

• THE FIVE MOST COMMON •

5 Capital Campaign Mistakes

— and Their Cures



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ADVANCING THE CHURCH

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Considering a Capital Campaign at your Church?

Here are the Five Most Common Mistakes – and Their Cures

Is there a capital campaign in your church's future? Sooner or later every church faces the need to raise money – whether to expand, renovate, or repair.

The opportunity to shape the future of your church can be a blessing. Whether you are seeking to conduct a campaign for new buildings, expansion, debt reduction, or any other type of fundraising, a church capital campaign can help your church take a substantial leap forward in the fulfillment of its God-given ministry. In fact, few activities will yield as significant an impact as a capital fundraising campaign in assuring the future of your church. At the same time, one misstep can set plans back years, or lead to disagreements that can divide congregations.



When Thomas Edison was working on inventing the lightbulb, he tried thousands of materials for the filament. After two thousand unsuccessful attempts, his assistant was ready to give up: "All our work is in vain. We have learned nothing." Edison saw it differently, however: "Oh, we have come a long way and we have learned a lot. We know that there are two thousand elements that cannot be used to make a light bulb!"

You don't have the luxury of making multiple tries to do your church campaign right. With so much at stake, it is important to get it right the first time.

Fortunately, you aren't the first to do it either. That distinction falls to King David, who led the first official "church capital campaign" to build Israel's first temple, as recounted in 1 Chronicles 29.

Since then, countless others have used that same biblical model to raise money for their own church campaigns. Some have done exceedingly well. A few have failed miserably.

There are lessons to be gleaned not only from the successes but also from the failures of those who have traveled this road before.



Is a Church Capital Campaign Biblical?

Church capital campaigns are modeled after the vivid example of the campaign that King David organized to build the temple as outlined in 1 Chronicles 29.

Though the Lord told David that it would be Solomon's job to build the temple, David wanted to help. He did so by making a generous leadership gift to help fund the work. His gift not only provided enough to start construction, but it also set a standard that served to inspire others. Once David made his gift, the leaders of Israel responded and likewise freely gave their own gifts. All the people then rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, and the whole assembly responded by giving their own offerings and worshipped the Lord in thanksgiving:



1 Chronicles 29.16-17

16 Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you.

17 I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things I have given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you.

This is just one example of many similar stories in Scripture. There are similar accounts of capital campaigns in Exodus when Moses built the tabernacle, and in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Haggai, which highlight the rebuilding of the temple and Jerusalem's walls.

Our church consulting group – Cargill Associates – has successfully conducted hundreds of capital campaigns raising hundreds of millions of dollars for churches like yours. We have seen the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Sometimes we like to say that with all our experience, there is not much that can happen in a campaign – good or ill – that our team hasn't encountered before. But then something happens that proves us wrong.

Every church and every situation is unique.

Your church has its own unique story, and is made up of a unique collection of people, each with their own unique collection of gifts. You also have a unique God-given calling. Hence the opportunities and the challenges you face are going to be unique.

Today, most churches use a variation of the 1 Chronicles 29 "Davidian" model for their campaign. The basic underlying structure is therefore largely the same, but at each step there are decisions that need to be made. The model may be simple, but in practice things can get complex. And – as always when faced with a complex choice – sometimes you will make the right decision, and sometimes you will make a mistake.

As one pastor said to me recently,

"I may not know that much about campaigns, but I am smart enough to know that there are a lot more ways to get them wrong than there are ways to get it right."



The only real mistake is
the one from which
we learn nothing."

- John Powell

question. 2. the
with moral principle
experience
noun 1. a particular
encountering or

Sometimes a mistake will be small, and won't have much consequence. Other times a mistake will be consequential. Mistakes often have the effect of diminishing the momentum of your campaign.

Gaining momentum is critical to achieving success in a campaign, and – once gone – it will be very difficult to regain it.

