



10 Steps to Maximize Your Fundraising Potential*

1. Start early. The earlier you start fundraising, the more money you will raise. Although it's never "too late" – the more time you have to ramp up your fundraising efforts, the better. Get an early start on getting organized (create lists, develop a schedule, customize emails.) By getting a head start on these various activities, you will have a longer window to solicit donations.

2. Set a challenging but attainable fundraising goal. Experienced "a-thon" fundraisers suggest setting a 'stretch' goal — one that is challenging to attain, but not impossible. As you come close to reaching your goal, it should be set higher. The idea is to avoid a situation in which prospective donors decide not to donate because your goal has already been reached! You might end up increasing your goal multiple times during the duration of your fundraising. For returning participants, this year's goal should be a step-up from the total raised in previous years

3. Develop an exhaustive list of prospective donors. Don't limit yourself to your email address book – you have **many more** potential donors. Names from clubs or organizations you belong to (e.g., a running club, a church congregation) should be added to the list. Reach out to **anyone** who might donate — you will be surprised by who will make a donation. (*Don't make the decision for someone else– by not asking.*) Remember offline address books, too – holiday card lists or rolodexes are great sources for prospects. Aunt Tillie doesn't have an email address? Create a separate list of people who should receive a letter by regular mail. (Make sure your letter includes detailed instructions of how-to make a donation online using your personalized web page **or offline** by mailing a check.)

4. Customize your emails. We provide you with email templates that you can use to solicit donations from friends and family. To maximize donations customize this template to incorporate **your own personal story** – your voice, your passion. Ideally, the email should communicate several key points:

- Why you are participating in the event
- Why MX for Children or the children's hospitals are important to you.
- What the money does.
- How their donation will help.

The attached MX for Children Fact Sheet can help with some of the above points. And, of course, the email should also include a link to your personal Walk web page!

5. Create a schedule for email communications. With a start date (*the day you register for the event*) and an end date (*the day of the event*) you can create a detailed fundraising schedule for the days, weeks, or months to come. Creating and following a schedule requires you to be organized and disciplined, but the efforts will yield the desired results. The schedule should include target dates for a series of emails. For those that don't know where to start a sample schedule is outlined below.

Starting 8 weeks before the Inside Line Experience or Jackpot Challenge

of Weeks

Until event

Email Topic

Week #8	Send an email explaining that you will be participating in the Inside Line or the Jackpot Challenge and explaining why (why the cause is important)
Week #7	Share your personal fundraising goal and ask for their support
Week #6	Update everyone on your progress to your goal; give people step-by-step instructions on how to sponsor you (using a credit card on your Walk web page or mailing a check.)
Week #5	If you know people who are unable to contribute financially invite them to fundraise with you. Encourage them to register for the event (<i>stress the importance of registering</i>) and give them hints and tips on fundraising
Week #4	Provide an update on your current progress toward your goal; if you've already exceeded your initial goal announce your "amended" goal (<i>due to the generosity of your family and friends you've been able to increase your initial goal – and provide more money for MX for Children's mission</i>); thank everyone for their support.
Week #3	Remind everyone that the event is coming up quickly – that there is only three weeks left to achieve your goal.
Week #2	If you've met your initial or revised goals announce your current goal – remind everyone <i>why</i> you are asking – that the problems and challenges of hydrocephalus are more than any one person – that in order to eliminate the challenges of hydrocephalus money is needed to fund vital research programs.
Week #1	If you haven't met your goal remind people that the event is coming up quickly. Let everyone know that it isn't "too late" to make a donation – that your website will remain active for several weeks after the event. Thank everyone for their support. Let them know that the money they have contributed will be wisely spent.

You can also try a more targeted approach to your emails by suppressing all individuals who have made a donation already. Depending on the amount of time you are willing to dedicate to your fundraising efforts, you might consider taking an even more sophisticated approach by segmenting your list of prospective donors into groups (e.g., past donors, new list members, family, fellow members of a club) and sending different emails to each audience.

