

The Pitfalls of Self-Led Capital Fund Campaigns

There are many stories of churches that have tried to conduct their own campaign "in-house" only to achieve poor, disappointing results. There are reasons for this.

Self-Led Campaigns . . .

Cost the church more than it saves by not hiring a consultant.

There is the false assumption by many church leaders that people will give the same amount with or without an outside consultant. History shows that churches who have self-led campaigns only raise 50%-60% of what could have been raised with an outside consultant. Thus, to save the cost of a consultant's fee, a church conducts a self-led campaign and receives tens and even hundreds of thousands of dollars less in commitments. It becomes a very expensive mistake that the church can make.

Raise less money than those led by an outside consultant, thus increasing other costs.

As a result the church either pays more in interest costs due to the need to borrow larger amounts over longer periods of time and pays higher construction costs caused by a longer delay in the project.

Have no proven campaign strategy and plan in place.

An outside consultant will bring to the church a proven, effective strategy and plan that has been developed through working with many churches. Using a consultant will help the church avoid many mistakes that a self-led campaign will experience.

Create a whole different "feel" within the church.

Using a consultant brings a sense of quality and professionalism to the campaign that cannot be experienced when self-led campaigns are conducted.

Require a higher time and energy commitment by the pastor and staff.

With the many demands upon pastors and staff today, most do not have the time and energy to be the catalyst for a self-led campaign. As a result the campaign does not have the focus and intentionality that it needs. An outside consultant brings to the church the skill and intentionality to keep the campaign focus in place and reduces the time and energy demands (as well as the criticisms) on the pastor and staff.

Tend to work on too short of a time frame.

Capital Fund Campaigns require months of time to develop the organizational base, properly educate and motivate the congregation, and bring people to a point of commitment. Self-led campaigns tend to not recognize these developmental dynamics and do not have the expertise or take the time to effectively lead the church through this developmental and commitment phase.

Tend to involve too few people in the campaign process.

Self-led campaigns usually end up being carried out by a few people in the church. A key to successful consultant-led campaigns is the structure and ability to involve a significant number of people in the campaign process, thus assuring a better pledge response. People involved in the campaign from the inside are more likely to make significant commitments than those who are looking in from the outside. Broad involvement is a key that most self-led campaigns lack.

Risk hindering the momentum of the church.

A campaign that achieves poor financial results can negatively affect the momentum of the church. It can take months, even years, to recover from the lost momentum of an ineffective campaign. Using an outside consultant greatly increases the chances that the church will reach its financial goals and add to the positive momentum of the church.