

THE LIBERTARIAN Volunteer

Volume 5 ♦ Issue 2 ♦ May/June 1994

A newsletter for LP volunteers, activists, officers, candidates, & student organizers

What's missing from the LP: A "team spirit"

Does the "rugged individualism" of Libertarians slow our progress?

BY
STUART
REGES

What is the Libertarian Party's *single greatest obstacle*? The media who won't cover us? The politicians who use ballot access and every other trick in the book to slow us down? The voters who won't take the time to study the issues?

These are formidable challenges, but I believe we suffer more from a problem *inside* rather than outside the party. The very same personality traits that make us rugged individuals who are attracted to libertarianism also prevent us from pulling together as an effective team.

I'm a libertarian because I don't accept the argument that "the law is the law" and must be obeyed. But even though I refuse to go along with the crowd when it comes to deciding my personal morality and political beliefs, I recognize the strategic advantage of the team approach.

Consider how the same behavior affects a team organization. While one can abstractly seek ideal justice, one cannot expect ideal leadership on a team. All teams make mistakes. Utopia is not an option. But a team that sticks

together despite such mistakes will be more competitive than one in which individual members circumvent the chain of command.

I claim that the following team attributes would help make the LP more effective:

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How to raise a lot more money for the LP

A 20% increase in your results will barely be noticed. A 50% increase isn't enough. If you quadruple your fundraising, the Democrats and Republicans will still generally be able to swallow your organization without chewing.

Can we aim for a tenfold increase? See if you can find enough ideas in here to make a real difference.

BY
SAM
EDELSTON

A. Have a product that people will want to invest their money in.

Fundraising doesn't exist in a vacuum. Your first job in successful fundraising is to create a growing, energetic organization that people *want* to give to. Remember, everybody loves a winner, and nothing succeeds like success.

1. Run your organization professionally. That's what your competitors do, and it will energize your members and delight your "customers" if you do.

a) Have professional-looking literature.

b) If you have a newsletter, make sure it's professional-looking, informative, unembarrassing, and timely.

c) Conduct activities that produce describable results.

d) Follow up on leads promptly and professionally.

2. Get your people known as credible, responsible, constructive members of the community.

3. Get people elected or appointed into office.

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

"I believe we suffer more from a problem inside rather than outside the party."

Inside

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Money - the root of all progress

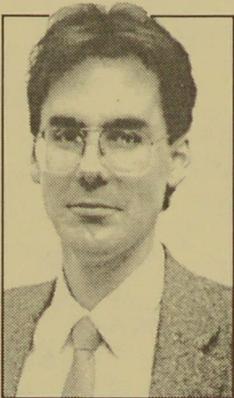
"I don't care too much for money; money can't buy me love," the Beatles sang many decades ago.

Love? Maybe not. But money *can* buy political success. To quote Libertarian talkmeister Gene Burns: "Money is the *mother's milk* of politics."

As political underdogs, Libertarian organizations need money. And they know it. When I called all the State Chairs last year and asked them what were the three biggest problems facing their state organizations, 30 mentioned money – or, rather, the lack of it.

That's why this issue of the *Libertarian Volunteer* focuses on fundraising. We've got several major "how-to" articles on the topic from such LP fundraising heavyweights as Perry Willis and Sam Edelston, as well as material from other outside expert sources. (Plus several helpful "Tips!"). Follow the suggestions in this issue, and I guarantee: You'll raise more money. (And create more positive progress!)

Looking to the future, the 1994 campaign season is heating up. That's why the next issue of the *Volunteer* will focus on successful campaigning. Do you have any tips, suggestions, things to avoid, or hard-won lessons to share? Send them to me by June 15th and I'll try to include them.



Bill Winter, Editor

Raising money: Proven techniques

Successful direct mail fundraising

In what way are my fundraising techniques proven? Simple:

> During my 12-year career as a Libertarian fundraiser my fundraising appeals have accounted for well over \$1,000,000 in income.

> Since 1980 no other single Libertarian has raised as much money as I have.

> I am the author of the highest grossing appeals for both our Presidential campaigns and for the Party itself.

My fundraising techniques have worked for the national LP, and they can work for you too. Here's the approach:

KEY CONCEPT: A fundraising letter is a service.

1. Too many Libertarian activists think of direct mail as junk mail or as begging. Done correctly, it's neither. People join the Libertarian Party because they want it to succeed, and a fundraising letter is the best tool you have for telling LP members exactly *how* you're succeeding. You should use your fundraising letters to tell your members specifically:

> What you have done to make the Party succeed since the last letter, and . . .

> What you are planning to do to achieve even more success in the near future.

Plans and progress. That's what you're fundraising letter should lay out – what you've *done* and what you're *going to do*. If your letter provides this information, it will be welcomed by its readers. I guarantee it.

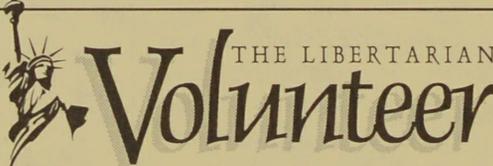
2. The first thing you must determine: What has your group done to make the Party succeed, and what projects should you undertake to build on that success? I believe that nearly all LP fundraising letters should be about the following projects:

- > Outreach that will increase membership.
- > Ballot access.
- > Winnable campaigns.
- > Re-electing sitting office holders.

