

The Complete Guide to Fundraising Management, Fourth Edition

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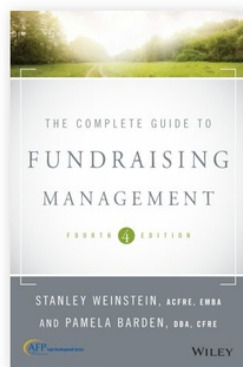
When a book is brought back for a fourth edition, you can have confidence in its quality, and this book is no exception. The reader is told in the preface, “This is a how-to book” and “completely updated to include both online and offline strategies.” Both are true; however, offline strategies remain the book’s primary focus.

The authors ably cover all major areas of fundraising at a level appropriate for beginners, whether they are professionals or volunteers. More experienced fundraisers will also benefit from a quick read that will remind them of what they should be doing as well as provide them with some helpful templates, training ideas and statistics. Should one hope to use these statistics in defense of contested fundraising decisions, however, be warned that they are not cited. Statistics, such as what constitutes a good response rate for a direct-mail solicitation to a house list, are merely stated as fact.

The book is set up so one does not have to read it cover to cover. Chapters are divided in a sensible way, and the table of contents even highlights subtopics within each chapter to reduce the time it could take to find specific information. The authors deliver common-sense strategies that are grounded in the real world. The reader learns best practices and the common impediments to their implementation.

Most terms specific to fundraising are well defined and should be understandable to even the most novice reader. However, two notable exceptions occur in the book’s coverage of prospect research. The authors recommend using “wealth screening software” or a “data append” to uncover wealthy prospects, but neither term is defined in any way. Similarly, while the coverage of charitable gift annuities is thorough, there is no mention of the American Council on Gift Annuities as a resource.

Even in our current era of less print, the authors champion newsletters and robust direct-mail programs.



They make a great case for not neglecting these tried-and-true communications and also warn, “Do not be attracted to false economies; mail to as many people as possible.” They also remind us that fundraising using a telephone can work and provide step-by-step instructions for a volunteer phonathon with helpful scripts and sample forms.

Despite the inclusion of more recent strategies as well as online strategies, occasional suggestions such as

“even the smallest organizations should computerize their fundraising efforts” are dated. eAppeals, social media and text-to-give are all covered, albeit briefly. Crowdfunding receives adequate attention, and the authors highlight what issues to consider about this fundraising technique. Cause marketing is well defined, yet suggesting that “nonprofit organizations of every size” can benefit from cause marketing and using a restaurant give-back night as an example contradict the book’s overall message that efficient and effective fundraising methods should be one’s focus. Donor-advised funds are not described beyond a mere definition.

While the authors do weave in the importance of high ethical standards in fundraising throughout the book, one blatantly inappropriate suggestion stands out. Readers are advised to grow their acquisition mailing list by pulling contact information from the membership directories of clubs and associations. Typically, such directories are expressly for members’ use to prevent this type of application. Additionally, a key element of accountability is not addressed. No guidance is given on what should be included in an official tax receipt or where the reader could find that information. This would be a helpful additional sentence or two.


Just as ethics and accountability are important, the book could not legitimately have “management” in its title without addressing the issues of budgeting and


worth a look ■ books

reporting. A very thorough sample budget process and development office budget are included. The authors also provide two templates for fundraising assessment: one brief, one comprehensive. These assessments, as well as all exhibits and other resources in the book, are available as Word downloads from the accompanying website. This access makes all the templates, checklists and matrices easy to use—no retyping required.

Those fundraising in a “small shop” can often be frustrated by the lack of scalability for some techniques and methods recommended in books and seminars. This book, however, provides content applicable to shops of all sizes and directly addresses issues specific to small shops. It also takes the time to address how capital campaigns can differ for organizations in various industries (e.g., education, human services, religion, etc.).

The authors acknowledge that fundraising success relies on more than just a talented professional, explaining that it “has a direct relationship to the quality

of services the organization provides.” They also point out that development staff cannot achieve their goals without board and volunteer support—a truism we all know. The book is sprinkled with the reminder to focus on high-payoff efforts. With so many competing demands on time, fundraisers of all levels can use this book’s reminders and tools to further their efforts. 



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