

**Grassroots Fundraising Strategy Chart**  
**Adapted by Mimi Ho from**  
**"Choosing the Right Fundraising Strategy," by Kim Klein & Stephanie Roth**  
**Grassroots Fundraising Journal, [grassrootsfundraising.org](http://grassrootsfundraising.org)**

Here's a tool to help develop your fundraising plan. By understanding what strategies are good for what, and what kind of response rates to expect, your fundraising efforts will soar!

Strategies requiring some personal knowledge of the prospect by the solicitor

| What it is  | Percent of Response   | Best Use  | Comments   |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p><b>Personal face-to-face solicitation</b><br/>           Meet with a prospective donor by pre-arranged appointment &amp; ask for a contribution. Prospect has ABCs: <b>A</b>bility to give size you're asking for, <b>B</b>elief in the cause &amp; has <b>C</b>ontact with the organization or person asking for money (that is, you and the prospect know each other).</p> | <p>50% say yes<br/><br/>           Half will give less than the amount you asked for.</p> | <p>To upgrade donors<br/>           To bring in large gifts from qualified prospects<br/>           To raise large amounts of money quickly</p>   | <p>Start with people you know, at whatever level is appropriate for them</p>   |
| <p><b>Personal phone call</b><br/>           Caller knows the prospect. Makes call &amp; asks for contribution over the phone</p>   | <p>20 - 25%</p>   | <p>To upgrade donors, especially people at \$100-\$500 level to a higher gift<br/>           Use with major donors who can't be visited easily<br/>           Raise large amounts of money quickly</p>                    | <p>If it is hard to get donors to agree to face-to-face meeting, might need to rely on phone.</p>  |
| <p><b>Personal letter or email</b><br/>           Key difference from direct mail: there is a relationship between the person writing and the prospect</p>  | <p>10-20%</p>   | <p>Low-key way for board, staff, or volunteers to ask friends &amp; colleagues for gifts<br/>           To get donors known to people in the organization to renew gift<br/>           Sometimes useful for upgrading</p> | <p>Usually recommend more personal contact with donors either by phone or in a meeting after letter, but letter alone can also generate money. Email only gets this kind of response if the person asking knows the prospect personally.</p> |

Strategies not requiring personal knowledge of the prospect

| What it is  | Percent of Response                  | Best Use   | Comments  |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| <p><b>Door-to-door Canvass</b><br/>Volunteers or paid canvassers go door-to-door in designated neighborhoods, asking them to become a member or to give a contribution.</p>   | 10-15%                               | <p>In combination with an organizing drive so people are asked to sign petition or express opinion as well as join the group and give money<br/>Gifts are often small and hard to get donors to repeat, other than through another door-to-door contact</p>  | <p>Solicitors usually don't know the people, so response may be low<br/>A certain percentage will answer the door, so solicitors can engage face-to-face in deeper way than writing or phoning those people</p>                                     |
| <p><b>Phone-a-thon</b><br/>Group of people are recruited (or hired) to come together over several evenings to call through a list of prospective donors that may be interested in the organization's work. Sometimes used with current donors who give smaller amounts.</p> | 5%<br><br>15% if current donors      | <p>Reaching large numbers of people with a message they can respond to immediately<br/>Can raise a large number of small and medium-sized gifts quickly<br/>Works best when donations by credit card accepted</p>  | <p>Good initial training for volunteers in how to ask for money from people they probably do not know</p>   |
| <p><b>Direct Mail</b><br/>A letter (not personalized) is mailed out to a list of 200 or more people by bulk mail. The list is people who haven't given (or sometimes lapsed donors), but may be targeted to people who have shown some interest in your issue.</p>          | .5 - 1%<br><br>10% if current donors | <p>Acquisition of new donors<br/>To reach people you have no other way to contact</p>  | <p>Direct mail can often cost more or as much as it brings in<br/>Best to first exhaust people through personal strategies</p>  |
| <p><b>Email (to new prospects)</b><br/>Email blast that is sent to a list of people who have never given to the organization before.</p>  | .5 – 1%                              | <p>Acquisition of new donors<br/>Good when this is the only contact information you have for someone<br/>Best way to drive traffic to your website</p>   | <p>More cost effective than direct mail (though you have to factor in the cost of the technology to be able to send bulk email)</p>   |
| <p><b>Special Event</b><br/>Gathers a group of people to do something fun, entertaining, and/or educational.</p>  | Varies by event                      | <p>To strengthen relationships with donors<br/>Raise money from sources you might not otherwise have access to, e.g., small businesses<br/>Good for other goals aside from strictly financial such as:<br/>To build sense of community in the organization<br/>To introduce new people to your work<br/>Gain publicity for your organization</p> | <p>Most successful events combine strategies for acquisition, retention or upgrading of donors.<br/>Very labor-intensive, may not be best for small orgs.<br/>House Parties are a good variation – require less time, labor &amp; upfront costs</p> |