

Introduction

Someone would have to live alone in a cave not to understand the importance of relationships or how to build and keep them, said Oscar to himself. This is a story, inspired by our clients, about a likeable, but somewhat stressed and overworked, Executive Director named Oscar. Although he knows relationships with the right people are critical to his organization and his fund development, he just can't figure out what more he can do, or what he can do differently, to make them stronger and work better!

From my thousands of conversations with nonprofits throughout the country over the past 24 years, one universal challenge stands out. Staff and supporters constantly struggle to secure more funding to grow and expand their great missions.

It's not that most nonprofits don't try or don't have the technology. Nor is it because of a lack of hard work, vision, dedicated staff, or deeply committed supporters.

I've discovered that most organizations operate year after year with a huge asset gap that holds them back—they don't have strong relationships with enough of the right people. Others can't comfortably turn the relationships they do have into fundraising successes.

A strong relationship is by far the most effective way to raise more money, reduce stress, and make work and life

more rewarding and a lot more fun. Although most people understand the importance of relationships, I'm amazed at how much gets lost in the day-to-day execution.

I've watched hundreds of nonprofits endlessly search to uncover their silver bullet of fundraising. "If I could just get more effective donor software, build a better direct mail program, beef up grants, or add some exciting new events, things would be great." But the struggles continue and things don't change very much.

Most organizations already have most of the tools that they need to dramatically increase their income, except for one—strong relationships with the right people who have the capacity to make more miracles happen.

Regardless of how much money you want to raise or how you plan to raise it, the single most important part of any fund development effort is the strength of your relationships. Without powerful relationships, it's a constant uphill battle to develop a stronger board, impact major giving, expand grants, increase event income, or drive a successful capital campaign.

Let's Have Lunch Together tears down many of the relationship-building roadblocks that I've seen clients experience over the years. It paves the way, with a step-by-step system, to successful major giving and multi-million dollar campaigns—without taking big risks or spending a ton of money.

If you enjoy the thrill of uncovering treasure right in

your own backyard, you'll love what you'll learn inside this book. Follow Oscar as he employs his greatest fundraising tool—himself—and fulfills every Executive Director's dream.

He's never heavy-handed or manipulative. For the first time, people can't do enough for him and the organization.

Oscar's successes are not fiction. They're very real. Our clients actually made all of this happen, and much more. Oscar did it by learning how to build stronger relationships and making them work for everyone. Now you can make more of your own miracles happen, too.

Follow his journey as he transforms a \$500 donor into a \$10,000 annual giver, strangers into \$25,000 major gift donors, and a friend who donates sodas for events into a supporter who helps him raise \$250,000 each and every year. Those are only a few of the very real miracles Oscar performs.

Step-by-step, you'll see exactly how he converts his board into a powerful leadership team and turns an unhappy donor into his strongest community advocate—an advocate who subsequently helps him raise hundreds of thousands of dollars.

There's probably a little bit of Oscar in all of us. He's deeply committed, has a strong vision, and works extremely hard. Like most Executive Directors, he's challenged by time, staff, and a tightening budget. He fears things will stay the same *and* he fears things will change.

Suddenly, one day at noon, Victoria, his new board

chair, unexpectedly drops by his office. Oscar was having a bad week—an extremely bad week. She was the last person he wanted to lunch with.

So it all began over a casual luncheon at Oscar's favorite diner: he learned how to build stronger relationships and make them work so much better than they ever had before.

If you're a nonprofit president, executive director, responsible for development, or member of a board, sit back and enjoy this book. Experience what a whole new world fundraising is with stronger relationships. Highlight some new ideas and give a few of them a try.

Call or e-mail me. Let me know how it's working for you.

Marshall Howard