It is helpful to have an experienced consultant working alongside you to minimize the chance of making a mistake. Altogether, our consulting team members have hundreds of years of combined experience managing capital campaigns. We have prioritized the five most common mistakes we have seen other churches make over the course of our careers, and compiled them in one source, in the hopes that you can learn from the mistakes other churches have made as you consider and plan a capital campaign at your church.



Mistake #1

Not Being on Solid Ground

Reaching the commitment goal for your campaign is cause to celebrate, but it doesn't mean your work is done. The plain fact of the matter is that you can't spend pledges — you need to make sure you are turning those pledges into cash. Too many campaign teams make the mistake of calling the job done right after Celebration Sunday.

“Anyone can steer the ship, but it takes a leader to chart the course.”

For a campaign to succeed, there must be unity behind the cause. A capital campaign has the potential to rally your church members together behind a vision as never before. But if not on solid ground, dissension will drive a wedge that can turn small cracks into gaping fissures.

Case Study:

Grace Community Church

Grace Community Church in Michigan had plans to conduct a major campaign that would – among other things – modernize their sanctuary. A central part of the plan was to pull out the old pews and replace them with more contemporary, flexible seating. But they didn't take into account that the church had conducted a campaign decades before and recognized members' contributions by engraving their names on small brass plaques and affixing them to the church pews.

The current leadership considered that ancient history. What they didn't realize was that many older members had fond feelings for those pews, especially the ones engraved with the names of their friends who had passed on to glory. You can imagine they were not excited about the plan to pull them out and replace them with chairs. At the same time, the leaders of the church were counting on some of those same people to step up with a large contribution to the campaign.

Do you feel the ground getting shaky?

THE CURE

How do you make sure you are on solid ground?

For starters, make sure you are involving others and gaining input into the plans. As leaders of your church, you may know where the church needs to go, but if the congregation is not on board it will be difficult to mobilize them around the campaign.

Make it clear from the start that you cannot do it without everyone's participation in an upcoming capital campaign. Also make an effort to get key influencers on board. And don't ignore the naysayers. They may never get on board, but it is important that they at least feel they've been heard.

The more people own the vision, the more likely they will buy into the plan.

There is an old fundraising adage that holds a timeless truth:

"When you ask people for money, they give advice. When you ask for advice, they will give you their money."



When considering a capital campaign you would be wise to take inventory of your congregation's financial capabilities and willingness to invest in your vision for the future.

The best way to do this is by conducting a Congregational Readiness Study; a survey made available to every member of your church, allowing them to offer confidential comments, questions and concerns. It will also give you a barometer of how much people are willing to give to the campaign, which will help you set a more accurate goal.

Grace Community Church in Michigan – highlighted in the case study – conducted a Congregational Readiness Study in advance of their campaign, and that was how we uncovered the issue with the pews BEFORE they launched their campaign. We made a plan to give special consideration to how they handled those old pews – some church members even took one or two to modify and install in their homes – and the campaign was back on solid ground and completed successfully.

Suppose one of you wants to build a tower.
Won't you first sit down and estimate the
cost to see if you have enough money to
complete it?

- Luke 14:28 (NIV)



Congregational Readiness Study

What is a congregational readiness study?

A Congregational Readiness Study involves a series of interviews with a carefully selected number of your congregation's leadership (selected because they may be able to give significant time, money, or influence to the campaign), plus completion of a survey by the remaining families in the congregation. For larger congregations focus groups may also be conducted with groups of seven to fourteen members each. By going through this process, you ensure that every member of the church has opportunity to have their voice heard and to indicate the degree to which they are willing to give. It provides objective data to the leadership of the church to assist in making critical decisions to determine a realistic goal for the campaign and significantly increases the likelihood that the campaign will be successful.

When is a congregational readiness study recommended?

Figuring out how much your church may be able to raise in a campaign can get tricky. Hence the most common reason churches opt to conduct a Congregational Readiness Study is to help them establish a realistically achievable financial goal for their campaign.