Projects which are designed only to increase public awareness, but which do not result in *measurable increases* in membership, new elected office holders, re-elections, or ballot status, are bad projects. If you can't measure the results then you don't know for certain what



Perry Willis, National Director



A newsletter for LP volunteers, activists, officers, candidates, & student organizers
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The Libertarian Volunteer (formerly *APC News*) is a publication of the Libertarian Party. Our goal is to provide proven advice, timely news, political resources, strategic suggestions, and accurate information for Libertarian volunteers. Letters, comments, articles, and suggestions are welcome!
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impact the project really had. And you can't use uncertain results as a stepping stone to higher achievements. Good projects are the bedrock of good fundraising.

3. A project can form the basis of more than one fundraising letter. As long as you need more funds to bring the project to completion, keep mentioning it in your appeals. But make absolutely sure to report what you've done with the project to date. Your members are your *partners* – treat them with respect and they'll give you the money you need to do the job.

4. A fundraising letter must entertain and inform. And the most entertaining thing is *success*. After you've identified the project you want to "sell" to your members, make a list of your recent accomplishments. These are the starting point for your appeal, while a description of your new project should come near the close of the letter. The good news builds the credibility you need to sell your project. That's why the good news comes first and the project second.

There are two kinds of accomplishments you can use. I call them "bullets" and "anecdotes." If one of your members was on a radio talk show but you don't have any interesting details to share about the show, list the event as a bullet item. For instance:

➤ Our state chair, Joe Shmoe appeared on KXTL radio, heard by over 50,000 people.

But if you also have an interesting anecdote about the show, share it. It could even be something as simple as one listener calling in to say how much sense Libertarianism makes.

The key concept here is to build *speed* as the reader progresses through the letter. Every word, sentence, and paragraph has to build a sense of momentum. You want to build momentum not only within the letter itself, but from one letter to the next, so that each appeal builds on the previous one, and paves the way for the next. This is one of the reasons (as I'll describe below) that you should maintain one or more themes from letter to letter.

5. I keep a file called "Next Letter." Whenever anyone in LP HQ gets word of any "good news" it goes in the file. When it's time to write a fundraising letter I get out the file and make a list of all the good news. This list, with any associated anecdotes, makes up the opening of the letter. It might go something like this:

Look at what we've just accomplished (thanks to you):

➤ A piece of good news. Bam!

➤ A piece of good news. Bam!

➤ A piece of good news. Bam! Plus a snazzy little anecdote that makes us all feel good about what we're doing. Cool!

6. Try to find ways to tie your past successes to your

new project. How do your *plans for the future* fit with your *past progress* to create an energizing vision of *ultimate triumph*? In our National fundraising letters we've tied our plans and our progress into one overriding theme:

Small steps, big payoff.

A secondary theme of all of our fundraising appeals is that each small step equals a down-payment on credibility. Make enough payments and the people trust you. Explosive growth and victory should follow soon after.

These particular themes are important not only because "small steps" are the way we're going to get the job done, but also because our rank and file members need to understand the importance that small victories have for the future. They're the building blocks of success.

So: Have a theme you can repeat again and again in your letters.

7. Tease and foreshadow. Under point 4 I told you I would say more about a certain subject further on. I *foreshadowed* something. Hopefully, that foreshadowing had the effect of teasing you along. This is an important technique in persuasive writing. I try to put at least one tease on each page, including the final page, where I tease about the premium or about the project itself (or both).

8. Mailing *more* fundraising letters is better than mailing *fewer*. Many Libertarians worry that they are over-mailing their lists, and that they'll wear out their welcome. You needn't worry – that will only happen if you write boring letters with stupid projects and no progress. But, if you're entertaining and informing, then you can mail many, *many* more than you are at present.

Am I worried that you'll be competing with National's fundraising? Not at all – and you shouldn't be worried about competing with ours, either. This isn't a zero sum game. By creating good projects, reporting our successes, and making our members feel good about what they're doing we will expand the available pie, not consume it.

And I'll tell you something else – this kind of fundraising will do wonders for your membership renewal rate.

Go forth and fundraise!



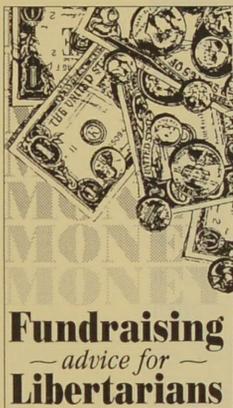
FUNDRAISING

When asking for money, you will be a more effective asker if you have already made a personally significant contribution yourself.

—BLUEPRINT FOR LIBERTARIAN ACTIVISTS



**"Have a theme
you can repeat
again and again in
your letters."**



A Team Spirit

➤ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

- Trusting other team players
- Surrendering personal pride to team pride
- Showing deference to team leaders
- Pulling together after defeats

The first two of these define the essence of the team concept. A good example of this came in the movie *Hoosiers* where a basketball coach suspends his star players for refusing to pass the ball to the inferior players. From the point of view of a star player, hogging the ball seems only natural because he knows that he has a better chance of scoring and he feels he deserves the glory if his talent made the score possible.

