



Conducting a Staff-Led Feasibility Study

**AFP – Greater Milwaukee Chapter
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Presentation Goals

- Understand the merits of conducting the study in-house
- Understand if, when, and how to use outside counsel in the study
- Demystify the process; empower you
- Learn what is involved in conducting a study—whether in-house or out-sourced

Why Do a Feasibility Study?



Likely Objectives

1. **Test constituent reaction to plans and funding needs**
2. **Position and cultivate donors**
3. **Learn how much could be raised in the campaign**
4. **Identify prospective campaign leaders**
5. **Surface concerns or issues that could become barriers to the campaign**
6. **Determine whether or not to proceed with the plans for which the campaign will provide financial support.**

Counsel Should Conduct the Study When:

- **Development staff has limited or no experience with major gifts.**
- **Known sensitivities exist around institutional leadership issues, making confidential interviews preferable.**
- **Demands of fundraising and other pressing work do not permit staff to invest the time to conduct interviews.**

Conduct the Study In-House

When:

- Mature development staff with prospect portfolio management responsibilities are available.
- There is strong relationship continuity between development staff and prospective campaign donors.
- Prospective campaign donors are weary of “one more feasibility study,” having participated in many, which begin to resemble one another.
- Prospective campaign donors signal some objection to “experts” from “outside” coming in for a short period and then leaving.

Top 10 Benefits of In-House

1. **Strengthens donor relationships with staff using targeted conversations.**
2. **Donors feel better knowing the conversations are about them first, rather than simply about their money.**
3. **Staff members gain experience asking sensitive questions about personal giving and interests.**
4. **Obtains valuable donor/prospect information that can be imported directly into the donor data management system without being filtered (or lost!) by the consultant.**
5. **Achieves greater scheduling flexibility for completing interviews.**

Top 10 Benefits of In-House

6. Fields multiple interviewers to gain multiple perspectives.
7. Staff members feel a greater sense of ownership of the information.
8. Increases staff credibility among internal constituents.
9. Helps retain staff who achieve valuable career building experience.
10. Saves money in consulting fees, redeploying that savings into other budget needs.

Elements of the Study Process

1. Determine the study's objectives
2. Select the study team
3. Select those to be interviewed
4. Prepare interview guide & materials
5. Arrange the interviews
6. Conduct the interviews
7. Collect and analyze the findings
8. Prepare and present the report

Determine Objectives

Prepare the feasibility study plan

1. Rationale and objectives
2. Resource requirements
3. Analysis and reporting
4. Communications

Select the Study Team

Roles to be played by staff:

- Team leader
- Interviewers
- Logistics support and coordination
- Statistical analysis
- Content analysis and report writing

Select Those to Interview

- **Determine selection criteria**
- **Consider interviewee types—individual, couples, corporate, foundation**
- **Set interview locations**
- **Decide number of interviews**
- **Determine the preferred inviter**

Prepare Materials

Materials to prepare interviewers:

- Interviewee profiles
- Scheduling & tracking tools
- Interview guide & questions

Materials sent in advance of interviews:

- Case/briefing document (draft)
- Business card

Materials introduced during interviews:

- Scale of giving/gift table
- Organizational leaders list

Arrange the Interviews

- **Telephone prospect to invite participation**
- **4 scenarios:**
 - Interviewer calls/existing relationship
 - Interviewer calls/cold call
 - Influencer calls/existing relationship
 - Influencer calls/cold call
- **Confirmation letters**
- **Courtesy reminder calls the day before**

Conduct the Interviews

- **Setting**
- **Content**
 - Introduction & general perceptions
 - Reaction to organization plans
 - Observations about campaign capacity
 - Interest/readiness for personal involvement
 - Advice on campaign strategy & leadership
- **Conduct, language, demeanor**
- **Mind-dump immediately follows**

Collect and Analyze Findings

Determine campaign goal and strategies

- **Review qualitative findings**
 - Content analysis of all notes
- **Review quantitative findings**
 - Master compilation worksheet
 - Goal determination worksheet
 - Scale of giving analysis