But that's not the only reason. Sometimes it can be difficult for a church to reach consensus on a campaign. Sometimes it is unclear whether the congregation fully supports the project. Sometimes the leadership simply wants more objective data to help make an informed decision. In these cases, a Congregational Readiness Study can be a very helpful tool.

Mistake #2

Making the Campaign About Money

No one likes talking about money, especially in the church. It doesn't feel spiritual. But if that's the case, then why did Jesus have so much to say about money?

We need to talk more about money in our churches. Except when you are trying to raise it. It may seem strange to hear this from someone who makes his career out of helping churches and ministries raise money, but when it comes time to do a capital campaign at your church, it can't just be about the money.

One of the biggest mistakes I have seen churches make is to focus their campaign too much on the money they need to raise, and not enough on the vision and goals they are trying to achieve.



THE CURE:

The insightful book, “Start with Why,” makes the case that companies focus too much on WHAT they are trying to achieve and HOW they are trying to achieve it, and not enough on the underlying WHY. Though the author is not a Christian and directs his topic toward corporate marketing, there are lessons here that have direct application to church capital campaigns.

Your unique WHY is your driving purpose; the vision and goals you are trying to achieve as a church. That should always be your starting point when raising money for your church and its ministries. Your WHAT lays out your plans. Only once you arrive at your HOW – the capital campaign – should you start talking about money.

If you fail to capture the hearts of your people with your WHY, they will not likely embrace the HOW and open their pocketbooks to pay for the WHAT.

Don't get me wrong... you do want to talk about money during your campaign. But money must be a means to an end, not the end itself.

MONEY MATTERS

Did you know that sixteen of the thirty-eight parables Jesus told were about how to handle money and possessions?

The Gospels are all about Jesus' life and ministry, and one out of ten verses in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (288 in all) speak directly to the topic of money. It's not just the Gospels, either. Amazingly, the Bible only has about 500 verses that refer to prayer, another 500 speak about faith, but more than 2,000 verses are about money and possessions. The Bible has more to say on this topic than about any other.

BEST PRACTICE TIP:

Don't let your HOW get tangled up with your WHAT.

Gaining consensus on the specific plans for an expansion project can be difficult. You will need to find the middle ground between competing priorities, and strike a balance between what people want versus what you can afford to build. You do not want to be untangling those issues right when you are trying to launch your campaign. Hence, in our experience, it is helpful to separate the planning for your building / expansion (the WHAT) from the capital campaign (the HOW). Momentum is very important to a capital campaign, and many campaigns have gotten waylaid because the leadership of the church waited to unveil the building plans until the roll-out of the capital campaign.

Be careful about making too many assumptions about who can or cannot make a big gift.



CASE STUDY:

First Church

A historic church in the heart of an industrial Pennsylvania town, First Church had seen better days. After going through a difficult rift, they suffered through a long stretch without a regular pastor. Membership had declined and they struggled to make ends meet. Their property and facilities were showing serious signs of neglect.

But there was hope on the horizon. By the grace of God, they had a new, dynamic young pastor and were beginning to see hope for the future. Under their new pastor's leadership, they were embracing a newfound vision to reach out and serve their surrounding community, particularly the low-income apartments that abutted their property.

Their near-term goal was to complete a million-dollar campaign for some long-delayed maintenance, to make their building more welcoming to visitors. Based on normal standards, a million-dollar goal was a stretch for this small, working-class congregation. And there was little about the WHAT in the campaign plan that people could get excited about – replacing windows, upgrading the HVAC, fixing the roof, patching the parking lot, plus some new carpet and paint. The campaign leaders were publicly upbeat but privately uncertain if they could reach the goal.

If their campaign had just been about the money they needed for maintenance, they probably would have failed. But it wasn't. They named their campaign "RENEWAL" and used Ezekiel 11:19 as their campaign verse: "I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them..." Most importantly, they gave clear expression to their WHY – a united family of believers passionately pursuing a renewed vision for ministry.