But this behavior destroys team unity and denies inferior players the opportunity to improve. In other words, the star player is putting his own good ahead of the team good. A player has to trust his teammates enough to pass the ball to them even when he thinks they will blow it. And he has to find satisfaction in the progress and success of the team, even if his superior ability is less emphasized as a result.

My own natural inclination is to act like the temperamental star player. I have a strong ego and prefer to perform a task by myself rather than have someone else do it if they aren't going to do it exactly my way. I have observed the same temperament in many LP members as

well. We have to learn to check our egos at the door when we perform party business and to trust other Libertarians enough to share some of the work with them, even if the result doesn't meet our personal ideal of perfection.

Libertarians are probably most challenged by the third attribute, showing deference to team leaders.

We wouldn't be libertarians if we blindly obeyed authority, but that tendency can also limit our effectiveness. I have often observed LP members wasting incredible amounts of time debating the fine points of a project. At the end of the argument we end up with a *slightly* better plan, but usually the debate consumes more time and energy than the flawed plan would have.

I have also witnessed party members wrangling over "six of one, half dozen of another" issues that have no right answer. There are many ways to crack an egg. Yet people often vigorously defend their approach and try to bully others into agreement. Unfortunately we have more than

our share of such bullies, and when they get together they waste everyone's time arguing questions that are irrelevant to our success.

In most cases a team that follows its game plan efficiently and without question will beat a team that debates the game plan, even if that debate produces a better plan. Unless you have a complete idiot in a leadership position, the plan will have some merit and will produce positive results. The fact that it might not be the *best possible* game plan is irrelevant if the time and energy necessary to improve the plan eats into the time and energy necessary to implement the plan.

Finally, an effective team pulls together after a defeat.

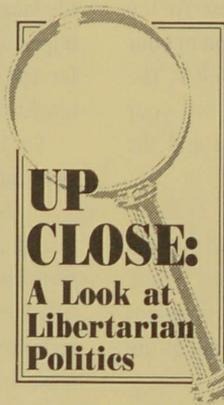
One can always find things to criticize about a team's performance, especially when it loses. But good team players don't allow their frustration and disappointment to turn into criticism and blame. Last year the Army/Navy football rivalry came down to a missed field goal attempt in the last seconds of the game, but the Navy kicker was patted on the back by his teammates afterwards. The *team* lost, not any single player or group of players. Losing needs to be a frustration that brings team members together rather than tearing them apart.

This is not to say that team players are never criticized after a defeat. Coaches wouldn't be good leaders if they didn't use such opportunities to point out areas of improvement for specific players. But such criticism should come from the coaches, not from individual players, and should be given in the context of how a player can overcome a deficiency and make the team stronger. Winning teams look forward, not backward.

I am beginning to wonder whether the one constant in the LP is petty criticism. I have felt the impulse myself to distance my ideas from those of other members, particularly party leaders, when I think their policies are flawed. I think we experience this because we take great pride in the quality of our ideas and because our egos are so often self-centered rather than group-centered.

But this endless bickering takes a great toll on the party. It destroys unity, delays projects, makes us vulnerable to attack, and leaves us all with a negative attitude about the party. This situation is particularly dangerous for newcomers whose enthusiasm is often dampened when they discover the latest round of contentious debate.

This lack of harmony is most destructive after a painful defeat like the disappointingly low Marrou/Lord vote total in 1992. Instead of going to Andre and Nancy and all the others who worked so diligently for their success and patting them on the back and talking about how much



"I am beginning to wonder whether the one constant in the LP is petty criticism."

better we'll do next time, we degenerated into a group of bitter individuals desperately trying to assign blame to anyone but ourselves. We looked backwards in depression rather than turning our attention forwards with renewed resolve.

I recommend a simple procedure for recognizing and correcting this problem. Every time you are about to challenge someone in the party, stop and think whether the action you are about to take will *directly benefit the LP*. If you can't immediately name the tangible benefit that will accrue, then your action is furthering *personal* rather than group goals.

When I was teaching computer science at Stanford, I had great success helping my Teaching Assistants understand how their personal habits were preventing them from being effective teachers by asking them to spend a week helping students without ever touching a student's keyboard. They found it difficult to do so, and learned a great deal in the process.

I have a similar experiment to suggest to LP members who want to explore the team concept: volunteer time for a project and force yourself to behave as a low-level team player.

That means you must do everything you are told without question. Avoid discussing the team strategy even if asked about it in a friendly manner. And find a way to compliment at least one other volunteer and at least one of the project leaders without expecting any compliments in return. Afterwards, say something positive about the project to a fellow libertarian who didn't participate.

You might be surprised to find how difficult this can be, but I believe you will find the experience worthwhile.

About the author: *Stuart Reges is a former National Director of the Libertarian Party, and a former professor of computer science at Stanford University. He currently lives in Washington, DC.*



CAMPAIGNING

If you're running in a non-partisan local election, don't expect to win unless you are well-known and well-liked in your community. Political expert Loren B. Belker writes: "Let's face it — many local elections are not decided over issues at all. They are popularity contests. When people care deeply about an issue, they may vote for a candidate that they do not care for because of his or her position on an issue. But if there are no real issues, they will never vote for a candidate they do not like."

