

The Stewardship Journal

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**From My Desk
to Your Inbox**



**Capital Campaign
Boot Camp**



**Capital Campaign
Overview**



**Capital Campaigns
Are Different**

THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

From My Desk to Your Inbox

Imagine never having to rely on a capital campaign consultant again. In the current series, ***Giving Away the Farm***, hopefully you're gleaning a treasure trove of insights that can empower you to successfully lead your own capital stewardship campaign when the need arises.

Mark Brooks, our favorite Stewardship Coach, challenges the traditional approach to capital campaigns as an outdated 20th-century program in his article, ***Capital Campaign Boot Camp***.

In the Bonus Section, Mark shares key elements of a successful campaign in the post, ***Capital Campaign Overview*** that can equip you for the task ahead.

Capital Campaigns Are Different, Not Dead caps off this week's Stewardship Journal. Discover why "Capital campaigns in this COVID-impacted 21st century must be different to be effective!"

If you are considering a future campaign, we trust you'll find that the Stewardship Journal is a great resource.

Remember, all our posts are available online for anyone in your church. Visit stewardshipjournal.com or LouisianaBaptists.org/Stewardship.

Keep Looking Up,



Dr. Steve How

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Mark Brooks



Capital Campaign Boot Camp



If you keep doing what you have always done, you will not get what you always got. That's one of my Brooks Mantras for Stewardship. As we entered the 21st century, it dawned on me that our methods for raising capital dollars were antiquated and becoming increasingly ineffective. The classic approach to capital campaigns was to organize various teams with specific tasks that required the team to recruit and enlist volunteers to staff all teams. The theory was that the more people involved in the campaign, the more money you would raise. Like many things in the stewardship

industry, we never checked to see if that was true. If companies had done the extensive data research we do on all our clients, they would have known this wasn't true.

Welcome to the *Capital Campaign Boot Camp* edition of *The Stewardship Coach*! When you think of boot camp, many images are conjured up, especially if you served in the military. The military boot camp is an intensive training experience that teaches future warriors how to defend our nation. The term boot camp is now being used for any training. I've seen coding boot camps that teach you how to code. You may have seen fitness boot camps that utilize a compressed few weeks of training to get a person in top shape. In this edition of the *Coach*, I will share the basics of a capital campaign. With my coaching, you might not be able to do a one-armed push-up, but you can certainly raise more money. **The first basic you must understand is the difference between programs and principles.**

A few years ago, a competitor wrote a short article entitled "**The Scriptural Approach to Raising Funds in Churches.**" Here is what my competitor wrote to start his article. "When raising funds in churches, it is important to raise them with the scriptural approach." I agree! Yet the question is, what constitutes a scriptural approach? He clarifies that by saying, "The scriptural approach to raising major funds is to prepare the heart first with solid scriptural teachings, then resolving attitude and stewardship issues, engaging people in meaningful service on one of the campaign teams, incorporating vision, motivation, and challenge, and then encouraging them to give with willing hearts. Asking for money without preparing the heart first is repulsive." I agree that we must prepare our hearts first. The question is, how best can we do that?

Let me say right up front: I like this guy. He is a deeply spiritual man who has helped many churches raise the funds they need over the years. He and I have talked twice about my purchasing his company as he neared retirement. Our differing views of the capital campaign approach stopped us in our negotiations. This owner passionately believes that his process, building teams, is the only true biblical campaign in our industry. He is wrong.

I see a difference between programs and principles; he has made his program a principle. Programs and teams don't raise dollars. An impactful and well-communicated God-given vision raises dollars. How that rolls out in your church depends upon your church's background. Here are some realities that blow away the team concept.

A few families in your church will give the majority of what is given. On average, 15% of your donors give as much as 90% of all that is given in a capital campaign. This has always been how campaigns worked and will continue to be how they work. Putting your top-end donors on a team will not assure a major commitment. Answering their questions and casting a compelling vision will!

THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

People are too busy to sign up for another team. Recently, in a church that told us they wanted teams, we ran into trouble finding people to serve. Everyone is on board with what the church is doing. Yet the church found that its members are time-stressed. Most have something to attend almost every night of the week. They have little interest in another night at the church. There are two commodities in our day: time and money. Your campaign must reflect this reality.

Campaigns that have teams are staffed by leaders already on multiple teams. Think about it. When you have something important in your church you want to be done, who do you turn to? You turn to those trusted workers who have proven track records. While you might want some new blood in service when trying to have a successful campaign, you won't go to the B team for help. What you end up doing with multiple teams is wearing your already exhausted workers to death. This could be one reason so many people hate capital campaigns.

So, your approach isn't scriptural if you don't have people serving on campaign teams? I might have missed it, but where in the Bible do you find committees and teams listed when they took up offerings to build the Tabernacle? This is one of the biggest stretches I have seen in my industry to defend how we have always done things.

Let's follow David's example! So, if you want to have a scriptural capital campaign, why not follow the way David raised funds for the building of the temple? In the closing chapters of I Chronicles, we find that story. How did David raise the needed funds?

It started with a God-given vision. "I had it in my heart," David told the leaders of Israel. God put that into David's heart. His vision had to be refined so that Solomon would build the temple, but David's original vision started the process. Crafting and articulating your God-given vision is essential to raising funds. My next *Coach* will share how to do this.

David's leaders bought into the vision and gave. I Chronicles 29:6 records that *after* David shared his vision and commitment, "They gave toward the work." Leaders always lead the way. Remember, as much as 90% of what will be raised will come from your existing leaders. You must know how to get them solidly on board.

The rest gave as they saw the leaders give. "The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders," is what I Chronicles 29: 9 says. Then they gave. This is a scriptural approach to raising funds.

