

## P R E F A C E

Historians of the nonprofit sector will look back on the first decade of this century as a key time in the direction of the sector. For people who are interested in history, this will make fascinating reading, but for those of us doing the work and living through it, it may have more of the feel of being in a runaway truck.

I need to say up front that no one really knows for sure how to raise money in times like these. In fact, I thought of adding a subtitle, *Fundraising in Times of Crisis: My Best Guess*. Having more than a quarter-century of experience, and having worked in fundraising through a number of other difficult times—the first round of government cuts of the Reagan administration, the first Gulf War, and other recessions and expansions—and having worked around the world with thousands of grassroots organizations, I think my guess will be helpful.

This book is written primarily for people in charge of fundraising in small nonprofits (those with budgets of less than \$1 million). When I use the word “you,” as in “You will need to write a letter” or “You will need to identify prospects,” I am speaking to development staff or executive directors. However, many small groups, especially those with budgets between \$100,000 and \$300,000, only have one paid staff or have a group of activist volunteers working for free. In those cases, “you” will sometimes mean a part-time staff person of no particular title, or a board member, or even a team of people who are taking responsibility for fundraising.

I suggest reading the book all the way through before beginning to apply any of the suggestions. It is a short book because people in crisis do not have time to read long books. The Resources section suggests other books that give more detailed how-to information if you need it. I am assuming you have either some experience in fundraising or access to someone who has experience. The problem in many organizations is that the experience you have—which is usually proposal writing—is not going to get you through this crisis. If you don't have grassroots fundraising experience, find people who do to be on your Crisis Task Force—a concept I detail in Chapter Three. I am not assuming you have years and years of experience, but if you do, you can read faster. Don't skip anything. Each chapter builds on the one before.

The Introduction presents the large view—what is happening in the bigger world that is affecting our nonprofit world. It is important to see your organization in the context of a large nonprofit sector not only so you don't feel alone but also so you can seek out other nonprofits and work together to address some of the sectorwide problems. Chapter One discusses why we as nonprofits are so vulnerable to the problems that emerged at the beginning of the century; one of the themes of this book is to help your organization permanently move away from that vulnerability. Chapters Two through Nine are strictly about what to do. What to do *now*, what to do in *three months*, and what to do in the *long term*. Chapter Ten discusses what the future must hold for nonprofits in order to maintain the changes recommended in the body of the book.

There are a lot of examples in the book—don't skip them just because your group is not like the one in the example. Although details have been changed, these examples are from real life. You may see your organization in the mistakes others have made or be able to avoid making those mistakes. You will also see how real groups came through some intense crises.

By the way, you do not have to be in a crisis to find this book useful. In fact, my sincere wish is that a lot of organizations will read this book and make the course corrections needed early on to avoid a crisis. It is never too

early to address problems, but as you will also see, it is rarely too late. Groups of people working together can come out of some pretty deep holes.

As well as being written primarily for small nonprofits, the book is written for organizations concerned with progressive social change. These can be advocacy organizations, social service agencies, arts and culture groups, environmental organizations, libraries, or animal shelters. Philosophy, not issues, is the common denominator.

It is critical that when the history of this time is written historians will be able to say that we of the progressive nonprofit sector made decisions that raised the money we needed without betraying our mission and our goals. Let us be able to say, "We ran the good race, we fought the good fight, and we kept the faith."

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