This small remnant of a congregation rallied around that WHY and sacrificially raised more money than anyone could have possibly imagined. They blew past their goal by more than double. This provided enough money not only for the improvements to their existing property, but also to proceed straight into the second phase of their plan – a community outreach center, specially designed to better enable them to live out their new vision as an outward focused church.

Mistake #3

Overlooking Leadership Giving Opportunities

Remember the story about a church that received an unexpected, multi-million-dollar contribution from that reclusive elderly woman? I'm sure you do... we've all heard stories like that. But they are very much the exception, not the rule. As anyone who has worked around fundraising will tell you, game-changing big gifts generally don't often just drop in your lap. While all are created equal, Jesus' Parable of the Talents reminds us that each are entrusted with differing measures of talent and wealth. Some church members are blessed with substantial resources; others are simply in a stage of life that enables them to give more generously. These people can often make gifts to your campaign at a level that will open doors to opportunities that might not be possible any other way.

Major givers account for one-half of the annual giving at a typical church, and an even greater percentage—often 80% or more—in a capital campaign.

**Be careful about making too many assumptions
about who can or cannot make a big gift.**

That would be a mistake. In his best-selling book *The Millionaire Next Door*, author Thomas Stanley points out that in our society most high-networth people live frugally and are often not easily recognizable. And many of those who appear to be wealthy are not – they are just highly leveraged with debt.

I've had many a pastor tell me that they don't have much wealth in their church. Guess what? They were wrong. The odds are (and our experience proves it) that wealth is everywhere. Wealthy people just don't normally appear like how most people think a "millionaire" is supposed to look.



DID YOU KNOW:

Interesting facts about millionaires...

It's not just athletes and actors and Fortune 500 CEOs that make the millionaire lists. Here are ten of the more common-place occupations comprising millionaire groups in the USA:

- Physicians & Surgeons •
- Attorneys
- Farmers & Ranchers
- Investment Managers
- Real Estate Brokers
- Insurance Brokers
- Chartered Accountants
- Funeral Directors
- Management Consultants
- Software Developers

Half of all millionaires either own their own business or are self- employed.

Most USA millionaires are "hidden in plain sight:

- The top car brands owned by millionaires are Hondas, Fords & Toyotas.
- The #1 watch is Seiko.
- The vast majority reside in houses valued under \$500k.
- Very few own a boat or a summer home.
- Most have never paid more than \$300 for a suit or a dress.



Wealth by itself, however, is not a good indicator of major giving. While high net worth people give more in absolute terms, the wealthy are not always generous. In fact, it might surprise you that as a percent of income, middle income citizens typically give twice as much on average, than those earning more than \$200,000 per year.

Major giving is a function of wealth PLUS generosity, and – as Paul points out in Romans 12:8 – giving is a spiritual gift.

I have had opportunity to get to know countless major donors over the course of my career, and I can say without pause that most of them have a very generous heart. Especially people of faith. For them, giving is often a big part of how they live out their faith and purpose in life – it is one of their spiritual gifts.

But it is an altogether too common a mistake to assume that these members of your congregation will automatically pledge a major donation to your campaign without careful approach from the leadership of your church.

We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy... if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

- Romans 12:6-8 (NIV)

CASE STUDY:

A Million-Dollar Answer to Prayer

Years ago, I was consulting on a capital campaign in Toronto. The leadership of the campaign had one couple in mind who they felt had potential to give a very significant gift to help seed the campaign, but they did not know how to ask. They needed my help.

Over lunch with the couple, we outlined the plans and talked about what was possible if we could reach our goals for the campaign quickly. We asked them if they would be willing to pray about making a gift of a million dollars to the campaign. They didn't hesitate in responding: "We don't need to pray about it. We've already been praying, and this is an answer to our prayers!" They went on to explain how they had recently sold a piece of property for a million dollars, and – sensing that God was calling them to give the proceeds to ministry – were praying fervently about where to give it. In the meantime, however, the closing date for the sale was only ten days away. I shudder to think what might have happened had we delayed further. Could our reluctance have hindered God's will and stood in the way of prayers being answered?

