

25 Ways to Cut Costs

How many do you use?

Boost your budget with these suggestions:

1. Every year, review what you pay for insurance. Get new bids and explore new options at least every three years.

2. Reduce paper weight whenever possible when printing and mailing. Paper can cost up to 30% of your printing job, so using inexpensive paper is a good way to stretch your budget. Using lower-weight paper will also reduce your postage costs.

3. Make maximum use of your board of directors. Be sure they help not only to raise money but also to save it. Ask them to use their contacts to find people willing to donate the goods and services you need or to sponsor your projects.

4. Ask local businesses if you can include your fundraising appeals in their mailings.

5. Make sure the sheets you fax are simple, without fancy borders or graphics, to cut down on transmission time. Send long-distance faxes when rates are lower, such as after 6 p.m. or on weekends.

6. Create an organizational wish list to encourage in-kind donations from companies.

7. Consider hiring high school students for short-term projects. Also look into cooperating with a high school for service projects, in which students work for you in return for school credit. (See Bowman in "Resources".)

8. Scan newspapers for information about corporations. Use what you learn to target prospects for corporate philanthropy, including in-kind giving. A business that's about to move may donate office equipment and furniture. A company that's getting bad press may want to prove its good citizenship by partnering with a nonprofit.

9. Look into fax-on-demand services to save time and money. Those requesting information will receive

it instantly without interrupting employees.

10. Ask your employees to answer these questions: "What could we do to reduce costs?" "What one thing should we cease doing?"

11. Use marketing departments at local colleges and universities to help you conduct market research. Use computer departments to help you create a Web site.

12. Get bids on all your printing jobs. Be flexible in your timing to get the best prices from printers.

13. Instead of cash, reward deserving employees with such bonuses as a day off or a longer lunch hour for a week.

14. Contact your nearest college or university, and let them know you're interested in an intern. Interns are available in almost all departments, usually at no charge or a very nominal fee.

15. Fax or e-mail your newsletters and fact sheets rather than printing and mailing them.

16. Adopt teamwork, cooperation, and collaboration approaches. Team with other organizations to purchase supplies and insurance. Share offices and equipment. Hold joint meetings and programs.

17. Try low-cost marketing and public-relations techniques, such as writing letters to the editor or guest columns in your newspaper. Check with local ad agencies to see if they will give you free billboard space or create public service announcements for you.

18. Use videoconferencing or teleconferencing instead of flying in candidates for interviews or out-of-town board members for meetings.

19. Make good use of volunteers. They can handle all kinds of jobs, including management positions, if you hire and match them carefully. Many retired managers, for example,

are happy to donate their time and skills.

20. Save energy by setting back temperatures during unoccupied times, turning off lights and equipment when unused, and installing efficient lighting. Make sure all employees are aware of the importance of saving energy.

21. Use postcards to cut your mailing and paper costs.

22. To lower the cost of training new people, use videotapes and books, and give each new person a mentor to help pave the way.

23. Remove old names from mailing lists. It's not cost-effective to keep mailing to people who have moved.

24. Use creative employment practices, such as letting employees share jobs, work from home, or work part-time. Consider hiring a consultant or freelancer rather than a full-time employee.

25. For each activity performed in your organization, ask: What would happen if we stopped doing it? Are the consequences worth the cost of continuing it? Does the reason we started the activity still make sense? Can someone else perform this activity at less cost? ■

Resources

Bowman, Karen, "Volunteering 101: Service Finds a Home in the Classroom," *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 16, No. 6.

Husak, Chuck, "PSAs, the Olympics of Nonprofit Advertising," *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 23, No. 5.

Ott, Christiner, "Nonprofit Communications on a Shoestring," *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 8, No. 2.

Ourand, Chris, "Nonprofit Doesn't Have to Mean Noncomfortable," *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 18, No. 2.

Yane, Rebecca, "Supervising Interns Effectively," *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 11, No. 4.

These resources are available at www.snpo.org/members.