—ORGANIZING FOR POLITICAL VICTORY

Taking advantage of talk radio

Talk radio is "the last neighborhood in America" and is an excellent method of reaching the general public — if Libertarians do it right.

That was the message of Jim Walsh, a libertarian-leaning radio talk show host from WILM radio in Delaware, who spoke at that state's annual convention in April.

"Talk radio is a great opportunity to get on and get ideas across with a minimum of effort," he said.

Some tips to maximize your talk radio effectiveness:

> **Be prepared:** "Listen to the show beforehand. Understand the format of the show you're calling. Understand the type of listener. Understand the temperament of the host." For example, "You wouldn't call Howard Stern to discuss Bosnia."

> **"Always adapt your message to the medium.** On radio, by its nature, time will be limited. My producers tell me that if I give callers more than 90 seconds, they better have something damned interesting to say. Prepare — and edit — your remarks. Say what you have to say in as few words as possible."

> **Be interesting:** "Remember talk radio is primarily an entertainment medium. This doesn't mean you can't discuss serious issues — but it does mean you have to be entertaining. For example, the worst thing you can do is call up and read from a newspaper article. That is deadly."

> **"Talk about stuff you're passionate about.** Talk about something that lights a fire under you."

> **Understand the difference between small and large radio markets.** "In small markets, you'll get more time to talk. The good small market talk show is a dynamite opportunity to talk to your neighbors."

> **"Don't restrict yourself to talk show hosts who agree with you.** It makes things a little more interesting if there's a little disagreement — as long as you can do it without being disagreeable."



"Understand the temperament of the host."



FUNDRAISING

When asking for money, requests should be for specific amounts, *at least* specific minimum amounts, and they should include an explanation of why that particular amount of money is needed.

—BLUEPRINT FOR LIBERTARIAN ACTIVISTS

Where LP state cash comes from

Where do Libertarian state parties get their money?

What is their *single largest* source of funds?

These were two of the questions that Director of Communications Bill Winter asked State Chairs around the country when he called them all last year.

"Some of the responses about fund-raising were exactly what we expected," he said. "Some were surprising!"

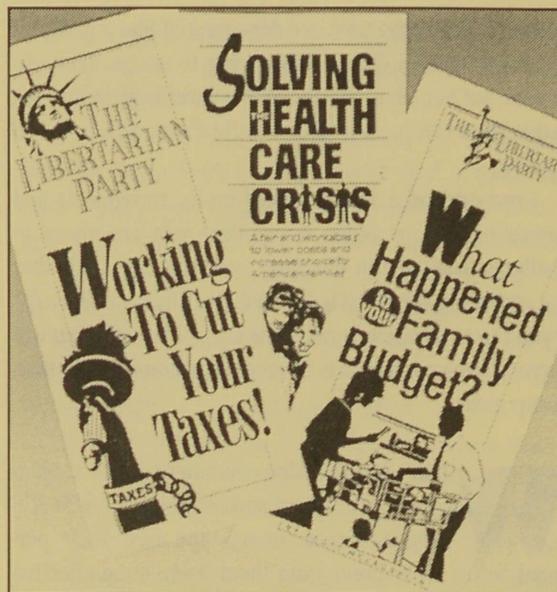
Here are the results of those two questions. (Totals may add up to more than 50 because of multiple answers.)

1. What do you do to raise funds?

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| > Fundraising letters | 21 states |
| > At convention | 9 states |
| > Nothing/No answer | 7 states |
| > Pledge program | 6 states |
| > From activists/officers/State Chair | 6 states |
| > Ask for money in newsletter | 4 states |
| > Not much/Haphazard | 4 states |
| > Fundraising phone calls | 4 states |
| > Sell merchandise | 4 states |
| > Social events | 4 states |
| > Rummage/garage sale | 3 states |
| > Fair Booths | 2 states |
| > Raffles | 2 states |
| > Unsolicited donations | 2 states |
| > "Beg" | 1 state |
| > Dinner club | 1 state |
| > Newsletter subscriptions | 1 state |
| > Collect money at LP events | 1 state |
| > Membership dues | 1 state |
| > Ask wealthy people | 1 state |
| > Auction | 1 state |

2. What is the single largest source of your money?

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| > Membership dues | 22 states |
| > Fundraising letters | 9 states |
| > Contributions | 7 states |
| > Convention | 6 states |
| > Pledge program | 6 states |
| > Newsletter subscriptions | 3 states |
| > Activists/State Chair | 4 states |
| > Passing the hat/Solicited donations | 3 states |
| > None/No answer | 2 states |
| > Check-off from state income tax | 2 states |
| > Unsolicited donations | 2 states |



New brochures available from LP

In an effort to improve the public image of the Libertarian Party and bolster outreach efforts, the National LP is offering three new outreach brochures for sale:

- > The Libertarian Party: Working to Cut Your Taxes!
- > What Happened to Your Family Budget?
- > Solving the Health Care Crisis

"This is part of our new commitment to professionalism," said Bill Winter, Director of Communications. "These brochures are professionally designed, printed in two colors, and are on nicer paper than previous brochures."

