



117 N. First Street, Suite 70
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104
www.RichnerRichner.com

Campaign Feasibility Study Methodology

A Feasibility Study is designed to produce a comprehensive understanding of the opinions and attitudes of the non-profit organization's representatives who will be called on to provide leadership and other resources for its vision to become a reality, typically in preparation for a special campaign (e.g. endowment building or a capital project). The study enables the organization to set an achievable monetary goal for the campaign, leverage internal support for fundraising, and cultivate a prospective donor base in the surrounding community.

To accomplish the goals of such a study, Richner & Richner conducts from three to four dozen personal, confidential interviews. In some cases, focus groups may also be appropriate. The interviewees include community leaders and stakeholders, and relevant local community foundations and grantors to determine the perceived response to the proposed campaign. Through these interviews the firm:

- Assesses the affinity of donors and prospective donors with the purposes of the campaign and the financial goals of the campaign
- Determines the likely potential for donor investment from individuals, foundations, and corporations
- Identifies potential new donor prospects and potential volunteer leadership for the campaign
- Offers an analysis of donor interest in and understanding of giving for capital purposes compared to other potential campaign goals if any, such as programs or endowment
- Determines any issues or concerns relative to the feasibility of the proposed campaign case, goal, and timing, including elements that would strengthen the case or inform goal-setting

- Measures the perceived viability, credibility, and image in the community of the organization
- Provides initial communication about and promote the proposed project among the donor audience
- Determines the organization's perceived ability to raise funds when compared to other fundraising entities in the community

The steps of a typical study are as follows:

1. Meet with the president/CEO and the director of development to set expectations for the engagement
2. Present study strategy to the Board, as appropriate
3. Constitute an *ad hoc* committee to oversee the study process
 - a) Develop a recruitment strategy and materials for the committee
 - b) Assist with the identification and recruitment of members
 - c) Convene the first meeting
4. Prepare for confidential external stakeholder interviews
 - a) Develop list of interview subjects
 - b) Draft/revise the campaign case for support
 - c) Draft an appropriate questionnaire to guide the stakeholder interview process
 - d) Draft a letter of introduction for the interview process
 - e) Identify dates for and schedule interviews
5. Conduct and conclude interviews with external stakeholders
6. Analyze the fundraising climate in the organization's area of operations
 - a) Research demographic and economic trends

- b) Identify the scale and scope of current or potential campaigns that may be occurring during the same time frame
7. Create an in-depth final report
 - a) Compile and analyze findings
 - b) Develop key recommendations on the overall feasibility of the proposed campaign, campaign budget and timeline, marketing, potential campaign leadership and volunteer structure, and the recommended goal
 - c) Develop an implementation strategy to make these recommendations operational
 - d) Recommend a process for approving the findings and recommendations
 8. Convene *ad hoc* committee to receive presentation of final report
 9. Meet with the president/CEO and director of development to review the outcomes of the engagement, and discuss implementation strategies

In most cases, the organization undertakes a fundraising program assessment prior to the feasibility study to make internal adjustments and preparations prior to exposing its plans to external scrutiny.