts of community and collaboration, they may find it difficult to translate these concepts into concrete action. Most people are educated in an environment that stresses “doing your own work” and “not relying on others for answers.” Consequently, getting people to work together may involve changing attitudes that have developed over many years.

Team-building exercises and retreats that are not directly related to the mission of your organization may help staff members get to know each other better on a social level, but they may not provide the guidance needed to collaborate effectively. Instead, encourage team members to meet in the office to discuss what tasks they intend to address as a team, how they believe these tasks can be accomplished, and what issues relating to group dynamics might hinder them from meeting their goals.

Often, a lack of leadership or interpersonal conflicts between team members can cause the wheels of collaboration to grind to a halt. If, for example, the team manager has not clearly expressed what is expected of the team, or if the expectations change arbitrarily, frustration can result. Or, one team member’s failure to complete tasks on time can make it harder for the rest of the group to do their work, which can also lead to resentment, gossiping, or ill will. Speaking about these issues frankly, but also respectfully and constructively, can help clear the air and point to a productive path forward.

Depending on the size and needs of your organization, you may wish to create several teams for specific purposes. For example,

managers may form one team, while certain support staff may form others. The organization’s volunteers may constitute a separate group, or individual volunteers may be integrated into several groups with specific tasks. Teams may be created on a temporary basis to work on finite projects, or they may be formed across several not-for-profit agencies partnering on larger projects.

While team members are expected to work together, that does not mean that every member of a team has the same duties and responsibilities. Each team will need a leader to coordinate and oversee the team’s activities, as well as report progress to management. Whenever possible, encourage team members to take on roles appropriate to their individual strengths and skills. For example, one member may be good at handling administrative or technical jobs, while another may prefer the role of strategic planning. Yet another may be adept at securing the resources needed to do the work. As teams are formed, the mix of skill sets and personalities should be considered, and the members, selected accordingly.

All teams will need clearly stated objectives and performance targets. These objectives can be clarified in the first team meeting, and the progress made toward reaching these goals can be assessed regularly. Frequent reviews of the work may guide the team away from problems and toward successful techniques. The goals of the team may also be linked to individual performance objectives, and each employee’s effectiveness as a team member may be considered in performance reviews.

Remember, building better teams takes time. Choosing a strong, visionary leader is an important first step. Often, a team can come up with different solutions and creative ideas. They may also recognize problems or pitfalls that an individual working independently may miss. Building teams may help your organization be more innovative, effective, and efficient.

As renowned author and anthropologist Margaret Mead once said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” ✧

MOBILE GIVING: IS IT RIGHT FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION?

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December 2004 and \$400,000 following Hurricane Katrina in August 2005, the total amount donated on the first full day of mobile giving after the Haiti earthquake was an estimated \$3 million. In less than 10 days, the Red Cross alone raised \$26 million via 2.6 million mobile giving donations of \$10 each.

To make micro-donations to the Red Cross Haiti relief effort, donors simply texted the word “Haiti” to an easy-to-remember number, or short code. Other charities also accepted texted gifts of \$5 or \$10 in the days and weeks after the catastrophe. Rather than having to write a check or use a credit card, donors who give via cell phone pay for the donation when they receive their monthly phone bill. Processors, like mobile application service provider Mobile Accord’s MGive, act as intermediaries, collecting donations from cell phone carriers and wiring them to the designated charities.

The success of these fundraising efforts has been attributed to a number of factors, such as the ubiquity of cell phones in the United States and around the world, as well as the willingness of people, especially younger generations, to use their mobile phones to conduct financial transactions. In addition, Americans have grown comfortable with the idea of texting charitable donations due to other recent televised campaigns, such as a request by pop singer Alicia Keys on “American Idol” for cell phone donations to an African AIDS charity, a United Way mobile giving campaign aired during the Super Bowl, and telethons that offer the option of mobile giving.

Can smaller nonprofits with less acute needs adopt a similar approach to fundraising? As long as a nonprofit is able to reach a wide

audience, there may be opportunities to raise money via mobile giving. Perhaps your organization can announce a short code for donations at events where potential donors are gathered, such as concerts or football games, while also including the code on your website, social networking pages, and other marketing materials.

Mobile carriers and service providers generally charge fees for mobile giving campaigns. These may include a setup fee, a per call charge, and a percentage of each donation. Many smaller nonprofits operate their mobile giving campaigns through nonprofit entities such as the Mobile Giving Foundation, which serves as a channel for these donations by processing the contributions through selected application service providers and offering marketing advice upon request. While there is a charge for these services, you select the level of service that suits the needs of your organization.

One potential downside to mobile giving is that donors may not agree to receive additional messages from the organization after the gift has been made. Other potential issues include low limits imposed by cell phone carriers on the total amount a subscriber can contribute via text message per billing cycle and the processing time before the charity ultimately receives the donation, which may be up to 90 days.

Mobile giving can be a viable way to reach donors. Keep in mind that successful mobile giving campaigns are often reliant upon reaching a large pool of potential donors and center around a powerful emotional appeal that will inspire people to reach for their phones and make small, spontaneous gifts. ✧



Nonprofits Plan to Maintain Staff Levels in 2010

While more than half of non-profit organizations reported cutting jobs between August 2008 and August 2009, less than 10% anticipate additional layoffs in 2010, according to a survey of nonprofit staffing and hiring trends conducted by the Chronicle of Philanthropy.

The online survey of more than 1,000 not-for-profit organizations nationwide found that just 9% expect to trim their payrolls in 2010, and 19% anticipate hiring this year. Researchers observed that, while the total number of employees working at the organizations fell 4.2% between August 2008 and



the same month in 2009, this rate was lower than the 5% decline in employment seen among all private-sector employers.

Of those who reported plans to increase their staff in 2010, 46% said they intend to hire fundraisers, while just 16% plan to recruit at the executive level.

When asked about staffing challenges in 2010, more than two-thirds of respondents (68%) cited avoiding “staff burnout,” while nearly as many said maintaining staff morale. However, just 4% of respondents said they expect to reduce employee workloads in 2010. ✧