Best of all, said Winter, "They are available at the same price as previous brochures: just 5¢ each in quantities of 100. They're in stock right now, and ready to ship."

> The "Cutting Taxes" brochure replaces the old "Break Free" brochure.

> The "Family Budget" brochure is brand new and focuses on the damaging effects of taxes on the typical American family.

> The "Health Care" brochure is an offshoot of the LP's Project Healthy Choice, and outlines free market health care solutions.

To order by credit card, call the Libertarian Party HQ at (202) 543-1988. Or, see the new order form in future issues of *LP News*. Prices: sample 50¢ or \$5/100.

Other new items: The 1994 party Platform (sample \$1 or \$50/100); the 1994 Program (sample \$1 or \$10/100); and LP Fact Sheets – 2-page LP History & 2-page Reading List, offered as a package only (sample 50¢ or \$10/100).

Creating an effective phone system for your state or local LP

BY
TOM
ISENBERG

Your phone line is your life line. The most basic function of each state LP is to have a phone line to handle inquiries.

Ideally, this should consist of both a local and toll-free number that goes to a voice mail box — not a physical phone or someone's answering machine. The reason is that a voice mail box is always on duty, always cheerful, never screws up, and the phone number won't ever need to be changed (i.e., because your phone staffer moves or is not doing a very good job.)

In Washington state, we disconnected our physical phonenumber and had the existing number redirected to a voice mail box. Things are much more efficient now!

Voice mail boxes

Instead of having a residential phone/answering machine, get a "market expansion line" and a voice mail box from your local phone company. (You can keep your existing number.) Your phone company's voice mail service won't cost much more than cheaper companies, and they're not likely to go out of business.

Remember, your phone number will be on a lot of literature, so you don't want to have to change it!

In Washington state, our "phone bill" is about \$30 a month with a one-time setup fee of \$40. Make sure that only one person (ideally, the membership chair, or whoever handles prospect mailings) knows the password to the voice mail box.

Make sure that only one person (your Treasurer?) is authorized to make any changes/cancellations to this service and arrange with the voice mail company to demand a password before implementing any changes.

Have an attractive female voice record your friendly voice mail message."

For example: "Thank you for calling the Libertarian Party of Washington! We're sorry, but all our lines are busy. [Technically, that's true.] To receive a free informa-

tion packet, please leave your name, address, and phone number. Thank you for calling!"

Toll-free numbers

Also, get a toll-free number for prospects outside your local calling area. In Washington, we use Sprint (1-800-877-4020) for our toll-free number, and it doesn't cost much more than cheaper services. (Plus, they'll be in business for a while.) Our toll-free bill is about \$25 a month, and there is no setup fee.

You can pick your toll-free number, so make it something easier to remember (if you were to hear it on a radio ad, for example.) There are still some 1-800-xxx-1776 numbers left!

And make sure that your 1-800 number also goes to your voice mail box.

Again, make sure that only one person (your Treasurer?) is authorized to make any changes/cancellations to your toll-free service and arrange with the phone company to demand a password before implementing any changes.

Phone listings

Call all the local phone companies that service your state to get your 1-800 number listed in all the major phone books in the state (outside of the local calling area, of course.) List the local number in your local area directories only. Due to the monopoly nature of local phone service, phone books do not overlap coverage areas. It costs about \$1 a month for each phone book listing.

Also, make sure that your toll-free numbers are listed statewide with directory assistance, the Secretary of State, the League of Women Voters, etc. Anticipate the different ways people will try to find your number!



FUNDRAISING

Three tips for more successful fundraising:

- > Most people *must be asked* before they will give. There is no substitute for asking.
- > The most effective form of fundraising is *one-to-one solicitation*, either in person or over the phone. Direct mail, by itself, can be the least effective, and should be followed up by phone calls to as many names as can be reached.
- > Recognize that *different people will be willing to contribute to different projects*; for example, some will contribute to the state party and not the local, some vice versa. Therefore, many different purposes and activities will generate many more contributions.

—BLUEPRINT FOR LIBERTARIAN ACTIVISTS



"Have an attractive female voice record your friendly voice mail message."

Raising money at LP banquets & special events

BY
KENT
GUIDA

It's become traditional to raise money at convention banquets and similar events, and for good reason. These events represent occasions where large numbers of Libertarians are all together in one place.

There have been many examples of successful fundraising at these events – and, unfortunately, many examples of fundraising attempts which were not successful. The difference hasn't been accidental. Fundraising succeeds or fails according to the preparation that's gone on before it. Successful banquet fundraising usually follows these guidelines:

1. Pledge/contribution cards and envelopes are ready and on the tables before the banquet starts. This is absolutely essential, since it makes no sense to ask for money without providing a means to respond.

2. The fundraiser – the person making the “pitch” – should identify the need, set a financial goal, and ask a specific minimum contribution from each person there.

3. As a general rule, there is a formula which can be used to set the financial goal for a typical event. Multiply the number of people in the room by \$25.

4. Two or three should be assigned the task of collecting the pledge cards and envelopes. They should visibly circulate around the room, asking each table of people if there are any envelopes to be collected.

