

Ten Critical Issues to Consider Before Fundraising

Carlton & Company developed our Critical Issues Management Program (CIM) to assess client readiness and prepare organizations for a smooth and successful capital campaign. CIM addresses 10 key questions:

1. Is your board “on board?” Campaign success depends on the support of volunteer leadership so they must have the confidence, commitment and enthusiasm to carry it forward.
2. Does your organization have the leadership it needs to be productive? A nonprofit board should include individuals of means, influence and community standing in order to drive support.
3. How deep is your pool of prospects? Determining whether you have promising pre-existing relationships with key donors, as well as how you’ll go about cultivating new contacts, is a critical component of readiness.
4. What kind of campaign will best serve your organization’s needs? Options range from a full-scale intensive effort to a rolling capital campaign or annual giving program. CIM evaluates the relative merits of each option given a client’s particular profile.
5. When should your campaign launch? Timing is a major factor in any campaign’s success, taking into account internal and external factors (for example, leadership availability and commitment, competing efforts in the community, economic climate).
6. Do you have the necessary resources to conduct a capital campaign? Your ability to fundraise will be compromised without a realistic campaign budget.
7. Is your organization financially stable? Operating deficits need to be addressed and appropriately presented to prospective donors.
8. Are there other sources of funding for the project in addition to charitable giving? Organizations should look at a range of resources, from bank financing and bonding to the use of endowments and existing assets.
9. What are the most compelling elements of your case for support? Put yourself in a prospective donor’s shoes and search your story for the most meaningful messages. Are you presenting institutional needs only or demonstrating value to the community as a whole?
10. Are local leaders aware of the problem or need you seek to address? Whether community leaders agree with the need – and your solution – will greatly impact the results of your campaign.

For more information on conducting a CIM program for your organization, please contact Carlton & Company at 800-622-0194 or email wcarlton@fundraising.org.