

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN or MAJOR GIFTS INITIATIVE?

It's not a semantic consideration. It's a strategic one.

Often a non-profit organization claiming to be "*in a Capital Campaign*" is, in essence, conducting a Major Gift Initiative. While that's certainly not a prima facie predicament, it does bring to mind the wise words of a famed strategist, New York Yankee Hall of Fame catcher Yogi Berra: "*If you don't know where you're going, you'll probably wind-up someplace else.*"

A Capital Campaign focuses the entire organization on over-arching goals -- in both dollars and deadlines -- which requires:

- sound planning and preparation for fundraising beyond current gift solicitations;
- timely enlistment, orientation and staffing of volunteer leadership required to undertake subsequent phases of the campaign;
- preparation of fundraising materials designed with flexibility to express evolving details of featured funding objectives ;
- donation receipting, recording, reporting and stewardship requirements as the campaign expands to engage the organization's entire constituency.

A Major Gifts Initiative typically focuses a few individuals -- senior administrators and volunteer leaders -- on securing gift commitments from identified potential major donors which most often involves:

- focusing on identified potential major donors with little attention given to cultivating awareness and interest among a broader donor constituency;
- limited involvement of other professional staff and volunteers either in securing gift commitments or preparing for subsequent fundraising initiatives/phases;
- fundraising materials generally designed as personalized presentations to selected potential major donors;
- donation receipting, recording, reporting and stewardship requirements which most often can be met by existing systems and procedures.

Whether your organization embarks on a Capital Campaign of Major Gift Initiative just be sure to know where it is headed!