

The Iconic Impact Series
Bridge Philanthropic Consulting, LLC

A photograph of four diverse women in professional business attire standing in a modern office. They are all smiling and looking at a tablet held by one of the women. In the background, other office workers are visible at their desks with computer monitors. The office has a high ceiling with exposed ductwork and modern lighting.

Managing Campaigns in Diverse Non-Profits

By: Dwayne Ashley,
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Managing Capital and Major campaigns can be a challenging feat, especially in diverse organizations. With a diversity of stakeholders from all levels of the community and economic levels, varying goals, limited capacity, and systemic inequality in funding parity present some unique challenges that can be a complex task to navigate. However, the successful execution of a campaign can significantly impact the growth and sustainability of an organization to fulfill its mission and goals.

At Bridge Philanthropic Consulting (BPC), we explore effective strategies and best practices for managing campaigns in diverse organizations. We bring a cultural understanding to our work because of our lived experiences. From understanding how the board arrived at the campaign goal and its funding priorities to understanding the needs and preferences of diverse constituencies to developing a compelling case for support, we will delve into the key factors driving success for our clients. Answering the most important question, “what would happen if the client closed their doors and went out of business.”



Hiring the right Campaign Counsel to drive success is key.

A capital campaign is a targeted fundraising effort that deploys dedicated resources needed within a specific timeframe. Donor investments from the capital campaign can be applied to three to four main funding priorities. Capital needs are used to fund a new building or renovations. Program needs within the campaign can be applied to sustain and scale programs. Operating needs are used for capacity building, which could include increasing staff or bolstering the infrastructure. Establishing an endowment for long-term sustainability and future growth can also be a focus area for the campaign. To accomplish any one of these needs requires engaging the right Campaign Counsel who is well-versed in every aspect of setting up and managing a campaign. Meticulous planning, prospect research, managing staff dynamics, board training, stakeholder engagement, and execution are the keys to ensuring an organization has a successful campaign. Effective campaign management is crucial for organizations looking to expand their donor base, launch new programs, or invest in infrastructure.

Having the right Campaign Counsel for your organization can be akin to a great relationship—the two of you relate to your values and vision for the work you both do daily. The Counsel-Client relationship is an authentic partnership that must be built on mutual trust. Likewise, the relationship between both parties is also driven by a deep understanding of the importance of successfully achieving the campaign goal.

A well-managed campaign can not only aid organizations in garnering the necessary fiscal support to continue fulfilling their mission but also rally support and engage stakeholders in the organization's mission. The success of the campaign serves as an opportunity to strengthen relationships with individual donors, the philanthropic community, corporate partners, board members, volunteers, and other members of the community and public sector, thus fostering a sense of shared purpose and commitment.



Understanding the short and long-term goals of the campaign

Before BPC partners with a client to embark on a capital campaign, we work with the client to clearly define the goals and objectives that the organization aims to achieve. This involves thoroughly assessing the organization's resource needs, identifying the specific projects or initiatives that require funding, and setting realistic goals and milestones, as well as a financial number that is aligned with market realities based on the scope of the project. For example, it is important that the financial goal set by the organization can be substantiated and is in line with the marketplace for similar projects.



By understanding the goals and objectives of the capital campaign, organizations can effectively communicate their vision to potential donors and stakeholders. This clarity helps in creating a compelling case for support, which can then motivate donors, i.e., philanthropic community, private and public sector, ultra- to high-net-worth individuals, corporations, and charitable foundations, to contribute towards the campaign's success.



Planning and organizing a campaign for success

A successful capital campaign requires meticulous planning, tracking, communications, and organization. This involves assembling a dedicated team with the Consulting team made up of staff, board, and stakeholders, establishing a timeline, and creating a comprehensive campaign plan. The team should consist of individuals with a diverse range of skills and expertise, including high-level fundraising strategy and tactical execution, sponsorships and presentations, proposal and grant writing, marketing and content, communications, and project management.

The campaign plan should outline the strategies and tactics to be employed, the target audience, and the key messages to be communicated. It should also include a detailed budget, a fundraising goal, and a timeline of activities. By having a well-defined plan in place, organizations can stay focused and ensure that efforts are aligned toward achieving the campaign's objectives.

Creating a compelling case for support

To secure funding for a capital campaign, organizations need to articulate a compelling case for support. This involves clearly communicating the need for the project or initiative, its potential impact, and the benefits it will bring to the organization and its stakeholders. The case for support should resonate with donors' values and motivations, compelling them to contribute.

Crafting a compelling case for support requires a deep understanding of the needs and preferences of diverse constituencies. Organizations must tailor their messaging and storytelling to resonate with different demographic groups, taking into consideration their cultural, social, and economic backgrounds. This approach ensures that the campaign's message is inclusive and relatable, maximizing its potential for success.