5. The fundraising portion of the event should have a predetermined pace. For example, the fundraiser makes the appeal, sets the goal, asks for the amount, and signals the collectors to begin making their rounds. While the envelopes start coming in, it's often a good

idea to have another person say a few words, in order to vary the program and keep the interest of the audience. Then the principal fundraiser can come back and make the final appeal.

6. When possible, obtain commitments from several people ahead of the event to make significant contributions which can be announced as the fundraising starts. Being able to say “Joe Smith has already pledged \$200

toward this important effort” will set the tone for subsequent contributions – people will then tend to give their maximums.

7. Consider having party members who can play the piano or guitar, sing, etc. provide entertainment between the initial pitch and the wrap-up. Sometimes this can be an incentive for more contributions: “If we get four more pledges of \$25, Sally here will play ‘Lady of Spain.’” This idea was enormously successful at a Florida state convention, and has worked well since. (As a variation, some people may be willing to pay not to hear Sally play “Lady of Spain.”)

8. Fundraising gimmicks, such as auctions, require someone who knows what he or she is doing to be pulled off successfully.

9. An Oregon experience illustrates a variation on good banquet fundraising technique. The party needed \$400 per month for a headquarters, so the fundraiser announced that he needed twenty people in the audience to raise their hands and pledge \$20 per month for the next six months. As hands started to go up, the fundraiser ticked off the number of people he still needed – “OK, I need eight more people. Now six.” etc. – until the goal was reached.



“There is no “easy way” to get the money party organizations need.”

Summary and Conclusions

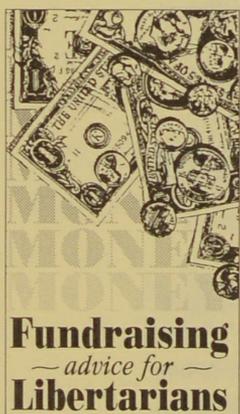
Of the thousands of methods of successful fundraising – whether they involved phone calls, direct mail, one-time-only contributions, monthly pledgers, wealthy people, not-so-wealthy people, experienced fundraisers, or novices – the essential ingredient to the success of the effort can be summed up in one word: ASK.

Unless people are willing to ask other people to contribute money, no fundraising will be successful. There is no substitute for asking, no “easy way” to get the money party organizations need. But successful fundraisers attest that, after the first few approaches have been made, asking for contributions gets progressively easier because the success rate among Libertarians is usually so high.



FUNDRAISING

Once someone has made a contribution, he or she should always be thanked, kept informed of the activity the contribution has helped to fund, and treated as a special person. Making a contribution means involvement. —BLUEPRINT FOR LIBERTARIAN ACTIVISTS



A dozen tips from an expert: Better fundraising

There are an enormous number of ways to raise money — and political expert Loren B. Belker has had experience with most of them.

In his book *Organizing for Political Victory* Belker gives numerous suggestions how to improve (and avoid problems with) three types of popular fundraising activities — personal solicitations, professional entertainers, and fundraising dinners.

Personal Solicitations

> **Make a list of who might give**, along with an assessment of the amount they should be asked to contribute: “Few contributors will give more than they are asked.”

> **Don't ask for too much money**: “Some so-called political experts feel that people are complemented when you ask them for more money than they can possibly give. This may be true if you are asking someone for \$500 and the most they can give is \$100. However, if you ask a man for \$1,000 when the biggest contribution he has ever made to any cause is \$25, he may be indignant.”

> **Make sure your solicitors contribute, too**: “Before individuals solicit money, they should be financially committed themselves. An individual who does not give of his own money does

not make an effective solicitor — he can not very well convince someone else that they ought to do something he is unwilling to do.”

> **Do not ask any one individual to make too many calls**: “One of the main responsibilities of the finance chairman is . . . to see that such personal solicitations are properly organized so everyone involved has a manageable amount of work to do.”

Professional Entertainers

> **Do your homework first**: “The best chance to get a celebrity to help exists if he or she is in your community for a performance and could also appear at your function. I do not believe you should approach a performer cold. Check with other sources to see if you are the type of [political cause] this performer supports”

> **Get professional help**: “While some cynics might say there is little difference between show business and politics, there are facets of putting on performances that political people are not familiar with, and should not attempt to handle alone. If you are considering this approach to fundraising, get professional help.”

Fundraising Dinners

> **Set an appropriate price**: “One of the first decisions to be made is the price to charge for the dinner. The price must be high enough so it will generate the kind of money you need, but not so high it will prohibit people from attending. A good rule of thumb to follow: You ought to raise at least two dollars for every dollar the function costs you.”

> **Check the public address system in advance**: “Do not wait until the night of the event to see if the public address system is working. If you discover it is inadequate for the event it is entirely too late to do anything about it.”

> **Provide programs**: “Printed programs as each table place setting let people know the agenda for the evening. People like to know what is going to happen. State the starting time and start on time.”

> **Discuss details with the management beforehand**: “Have an understanding with the hotel or restaurant that tables will not be cleared once the program begins. There is nothing more disconcerting to a speaker [than] waiters and waitresses going through an auditorium like a horde of locusts.”

> **Control the timing**: “Have the program timed. When you ask people to speak, let them know how long you want them to speak.”

