

Here's the payoff for the disciplined candidate who takes "dialing for dollars" seriously...

If you call 15 potential donors an hour, you should connect with seven. On a good day, you will get money from four. With a donation of \$100 from each donor, you'll raise \$400 an hour. If you commit to "dialing for dollars" a minimum of just three hours a day for only three days a week, you'll be bringing in almost \$15,000 a month.

If you start raising your money six months before the campaign really begins (Labor Day), you'll have raised close to \$100,000 just from phone calls. That doesn't count money raised from events, direct mail and one-on-one solicitation from major donors.

For many local, first-time and down-ballot campaigns that's a ton of cash. But if you need more, you simply need to (a) ask for more during your call, (b) devote more than three hours a day to phoning, and (c) spend more than three days a week phoning. Pretty simple game.

The key is to set a specific schedule for making the calls ... AND STICK TO IT. The hardest fundraising call to make is the first one ... so get it over with NOW.

On to major donors.

Getting money from the "big fish" usually requires a personal visit from the "big cheese." That means the candidate himself - or the party chairman or club president. The good news is, once you get a meeting with a major donor - if you've done your homework, have a solid campaign plan and realistic budget - getting a check really isn't that tough.

The bad news is, getting that one-on-one meeting is the true hard part.

First, there's the gate-keeper - the personal secretary or assistant who's job it is to keep you away from the boss. So common-sense says: Be Nice to the Gate-Keeper.

Unless you are an incumbent or a high-profile, already-well-known candidate, chances are Mr. Big and his gate-keeper have no interest in giving you a sit-down. Unknown candidates with no name recognition making a fundraising "cold call" are about as welcome to major donors - who get hit up all the time by wacky candidates - as a skunk at a picnic.

Unless ... you have an introduction.

This, ladies and gentlemen, is the true secret to a successful "finance committee."

Sure, if you can put together a finance committee of people who will aggressively go out and raise money for you ... great. Just keep feeding them names of prospects and cut 'em loose.

But if you're starting from scratch with people who haven't done campaign fundraising before, you're going to have to approach this process in a different fashion.

Again, you as the candidate or organization leader must be the one asking for the donation