

NonProfit PRO

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COVER STORY

GOING BEYOND THE DONATION IN PEER-TO-PEER FUNDRAISING

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY CEO TALKS BUILDING COMMUNITY, DONOR ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY.

**Jonathan Reckford, CEO,
Habitat for Humanity International**

Photo Credit:
Habitat for Humanity

PEER-TO-PEER FUNDRAISING ISN'T DEAD

CHRIS HAMMOND AND BRITTANY LAGANKE OF CORPORATE GIVING CONNECTION SHARE INSIGHTS INTO LEVERAGING PEER-TO-PEER FUNDRAISING STRATEGY.

BY RACHEL DAVY

As we near the end of 2019, we thought it would be useful to investigate a method of fundraising that seems to have fallen out of favor for many organizations: **peer-to-peer fundraising**.

We sat down with Chris Hammond, CEO and founder of Corporate Giving Connection (CGC) and CGC's director of nonprofit development, Brittany LaGanke, to find out why peer-to-peer fundraising is still a valuable tool.

What is peer-to-peer fundraising?

CH: Simply put, peer-to-peer fundraising is a type of crowdsourcing, where individuals can fundraise on behalf of your organization. They become fundraisers and champions for a specific campaign.

BL: Typically, peer-to-peer fundraising involves generating a personal page on a platform made for this type of campaign. They can then share this with friends and family. Overall, it's a great way to tap into your supporter's network and connect with new donors.

Why do nonprofits think it's no longer an effective means of fundraising?

CH: The simple answer is that peer-to-peer fundraising has become extremely oversaturated. So many people are doing it that it feels difficult for a campaign to stand out.

BL: Absolutely. Another problem we see is that nonprofits think peer-to-peer



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— **Chris Hammond, CEO and Founder, CGC**



fundraisers are more self-sufficient than they actually are. Many think they can set up their campaign, put it out into the world and have donations roll in. But to be successful, they need to be much more intentional.

CH: Some organizations don’t take the time needed to come up with a coherent and cohesive campaign. The initial work and planning is quite an undertaking. While we promise it pays off, getting nonprofits to set up an online platform

with a solid foundation for growth can be a big ask.

How can/do nonprofits use peer-to-peer fundraising to improve their program outcomes?

CH: Basically, peer-to-peer fundraising works best when there’s a tangible goal and a way to track the impact of donations. For example, your organization’s goal could be to build five schools. There is a specific dollar amount needed

to meet this goal. Fundraisers and their peers can clearly see where their donations are going.

BL: People want to feel like they are participating and helping their peers achieve these goals.

CH: Exactly. Another key part is to tell a story. Using a specific theme linking your story, your goal and your desired impact will make it easier for potential donors to get on board. ▶

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“Nonprofits should also reach out to top fundraisers to build personal connections. Recognition is crucial in making these relationships long-term.”

— **Brittany LaGanke,**
Director of Nonprofit Development, CGC

BL: It’s also important to remember that peer-to-peer fundraising is a fantastic way to engage young donors. We’ve seen some incredible examples of middle and high schoolers and young professionals being the most effective campaign ambassadors. The technology and crowdsourcing concept is right in their wheelhouse.

How can nonprofits better support their fundraisers?

CH: At the end of the day, we believe that your organization is only as strong as the people who are doing the fundraising. So if your fundraisers aren’t properly trained and supported, then there’s no way the campaign will produce large numbers of donations.

BL: The next steps are to develop a toolkit for fundraisers. Creating a large library of resources will empower them. This can include videos, email templates, graphics and sample social media posts. Your goal as the organization is to take as much responsibility off your fundraisers’ shoulders as possible, so it’s easy for them to make those asks.

CH: It helps to think of it like this: You’re using your fundraiser’s network of peers, so you need to be mindful of the fundraiser’s time and efforts.

What are some creative ways to engage with your constituents and keep your organization top of mind throughout a campaign?

CH: We’ve found that the best way to engage with fundraisers is through short, emotional videos. Video makes

everything more personal, so fundraisers should be empowered to use visual media to share why a campaign is important to them. One reason peer-to-peer fundraising is successful is because donors will see their financial gifts as supporting their peer, not necessarily the organization directly.

BL: And along with the toolkit we mentioned, successful campaigns usually have a staff member or point person dedicated to supporting them.

CH: Right, development staff support is critical. It’s so important that your organization has an internal champion. This person needs to be savvy enough to understand how to use the fundraising platform, but they also need to critically analyze the strategy and know how to pivot for more successful engagement. Make sure they understand the basics of digital marketing. We’ve also seen success with a series of events leading up to the end of the campaign. Whether that’s a walk, run or reception, it’s important to celebrate milestones. These events don’t have to be extravagant. Just provide a space for your fundraisers to connect.

BL: Nonprofits should also reach out to top fundraisers to build personal connections. Recognition is crucial in making these relationships long-term.

Can you tell us about technology’s role in peer-to-peer fundraising?

BL: There are so many companies out there that provide peer-to-peer fundraising software. At the end of the day, budget is going to dictate what

platform you use, but make sure you do your research before committing. We recommend finding out exactly what information you’ll receive at the end of the campaign. Some platforms don’t share certain donor information, and this can undermine its long-term usefulness.

CH: Your team should also be looking at analytics. Determine how your audience responds to different tactics. What are people engaging with? What are they actually clicking on?

What can an organization do TODAY to better facilitate peer-to-peer fundraisers?

CH: Start communicating consistently with your audience. You should be continually building your social media and email audiences. Random, quick campaigns can be jarring. People need to be prepared to donate.

BL: Right. Sometimes nonprofits are very present at the start of a campaign, but then drop off. Whether it’s thank-you notes, in-person events or general follow-up throughout the year, give your fundraisers updates. You don’t want the only time your audience hears from you to be when you’re asking for money.

CH: Genuine connection is what it’s all about. Remember that storytelling will be your key to success. Make the campaign theme memorable, easy to understand and consistent with your organization’s mission. And finally, provide the resources that fundraisers need to easily connect with their peers as your ambassador. *NPPRO*