

## **USING COMMUNICATIONS FOR FUNDRAISING SUCCESS: Making the Case, Making the Connection**

There are five simple steps to using communications to help ensure fundraising success:

### **Step 1: Take an Integrated Approach**

A strategic fundraising plan *requires* a corresponding strategic communications plan. These two vital tools need to be developed in concert and then *implemented* in an integrated fashion. Both plans require external input. Be inclusive and externally focused. Remember: good planning will reap benefits in the long run.

### **Step 2: Know the What, When and How + The Big Idea**

Start by identifying and contacting your constituents. Find out *what* they want to hear about, *when* they want to hear it, *how* they want to hear it. Most importantly in terms of communications and creating your message, you are looking for the “big idea,” the concept or unifying visionary theme that will inspire donors and simultaneously transcends your organization and connects it to the larger world.

### **Step 3: Discover What Makes Your Organization Unique**

Use state-of-the-art tools including online surveys, focus groups and discovery calls to find out what makes your organization unique *in the minds* of your key constituents.

### **Step 4: Be Flexible and Adapt**

Step outside your communications’ “comfort zone.” Use the new knowledge from your discovery tools to create a strong communications platform. Alter your messages and approaches based on what you’ve learned. *The key is to be flexible so you can reach the right people with the right message at the right time in order to get your constituents to embrace your message.*

### **Step 5: Educate and Involve**

Take a broad view of communications. It operates on many levels and includes more people beyond the communications staff. Be sure to educate your colleagues to view communications as the first step—*the vital step*—in building the relationships that lead to gifts and financial stability. Train your colleagues from senior staff to frontline service workers about the key messages to share with others.