



# We're Better Together: Attracting Large Numbers of Donors, Volunteers, and Subscribers

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Presented By: Ellen Bristol, Bristol Strategy Group  
Thursday, August 26, 2021 | 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.



# A little housekeeping...



*We're recording this webinar!*

All registrants will receive an email containing a link to the recorded webinar AND a ton of other resources!



*Feel free to ask questions!*

Use the Questions chat box to ask your questions. We will have a Q&A session at the end of the presentation.



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**Assess Your Fundraising Productivity  
Build Fundraising Strategy & Operations  
Manage Change for Long-Term Impact**

# Today's Speaker



## Ellen Bristol | President, Bristol Strategy Group

Ellen is renowned for her expertise in managing fundraising strategy and operations. She is considered a thought leader in the arena of fundraising performance management. She has consistently forged new ground in ways to manage revenue generation for nonprofits, B-corps, and other mission-driven enterprises. Her clients value her visionary ability to grasp the underlying dynamics of the organization and harness them to produce predictable, consistent income growth. She is on the board of Association of Philanthropic Counsel, belongs to the Association of Fundraising Professionals, the Alliance for Nonprofit Management, NTEN, the Nonprofit Technology Enterprise Network, and AASP, the Association for Advancement Services Professionals.

# We're Better Together

Attracting Large Numbers of Donors, Volunteers, and Subscribers

# Donors, Marchers

What's the Difference?



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## ❑ Major Funders \_\_\_\_\_: BIG Investments

❑ Few of Them

## ❑ “Marchers” \_\_\_\_\_:

❑ Lots of Them

❑ SMALLER Investments

❑ Passion, Time, Energy, Volunteer

❑ Gifts in Kind

❑ MARCH for your cause



# Some Troubling News

## About Losing the “Marchers”

**GOOD NEWS:** Giving USA 2020 reports \$471 BB in Giving, Up 5% from 2019

### **BAD NEWS:**

- Fewer Households Giving – From 66% Down To 49%.
- Uptick In Giving From A Few Super-wealthy People
- Rise In Giving To Foundations; Donor-advised Funds; Less Giving Direct To Nonprofits



# Huge Gifts from the FEW

Modest Gifts, Gifts in Kind, Volunteer Time,  
Advocacy, “Marchers” from the MANY

*This is a Problem!*

# It's Three Problems.



## Undue Influence.

Few major funders exert undue influence on direction, culture.



## Vulnerability.

Few major funders make you financially vulnerable.



## Resilience.

The larger your following, the more resilient you will be.

# 1. Risks of Undue Influence



# Q: Who Owns Your Nonprofit?

## A: It's Not The Funders

- ❑ It's the Community Served
- ❑ Governing Board Represents Them
- ❑ Client Base Includes Them
- ❑ Funders Support Them – and the Mission, Cause and Programs You Offer

# Undue Influence

## The Cynic's 'Golden Rule'

- ❑ “Them What Has the Gold Makes the Rules”
- ❑ The Dark Side of Being Donor-Centric
- ❑ Drives Mission Drift

# Undue Influence

Conscious or Unconscious Impact

- ❑ Major Funders Tend to Get More Attention
- ❑ Often Invited to Serve on Boards
- ❑ “Follow the Leader”



## 2. Risks of Financial Vulnerability

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# Financial Vulnerability

## Many Risks

- ❑ Major Funder Stops Funding
- ❑ Other Major Funders May Follow Suit
- ❑ Recovering from Major Losses – Tough, Maybe Impossible



# Tip from Sales Teams

## Set “Customer Concentration” Standards

- ❑ No Single Customer May Account for More than 9 - 12 % Total Revenues
- ❑ No Single Group of Customers May Account for More than 25 % Total Revenues

# Nonprofit Version

## Set Funder Concentration Limits

- ❑ No Single Funder, or Group of Funders, Accounts for More than Nonprofit Can Afford to Lose – Choose Limits You Can Tolerate
- ❑ **Bring On the Marchers!!!!**



# 3. Resilience.

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# To o Few Funders

## Less Resilient, Less Sustainable

- ❑ See “Undue Influence”
- ❑ “Funder X Might Not Approve..”
- ❑ See “Financial Vulnerability”
- ❑ “Funder Y Stops Funding..”
- ❑ Tough, Impossible to Recover

# Lack of Diversity

## Consider Most Mega-Donors

- ❑ Ultra-Wealthy – the “1%”
- ❑ ‘Titans of Industry’
- ❑ Mostly White
- ❑ Highly Educated

# Broad Funding Base

More Resilient, More Sustainable

- ❑ Collective Influence Focuses on “Owners”
- ❑ No Single Funder Outweighs Others
- ❑ More Potential for Acquisition, Retention, Upgrading
- ❑ Loss of 1 or 2 Funders Easier to Recover From



# How to Create ‘Marcher’-Driven Funding

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# Review Funding Strategy

## Analyze Donor Base

- ❑ Explore the Data
- ❑ Overconcentrated in Major vs Other Types of Investment?
- ❑ Are Outreach Strategies Supporting DEIA?
- ❑ Is Number of Funders Growing, Shrinking, Static?
- ❑ What About Age Ranges of Funders?



# Broaden Funding Base

## Funders Represent “Ownership”

- ❑ The “Marchers”
- ❑ Lots of Small Gifts
- ❑ Improves Awareness of Mission, Cause, Programs
- ❑ Accessible to Those with Passion but Limited Means

# Strategy re the 'Majors'

## Set Funder Concentration Limits

- ❑ No Single Funder, or Group of Funders, Accounts for More than You Can Afford to Lose
- ❑ Document Tolerable Limit
- ❑ Keep 'Aging Out' In Mind

# Renewable Resource

## The 'Marchers'

- ❑ Continuous Acquisition of Transactional Investors
- ❑ Continuous Retention, Upgrading
- ❑ Invest in Effective Messaging
- ❑ Offer, Create Other Opportunities for Engagement

# Open Doors to DEIA

## Confront the Issue Directly

- ❑ Data Shows Diverse Boards Perform Better
- ❑ BIPOC Funders, Fundraisers Available Already
- ❑ Make Your Nonprofit a True Community Asset

# Get to Know Some 'Marchers'

## Talk to Your Funders – at All Giving Levels

- ❑ Refreshes Understanding of Their Giving Motivations
- ❑ What YOU Think Might Differ from What THEY Think
- ❑ Engage Them in Volunteering, Spreading the Word

# Leverage the Right Software

## Think Qgiv!

- ❑ Strong Support for Low-Dollar Investment Strategies
  - ❑ Annual Fund
  - ❑ Peer - to - Peer
  - ❑ Special Events, Online & Social Giving
- ❑ Powerful Reporting Tools



# Questions?



This webinar program qualifies for 1 point of continuing education toward maintaining the Certified Fundraising Executive Management (CFRE) credential.



# Thank you for joining!

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