Master Compilation Worksheet

Name	Interviewer	Connection Strength	Overall Perception	Sr. Mngmnt	Dev. Staff	Board	Project Support	Clarity of Case	Certainty of \$15M	Certainty of Scale	Project Giving Interest	Gift Amount	Gift Amount High	Pledge+ Estate
Bridgley, Tom	Olaf	Strongly connected	Strongly Supportive	5	4	4	Supportive	Mixed assessment	Mixed feelings	Somewhat achievable	Moderate interest/priorit	\$25,000	\$50,000	\$250,000
Brosniche, James	Olaf	Strongly connected	Strongly Supportive	5	5	5	Strongly Supportive	Somewhat clear/compelling	Success somewhat unlikely	Mostly unachievable	igh giving interest/priorit	--	30,000	30,000
Cutipper, George	Spearman	Strongly connected	Strongly Supportive	4	2.5	3	Supportive	Somewhat clear/compelling	Some likelihood of success	Somewhat achievable	igh giving interest/priorit	250,000	500,000	1,000,000
Dorito, Phil	Rolf	Moderately connected	Strongly Supportive	3	3	3	Mixed feelings	Somewhat unclear and not compelling	Some likelihood of success	Somewhat achievable	Moderate interest/priorit	250,000	500,000	500,000
Faheart, Thomas	Merchant	Strongly connected	Supportive	5	4	5	Strongly Supportive	Very clear and compelling	Mixed feelings	Mixed feelings	Moderate interest/priorit	50,000	100,000	100,000
Faraday Foundation	Norther	Strongly connected	Strongly Supportive	5	4	4.25	Strongly Supportive	Somewhat clear/compelling	Mixed feelings	Mixed feelings	igh giving interest/priorit	2,500,000	5,000,000	10,000,000
Floride, Larry Dr.	Merchant	Strongly connected	Supportive	5	4	5	Supportive	Somewhat clear/compelling	Strong likelihood of success	Very unachievable	igh giving interest/priorit	10,000	50,000	50,000
Fuloder, Irving Dr.	Rolf	Strongly connected	Strongly Supportive	DK	3	DK	Strongly Supportive	Somewhat clear/compelling	Strong likelihood of success	Mixed feelings	igh giving interest/priorit	100,000	250,000	250,000
Gallagher, Dino	Spearman	Strongly connected	Strongly Supportive	5	4	5	Strongly Supportive	Very clear and compelling	Strong likelihood of success	Very unachievable	igh giving interest/priorit	250,000	500,000	500,000
Grundie, Helio Dr.	Rolf	Minimally connected	Supportive	5	3	3	Supportive	Very clear and compelling	Mixed feelings	Mostly unachievable	Moderate interest/priorit	15,000	15,000	15,000
Haldeman Productions	Spearman	Strongly connected	Supportive	5	3	DK	Strongly Supportive	DNA	Don't know	Don't know	Moderate interest/priorit	30,000	30,000	30,000
Haldenbock, Siri	Merchant	Moderately connected	Mixed feelings	DNA	DNA	DNA	Mixed feelings	Somewhat clear/compelling	Little likelihood of success	DNA	igh giving interest/priorit	--	25,000	25,000
Hanline, John	Norther	Strongly connected	Supportive	3.5	4	3.5	Unsupportive	Very unclear and not at all compelling	Little likelihood of success	Very unachievable	Low interest/priorit	--	10,000	10,000
Hernandez, Consuelo	Norther	Moderately connected	Supportive	4	4	4	Supportive	Somewhat clear/compelling	Some likelihood of success	Mixed feelings	igh giving interest/priorit	50,000	100,000	150,000
Hessellbind, Gladys.	Spearman	Strongly connected	Strongly Supportive	5	3	4	Mixed feelings	Mixed assessment	Don't know	Don't know	Low interest/priorit	15,000	25,000	25,000
Kelley, Lizbeth	Olaf	Strongly connected	Strongly Supportive	5	3	5	Supportive	Somewhat clear/compelling	Some likelihood of success	Very unachievable	Moderate interest/priorit	100,000	100,000	110,000
McElinibus, William	Rolf	Minimally connected	Supportive	DNA	DNA	DNA	Mixed feelings	DNA	Success somewhat unlikely	Mostly unachievable	Low interest/priorit	250,000	500,000	1,000,000
Morizio Metals	Merchant	Strongly connected	Strongly Supportive	5	3	3	Mixed feelings	Very clear and compelling	Success somewhat unlikely	Don't know	igh giving interest/priorit	1,000,000	200,000	5,000,000
Murphy-Stein, Shelby	Spearman	Moderately connected	Supportive	DNA	DNA	DNA	Supportive	Mixed assessment	Some likelihood of success	somewhat achievable	Moderate interest/priorit	--	5,000	5,000
Ozley, Marty	Norther	Minimally connected	Supportive	3	DK	DK	Supportive	Somewhat clear/compelling	Strong likelihood of success	somewhat achievable	Low interest/priorit	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Rolfnbailey, Steve	Norther	Strongly connected	Strongly Supportive	4	4	4	Mixed feelings	Somewhat unclear and not compelling	Don't know	Don't know	Moderate interest/priorit	5,000	5,000	5,000
Roth, Daniele Dr.	Merchant	Strongly connected	Supportive	4	4	4	Strongly unsupportive	Somewhat unclear and not compelling	Mixed feelings	Mixed feelings	Moderate interest/priorit	25,000	25,000	275,000
Scatterfly Industries	Spearman	Moderately connected	Supportive	4	4	4	Mixed feelings	Mixed assessment	Strong likelihood of success	Very achievable	Moderate interest/priorit	1,000,000	1,500,000	1,500,000
Tolisi Companies	Rolf	Strongly connected	Strongly Supportive	5	5	5	Supportive	DNA	Mixed feelings	Somewhat achievable	igh giving interest/priorit	2,500,000	5,000,000	5,000,000
Tyroli, James	Merchant	Moderately connected	Supportive	DNA	DNA	DNA	Mixed feelings	Mixed assessment	Mixed feelings	Mixed feelings	Low interest/priorit	10,000	10,000	10,000
Winters, Willamina	Norther	Strongly connected	Strongly Supportive	5	4	3	Strongly Supportive	Don't know	Some likelihood of success	Mixed feelings	Moderate interest/priorit	2,500	5,000	5,000
Wobegone, Marilyn	Spearman	Strongly connected	Strongly Supportive	5	1	2.5	Unsupportive	Somewhat unclear and not compelling	Little likelihood of success	Very unachievable	Low interest/priorit	--	25,000	25,000
Zidescu Foundation	Merchant	Moderately connected	Supportive	5	5	3	Supportive	Somewhat clear/compelling	Little likelihood of success	Mostly unachievable	igh giving interest/priorit	10,000,000	15,000,000	15,000,000
				4.5	3.6	3.9						\$19,437,500	\$30,560,000	\$41,870,000

