

FIELD NOTES



TRAINING FOR THE FINISH LINE (AND BEYOND)

In many ways, an annual support campaign is like running a marathon. Your ultimate success depends on how well you prepared, accurate assessment of your progress, setting a sustainable pace, staying focused and motivated, and saving a little something for the final kick to the finish! (And let's not forget the post-race celebration!)

RACE PREP Experienced long distance runners (and Development Officers) will tell you that the "race is won in the off season." What are you doing to strengthen your organization's fundraising muscles? A well-developed campaign plan with solid team buy-in is critical to your ultimate success.

PACE Once the race has begun, a strong but sustainable pace is the key. Identify and celebrate benchmarks along the way. Breaking the overall effort into smaller targets helps to keep your team going and provides you with a snapshot of your progress to goal.

REACHING FOR THE FINISH At later points in the race, fatigue and doubt can creep into even the most seasoned runner's (or campaigner's) mind. The thrill and motivation of the kick-off have long since faded, most of the good prospects have been solicited and the finish line seems far away.

This is the critical make or break time in your campaign. At this point, a new race has begun. You need to outline for your team just how they can make it to the finish. The key here is to make it final plan clear, concise and achievable. In fundraising, the formula for success lies in the **Gap to Goal Report**.

Gap to Goal Report

Take **70%** of the actual amount raised in your last campaign and subtract this from your new goal. (The 70% assumes a 30% loss of past gifts if everyone is asked.) That total is the amount of **NEW** money you'll have to raise.

Challenge your board to find new major gift donors to fill this gap. For example, if your gap is \$30,000, could you cover it with one \$10,000 donor, two \$5,000 donors and four \$2,500 donors?

VICTORY! Once you've achieved that goal, it's time to celebrate! Volunteer and donor recognition are critical elements of a well-rounded annual campaign. The old rule of thumb still applies: plan to thank your donors and volunteers at least 7 times a year. Recognition takes many forms (personal notes, kids' art, plaques, signage, etc.)

Effective recognition is also a great way to keep folks committed year after year!

ASSESSMENT Runners determine performance with one simple measure: time. Annual Campaign assessment goes deeper.

To ensure good planning for the next year, the following campaign benchmarks should be set and measured:

- Percent Board Giving
- Board Productivity (making asks)
- Percent Staff Giving
- New Donors
- Renewal
- Upgrades
- Total Dollars Raised

Plus, a comprehensive staff and volunteer survey will provide you with vital feedback as you begin planning for the next campaign.

NEXT YEAR Once the campaign has been reviewed and analyzed, it is time to begin setting new benchmarks for the coming year. When setting goals, take just one last tip from the world of running: it is very important to **STRETCH!**

Ready to start training preparing for your next campaign? Contact us for more information on our integrated annual campaign coaching and tools to make your 2017 finish even stronger!
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