



# Elements of an Effective Capital Campaign



**Generosity**  
↳ LifeWay

## Six Elements of an Effective Capital Campaign

I can't tell you how many times I have consulted with churches that were experiencing rapid growth, but suddenly stalled-out because they were out of space. Unfortunately, when this happens and there are times that the only solution is to expand our footprint or relocate our campus. There is nothing more challenging on our financial systems than to have to come up with the resources to expand our space.

While there are other solutions to the space problem like going multi-site, church planting and others none of them are cheap solutions and most often requires capitalizing.

When there are millions of dollars at stake it often requires a well thought out capital campaign.

### What is a capital campaign?

A capital campaign is a focused effort, to raise significant dollars, over a specific period of time, to fund a one-time need of the organization.

A good rule of thumb when it comes to how much money a capital campaign can raise in today's economic environment is 1.5 times your budget over a 36-month period of time. This can go up or down depending on the context.

However, to maximize a capital campaign there are six elements that need to be included. I will address them in question form.

#### **Readiness** – Are we ready for a capital campaign?

A capital campaign is a large undertaking that requires months of preparation prior to execution. I am constantly telling church leaders to "slow down in order to speed up." Taking time to assess the readiness of your key donors and leaders is essential to determining your readiness to take on a capital campaign. Recently, we spent several days with a church interviewing some of their key people to discover that while the church was overwhelmingly supportive of the leadership they had questions about the specific project and priorities. When we do a deep dive to assess readiness it doesn't necessarily mean no to a project, but what it can mean is we have more work to do getting the congregation ready for the project.

#### **Vision** – Do we have clarity around the project?

Every campaign should be a vision-focused campaign. As a consultant with Auxano we live and die on the fact that "clarity isn't everything, but it changes everything." Whenever, we do a capital campaign we always begin with vision. It is a higher and more fulfilling motivation and responsibility to invite people into a vision than to simply invite them into a building project. Recently a young pastor completing his first capital campaign said to me, "This was so much more than a capital campaign, this was about God's vision for our church". Need I say that far exceeded their goal and are off and running on fulfilling their God's vision for their church.

## Notes

**Expectations** – Do we know what to expect in terms of results?

Let's face it we begin a capital campaign because we need the resources to most often start a capital project like a new worship or children environment. Beginning the process with clear expectations of realistic potential results are crucial. Careful and professional analysis of a church's financials should give some strong indicators of what to expect. I can't tell you how many times a church has reached out to me with an unrealistic expectation when it comes to how long it is going to take to prepare for a campaign and how much money they can raise. A good process will always give a church what they need to know, not what they want to know. Numbers don't lie. Know your numbers and listen to them.

**Engagement** – Have we engaged our leaders and are they ready for the journey? In a capital campaign we need people to know the right about of information at the right time. Prior to beginning the public aspects of the campaign we want to make sure there is appropriate ownership at every level of our pipeline and that we have answered all the appropriate questions related to our campaign. There is nothing that will stall out a campaign quicker than if we have done a poor job of engaging leaders prior to the campaign public launch.

**Discipleship** – How do we disciple people to greater financial commitment? First and foremost generosity is a discipleship issue. While many if not most churches focus on the public phase of the campaign and specifically what happens in the worship environment there's much more to a campaign. Nothing can be more opportune when it comes to disciple making than a capital campaign. Jesus tells, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21). A campaign process we pay close attention to how we disciple people to make spiritual decisions related to where they place their treasures by giving perspective, leading families into meaning processes, and equipping them with specific tools.

**Follow Up** – Do we have an effective plan for month two through thirty-six of the campaign? The public part of the campaign that consists of four to six weeks is only the beginning of the campaign. It is not unusual to see a church achieve 85 to 105% of their original goal when they are intentional about follow up. Follow up often consist of how we continue to advance the vision, make generous disciples, lead key donors, and administer campaign giving. When good strategies are developed for these four things around weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual rhythms campaign giving can be maximized.

A well-done campaign can and should be a game changer for your church and the families that make it up. Visit [Auxano](#) for helpful resources on Capital Campaigns.