The lesson for us is to be careful about making our preferences of how we like to do something the same as a principle from Scripture. The truth of the matter is there is no one-size-fits-all approach, and the Bible doesn't give us a plan or identify a process of how to raise capital funds.

A few years after I started working in the stewardship industry, I started asking why. I looked at every element of a capital campaign and, like a three-year-old, I asked, "Why do we do this?" The answer I received more often than not was because that is the way we have always done it! The more the stewardship industry dug in to defend 1980 methods, the more I began to see the need for a better way. Times have changed and how we do capital campaigns has changed as well.

The question you should be asking is, "**Does the campaign process we are running match the culture, character, and makeup of our 21st-century church?**" It's time to stop using 1980 strategies in the 21st century because **if you keep doing what you have always done, you will not get what you always got.** Let's change how we go about raising funds.



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OnlineGiving.org, the leading online giving processor in America, sponsors my writing. Find out more about their services at <https://www.onlinegiving.org/>.

THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

Bonus Section

Capital Campaign Overview

The following is a copy of what I hand church leaders in my first planning meeting with them. This is a great overview of the basic principles of a campaign. How this is fleshed out is church dependent. The following is my initial handout.

The overall mission of a capital stewardship campaign is to help cast the vision of your church campaign in a clear, concise, and compelling manner. The goal is to connect each segment of the church family to the vision so that their questions are answered and they are ready to make a willing, wholehearted commitment to the campaign.

The principal values to remember throughout this process are to:

- Share the vision of the church and how the project links to fulfill that vision;
- Tell the story of your church;
- Answer anticipated frequently asked questions;
- Inspire members about the vision;
- Encourage involvement in the church and the campaign;
- Challenge each church family member to commit to supporting the vision.

Values of a Successful Campaign—As you build a plan to bring maximum dollars to your church, you must focus on the key values that make up a successful campaign. We will focus not on a particular method but the value and then look for the best plan to communicate that value to the church family.

Vision Communication—Before anyone fully commits to a campaign, they need to fully understand what we are asking of them. They want to know what the dollars raised will be going for, and most importantly, they want to know how that will make a Kingdom impact.

Spiritual Connectivity—It is essential that members catch the vision for what we believe God wants to do through this campaign. Our hearts have to be inspired. We must see the link between the project, why we are raising dollars, and the church's vision. We must spiritually connect the members to that vision that comes from God's heart.

Leadership Track - We cannot expect the church family to join if your leaders are not on board. The following events will bring leaders up to speed and on board.

Leadership Summit—On this date, we hold an event to which key leaders are invited for fellowship and dessert. The pastor shares with the church leaders the vision of the new campaign and what it would accomplish for the church.

Early Commitment Process—This process' purpose is Biblical and practical: Leaders should lead! Having leaders commit early will allow us to show the church family that we have great momentum, encouraging them to help finish the task. It will also model what a sacrificial gift looks like.

Commitment Sunday—The two key reasons for the Celebration Event are to celebrate the blessings of God upon the church and commit to the future of the church. At this event, we will ask the entire church family to commit to the campaign.

THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

Capital Campaigns Are Different, Not Dead!

Success in a capital campaign begins by understanding that capital campaigns are different, not dead. The traditional capital campaign process was developed in the last century and, for the most part, has been left unchanged into the 21st century. That model revolved around organizing a multitude of various teams involving as many members as possible. The reasoning was that the more people were involved in a campaign, the more pledges would be made and, thus, the more money raised.

So, we organized various teams and then attempted to sign people up to make calls, set up tables, or whatever work we could come up with. Frankly, most of it was busy work in the '80s and '90s, which might have worked. It doesn't work in the 21st century. Why would we put all our marbles in something that no longer works? We must realize that the 21st century demands a different plan of action. Why? Our society has changed, thus demanding of us a new and different approach.

Yet stewardship firms continue to send emails that ignore that capital campaigns are different, not dead. Long before COVID-19 hit our shores, capital campaigns were in danger of irrelevancy. Here is a list of some of the major reasons why capital campaigns are not what they used to be.

1. **In this young century, we have had several major crises, each significantly impacting the economy.** Each crisis created financial stress and uncertainty among our key donor groups, especially those that gave most of the funds raised.
2. **Churches were already rethinking their building strategies and building smaller facilities than in the past.** Now, post-COVID-19, church leaders are reevaluating the need for physical structures at all.
3. **The aging demographic of our key donor groups, especially Baby Boomers, is causing less money to be raised in campaigns than in previous years.** Fundraising experts have said that due to the shift in generational giving practices, non-profits have a closing window of opportunity.
4. **Younger generations are more building adverse and suspicious of any programmatic approach to fundraising.** They view anything that smacks of a programmatic approach as being inauthentic. Yesterday's gimmicks no longer work today.
5. **The pace of today's congregants demanded a new direction in raising capital dollars.** Your members' schedules are already crowded, and their patience for meaningless meetings is non-existent.

These are a few of the multiple reasons for the decline of the traditional campaign. The point is that you will be disappointed if you are still attempting to raise capital dollars with 20th-century strategies. Times have changed, and so have our strategies. **Capital campaigns in this COVID-impacted 21st century must be different to be effective!**

Given the changes forced upon us by society and COVID, it is past time we recognize that the **how** of raising capital dollars has changed, not the **why**.

Growing churches must always raise money over and above their yearly budgets. Whether to fund new facilities, renovate existing facilities, or pay off debt, the need for capital dollars will never cease. That is the **why**. Yet, the **how** must change to meet the changes of our day.

This is why winners don't do different things. They do things differently. Yes, you can raise capital dollars in 2024. The question is how. **Remember, capital campaigns are not dead; they are simply different.**