> **Get a good Master of Ceremonies**: “This person should realize that he or she is primarily an expeditor. The agenda should be strictly followed. The master of ceremonies is not the show — he or she is there to make sure things run smoothly. The job of the MC is to make everyone else look good.”



“Few contributors will give more than they are asked.”



FUNDRAISING

When asking for money, requests for funds should not be mixed with requests for other things, such as volunteers for certain activities. Many people will avoid contributing if they can choose another option, but would have gladly contributed if the other option had never been presented.

—BLUEPRINT FOR LIBERTARIAN ACTIVISTS

Raising more money

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

4. Ask people for quotes or testimonials. If you can get a city councilman or prominent local figure to say that one of your proposals is interesting, provocative, or worthy of support, use it in fundraisers and other literature.

5. Cultivate, cherish, and abundantly thank your volunteers and activists.

B. Fundraise more aggressively.

1. Fundraise more often. If you currently do one or two mailings a year, try three or four.

2. Easy way to add a mailing: Two or three weeks after you do a mailing, send the same letter again, with a Post-it or overprint saying something like, "In case you missed this important letter..." This follow-up should draw 50%-70% as much response as the original.

3. Focus especially hard on the people who are most likely to send money. You'll get the most from past donors. Second priority: Members. Lower priority: Prospects and sympathizers. (Many people believe that their brilliant words will open up the prospects' wallets. Great fantasy.)

4. Keep track of who has given money in the past.

a) Ask past donors for more money than they gave you last time. This is especially easy nowadays, with easy-to-use databases and laser personalization.

b) If someone gave \$50 last time, give him a laser-printed choice of \$100, \$75, or \$50 next time.

5. Build as big a mailing list as possible. That includes supporters and sympathizers who aren't necessarily Libertarians.

a) At all events, actively encourage people to give you their names and addresses.

b) If you hear someone complain about the government, get his address. (And note what his hot issue is.)

c) Note: This is "so you can find out about upcoming events." It is not so the person can "get on our mailing list." People want to know about events; they don't want to be on mailing lists.

6. Send thank-you notes (promptly) to contributors. ("Oh, and while you're thinking of it, if you could somehow squeeze another \$30 out of your next paycheck, it would be greatly appreciated.")

C. Step "Outside the Box"

1. Cultivate a monthly pledge program. National LP has developed this into a major revenue source.

2. Here's a clever one: On your yearly membership renewal forms, add a line for "Voluntary Dues Supplement.....\$10." (Carnegie Hall asks for \$100.)

3. If you're raising money for a political campaign, don't just approach Libertarians. Approach your friends, neighbors, and relatives — and those of the candidate. Approach all the merchants downtown. Approach anyone who has an axe to grind against the status quo. (Did they just pass a historic preservation law? Get a list of the affected properties!)

4. Urge your members to include your organization in their wills.

5. Identify potential major donors and other heavyweights (such as business owners who have just been given a major government runaround). Approach them separately, in a very customized way.

6. This is very important: If you don't have a lot of free time for fundraising, find someone who does. Recruit a retiree or stay-at-home mom to do your organization's fundraising. (Someone reliable, and preferably someone who has direct mail experience.)

7. Find an experienced direct mail writer (doesn't necessarily have to be a libertarian) to write your letters, or at least critique them before you mail.

a) If this proves impossible, then try your letters out on a non-libertarian spouse or friend who you can trust to speak candidly.



D. Better Mailing Pieces.

1. Put a headline at the beginning of your letter.

a) The job of the headline is to get the person to read the first sentence. So make it a real grabber, not just something cute.

2. After you've written and edited your letter, cover up the first paragraph or two and see if it reads better. (Most writers take too long to get to the point.)

3. Don't be subtle or ashamed about asking for money. These are your fans and supporters. And they do enjoy supporting your cause.

4. Make your reply card simple, uncluttered, and reader-friendly. (In fact, with people who have never given before, consider asking for just a single amount of, say, \$25 — instead of the traditional five or six choices.)

5. Collect and read literature from other organizations.

a) One easy way: Send \$5 a year to the Democrats and Republicans. They'll send you all sorts of interesting material.



"Don't be subtle or ashamed about asking for money. These are your fans and supporters."

6. Telephone follow-up will lift response if you have enough bodies to do it. If you have only a limited number of volunteers, focus on your best donors.

7. If your mailings are large enough, get your materials printed professionally, hire a real lettershop to insert it, and save a fortune in postage by mailing third-class.

E. What to say in letters

1. Talk about real accomplishments and attainable, realistic goals. Convince me that you can do what you're talking about. Use those selling points from the beginning of this article.

2. Making overambitious, unattainable promises will bring in more money in the short run, until people get wise to you. In the long run, it disillusiones your readers.

3. Remember that people (including us!) make decisions on an *emotional* – not logical – level. Don't try to convince them with syllogisms. Appeal to their gut. Get under their skin.

a) If you can find a person who has a really to-the-point personal story to tell, build it into your letter.

