

# From the Donor's Perspective: Why Some Fundraisers Succeed While Others Fail

By Paul J. Meyer

**What qualities or characteristics separate the fundraisers who succeed from the ones who fail? Who better to ask than the top donors who give to them!**

In order to get their valuable perspectives on fundraising, I interviewed more than 30 donors of the highest caliber who have given millions and millions of dollars to various charities, ministries, and organizations. I asked them why some fundraisers succeed while others fail.

These are the qualities and characteristics the donors felt made successful fundraisers:

- **Sincere relationship** — Above all, successful fundraisers are sincere.
- **Personal integrity** — Successful fundraisers are upfront, genuine, and always operate with integrity.
- **Knowledge of their charity** — Successful fundraisers are well informed.
- **Clearly defined goals** — Successful fundraisers clearly state the mission, needs, and opportunity a donor has to help accomplish the mission.
- **Regular communication** — Successful fundraisers keep donors in the loop.
- **Assurance of cost effectiveness** — Successful fundraisers show donors that their money is doing what was promised.
- **Credibility** — Successful fundraisers use donors' funds for the intended purpose only.
- **Matching gifts** — Successful fundraisers think about lead gifts or matching gifts so donors' gifts are multiplied.
- **Deserving cause** — Successful fundraisers help donors feel that they are making a worthwhile contribution to a worthwhile cause.
- **Shared vision** — Successful fundraisers seek donors who share the organization's vision and want to make a difference.
- **Passion** — Successful fundraisers believe in their cause so much that they contribute to it themselves.
- **Common interest** — Successful fundraisers find donors who are interested in their mission.
- **Enthusiasm** — Successful fundraisers are enthusiastic about their cause.
- **Quality presentation** — Successful fundraisers present the charity in an enticing, concise, and articulate manner.
- **Gratitude** — Successful fundraisers must have an air of gratitude, no matter the amount of the gift.
- **Persistence** — Successful fundraisers are persistent without being offensive.

On the other hand, these are the qualities and characteristics the donors felt made fundraisers fail:

- **Lack of personal relationship** — One of the most common reasons that fundraisers fail is that they haven't established a relationship with the donor.
- **Negative characteristics portrayed** — If something is said or done that runs up the "red flag" for the donor, the fundraiser will most likely fail.
- **Lack of sincerity and belief** — Failure comes when fundraisers are not sincere and do not have a strong belief in their charity.
- **Poor communication** — Failure is imminent for fundraisers who do not communicate, including communicating about the charity and keeping in touch with the donor.
- **Lack of clear goals** — Fundraising without clear goals leads to lack of balance and action.
- **Lack of integrity** — Any hint of a fundraiser's lack of integrity, and the donor will slow down, back up, or demand answers.
- **Perceived ungratefulness** — Fundraisers who fail rarely give donors a personal thank-you for their gift or else they use it as a steppingstone to the next request.
- **Desperation letters** — Desperation letters are not effective, well received, or quickly forgotten.
- **Pressure selling** — High-pressure salesmanship is a serious turnoff.
- **Lack of knowledge** — Fundraisers fail because they cannot answer the questions that donors ask.
- **Inaction** — Many fundraisers fail because they are not getting the message out to enough people.
- **Wastefulness** — Fundraisers fail when they do not spend the donors' money wisely.
- **Lack of interest** — Fundraisers who fail seldom do the homework necessary to know if the prospective donor is even interested in the charity.
- **Inappropriate appreciation** — Unsuccessful fundraisers don't take the time or care to find out how their donors expect to be appreciated.
- **Forgetting the obvious** — If a fundraiser does not leave a donor with all the necessary contact information, the donor cannot give.
- **Wasting time** — Prospective donors do not appreciate when fundraisers are insensitive to their time and schedule.

Having a donor's perspective can help make the difference between success and failure as a fundraiser!

Since 1960, New York Times best-selling author and one of the founders of the self-improvement industry, Paul J. Meyer, has helped people become successful fundraisers. To learn more invaluable tips on fundraising, order *Fundraising ... from the Donor's Perspective* today, available at [www.pauljmeyer.com](http://www.pauljmeyer.com).