Identifying and engaging potential donors and leadership

Identifying potential donors is a crucial step in managing a capital campaign. Organizations should leverage their existing networks (professional and personal), conduct prospect research, and utilize data analytics to identify individuals and organizations that align with their mission and have the capacity to contribute. This includes reaching out to major donors, corporate sponsors, foundations, and other potential funding sources, such as local mayors and county executives, along with state and federal legislators to fund capital projects that focus specifically on construction, job creation, workforce development, and other infrastructure-related areas that align with the public officials' interests.

Engaging potential donors requires building meaningful relationships and establishing trust. Organizations should develop personalized cultivation strategies tailored to the interests and motivations of each donor. This can include organizing donor events, providing regular updates on the campaign's progress, and showcasing the impact of their contributions. By nurturing these relationships, organizations can foster long-term partnerships that extend beyond the capital campaign.



Fundraising strategies for large campaigns

Fundraising is at the core of a capital campaign, and organizations must employ various strategies to maximize their fundraising potential. This includes traditional methods such as direct mail, phone calls, and in-person solicitations, as well as digital strategies like online crowdfunding, social media campaigns, and peer-to-peer fundraising.

Organizations should also explore opportunities for partnerships and collaborations, leveraging the support of other organizations or influential individuals who share their mission. This can help expand the reach of the campaign and tap into new networks of potential donors.

Tracking and measuring campaign progress

Tracking and measuring campaign progress is essential for evaluating the effectiveness of fundraising strategies and adjusting tactics as needed. Organizations should establish clear metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor the campaign's progress against its goals. This can include tracking the number and value of donations, the engagement level of donors, and the overall campaign ROI.

Data analytics can play a significant role in providing insights into donor behavior, enabling organizations to optimize their fundraising efforts. By leveraging technology and digital tools, organizations can track and analyze data in real time, making data-driven decisions to enhance campaign performance.

Overcoming challenges in managing any large campaign

Managing a capital campaign in diverse organizations comes with its fair share of challenges. It requires balancing the needs and expectations of various stakeholders, coordinating multiple activities and deadlines, and adapting to unforeseen circumstances. Organizations must be prepared to navigate these challenges and have contingency plans in place. If necessary, have a pivot pitch in the event what you are selling to that potential donor is not resonating or if your carefully crafted thirty-minute meeting is shortened to fifteen minutes with five minutes to answer the who, why, when, where, and respond to the question, 'What's the request?'

Communication and transparency are critical in overcoming challenges. Regular and open communication with stakeholders helps manage expectations, address concerns, and keep everyone aligned toward the campaign's goals. Flexibility and adaptability are also essential, allowing organizations to adjust strategies and tactics based on evolving circumstances.





Thinking about your next steps for success

Managing a capital campaign in diverse organizations is a complex endeavor, but one that can yield significant rewards. By understanding the needs and preferences of diverse constituencies, developing a compelling case for support, and employing effective fundraising strategies, organizations can drive success.

Leveraging technology and data analytics can enhance campaign performance, enabling organizations to reach a wider audience, track progress, and make data-driven decisions. Overcoming challenges requires effective communication, transparency, and adaptability. In moments where it matters the most, developing a friendly but professional rapport with the client early in the engagement allows for those difficult but honest conversations to take place. Doing so allows for individuals to course correct and pivot, if necessary.

In conclusion, managing a capital campaign in diverse organizations requires meticulous planning, tracking, and measuring campaign progress, communications, organization, and ongoing evaluation. Organizations must ensure the combined elements of prospect researching, managing staff dynamics, board training, and stakeholder engagement are part of the overall tactical plan to execute the campaign strategy. By following the strategies and best practices outlined in the paper, your organization can navigate the complexities and achieve its fundraising goals, making a lasting impact on your mission and the communities you serve.

About Bridge Philanthropic Consulting, LLC



Bridge Philanthropic Consulting (BPC) is the nation's only full-service Black-Owned Philanthropy firm. Our company has a proven track record of extraordinary success in helping philanthropic organizations and institutions to realize their dreams, accomplish their missions, and grow their aspirations. With more than 600 years of combined experience, our leaders have raised billions for clients throughout the world.

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Dwayne Ashley, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, BPC

With over 34 years in the philanthropic industry, Dwayne Ashley has utilized his knowledge of fundraising and passion for social justice to create opportunities for people of color through his founding of Bridge Philanthropic Consulting (BPC), the nation's only full-service Black-owned fundraising firm. Throughout his career, Dwyane sought to align with organizations that shared his values regarding the betterment of Black-and-Brown people and, through that alignment, has raised over \$1 billion to support those communities.

During his early years, the spirit of charity was instilled into Dwayne through witnessing his great-grandmother's establishing one of the first schools to educate blacks in Heflin, Louisiana, which has now been memorialized as one of the oldest Black churches in the state. The weaving of his great-grandmother's legacy into Louisiana's rich history pushed Dwayne to forge his own path and attend Wiley College and the University of Pennsylvania's Fel's School of Government, where he learned how he too could use his knowledge to help the disenfranchised.

Following his time in college, Dwayne joined notable organizations like the African American Development Officers and The Giving Institute—serving on the board of each—as well as serving as a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, where he sat on board positions with Philadelphia and New York City chapters. In addition to professional organizations, Dwayne is also a member of community-based organizations like One Hundred Black Men of New York and a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated, where he has been honored with the 'Bigger Better Business' award leading to his five-time inclusion in Ebony Magazine's list for most influential Black Americans.



