



“The Little Book of Gold: Fundraising for Small (And Very Small) Nonprofits”

By Eric Hanberg

Change-Makers Nonprofit Book Club

November 2023

Virtual Book Club Meeting Summary

Quick Recap

The book club meeting attendees discussed "The Little Book of Gold: Fundraising for Small (and Very Small) Nonprofits" by Eric Hanberg. Melanie Lambert, managing director of Just Write Grants and Change-Makers Nonprofit Book Club lead, shared her thoughts on the book and asked questions to attendees to prompt discussion. They also discussed direct mail in a digital age, personal touch, correctly structuring donors' names, cost and time drain of events for nonprofits, alternative fundraising revenue streams, understanding the donor pyramid, and planned giving. Melanie invited attendees to join them in reading 'The Mister Rogers Effect', the book club selection for January 2024.

Summary

General Overview: "The Little Book of Gold: Fundraising for Small (And Very Small) Nonprofits" by Eric Hanberg

Melanie and Bekka discussed the book, focused on fundraising for small and very small nonprofits. Melanie mentions that her background is in small to mid-size nonprofits and that she enjoyed the book as a field guide for fundraising. The conversation also touches on grammar and spelling errors in the book, which Melanie finds distracting.

Nonprofit Fundraising Strategies

Melanie shared her extensive experience in nonprofit fundraising, emphasizing the significance of strategic planning and avoiding "shiny object syndrome." She stressed the importance of



focusing on existing revenue streams and adding strategy to them for transformational impact. As mentioned in the book, Melanie also highlighted the need to understand the Donor Bill of Rights and manage excess funding wisely for sustainable fundraising. Referencing the author's cautions about "working boards," she discussed the challenges of working with a board that views itself as an extension of the staff, the need to shift this mindset, and the importance of a committed board that contributes financially. Melanie touched on the benefits of recurring giving programs and the pitfalls of fundraising committees. Finally, she noted the increasing interest of grantmakers in seeing the positive outcomes of a nonprofit's work.

Direct Mail in a Digital Age

Melanie and Bekka discussed the importance of direct mail in a digital age. Melanie shared her experience of receiving direct mail and setting it aside for thoughtful consideration, contrasting it with the frequent bombardment of electronic solicitations. Bekka emphasized the personal touch that comes from taking the time to sign and address a letter. They also mentioned the use of personalized notes and post-it notes that were found to be effective in making donors feel appreciated. Melanie emphasized the need for organizations to correctly structure donors' names, remember their preferences, and invest extra time in communicating with their top donors, while expressing surprise at a suggestion in a book they were reading about holding a Phonathon. Melanie shared her personal experience working as a student Phonathon caller during her college years and expressed her preference for not answering unsolicited calls from unknown numbers. She shared her strategy of focusing on thanking donors and providing updates about the nonprofit's activities rather than asking for direct donations or support.

Nonprofit Event Costs and Alternatives

Like the author, Melanie expressed her views on the cost and time drain of events for nonprofits, especially for smaller organizations as Hanberg reiterates. She agrees with Hanberg that nonprofits should consider alternative fundraising revenue streams that could be more efficient and cost-effective. She mentioned Hanberg's suggestion of a breakfast event, which would be less expensive and more convenient for attendees, as outlined in a book. Melanie also shared that she was considering partnering with consultants to organize a nonprofit conference in the morning, instead of lunch, to save costs and increase attendance.

Nonprofit Fundraising Strategies

Melanie discussed the insights from Chapter 5 of the book. She emphasized the significance of understanding the donor pyramid and using it to plan strategically. She also highlighted the



author's recommendation of moving away from one-off donations and investing in a donor database to facilitate more personalized and strategic fundraising. Like Hanberg, Melanie cautioned against offering incentives for donations as they can be inefficient and encouraged focusing on expanding existing fundraising models. She emphasized the need for realistic goals and considering the capacity of the team. Finally, she stressed the importance of having a clear and accessible donate button on a nonprofit's website.

Fundraising Strategies for Nonprofits

Melanie emphasized the importance of nonprofits being comfortable with fundraising and not making it difficult for potential donors. She highlighted the importance of looking at other nonprofits' annual reports to see who their grantors are, stating that it's not unethical but a smart move in fundraising. Melanie also discussed the importance of treating foundation staff as potential supporters, suggesting that nonprofits cultivate a connection with them. She mentioned a list of questions to ask a grant administrator to determine if a grant request should be submitted and the availability of this list on Just Write Grants' website and in the book. Lastly, she noted the challenges of getting a grant administrator on the phone post-Covid and how these questions can also be used in email.

Planned Giving and Capital Campaigns for Nonprofits

Melanie discussed the topic of planned giving and capital campaigns, as mentioned in the final chapter of the book, highlighting the importance for nonprofits to consider these fundraising strategies. She emphasized that planned giving can be a transformational source of funding and can be as simple as including a checkbox on a nonprofit's website for interested donors. Melanie also pointed out, just as Hanberg did in the book, that capital campaigns, while potentially lucrative, can be cumbersome for small nonprofits and recommended hiring external professional assistance for such campaigns. She stressed the importance of building reserves and being part of the community, as these can positively impact fundraising efforts. Lastly, Melanie talked about the need for nonprofit staff to have a balance between fundraising and other responsibilities, suggesting that hiring development staff can be a solution.

Book Club Overview & Future Plans

After wrapping up the overview of "The Little Book of Gold," Melanie announced that the book club would read "The Mister Rogers Effect" in January and invited Amr and Bekka to join. Melanie also explained how to access the book on Amazon. She thanked both participants for their contributions.



Next Steps

[Join Change-Makers Nonprofit Book Club on Amazon](#) to see a full list of upcoming books and how to purchase them. [Click here to get your copy of “The Mister Rogers Effect: 7 Secrets to Bringing Out the Best in Yourself and Others from America's Beloved Neighbor.”*](#)

**As an Amazon Affiliate, Melanie Lambert receives a small commission for each applicable sale.*