

Donor - Centric Resolutions for 2011: Your Road Map for Fundraising Success

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It is ironic that one of the best pieces of advice for surviving the current economic storm comes not from an economist, or a marketing guru but Rowan Atkinson's uncanny parody of a platitude-spouting front bench politician - 'Sir Marcus Browning MP.' He offers his audience innumerable tips on avoiding "the gwavest (sic) economic crisis since 1380."

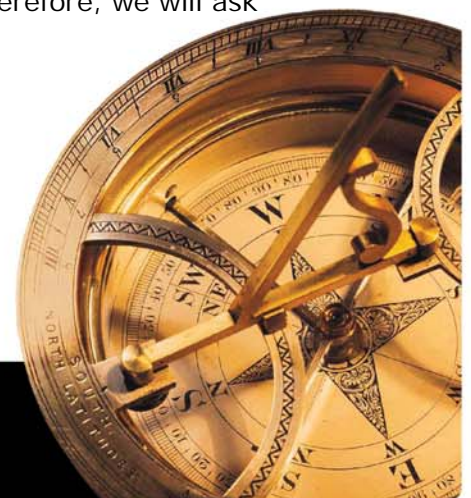
"We must ask ourselves crucial questions: How did we get here? Why did we come? Where do we want to go? Why do we want to get to where we want to go? ..How would we know where we were when we got there?"

So far so platitudinous. But, with a final rhetorical flourish Browning encourages the audience to ask: **"Have we got a map?!"** Actually, it is a rather good question to ask yourself right now - especially if your charity is determined to do more than just muddle through the hard times. We know enough about the economic storm we are facing and the changing nature of giving to navigate rather than sleepwalk our way through 2011.

So here are my **2011 resolutions** for Christian charities that will add focus and direction to those wanting to navigate the storm with a good map in hand.

1. We shall ask with honesty and confidence.
2. We shall create compelling donor experiences.
3. We shall not treat all our supporters equally.
4. We shall do more to engage new donors.
5. We shall focus on building brand loyalty.
6. We shall measure the performance of our fundraising activities.
7. We shall communicate with passion, integrity and creativity.
8. We shall engage our employees and volunteers.
9. We shall listen to supporters.
10. We shall dare to do something new in 2011.

1. **We shall ask with honesty and confidence.** We shall not be surprised by the fact that many Christians want to use their money in ways that demonstrate God's love and purposes for the world. Therefore, we will ask for support in open and honest ways.



2. **We shall create compelling donor experiences.** In 2011 we shall 'raise our game' and do more than send out lukewarm fundraising appeals and impersonal updates. Through a variety of media channels and personal interactions we shall offer our supporters the kind of experiences and insights into our work that will strengthen their bond with our ministry.
3. **We shall not treat all our supporters equally.** We shall recognise that different donors groups are at different stages of involvement with our ministry and that they have different levels of interest in our work. We will map out supporter cultivation cycles and develop effective strategies for lifting them from one level of support to the next.
4. **We shall do more to engage new donors.** In 2011 we will ensure that new donors don't stop at making just one gift to our work. We can no longer think of a first gift is the same as acquiring a long term donor. That is why we will do more to actively guide new supporters to the point where they give again and again.
5. **We shall focus on building 'brand loyalty'.** We shall remember that a brand in and of itself is not an asset unless it generates 'brand loyalty.' Therefore, we shall focus our efforts in articulating our brand promise and in creating, keeping, and rewarding donor loyalty as the means to true 'brand profitability'.
6. **We shall measure the performance of our fundraising activities.** We will no longer 'make decisions in the dark' but, make use of the data available to us from our supporter giving trends and other sources like: supporter surveys, inbound e-mails, and social media conversations. We shall turn data and unstructured feedback into valuable insights. We will use these insights to shape up our fundraising objectives and the language and content of our supporter communications.
7. **We shall communicate with passion, integrity and creativity.** We shall pay attention to little things that can dramatically affect donors' experiences of our ministry. These things include: personalisation of communications, simplification of giving instructions in response forms or web, using compelling and conversational language and offering regular feedback on how the money was spent.

Furthermore, we will invest in creative design in order to improve current and potential donors' experience of our website, social network groups, magazines, etc; intentionally looking for and eliminating the things that can hinder a donors' interaction with our communications.



8. **We shall engage our employees and volunteers.** We shall relentlessly communicate and celebrate donor-centric behaviour. We shall work together as a team and value each member for what they bring to the team. We need to bear in mind that unengaged staff or volunteers don't create engaged and enthusiastic donors so we will work towards hiring the right people and training and resourcing them to engage effectively with donors and beneficiaries.
9. **We shall listen to supporters.** We shall commit ourselves to incorporating supporters' insights into the day-to-day activities of our fundraising and communications offices. To make this happen those involved in doing marketing research should continuously gather insights from supporters and get these insights into the hands of the staff members who are responsible for shaping up decisions about fundraising propositions and products, donor relations, communications frequencies and much more.
10. **We shall dare to do something new in 2011.** We shall aim to do something new and fruitful in one area of fundraising this year: speak to some major donors, engage with young supporters through *facebook*, launch a regular giving campaign or host a sponsored event, engage in a 'listening to donors' research project, etc.

Above all we shall be committed to overcoming whatever challenges we face in our way of becoming a truly donor-centric ministry.

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