

Fund Development: Your Time and What's at Stake

You're passionate about your mission. With so many lives impacted by your work, it can be hard to prioritize. (Surely we can just work more hours, right?!) But a basic review of time allocation as it relates to return on investment can help make your work stronger and even more effective.

We suggest conducting the following analysis*: Start with the number of days your development team works annually. Remember to subtract any days that part-time staff members don't work, as well as weekends, holidays, vacation, and sick and personal days. (Yes, we know you probably work some or all of those times, but let's exclude them for the purpose of this analysis.) Try, also, to make an educated guess about the amount of time not worked for other reasons, such as staff events, etc., and subtract that, too.

Next, ask each development staff member to analyze and prepare a solid estimate of how much time s/he devotes to the following:

- Administrative and record-keeping tasks.
- Meetings, trainings and conference attendance.
- Work-related travel.
- Any other tasks that do not reasonably and *directly* relate to raising money for your organization.

You likely can't simply stop doing all these things, but they do impact how many hours you have available to raise funds. Subtract the time spent on these activities from your prior total. *Now you know how many hours you have available to raise funds for your cause.*

Next, simply divide your funding goal for the year by this remaining number of hours. *This is how many dollars your team needs to raise for each hour they spend on direct fund development!* (Of course, you can also do this calculation for individual members of the team, based on each team member's hours worked and individual portfolio goal.)

Now let's suppose your calculations reveal a need to raise an average of \$10,000 an hour. Another way to think of this is as your Income At Stake (IAS) per hour. (Various other terms have been proposed, but we like this one!)

What do you have on your calendar today? This week? This month? Does the potential reward for those activities (individually and/or collectively) total \$10,000 per hour? If not, does the potential reward for those activities still justify you putting this income at stake? Perhaps, for example, there's another effective way to thank and steward \$500 donors, in order to free up more of your time to generate and pursue \$10,000+ leads? Perhaps a reliable volunteer can help with some tasks that currently take you away from pursuing high-quality leads? Are there any tasks that need to be postponed, or designated to another staff member, or simply discontinued?

Spending a little time to calculate your IAS can make it much easier to prioritize — so you have more time to raise the funds your organization relies on!

* Adapted from Fundraising the SMART Way, by Ellen Bristol.