



SOBEL & CO. ANNUAL NONPROFIT SYMPOSIUM  
JANUARY 16, 2013  
BRIGHT IDEAS

Here are some of the ideas offered at the annual symposium by Anna Marie Gewirtz, Liberty Science Center; Helen LeFrois, Jersey Battered Women's Services; Janet Russell, Visiting Nurses of Northern New Jersey and Maria Semple, The Prospect Finder.

- Because 80% of giving is attributed to individuals, nonprofit organizations should pay attention to the details. Personalize the message! Cater to the individual.
- Know who your donors are; do your research – cultivate even the smaller donors and recognize their potential for future giving or future introductions.
- Customize your “ask” for each major donor.
- Create an atmosphere of connectivity – connect the dots between the donors, the vendors, the volunteers and the staff.
- Pay attention and upgrade your core programs periodically (refresh direct mail and other campaigns –keep improving them).
- Leverage your board members and their relationships. Use their networks to build your prospect lists.
- Ask! If you don't ask, there will be no giving. Increase your outreach.
- Seek out new grant options; be strategic and deliberate with the grants you apply for to have a higher success rate.
- Include all collaborations when writing a grant to improve your chances.
- Engage your staff and volunteers in fundraising at many levels to augment the efforts of your development professionals.
- Use the “appeal” process for annual appeals and special appeals throughout the year.
- Promote case studies to share a real story; educate the donors about what you do.
- Avoid printed ad journals to keep costs down. This can now be done online. Online ads have no real cost to the organization, so this allows you the additional benefit of offering “free” ads to vendors and others to help you build a stronger relationship with them.
- Invite vendors to set up tables at fund raising events; this is another way to strengthen the relationship.
- Prioritize your events. Know your ROI and select only those programs and events that deliver the best results for your organization.
- Consider that a silent auction may be better for your fund raising efforts than an ad journal.
- Host small group “cultivation” events throughout the year. Instead of one large event, host three to four intimate get-togethers for major donor prospects, foundation heads, corporate leaders, etc.
- Conduct an annual analysis of where and how revenue is typically generated by your organization. For every event to succeed, you need three basic things: volunteer support, financial support and it must be a draw. If not, reconsider!
- Create corporate/strategic partnerships and collaborate to expand your donor base. Use the services of corporate partners to keep costs down.

- Try asking for multi-year donations from corporations.
- Expand your volunteer pool by inviting employees of corporations to help you; host a “Day of Service” and recruit from the corporate staff.
- Collaborate with other nonprofit organizations to cross-sell to the same audience; pick a nonprofit that has an expertise that complements what you offer. To do this well, you need to get out and meet the organizations in your area so you can better help each other.
- Make it easy to donate – and make it easy for your board members to ask for donations too.
- Show your donors where the money is going; make it very visible and tangible – let them see how your mission being accomplished!
- Encourage a personal touch – hand sign letters, make a phone call, send an email. Never forget that relationships are the key to fundraising.
- Concentrate on friend raisers; set up small meetings at someone’s home; ask your board and strong supporters to open doors for you.
- Consider participating in community events that help promote your mission and your organization.
- Listen to your donors. Know what matters to them and make sure your “ask” is customized to reflect their passion.
- Use social media to raise money; this is especially helpful when there is an immediate need.
- Fundraise through Facebook, including online auctions of experiences, services or goods.
- Use QR tags, especially to promote special events. Include these on every piece of collateral material you print.
- Be multi-faceted. Send everything out in at least two ways – for example, every printed piece should have a corresponding electronic version.
- Donors like to give to an organization that has a specific goal or need.
- Ask your supporters to share information about you on Facebook with their friends.
- Mentor and train board members to help them cultivate donors. This is part of a solid onboarding process.
- Ask board members to write personal notes whenever possible; even if you need to use technology to do this.
- Give board members a list of three ways they can help the organization raise funds.
- Give each board member a “How to Make an Ask” sheet with talking points.
- Include your development professionals at board meetings; they need to know the board members and they need to be a part of the discussion.
- Leverage your Gala to cultivate new major donors by offering them a complimentary invitation; ask the hotel for two “free” tables – they get the publicity and you get the free seats along with a chance to introduce the organization to potential supporters.
- Command a presence when speaking with corporate leaders. Sound business-like, talk about measureable success; avoid the tin cup (begging) approach.
- Balance long term and short term strategies.
- Diversify your donor base.
- Make your website mobile friendly.
- Form an umbrella group if you are going to attempt a collaborative fundraising effort with multiple nonprofits to avoid confusion.

Some fundraising websites suggested include:

[Winspireme.com](http://Winspireme.com)  
[Yougivegoods.com](http://Yougivegoods.com)  
[Kickstart.com](http://Kickstart.com)  
[Indiegogo.com](http://Indiegogo.com)  
[Njactb.org](http://Njactb.org)