



**POINTERS FOR  
AVOIDING COMMON  
DEVELOPMENT  
MISTAKES**



**PASTOR GUIDE**

**Fundraising is equal parts art and science...and it can feel overwhelming when most of us in ministry leadership weren't trained to do development work.**

There's a lot at stake for our churches, and we want to be sure we're honoring our givers and building our ministries' mission with their support.

Pastors, after decades of working with churches and ministries, I'd like to offer some pointers for you based on the most common mistakes we all can make in doing this work.

POINTER

1

# Don't rush the process

**This has been the biggest  
lesson of my career.**

Don't try to rush or pressure people before they're ready to give. We need to spend the bulk of our energy seeking out people's passions for our church and ministry and building relationships. People take time to engage and then make their contributions as they deepen that trust and excitement about our work together.

It's too easy for churches to operate in crisis modes when it comes to fundraising. Pastors, any high-pressure tactics for your latest funding "emergency" might have short-term success, but they harm your long-term relationships with donors. (Yes, we will occasionally have a funding crisis or urgent need, but those should be extremely rare and built on an opportunity to invite donors to be part of solving a critical, timely issue.)

Too often, churches manage stewardship and budget needs in a way that feels unplanned and chaotic, and frankly, erodes donor trust. This urgency might get us low-hanging fruit, or what a colleague of mine likes to call "go away money," but it doesn't deepen our givers' sense of partnering with us in ministry. And it doesn't lead to the kind of fundraising culture that grows loyal, major donors.



POINTER

2

# Allocate your time

**This is a challenge for everyone, but especially for pastors, who are pulled in so many directions on a daily basis.**

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Carve out intentional time on your calendar each week to do some donor thank yous or to have a pastoral visit with givers to thank them with no other agenda. Engage your staff and key volunteers in helping make this a priority for everyone on your team.

In the fundraising world, it can take nine to 12 months between introduction and the response to a giving ask to a donor. What does this mean for the church? We have to take advantage of the built-in relationship building opportunities we have every week with our congregants and use those to better understand their passions, interests and what inspires them about our mission.



POINTER

3

# Ask for contributions consistently

**This is another mistake we can avoid - either overasking OR going too long without making our case for tithes and offerings to our ministries.**

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Avoid giver confusion or fatigue by intentionally planning your stewardship campaign and any other asks throughout the year.

Some nonprofit best practices indicate a donor should hear from an organization five to eight times for every financial ask. It's a good rule of thumb to look at how you're communicating and thanking your givers against the times you're soliciting them.



POINTER

4

# **You will not get a financial commitment on every first request**

**This is a difficult one, but an important one, and it ties to Pointer 5 below.**

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Pastors understandably get discouraged when they get a “no” from a donor they thought would provide a lead gift for a project or campaign. But it does happen, and it’s not necessarily a reflection of the donor’s view of your ministry, the project or your leadership. Sometimes there are other factors at play.

If you have built a trust-filled relationship with the donor, that decline to participate will be just a step in better understanding the donor’s circumstances or views. Sometimes it’s not a firm no, it’s “not now.”



POINTER

5

# Don't lose sight of ministry in the life of the donor

**There certainly will be times you get discouraged or frustrated in the process of raising the funds for your ministries.**

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But in those times, remember that this, too, is ministry and keep your eye on the needs of your givers. Remember, they need our churches more than we need their tithes and offerings.

Fundraising is the sacred ground where God can bring together Kingdom needs with those with the resources to fuel them. Trust in His provision, and as you do, invest regularly in the lives of your givers.

**TIMOTHY L. SMITH**

# Choosing the Right Ministry Partner

## **The know-how you need from experts you trust.**

ACS Technologies is the original pioneer of Church Management Software (ChMS). We are firmly dedicated to serving local churches all over North America by providing the best-in-class ministry software and service solutions that help you fulfill Christ's mission for your Church.

## **Tools and support to strengthen churches.**

We build great software, but we don't stop there. We have a "service-first" approach that truly sets us apart. With hundreds of dedicated support and consulting personnel, your staff can reach our team 24/7. We're in your corner to help you with the ministry challenges you face every day.

## **Ideas and solutions powered by integrity.**

Integrity is real for us, and it means consistently being faithful stewards by doing the right thing for church success. We have earned the trust of pastors, church staff, congregants, our employees, and colleagues for over 40 years.

## **A plan to meet your needs and move your ministry.**


We're not just interested in satisfied customers. We see ourselves as your real ministry partner and will work with you to make disciples that will last for an eternity. We're excited to talk about your goals, create a plan together, and set you up with the software, service, and resources you need.

## **We believe in YOU!**

ACS Technologies believes in the local church. Over 75% of our team has experience serving in their local churches. We know firsthand that serving the Church means serving people, and we take seriously our commitment to helping ministries like yours achieve their God-given mandate - to make disciples in their communities, states, and across the world.

## Let's Talk

We know the challenges of switching or implementing new technology and how that can be intimidating. But we also know the unbelievable changes that have happened within churches that have partnered with us for their ministry needs. Let's connect and see how we can assist you in the greatest thing you do - grow God's Kingdom.

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