When we understand that giving is a spiritual gift, it changes the way we look at asking people to invest their money into ministry. doesn't it? If you are not offering meaningful opportunities for these people to give, one could argue that your church is doing a disservice to those who might otherwise be blessed by their involvement in your God-given ministry.



The Cure

Many in your church have the means and the desire to give big gifts to a big need or idea, but will typically only do so if you ask. How you ask is important as well. To have a successful campaign, it is important to invest time and effort into identifying and engaging the support of potential leadership-level financial partners early in the process. You will be rewarded if you make time for personal meetings with these major contributors to share the plans, answer their questions, and ask them to invest in the vision. Some may argue this places a higher value on wealthier congregants. I would argue that it is not so much about “value” as it is about “importance”. Their giving is important to building momentum.

Simply stated, big gifts add up faster.

It might also help to know that this approach is modeled in the Bible. As shared earlier, in 1 Chronicles 29, David pioneered the first capital campaign to fund construction of Solomon's Temple. He starts by making a generous leadership gift from his own resources, which prompts the leaders of Israel to give their own major gifts. Once David and the leaders set a high standard for generosity, the whole assembly responded by giving their own offerings. David understood the importance of setting a standard of leadership giving first.



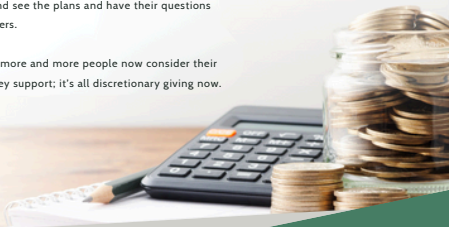
Recent Trends:

This Recent Trend in Church Giving Will Affect Your Campaign

It used to be that the first money people gave was to their church. Giving to the church was automatic, while other charities were discretionary. Not anymore. The expectations and giving patterns of major donors have changed in recent years, as evidenced by a recent Barna Group study on church giving.

Churches have traditionally conducted capital campaigns very differently from how other nonprofits run campaigns, particularly when relating to major donors. Conduct a campaign today and you would be unwise to expect major donors to automatically give. They want to hear the vision and see the plans and have their questions answered, preferably by the senior pastor or key church leaders.

Even though we may not agree with it, today's reality is that more and more people now consider their church to be on an equal footing with other organizations they support; it's all discretionary giving now.



So are you saying that raising money for churches is nothing more than secular fundraising, just with some Bible verses strewn throughout our appeals? Is that what it's come to?

Absolutely not! Two things should always mark us as distinctly Christian in our approach, and have a dramatic impact on the way we conduct a fundraising campaign...

Faith-based, not manipulative

God's people give to God's work as God leads them. When we ask people to pray over their decision, we must be sincere in leaving the decision in God's hands. Yes, we must do our work well by making a clear presentation of the vision and what will be needed to bring it to fruition, and by being direct and specific about what we are asking people to do. But we do not "strong-arm" people or manipulate them to give.

Transformational, not transactional

Our goal is not just more money, it is to raise up godly stewards. Transactional donations are here and gone. Christian fundraising is about opening ourselves up and allowing God to transform our hearts, minds and pocketbooks so that authentic and abundant generosity will follow. When we understand that a capital campaign is not a necessary evil to raise money, but rather a ministry of teaching and applying some of the most fundamental Biblical stewardship principles in a way that leads to spiritual transformation, it will change your approach to campaigns altogether. We believe that all church capital campaigns must first be programs that teach Biblical stewardship, emphasizing the teaching of three foundational principles:

God is the owner of all

- Psalm 24:1 (NIV)

We are blessed by God so that we can bless others

- Galatians 6:10 (NIV)

We are stewards, not owners of God's wealth

- Matthew 25:14-30 (NIV)

Mistake #4

Failing to Adequately Plan

A church capital campaign is one of the most significant initiatives your church will undertake. It is a complex undertaking, and is critically important that it be done right. To succeed, a church capital campaign must have a very high profile. This means that if it flops, it will be a high-profile flop. You also generally only have one shot at getting it right. There are many ways that a church capital campaign can “go off the rails,” and when it does, it can be very difficult to get it back on track.

