

# 10 BIG LESSONS TO FUND YOUR VISION

The **Master Lesson**: **JUST ASK. JUST ASK. JUST ASK.**

Ignore ALL other lessons until you ACT on this one.

- **Lesson #1: ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING.** Every single successful 'Campaign' and Funding Initiative in which I have been engaged, seen or read about... was a direct function of ATTITUDE!

I'm not Pollyanna, with rose-colored glasses, living in Alice's Wonderland. This is not some 'Positive Mental Attitude' pabulum that solves everything.

However, I am an admitted 'Positive Attitude' believer/junkie. From these readings and experiences, I know that if you can **CHANGE YOUR ATTITUDE...** you can change the world.

Three ideas to help your attitude with prospects and potential investors.

1. **Always assume the best.** Tell yourself: *"TIMING is PERFECT..." "They just INHERITED a large fortune..." "Their BUSINESS is booming..."*  
\*And, of course, *"They love our CAUSE and our CASE!!!"*

2. **Don't make decisions for your prospective investors!!!**

(Especially **before** you even get there!!!) *"They're burnt out..." "They've got 3 kids in college..." "They're still paying on an OLD pledge..." "I'm not SURE they can do \$10,000 or \$100,000..."* etc.

\*It's not important whether 'YOU' are 'SURE'. IT'S NOT YOUR MONEY!  
Give them a chance to say *"YES!"*.

3. **Knock them off their chair...** Get (a few of) them to FALL OFF THEIR CHAIR... in SHOCK... at the MAGNITUDE of YOUR PRESENTATION. (If you have NOT caused someone lately to be SHOCKED at the SIZE of the OPPORTUNITY... You're **not** THINKING BIG ENOUGH!)

- **Lesson #2: "LEADERS LEAD."** This is from my friend, big-time Mensch and Jewish philanthropic legend, Bob Werner.

Success (or failure) is a direct result of LEADERS LEADING.

If no one steps up as the INTERNAL LEADER, then any funding initiative is

doomed from the get-go.

And, if you can't find at least one EXTERNAL LEADER (CHAMPION), it's also not going to happen. (My preference is for you to find at least 3 CHAMPIONS and PASSIONATE ADVOCATES to secure the success of any funding effort.)

**LEADERS LEAD.** Boards, Committees, Staff, Constituents, Stakeholders, et al. FOLLOW.

- **Lesson #3: EVERYTHING'S A PROJECT.** I've written and talked about this so much lately that I'm worried it's losing its effect.

However, It's definitely one of the biggest lessons that can help you achieve success.

**EVERYTHING'S** (literally) **A PROJECT.** (EAP)

Every project has a Team Leader, Project Team, Support Team, Goals, Tools, Resources, Timetables, Measurements and Action Plan.

Specific examples around a non-traditional campaign/funding initiative:

- The entire Funding Goal is a PROJECT. (\$10 Million. \$300 Million. Whatever.)
- Each Priority and Program is a PROJECT.
- Each level of the Today | Tomorrow | Forever Funding is a PROJECT.
- Every Major Campus Improvement or 'Capital' Improvement is a PROJECT.
- Every Leadership Society, President's Circle, Legacy Society, Memorable Experience, etc. is a PROJECT.

If you attack everything as a PROJECT... and make every PROJECT successful... the entire 'CAMPAIGN'/PROJECT is a success!

- **Lesson #4: THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING 'ON BOARD'.** This is a big deal. Very important that we know the difference between ON BOARD and ON 'THE' BOARD.

Funding Your Vision requires ALIGNMENT around all the BIG STUFF! Therefore, everybody needs to be ON BOARD.

It's not always about 'unanimous consent'. Healthy, intense dialogue and discussion often leads to the **right decision**... not just the one that's easiest to get past.

ON BOARD, ALIGNMENT and LEADERSHIP CONSENSUS around the Vision, the Big Hairy Audacious Goals, the Priorities, etc. changes the entire game.

**Note:** We have failed on a handful of funding goals over the years. (That's not too bad out of 500+ Campaigns.) ALL have failed because the Board was not 'ON BOARD'... or the key investors were not 'ON BOARD'... or the senior staff was not 'ON BOARD'.

Lesson learned.

- **Lesson #5: LET GO OF YOUR BAGGAGE!** You can't make a *QUANTUM LEAP* in your funding efforts, campaigns or projects while dragging a big load of **baggage**, your **sacred cows** and your '**always done it this way**' attitude.

