



TIFF Fundraising Symposium

On April 20, 2022, TIFF Investment Management hosted the third of four sessions of our Fundraising Symposium. Each session has its own theme and set of presenters, but the purpose of each is the same: To help nonprofits leverage fundraising best practices efficiently and effectively in a post-pandemic landscape.

“Cultivating Major Donors and Transformational Gifts” was hosted by **Charlie Cummings**, Strategic Advisor at the Do Good Institute at the University of Maryland. **Jeff Franco**, CEO and Camino Consulting Group and Transformation Leadership Group and Adjunct Professor at the Do Good Institute, led an interactive presentation on the fundraising relationship between a nonprofit and its high net worth supporters.

TIFF Members can access the recording of the session and presentation materials through the Member portal. A high-level summary of this informative event appears below.

If you have questions or feedback or would like to receive an invitation to the fourth installment of the 2022 Fundraising Symposium, please email your name, affiliation, and title to memberservices@tiff.org.

TIFF 2022 Fundraising Symposium Session 3 of 4: “Cultivating Major Donors and Transformational Gifts”

Host: Charlie Cummings
Strategic Advisor
Do Good Institute, University of Maryland
[DGI | UMD School of Public Policy](#)

Speaker: Jeffrey Franco
CEO and Founder of Camino Consulting Group
Adjunct Professor, Do Good Institute, University of Maryland
[Jeffrey Franco | Do Good Institute \(umd.edu\)](#)

Differentiating Fundraising and Development

Fundraising can be defined as both an art and a science. The “science” of fundraising pertains to fundraising-related analytics, such as revenue plans, donor lists, outreach strategies, target ranges, etc. The “art” of fundraising is in building a cultivation plan – having strong donor relationships is where the fundraising magic happens!

Fundraising can also be defined as episodic, reflecting a moment in time when an “ask” is made. In contrast, fundraising *development* is a continuous process in which the ask is just one step of several. Fundamentally, fundraising is the art of teaching people the joy of giving. Sharing your organization’s mission and plans gives donors an incentive or desire to give because they believe in your mission, believe in your people, or want to better their community.

Fundraising vs. Development

As described above, fundraising is typically an episodic ask backed by a combination of fundraising analytics and relationship expertise.

Development is a long-term commitment to building a donor relationship. This resonates especially well with high net worth (“HNW”) individuals, as they tend to value getting to know the organizations to which they donate.

Development is also an art and a science. Here, the “science” pertains to prospect research, such as analyzing an individual’s assets to determine their potential giving capacity, researching past giving activities, and learning about their passions and interests.

The “art” behind development is in establishing and developing an authentic relationship with a donor that leads them to commit to supporting your organization. This can include how you decide to approach and connect with a potential donor, when to make an ask, and leveraging relationships throughout your network to foster connections.

Development Techniques and Tools

Relationship World is the new network. A fundraising developer’s world should include both internal stakeholders and external relationships – both are good sources of potential donors.

Board and Development Staff. Your organization’s Board and Development staff are your top fundraising development resources and should be aligned as if they are part of the same team. Part of most Boards’ responsibility is to connect their relationship world with the Development staff. This requires a certain level of trust between the parties, which can be developed with clear, structured expectations of each other. For example, Development staff trusts that the Board will in good faith act on the requests made of them, such as making three introductions a year. In return, the Board trusts that the Development team has in place appropriate back-office operations to capture, execute, and follow up on those introductions. Additionally, the Development team should be proactive in its requests, such as reaching out to Board members with gentle reminders.

Uncovering Superpowers

- Executive Directors/Development Directors and their Boards tend to have different perspectives of each other’s strengths and potential contributions. Recognizing these different perspectives could be very powerful and add to growing relationship worlds. You never know what you’ll uncover until you ask!

The best ask can be no ask. The art of development is being able to read your audience and apply your current relationship status to meet them where they are. For example, during COVID, it was evident that checking in with donors to see how they were faring resulted in a more transparent, authentic relationship.

Inclusion. Recognizing where your donor is can provide valuable insight into what type of ask to make and when. Perhaps you are speaking with a donor who is not in a place where they can donate large sums of money, but instead they could donate other types of resources

that would support your organization's program, or they could make a few introductions to other new donors. The human nature wants to be connected with others and wants to make connections with others. Connecting will enhance the way you're able to do development.

Fundraising and Relationship Management Stages

Of the 8 stages of fundraising, *only one relates to making an ask*. Although most people think of fundraising as the ask, it is just one step of many in a long process:

1. **Identification.** Who is the target donor?
2. **Qualification.** Research on a donor to determine how they might best fit with your organization.
3. **Strategy.** How to approach and connect with the donor?
4. **Cultivation.** Getting to know each other to establish an ongoing relationship.
5. **Solicitation.** The Ask.
6. **Promised & Thanked.** The Developer taps back-office support to promptly thank the donor.
7. **Gift Processing & Recognition** – managed by back-office support.
8. **Stewardship.** Continue to cultivate your relationship with the donor so you can make future asks (typically 1 year later).

Development Team Composition

Development staff are effectively the face of your organization, and the only exposure to your organization for 70% to 80% of your donors. When building a development team, one size does not fit all. A development "team" could be an individual, such as an Executive Director or Director of Development, or a group of professionals.