6. Ask, ask, and ask again. In addition to the email communication schedule above, you need to ask, ask, and ask again at every possible opportunity. **The only way that people can make a donation is if you give them the opportunity to do so.** During face-to-face interactions or phone calls with friends, family, neighbors, or other prospective donors, mention your fundraising progress and your goal. Give people a chance to donate, but leave the ultimate decision up to them.

7. Customize your personal fundraising web page. The most compelling fundraising web pages include text, **your personal story** and photos. The combination of these elements will convey your strong passion for the organization in a way that motivates visitors to make a donation. Text on the page should be aligned with the email communications. Specifically, the text should explain *why* you are participating, what your children's hospital has meant to you and your family, what the MX for Children does, and how the donor's gift will be used (to fund vital research.) Update your personal web page periodically with your progress (or challenges) so visitors can stay informed and engaged throughout the duration of your fundraising effort.

8. Add social media to the mix. Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn and other social media sites are a great way to increase donations. By using status updates and tweets about MX for Children or your fundraising progress and by

including links to your web page, you can subtly encourage your friends, family and followers to make a donation. Social media is a great way to stay in front of people without making a 'hard ask. Thank individuals who have already donated and ask everyone else to donate now. Introduce the event, what MX for Children does, why you are participating and encourage the recipient to donate.

9. Get creative. There are an infinite number of creative ways to encourage people to donate. You can add a link to your web page in your email signature, or create business cards with the URL to give to people who express an interest in donating during face-to-face interactions. Consider giving potential donors 'piggy banks' (antique milk bottles, jam jars...some sort of container) with a label providing your name and MX for Children's name. Ask them to collect their change for a month in support of the event.

10. Send a personalized thank you note. After the event is over and donations have stopped trickling in, reach out to donors and thank them again for their generosity. The thank you note should also include information about the event, the amount you raised, and a reminder of how the donor's contribution will help fund research for the hydrocephalus community. Donors will be more likely to contribute to next year's event if they feel that their donation was appreciated and valuable.

Questions? Need more hints and tips? Contact MX for Children at info@mxforchildren.org

Facts About Hydrocephalus



Hydrocephalus

- Hydrocephalus is a chronic condition caused by an abnormal accumulation of cerebral spinal fluid, resulting in pressure on the brain

Hydrocephalus Is Common

- Over one million Americans are affected by hydrocephalus, in every stage of life, from infants to the elderly. Head injuries causing hydrocephalus in our returning military personnel serving in Iraq and Afghanistan are greatly increasing the numbers of Americans living with this challenging condition.
- **Anyone, at any age, may be diagnosed with hydrocephalus.**
- Almost 8,000 babies are born with hydrocephalus every year.
- Hydrocephalus is the most common reason for brain surgery in children.

There Is No Cure

- Currently there is no prevention for hydrocephalus – there is no cure.
- The most common treatment is brain surgery to implant a shunt – but **a shunt is not a cure!** A shunt is only a control – and with a 50% failure rate in the first two years – not a very good one.
- While many people are helped by surgery, many more need further operations to stay well. Of the over 40,000 hydrocephalus operations performed annually (one every 15 minutes), only 30% are the patient's **first surgery** to treat hydrocephalus.
- The medical costs of treating hydrocephalus are over \$1 billion per year, yet in 2010 government funding of hydrocephalus research totaled less than \$8 million.

There Is a Crisis in Diagnosis

- An estimated 375,000 older Americans have normal pressure hydrocephalus (NPH) – many misdiagnosed as Alzheimer's or dementia. When properly diagnosed and treated the patient often returns to normal functioning.
- Hydrocephalus often is undiagnosed and untreated in younger adults, leading to substantial loss of productivity and healthcare cost.

More Effective Treatment Is Needed Now

- In the past 50 years there has been **no significant progress** in the treatment methods for hydrocephalus.
- **Research is essential. The Hydrocephalus Association recently announced a multi-year, multi-million dollar research initiative aimed at finding the answers to this chronic, complex and life threatening condition. But research is expensive. To fund research new revenue sources must be found.**

The Hydrocephalus Association

- The Hydrocephalus Association was founded in 1983. Its mission: to eliminate the challenges of hydrocephalus.