4. Whenever possible, tie your mailings to something specific.

5. Keep a clip file of horror stories and useful statistics that you can use as ammunition.

6. Find a formula that will allow you to write letters quickly. You can't afford to spend twenty hours tweaking a letter if it will only go out once to 500 people.

a) Look for ways to recycle parts of your letters from mailing to mailing. For example, try to re-use the "asking for money" section of your last letter.

b) Think through what your letter will say before you begin jotting down notes and writing it.

c) Writing is always easier when you feel inspired. If you're having trouble getting inspired, see if you can set yourself up to have a frustrating experience with some regulatory bureaucrat.

7. If you have a really clever, pithy line that you simply can't resist using in a letter – but you have to stretch to make it fit – edit it out.

a) Don't resort to name-calling. For example, talking about "Tweedle-Dum and Tweedle-Dumber" or the "Demopublicrats" may feel good, but it sounds childish.

8. "Premiums" (gifts you give to people who respond) can be good . . . but *keep the presentation simple*. If you have to spend half a page explaining four different levels of premiums, you're confusing matters.

a) You're probably better off just offering every donor a mug with some really irresistible slogan.

9. However you feel about it ideologically, the oath or membership pledge decreases response in membership

solicitations. Therefore, when you want to get money from non-libertarians, you may be best off doing it through a fundraiser for a candidate. (Then maybe send an immediate follow-up membership pitch to donors, saying that because of their recent contribution to the allied organization, you'll waive their first year's dues.)

F. Do things easier

1. Your time is limited. Use it as effectively as possible.

2. If you manage the fundraising or write the letters, recruit someone else to take care of the inserting and mailing. This builds your organization.

3. Many hands make light work.

a) When you invite volunteers over to insert a big mailing, let them know you'll be inviting some pizza or ice cream, too.

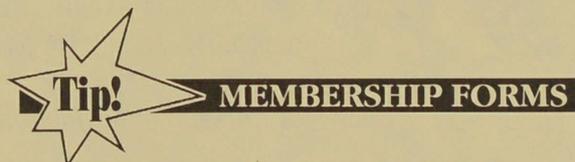
4. Develop a format that's easy and workable for you.

a) Because my quantities couldn't justify anything fancier, my NJLP mailings evolved to a 2-sided 8.5x11 letter (which I could easily photocopy at the office) with a #9 reply envelope and a laser-printed, one-third-of-a-page, colored reply form with the addressee showing through a #10 window envelope.

G. Save this article.

Put it someplace where you'll find it the next time you're preparing a fundraiser.

About the author: *Sam Edelston ran the New Jersey Libertarian Party's fundraising and membership development efforts for four years. In real life, he's vice president for marketing and strategic planning at a publishing company that sent out nearly 100 million pieces of promotional mail last year (mostly to your mailbox). On his speed-dial are several of the greatest direct-mail writers and experts of all time.*



Want to *increase* the number of new members – and *decrease* name and address errors in your database? Don't send out tiny, cramped membership forms. Webcraft Technologies recommends: "Make the writing area spacious enough for your customers to easily fill in the necessary information. Increase the size of the order form if necessary, to insure that there is sufficient room to write legibly. Small spaces discourage sales and increase the likelihood of order processing errors." A suggestion: Before sending any customer response form to the printer, personally fill out a prototype with your name and address. If it doesn't comfortably fit, make your form bigger.

–31 TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR ORDER FORM



"Remember that people (including us!) make decisions on an emotional - not logical - level."

Notices

■ **Calling all candidates:** Ron Crickenberger, Chairman of the LP Campaigns Committee, is compiling a list of *all* Libertarian candidates – from U.S. Senate down to non-partisan local positions – running for office in 1994. Support will be provided by the National LP for some of these candidates. Information needed for each candidate: 1) Complete name, address, and phone number; 2) Office sought; 3) Campaign goals (Example: to win; “paper candidate,” to gain ballot status, etc.). Please send information to: Joe Barnett, 1112 West Sanford Street, Arlington, TX 76012. Home phone: 817-469-9171. CompuServe: 70252,2400

■ **Suggestions:** Bill Bragg, the State Chair of Florida, has a suggestion for all other State Chairs and database managers: If a state LP member in your state moves, please forward their name and new address to the LP organization in their *new* state. This will make it easier for that state's LP to contact that person, invite them to join the party, and encourage them to get active.

■ **Online:** Jim Merritt, host of the Libertarian Forum on America Online, wants to discuss the possibility of holding live conferences in that forum with interesting Libertarian guests. Party officials, victorious candidates, and current office holders can contact him at “>internet:presbyte@aol.com”.

■ **NOTA alliance:** The Free Congress Foundation is interested in working with Libertarian groups to publicize and support “None of the Above” (NOTA) initiatives. “Libertarians and the Free Congress Foundation share a common interest in less government, less taxes, and less regulation of the economy,” the group wrote to LP National headquarters. “That is why we are asking for your help in promoting NOTA, [which] can help make new people aware of the Libertarian Party and it's promise of less taxes, less government, and more freedom.” For information about their campaign, write: NOTA, Free Congress Foundation, 717 Second Street, NE, Washington DC 20002. Call: (202) 546-3004.

■ **New officer lists:** LP state convention season continues, and many states are electing new officers. If your state recently elected new officers, please send an updated list to the National HQ, Attn: Bill Winter.



THE LIBERTARIAN Volunteer

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