'IL SOLE NO MUOVE'. Da Vinci and Copernicus both got blasted by the church for espousing this heresy: The sun doesn't move. Same with the world is flat. Can't break four minutes in the mile. Peers must ask peers for money. Feasibility studies are mandatory. And on and on.

You cannot move at the speed necessary to achieve success dragging steamer trunks of baggage. Let it go.

- **Lesson #6: SPEED DOESN'T KILL.** *"If you feel like you're still in control, you're not going fast enough."*

The new Funding Model is about **speed**. **Momentum**. **Massive action**. And, perhaps most important of all, a **sense of urgency**!

Think about this. If there is no **internal** sense of urgency... there will be no **external** sense of urgency.

Why should prospects make decisions to make a really big IMPACT on your organization... if there is no sense of urgency on the organization's part?

Love him or hate him, Jack Welch, former Chairman and CEO of General Electric, is one of the most highly regarded business leaders of the last 25 years. Here is one of my favorite Welchism: *"SIMPLICITY EQUALS SPEED."*

Matches all my experience. If you want to go a lot FASTER... SIMPLIFY EVERYTHING!

- SIMPLE MESSAGE
  - SIMPLE PLAN
  - SIMPLE MODEL
  - SIMPLE ENGAGEMENT TOOL
  - SIMPLE PRIORITIES
  - SIMPLE MATH
- **Lesson #7: IT'S ALL ABOUT SALES!** I know. It's a napkin, a guiding principle, a quote on everything we do.

But it's also a big freakin' lesson: Those who successfully achieve any funding success are driven by SALES.

3 Big Questions:

1. Have you built a SALES CULTURE??? (Goals, Measurements, Tools, Resources, etc.)
2. Who is your SALES TEAM LEADER??? (In the business world, your Sales Manager?)
3. Who is on your SALES TEAM??? (Do they know it? Are they trained?)

SALES, as we define it, requires PEOPLE... PROCESS... and PERFORMANCE.

Sales success is a direct result of combining your SALES PEOPLE with a SALES PROCESS and then relying on them to PERFORM!

Our For Impact | Suddes Group SALES PROCESS has been refined over the last 30 years. It is certainly a big, big part of our For Impact Funding [ROADMAP](#).

\*Bonus Lesson: Sales requires measurement. *"You get what you measure"* is an overused and abused cliché, but it does capture the essence of SALES CULTURE. Everything you do needs to be measured... activity, productivity, what works, what doesn't, every project, every number, every person.

This kind of measurement helps to keep you **focused on results**... when everything else seems to be getting in the way.

- **Lesson #8: WRITE IT DOWN. IT WILL HAPPEN.** I live by this mantra.

Forget about the scientific rationale for this (it's there). All I can tell you is... IF you WRITE IT DOWN... IT WILL HAPPEN. This starts with **GOALS** and includes your **Master Prospect List**, your **Funding Pyramids**, your **strategy on visits**, and on and on and on.

**Bottom line:** WIDIWH becomes a SFP (SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY).

- **Lesson #9: SIMPLIFY YOUR MESSAGE.** I know. You've heard this before (a lot). However, don't blow off this LESSON!

The simpler the Message... the stronger the Value Proposition and the Case Rationale for Support.

If you can't say it... on a napkin... you can't sell it!!!

I don't care what you call it. Elevator Pitches. One-Minute Selling. Napkins. Blue Box Message. Purpose. Raison d'être. Etc.

\*\*\**FUNDING THE VISION* is very different than **Building Campaigns, Capital Campaigns, Campaign Campaigns.**

It's all about the **Vision** of the organization... and tied directly to the **Mission/Meaning/Message.**

- **Lesson #10: SHARE THE STORY. PRESENT THE OPPORTUNITY.** Simple but not easy lesson.

**Stop** asking for money. **Start** SHARING THE STORY and PRESENTING THE OPPORTUNITY.

This is one of the greatest lessons to get your Board and volunteers engaged in your funding effort.

Simply ask them whether they'd rather '**ask their friends for money**' or '**Share the Story and Present the Opportunity**'.

This also works great when you ask the Founder or Leader or CEO or Executive Director or Chairman of the Board to '*sprinkle magic dust*' (**Share the Story**)... and then someone else can actually **Present the Opportunity.**