A very common mistake churches make is underestimating how much planning is required to pull off a campaign successfully. Even if you’ve done a campaign before, it can be easy to forget how much work went into it.



Campaigns are complex endeavors, with strict deadlines and little margin for error. Plans must be drawn up, materials written and designed, media produced, sermons composed, committees recruited, leaders trained and challenged, events planned and organized... the list goes on.

Getting the timing right is vital.

There are numerous moving parts, many requiring specialized skills, with tasks delegated amongst staff and volunteer members of the congregation who need to be carefully managed.

Done poorly, chaos reigns and campaigns fail. Done correctly, a well-managed plan allows the members of a church to truly act in concert as one body towards a single goal, as in 1 Corinthians 12:21 (NIV):

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!"



Best Practice Tip:

Why Timing is Important.

When it comes to figuring out the timing of your church's next capital campaign, a church calendar jam-packed with year-round activities is only one of the challenges you will encounter. The question of "timing" is in fact not just one question but four, wrapped together into that one simple word: What time of year should we launch our church's capital campaign? How much lead time will we need to plan and prepare in advance? How long will it take to complete our campaign? How far ahead of when we plan to start building should we conduct our campaign?



The Cure

Failing to plan your church campaign... is planning to fail. With so much at stake, most churches wisely choose to retain a capital campaign consulting firm to help guide their church capital campaign through to a successful completion. Of course, creating a plan is only part of the job. Executing is quite another. As a friend of mine likes to say:

**“Plans are a dime a dozen...
but execution is priceless.”**

A campaign is a lot of work, and requires broad participation from your entire congregation.

Here are some ways you can get people involved and giving:

Make sure everyone in your congregation knows

about your campaign. Talk about it early and often, and keep it in front of your congregation with signs, banners, announcements, videos, etc. During the six weeks that your campaign is being presented, you want your people saturated in the message of your campaign.

Match your church members' talents

with work that needs to be accomplished. There is much to do in a campaign. Select your leaders carefully, and then let them build out a team of volunteers to help them accomplish their tasks.

Put one person in charge.

He or she is not the person who needs to do all the work (quite the opposite actually—his or her only task should be keeping everyone else on task) — you need one person who is acting as flight traffic controller of the entire team of both staff and volunteers.

Communicate with people

about investing funds the Lord has given them stewardship over. Make stewardship teaching a central part of the campaign — in the weekly sermons, in small group discussions, and Sunday School curricula.

Never stop praying

while you are going about this work.

Pray it Through From Start to Finish

Prayer must be an integral part of any capital campaign; but prayer alone will not fund your goal. Simply sitting back hoping “God will provide” is not a workable approach.

One of my favorite sayings that I share in every campaign is this: “It is important to have blisters on your fingers AND on your knees.” You need to make plans and do the work as if it all depends on you, but at the same time pray as if it all depends on God.

Nehemiah offers a clear illustration of this rhythm of prayer and action in a campaign. Upon learning the fate of Jerusalem, Nehemiah prayed for days. Discerning God’s call he then rose to action, raising resources and inspiring people around him to accomplish a great work. This pattern is repeated throughout Nehemiah—prayer first, then rising up to do the work.

So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of the month Elul, in fifty-two days. When all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations surrounding us saw it, they lost their confidence; for they recognized that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God....

- Nehemiah 6:15-16 (NIV)

Mistake #5

Lack of Follow-up

Reaching the commitment goal for your campaign is cause to celebrate, but it doesn't mean your work is done. The plain fact of the matter is that you can't spend pledges — you need to make sure you are turning those pledges into cash. Too many campaign teams make the mistake of calling the job done right after Celebration Sunday.

In truth, that is only the beginning — a capital campaign is not complete until the last pledge is collected, and that can take years.