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Sylvia White, Executive Vice President, Business Development

A seasoned development executive with substantial experience in principal and major gifts, board development, and fund-raising management, Sylvia White has worked directly or managed teams in every area of development, including major gifts, corporate and foundation relations, annual giving, stewardship, systems, and research, among others. Ms. White is a highly sought after advisor and mentor in the nonprofit and fundraising sector. In this capacity, she has successfully developed key external alliances, cultivated major donor prospects, designed fundraising programs, and events. Through her collaboration with executive leadership and top-level donors, she has secured major gifts and pledges of millions of dollars annually.



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Prior to this appointment, Ms. White served as the Deputy Executive Director at Harlem Hospital Center. In this capacity, she was responsible for forwarding the agenda of the Hospital throughout the Institution and the community. She worked closely with Hospital leadership to provide senior-level support to top decision-makers and managers for a wide range of diverse projects.

Ms. White directed the harmonious flow of projects supporting strategic planning, business development, public affairs, regulatory compliance, senior-level presentations, communications, media affairs, intergovernmental affairs, and crisis management. Ms. White has published articles in the New York University College of Dentistry's Global Health Nexus and The Positive Community Magazines. She has also co-authored several presentations for national conferences. Ms. White is deeply devoted to community service and is a former Chair of the NAACP Mid-Manhattan Branch Health Committee.

A recipient of many awards for civic and community service, she has also served as a volunteer for The Harlem Arts Alliance, The Hope Center, The Harlem Renaissance Five Mile Race, Volunteers in Service to America, Literacy Volunteers, and Prison Fellowship.

Ms. White earned her undergraduate degree from Rutgers College in New Brunswick, New Jersey and her Masters Degree in Public Administration from Baruch College of the City University of New York. Her post-graduate work includes a certificate in Business Administration from New York University. Ms. White serves on the Board of Directors, and is a proud member of, The Harlem Writers Guild, the oldest continuously operating Black Writers Workshop in the United States.



Dr. Tammy Smithers, Executive Consultant.

Tammy E. Smithers, EdD, MBA is an interdisciplinary scholar, researcher, writer, and thought leader on issues of race/ethnic inequity, gender disparity, diversity, and inclusion. One of her unique gifts is facilitating conversations both as a moderator, speaker, and panelist on diversity and social justice issues with engaging, thought-provoking candor. As a complement to this, she uses her skills as a scholar-activist and prior salesperson to tell and sell stories that move individuals and institutions to action.

Dr. Smithers worked professionally for twenty years with high-net-worth donors and clients both as a Wealth Advisor in the financial industry for three Fortune 100 corporations, including a global Wall Street investment firm and as a Director of Corporate Philanthropy and Institutional Advancement departments at Texas Chiropractic College and Houston Grand Opera.

Upon pivoting and exiting those roles, Dr. Smithers leveraged her experience in the financial services industry by becoming an adjunct professor and teaching Introduction to Management and Professional Selling Marketing courses in the Jones School of Business at Texas Southern University, one of the oldest historically Black colleges and universities in Texas. Dr. Smithers earned a Doctorate in Education from the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas, where she also teaches the Diversity/Equity and Leadership course in the School of Education and Human Services. She holds a Master's in Business Administration from Rice University and a Bachelor's in Journalism/Public Relations from the University of Texas at Austin.



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Dr. Smithers is a Visiting Scholar at the Center for Minority Serving Institutions and Samuel DeWitt Proctor Institute for Leadership, Equity, and Justice both housed in the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers University. Samples of her scholarship can be found in industry and academic journals, news media, and a book chapter. Her most recent work includes: “Servant Leadership, Crisis Management, and Post-Pandemic Realities” (HBCU Times Magazine), “Racism & COVID-19: Pandemic Exposes Socioeconomic Disparities” (Defender News Media), and “The Weaponry of Whiteness, Entitlement, and Privilege” (Diverse Issues in Higher Education). Currently, Rutgers University has commissioned her research report on “Whiteness and Privilege: Lifting the Veil on Systemic Racism,” which is in press to be released in February.

Dr. LaToya Pace Smith , Executive Consultant.

LaToya Pace-Smith is a multi-faceted leader, Executive Consultant, Business Strategist, and Marketing Expert with keen creativity, business acumen, and a passion for inspiring as many as possible— especially women and children—to reach higher and achieve their goals and dreams. Ambitious to her core, LaToya is on a purpose-driven mission to make a positive impact that will leave behind a legacy for generations.

LaToya holds a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration, with a Marketing concentration, and a Master of Business Administration, with a concentration in Strategic Finance.

When LaToya is not busy dominating the world of empowering women, girls, and other entrepreneurs, she enjoys reading, running outdoors, and traveling. However, nothing means more to her than her family, so the proud mother and happy wife loves spending quality time with her two beautiful daughters and supportive and loving husband.



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