THE FOCUS GROUP
SYMPOSIUM

# Navigating the Real Life of a Capital Campaign

## "The Messy Middle"

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# What We'll Cover Today

***Navigating the Real Life of a Capital Campaign***

- Why campaigns often feel messy, but in fact are healthy
- How to respond when donors hesitate, delay, or go quiet
- What builds momentum without pressure or manipulation
- How to steward relationships with wisdom, patience, and faith

# Leading Well when Faithful Planning Meets Human Reality

- The capital campaign journey is rarely linear
- Donor behavior is shaped by trust, missional connection  and timing
- Campaign leadership requires maturity and wisdom, not just execution

# Strong Vision is Essential but not Sufficient

- A solid case opens the door but it doesn't carry the campaign
- Most campaigns have real need and clarity
- Most communities have sufficient giving capacity
- Momentum depends on more than agreement, it depends on **personal motivation**

# Relationship Readiness Determines Speed

- Trust, not dollars, is usually the bottleneck
- Donors move at the speed of trust
- Hesitation often reflects discernment, not disinterest
- Readiness is relational, not mechanical

# Interpreting Reality vs. Tracking Progress

- Reading & leading between the lines
- Notice shifts before others do
- Translate donor behavior into strategy
- Help leadership respond wisely, not reactively

# Understanding Donor Delay

- Delay has a context and does not denote failure
- Silence always has a story
- Family conversations take time
- Financial timing matters
- Confidence builds through listening and observation
- Involve and connect by permission

# What Undermines Trust Quickly

- Pressure does not equal leadership
- Urgency without trust backfires
- Ask questions and listen instead of re-selling

# Re-anchoring Donor Motivation

- Partners move when purpose is reconnected

- People give to what they help shape
  - Reflect donors' own stated values
  - Revisit what initially stirred them
  - Emphasize outcomes, not transactions

# Preparing the “Askers” Well

- Good preparation strategically shapes the conversation
- Coaching posture matters more than scripts
  - Equip askers to listen deeply
  - Encourage thoughtful questions
  - Frame follow-up as stewardship

# The Power of Peer Influence

- Donors often follow donors
- Trust transfers relationally
  - Peer affirmation accelerates confidence
  - Leadership gifts boost credibility
  - Messenger matters as much as message

# Gentle Urgency, Done Well

- Clarity & transparency honors the donor
- Deadlines serve discernment when framed rightly
  - Benchmarks provide context
  - Phases explain timing
  - Early gifts build momentum

# Faith and Dependence in the Process

- Faithful effort, released outcomes
  - Sowing & harvesting
- Prayer grounds our actions
  - Prayer shapes discernment
  - Trust prevents control
  - God moves hearts; we steward relationships

# The Long View of Stewardship

- Campaigns end, partnerships continue
- Generosity unfolds over seasons
  - Stay connected even without a ‘yes’
  - Continue to connect the ministry to the donor’s heart
  - Serve without agenda
  - Trust harvest principles

# Questions?

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