Many a church has found themselves in hard times because they spent borrowed money to build, assuming that the cash would come in as pledges were fulfilled based on the outcome of a campaign, only to discover down the road that they only actually received two thirds to one half of the amount pledged in the original campaign.

A lot can happen in the two to four years between when you launch your campaign and when your members make their last pledge payment. It's a big mistake to assume everyone will remember their commitments.



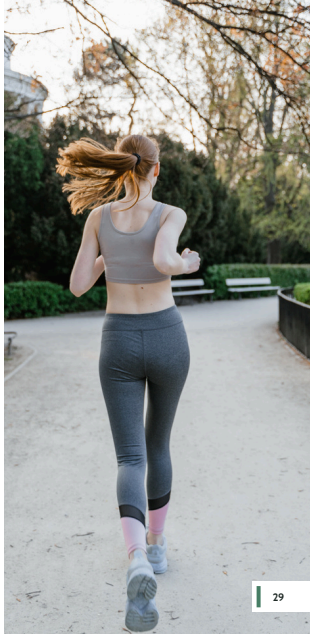
The Cure

For a capital campaign to succeed in the long run, you must finish strong. You need a good follow-up plan in place to ensure you don't come up significantly short on cash because commitments faded or were forgotten.

We are often asked what percentage of pledges a church should reasonably expect to receive in cash. If you neglect to follow-up with a strong fulfillment plan, you should expect to collect only two-thirds to one-half of your campaign pledges. But done right, you can collect 100% or more.

Reminders are very important. Ask people to indicate how they intend to fulfill their commitments at the time they complete their pledge cards. Keep records of these commitments and send out simple reminders ahead of time. That is much less awkward than trying to ask people to catch up after they are past due, or when the campaign starts to fall behind.

Communication is also very important. Keep your congregation informed every step of the process. Provide updates in the weekly bulletin, from the platform, and in emails, newsletters, etc. Let people know regularly how you are tracking on campaign pledge payments. Hold gatherings to celebrate and pray over events like ground breakings and other key milestones. This will keep the campaign in the forefront of people's minds.





With a well-organized reminder program in place and a good plan for communications you should be able to keep your pledge collection rate between 90% and 100%.

We have seen many of our clients, however, collect well over 100% of the total pledged to their campaigns by generating new commitments to offset shortfalls from those whose situations change, or who leave the church.

Who gives these new commitments? Some of the new money will come from new members. There are best practices you can follow to help you decide how and when to challenge new members to contribute to the campaign, and your campaign consultant can help guide you through how to set this up.

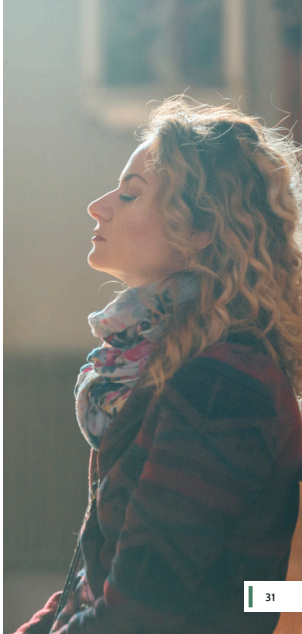
Another tranche of new money will come from people who choose to increase their commitment during your campaign's fulfillment period. Some people do not like to make multi-year commitments, and will make a one-time gift on Commitment Sunday, versus a multi-year pledge. Others give out of the proceeds of their business, and the amount they give varies based on how their business is doing any given year. Many of these will choose to give additional gifts over the course of the campaign if you provide the right kinds of opportunities to do so.

Finally, there are the late-comers. In every campaign, you can count on your leaders to jump in early to help build needed momentum for the campaign, and you can count on your late-comers to show up after most everyone else has made their commitments.

Latecomers take a “wait and see” attitude. Sometimes they want to see what everyone else is going to do first. Or maybe they are lukewarm towards the project. Once you start to close in on the end of the campaign they can be prompted to give – and often respond well to challenges to help push the campaign “over the top”.