Fundraising professionals are highly sought-after individuals. The role is exciting and rewarding but also experiences a high rate of burnout due to high expectations that get more challenging year after year. Compensation has not kept up, although we are seeing more ways to incentivize development teams, such as potential equity options, making sure they have the tools they need to succeed, and supporting/coordinating opportunities for growth and advancement.

When building your team, look for passion for the mission in potential hires. A passionate individual is more likely to be able to overcome the challenges of the role.

Networking vs. Relationship World Building

Networking is transactional and unidirectional. Relationship World Building is interactional and symbiotic. It is an exchange of helpful or impactful ideas and resources amongst contacts. It transcends your professional network – family, friends, neighbors, fellow volunteers are all part of your relationship world, and therefore, are potential donors. Relationship worlds grow by connecting with and getting to know people.

Tips for Expanding Your Relationship World

- Steady and constant care
- Treat each introduction with a high level of professionalism, thoughtfulness, and integrity

- Keep your organization in mind with all interactions
- Expand your perspective on relationships and who “qualifies” as a good connection – you cannot know who your mission will resonate with without getting to know a person
- Shift mindset from donors to stakeholders

Donor Capacity Differentiation

There are inherent differences in cultivating donors depending on their capacity.

- Small capacity donors make **transactional** gifts. Large capacity donors can make **transformational** gifts. For example, one multi-million-dollar gift might reach your total annual revenue goal, transforming how your organization operates for the next year.
- Another transformational gift might be a multi-million-dollar gift over a three-year period. This is an example of a **long-term vision** gift, whereas the one-time large gift is more of a **short-term gain**.
- Transactional gifts and even short-term gain gifts can be achieved through direct asks, such as an email campaign asking for gifts.
- Developing a large, long-term vision gift requires building a relationship with the donor over time. This could take years, and there may be “no’s” to your ask along the way. However, if you can properly cultivate the relationship along the way, eventually you will earn the right to make a large, transformational ask.

Biographies

Charlie Cummings

Charlie Cummings is a strategic advisor for the Do Good Institute and manages the Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management and Leadership program. He studied philanthropy and nonprofit leadership while earning his Master’s in Public Policy from the University of Maryland. While working as Do Good Institute Director Bob Grimm’s graduate assistant, he co-founded the Do Good Challenge and managed the first two competitions in 2012 and 2013. The Challenge catalyzed a new culture of philanthropy in College Park and inspired the then-President of the University to call UMD the “nation’s first Do Good Campus.”

After earning his master’s, he created a nonprofit program to activate and organize K-12 educators to impact education policy in their states. After piloting the initiative in New York, he raised more than \$4 million in support from Bloomberg Philanthropies and other major donors to implement the program across the United States. The Educator Voice Fellowship (EVF) empowered hundreds of award-winning teachers and principals to work alongside policymakers in state capitals, Congress, and the White House. In 2017, Charlie directed a coalition in Colorado to successfully pass a new law for high school graduation requirements that was written by a teacher and a principal in the EVF.

In 2018, he taught the Do Good Institute’s hands-on seminar on social innovation. In May of that year, he joined the Do Good Institute team as a strategic advisor. Charlie took an idea for a nonprofit management graduate program and turned it into a profitable, sustainable

business that is generating new revenue while advancing the Institute's mission. In addition to managing the Graduate Certificate program, Charlie cultivates new partnerships for the Do Good Institute.

Jeffrey Franco

Jeffrey Franco has over 25 years of experience in leading and managing a large-scale nonprofit, and providing strategic consulting, business development and change management for both corporations and nonprofit organizations. As CEO of Camino Consulting Group, Jeffrey has worked with local and national nonprofit CEOs to provide strategic plan support, board development, executive coaching and fundraising guidance. Outside of Camino Consulting Group, Jeffrey serves as Adjunct Professor at American University and University of Maryland where he designed and currently teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in nonprofit management.

Jeffrey served as Interim Executive Director and Vice President of City Year Miami after serving over 12 years as Executive Director of City Year Washington, DC. Under Jeffrey's leadership, City Year Washington, DC tripled the size of its staff, tripled the number of schools served, and quadrupled the number of students served. Since his arrival at City Year, Franco more than tripled the organization's fundraising capacity from \$2.3 million to \$8.6 million. During this time, Jeffrey worked directly with the CEO of the United Way of the National Capital Area to establish its first direct six figure multiyear grant to support for City Year's work in Washington D.C.'s most underserved schools.

Directly prior to joining City Year, Franco served as the Director of Global Business Development and Project Manager at Voxiva, Senior Consultant at Deloitte Consulting, Associate Director of Marketing and Sales at Corporate Executive Board, and Consultant at the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank Group.

Outside of his professional work, Franco was named 2013 American University Kogod School of Business Alumni of the Year, is an alumnus of the Aspen Institute Socrates Program, and is a 2016 graduate of the Co-Active Teaching Institute Leadership Program and 2010 graduate of Leadership Greater Washington. He graduated with a B.A. from Fairfield University, and has a Masters degree in International Affairs and M.B.A. from American University. Franco is fluent in Spanish and Portuguese, enjoys traveling, has completed 5 marathons and an Ironman triathlon, walked the 500-mile Camino de Santiago in Spain in 2013 and completed the 150 Mile Annapurna Circuit in Nepal in 2017.