"How to raise money when you're a local nonprofit organization?"

Katie Ragan - Community Services, Inc.

Introduction

Nonprofits may receive grants from State, local or the Federal government and they need money to operate. Non-profit organization do not "make money" but they do collect it, and from the money they collect, they have costs, expenses and salaries for people who devote their full-time duties to running the organization. The nonprofit organization will need to spend a lot of time fundraising, collecting donations from individuals and other groups. If the nonprofit is a 501(c)(3) organization, individuals can make tax-deductible donations to it. Nonprofits can sell products and services. For 501(c)(3) nonprofits there are certain issues around receiving money from activities that are not related to its tax-exempt status (essentially its mission). Also, nonprofits generally work hard to keep their expenses down by utilizing volunteers and negotiating very favorable rates (and even donations) for services and items they need to operate.

Major Steps Taken

The four major steps and the process taken: initiation, planning, implementation, and completion. Taken together, these phases represent the path a project takes from the beginning to its end and are generally referred to as the project "life cycle." The initiation phase - the project objective or need is identified. The planning phase - the project solution is further developed in as much detail as possible and the steps necessary to meet the project’s objective are planned. In this step, the team identifies all the work to be done. The implementation phase - the project plan is put into motion and the work of the project is performed. It is important to maintain control and communicate as needed during implementation. Progress is continuously monitored, and appropriate adjustments are made and recorded as variances from the original plan. The closure phase - in the closure phase, you provide final deliverables, release project resources, and determine the success of the project.

Goals and Implementation

The goals of the project are to lead conclusive recommendations and fulfill all deliverables. CSI will focus the efforts to specifically increase reach, boost engagement, and get the word out about the cause that will introduce new people to our organization and who may become donors in the future. The funds will go toward the agency to have a greater opportunity to succeed and transition. The agency will have the ability to provide improved skills and increased knowledge. Our mission is to provide support services that empower and enrich low income individuals, families and communities.

Recommendations

- Raffles - For small nonprofits, a raffle is an inexpensive fundraising idea that can generate a lot of funds for your nonprofit. This fun and inexpensive fundraiser can be tailored to fit any organization or project.
- T-Shirt Fundraising - Hosting a t-shirt fundraiser is a fantastic idea because not only do you raise money, but when people wear them, they help to promote your nonprofit and mission.
- Crowdfunding - Crowdfunding is an inexpensive fundraising idea that helps your nonprofit spread the word through social media.
- Walkathons - Walkathons are the most popular choice of fundraising by small non-profits, because they’re the easiest to plan while having a high return.
- Advertisement on vehicles - Buses are a great medium for advertising. With their size and mobility, your advert can be seen all around cities and towns, reaching hundreds of potential customers again and again.

What I Learned

Introduction

- Advertise - advertise with non-profits, non-exempt and other non-profit-related organizations.
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Goals and Implementation

- Project Participants:
  - CSI Board of Directors
  - Daniel Edwards, Sr., MPA President/CEO
  - Katie Ragan, Assistant Director of Transportation
  - Arelette Cobb, Office Manager
- Recommendation - Hire experienced development staff to drive the fund development process.

Results

- Resource and Contact Information:
  - Project Participants:
    - CSI Board of Directors
    - Daniel Edwards, Sr., MPA President/CEO
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    - Arelette Cobb, Office Manager
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