Scale of Giving Analysis

Scale of Giving to Raise \$100,000,000					Feasibility Study Results		
Gift Level	# of Gifts Needed	#of Prospects Preferred	Total	% of Total Goal	# of Gifts Identified	Total	% of Total Goal
\$20,000,000	1	2	\$ 20,000,000	20.0%	--	--	--
\$15,000,000	1	2	\$ 15,000,000	15.0%	1	\$ 15,000,000	15.0%
\$10,000,000	2	4	\$ 20,000,000	20.0%	1	\$ 10,000,000	10.0%
	4	8	\$ 55,000,000	55.0%	2	\$ 25,000,000	25.0%
\$5,000,000	4	12	\$ 20,000,000	20.0%	2	\$ 10,000,000	10.0%
\$2,500,000	5	15	\$ 12,500,000	12.5%	--	--	--
\$1,000,000	6	18	\$ 6,000,000	6.0%	4	\$ 4,500,000	4.5%
	15	45	\$ 38,500,000	38.5%	6	\$ 14,500,000	14.5%
\$500,000	8	24	\$ 4,000,000	4.0%	2	\$ 1,000,000	1.0%
\$250,000	12	36	\$ 3,000,000	3.0%	3	\$ 775,000	0.8%
\$100,000	15	45	\$ 1,500,000	1.5%	3	\$ 360,000	0.4%
	35	105	\$ 8,500,000	8.5%	8	\$ 2,135,000	2.1%
\$50,000	30	90	\$ 1,500,000	1.5%	1	\$ 50,000	0.1%
\$25,000	40	120	\$ 1,000,000	1.0%	5	\$ 135,000	0.1%
\$10,000	50	150	\$ 500,000	0.5%	3	\$ 35,000	0.0%
	120	360	\$ 3,000,000	3.0%	9	\$ 220,000	0.2%
\$5,000	100	300	\$ 500,000	0.5%	3	\$ 15,000	0.0%
\$2,500	250	750	\$ 625,000	0.6%	--	--	--
\$1,000	500	1500	\$ 500,000	0.5%	--	--	--
	850	2550	\$ 1,625,000	1.6%	3	\$ 15,000	0.0%
below \$1,000	many	many	\$ 375,000	0.4%			
Total	1004	3008	\$ 100,000,000	100.0%	28	\$ 41,870,000	41.9%

Key Variables in Goal Setting

1. Response/readiness of top 10
2. Were “the right” prospects interviewed?
3. Rated capacity of interviewees
4. Risk-aversion profile of your leaders
5. Environmental factors
6. Gravitational pull of plans/projects
7. Internal capacity for campaign
8. Organizational fundraising history

Prepare & Present the Report

- **Full written report**
 - Executive summary
 - Describe methodology
 - Study findings and observations
 - Recommendations
- **Process report for acceptance and ownership**

Discussion / Q & A

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Gary Hubbell Consulting, LLC

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