This money doesn't raise itself — you need a planned and deliberate approach to doing so, and it must be handled in an appropriate time and in an appropriate way.

But if you have a good plan and stay focused on the campaign right through the end of the fulfillment period you can expect a high rate of fulfillment, perhaps even setting yourself in good position for your next campaign.



Whether you are looking to raise money for expansion, renovation, debt reduction, missions, or any other purpose, a successful capital campaign can help your church take a substantial leap forward in the fulfillment of its God-given ministry.

Truth is, a capital campaign is probably one of the most complex initiatives that your church will undertake.

With so much at stake, most churches wisely choose to retain a capital campaign consulting firm to help avoid these types of mistakes and to guide their church capital campaign through to a successful completion.



About the Author:

Rob Flint | President | Cargill Associates

Rob's heart for the local church and his passion for helping others align their vision with action have been the driving forces throughout his career. Growing up as the son of a pastor, Rob has always felt a deep calling to serve in ministry. After earning double degrees in Biblical Studies and Political Science from Palm Beach Atlantic University, where he was honored with the Outstanding Graduate Award in Political Science, Rob furthered his theological education at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

For nearly 15 years, Rob pastored in the local church, focusing on developing systems that promote growth and sustainability. His dedication to helping churches thrive led him to become a consultant with The Timothy Group, where he specialized in helping ministries build effective fundraising strategies to achieve their God-given vision.

In 2020, Rob launched his own marketing and consulting agency, driven by his desire to provide businesses, churches, and nonprofits with the tools they need to excel in today's ever-changing landscape. His agency specializes in helping organizations not only develop effective fundraising strategies but also create clear and sustainable systems that foster long-term growth and impact. With his experience in both pastoral leadership and strategic business development, Rob brings a unique blend of insight and practical application to his clients.

Outside of his professional life, Rob is an avid basketball fan and sometimes coach, where he mentors young players and helps them grow both on and off the court. He is married to Taryn, and together they are raising two wonderful children.

With a wealth of experience in church leadership, strategic consulting, and fundraising, Rob is committed to helping churches and nonprofits navigate today's fundraising challenges and build sustainable systems that support their mission.



We Are Cargill Associates

Our passion is helping churches and nonprofit ministries grow and thrive.

Cargill Associates is one of the longest-serving capital campaign consulting firms in the nation. Dr. Robert 'Bob' Cargill started Cargill Associates in 1976, at a time when nonprofit capital campaigns were typically conducted by outside professionals brought in to serve as full-time "resident counsel".

After his first experience serving as a resident counsel, Cargill recognized there was a better way to conduct capital campaigns – one that did not depend on costly, commissioned outsiders working pseudo-independently to raise money on the organization's behalf. Bob believed that with appropriate guidance and direction from an experienced professional consultant, organizations could be empowered to raise the resources they needed for their own campaign. Hence Cargill Associates was borne – and grew to become one of the largest and most successful capital campaign consulting firms in the nation.

Nearly a half-century later, the retainer-based capital campaign consulting model Bob Cargill helped pioneer has now become the standard in the industry. Today, his legacy carries on in the billions of dollars that Cargill Associates has helped raise to build, renovate, or expand facilities, purchase land or property, advance programs, retire debt, and grow endowments for thousands of churches, colleges/universities, and nonprofit organizations located across the United States and Canada.

In 2022 Cargill Associates became part of DickersonBakker, a national nonprofit consultancy with offices in Dallas, Indianapolis, and Raleigh, serving organizations across the United States and Canada. This partnership significantly expands the breadth of services we can offer clients. Together, we now represent one of only a handful of consulting firms offering a complete scope of in-house services to help churches, higher education institutions, and nonprofits of almost any size raise the resources they need to transform their vision into reality.



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ADVANCING THE CHURCH

What does forward look like for you?

Contact us today to discuss how our team of experienced professional consultants can help you get there.

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