

FIELD NOTES



THE ENEMY OF GREAT

“GOOD IS THE ENEMY OF GREAT.”

This is the first sentence of Jim Collins’ best-seller, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...and Others Don’t*. The book has provided inspiration and guidance for many nonprofit leaders.

Many nonprofits have competent fundraising departments and successfully generate the contributed resources needed to meet their goals each year. They may even have a fairly healthy endowment fund ensuring that their organization meets its commitments to the community now and in the future. Perhaps they’ve laid the groundwork to launch a successful capital campaign when the need for expansion arises.

Some, however, may be hovering at good or good-enough. They are experiencing a plateau and aren’t able to grow and expand to meet the community’s needs.

How do you know when you have settled for “good” with your organization’s fundraising efforts, when you could be striving for “great?”

TAKE THE TEST

To gain some insight into whether your organization has become complacent

with “good enough” fundraising practices, take this brief (and admittedly unscientific) self-examination.

- Could more people in your community benefit from your programs/services?
- Do you hesitate to set ambitious organizational goals because you can’t envision having the resources to meet them?
- Are your annual fundraising goals based on a modest percentage increase over the previous year’s results?
- Are you envious of the level of board members other organizations are able to attract?
- Are most of your fundraising efforts focused on direct mail and/or special events?
- Have three months or more passed since you met in person with one of your major donors?
- Is your annual campaign led primarily by staff?
- Do your staff and volunteers dread fundraising for your organization?
- Do you worry about being in competition with other local charities that seem to have more compelling needs for contributions?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, then it might be time to take a critical look at your organization’s fundraising practices and processes.

READY TO GIVE IT A TRY?

In order to make a successful shift to a great fundraising organization, you need:

- **Objective, candid feedback and analysis.**
- **Volunteer and staff leadership open to moving to a donor-centered orientation.**
- **An inspiring strategic plan with a compelling case for support.**

Need help in getting the process started? Donor By Design can help through consultation or an objective and candid assessment of your current fundraising culture.

Contact us at
info@donorbydesign.com.

After all, while good ain’t bad, nudging yourself over to the great side can be, well, GREAT!

