


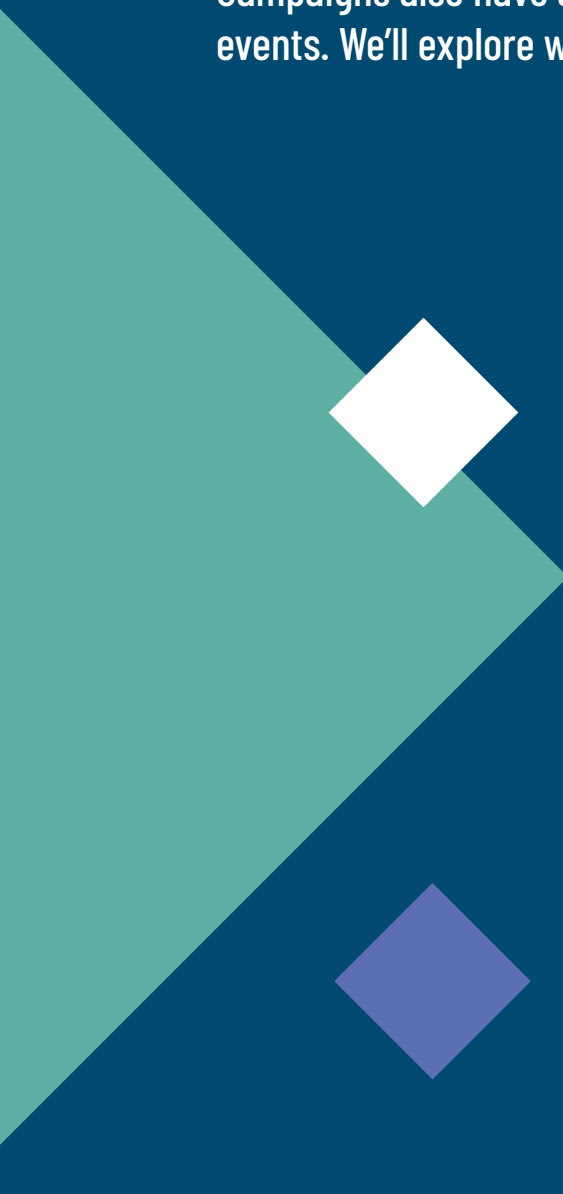


# CAPITAL CAMPAIGN STRUCTURE



## EVERY CAPITAL CAMPAIGN HAS AN INFRASTRUCTURE, THE KEY COMPONENTS THAT ARE THE BACKBONE OF ENSURING SUCCESS.

In this article, we'll be unpacking the four critical aspects of a capital campaign's structure to help you plan and visualize how to establish your church's campaign. Nearly all capital campaigns have a leader, chair or leadership team. They have a cadre of volunteers or campaign committees. Campaigns also have a suite of communications and of campaign-specific events. We'll explore what to consider in each of those four areas.





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# LEADERSHIP

If I ask you to think about someone who taught you a lot or blessed you with some terrific life lessons, I'm hoping at least a couple of people come to mind. It might be a parent or grandparent, a pastor, a teacher, a mentor or a colleague. But if we're honest, we've all learned a lot from people who were not great leaders, mentors or teachers. Sometimes I've gotten the most from those people in my life, and they were a blessing to me in a very unexpected way.

As the old adage goes, people can teach you what to do and what not to do. Both are important, and I'll be pulling from years of capital campaign experience (the hits and the misses!) to help you shape how you approach your campaign in your church. We'll begin with leadership. Whether you are the pastor and the face of the campaign or a highly involved volunteer or staff member, campaign leadership is all about consensus and buy-in.

My very first capital campaign was to build out a children's wing of the church I was working for, and my initial task was to take the proposed concept directly to the people impacted by it the most: parents of young kids in our congregation. The act of meeting with them individually, and the gathering of their input and consensus on the project, led to most of them becoming donors to that campaign. They were involved early and they had buy-in to the importance of the project to our church's mission.

Leadership embodies posture you take as a church as you take your campaign project from "good idea" to fleshed-out-concept - with costs and timelines attached. Look for ways to meet with your congregants early and often as those discussions advance, building buy-in and consensus on the important pieces of the project.

A campaign doesn't necessarily have to have a chair or co-chairs but if you establish a campaign leadership, work hard to ensure broad representation from your congregation on your steering committee. Protect against this group becoming a small clique of decision-makers: Your campaign's success depends on buy-in and excitement across the congregation, not just amongst a small group.

# VOLUNTEERS

If your church is heading into a capital campaign, it's all hands on deck! How do you best mobilize volunteers? What type of structures are most common when implementing a capital campaign?

As we mentioned above, most campaigns have a chair or leader and a campaign steering committee. You need a manageable but representative group who can lead the key areas and help shape the campaign decisions. Many organizations use a campaign consultant in these early stages to help identify possible chairs and steering committee members, work with the board and assess donor capacity. An experienced campaign consultant can help take the guesswork out of those important decisions in the planning phase.

As the leadership structure comes together, most campaigns will need a set of volunteers. These are not necessarily people who want to ask for money or solicit gifts. Your campaign likely will need an events committee, a communications committee, an acknowledgment or stewardship committee who focuses on thanking donors, and an outreach or ambassador group who are willing to help connect with members and share campaign information and updates.

We often see churches establish a kiosk in their lobby during a campaign, where members can get the latest information about the project, fundraising progress, photos, renderings, etc. This is a perfect place for volunteer hosts just to answer questions and help get people excited about the project.

While a staffed church needs to ensure each and every staff member is an advocate for and is thinking about how to champion the campaign, it's important not to rely on staff to carry that water alone. There is nothing more powerful in mobilizing donors than to have peers sharing their excitement and passion for the project. Create roles for your relational members to be your advocates. Give them the tools and the opportunities to build and enhance the connections among your members during this campaign. Some churches use their ambassadors to literally call on each member - not to make an ask, but to answer any questions they have about the project. These conversations can be very helpful in developing your campaign communications. You will know very quickly if there is any confusion about the project, its financing or the plans if your ambassador group is actively engaging members.

# COMMUNICATIONS

A successful capital campaign has a well-designed communications plan that engages donors and keeps members informed. Often, that plan is developed and implemented not just by church staff but by a committee of volunteers. In fact, a campaign communications plan should never be one person's role...it's a critical piece of weaving your campaign into the life of your church across multiple audiences and platforms.

Building a team for your communications is critical. There are likely lots of members in your church for whom this is their wheelhouse. Most would be excited to be asked to contribute to the campaign in this way as a volunteer.

## **To be successful, your communications committee needs to identify:**

1. a clear set of goals that identify what you want to accomplish;
2. a budget to work within;
3. the audiences you'll be communicating to;
4. the phases of the campaign (ie, silent, public, closing) and any segmented sub-audiences within those;
5. messaging for each of those phases and audiences; and
6. the platforms for those messages (ie, digital, print, video etc).

Your campaign communications need a dedicated budget so you can effectively plan for any production costs for your campaign logo, the design of your materials, videos and any print expenses. While we've seen most organizations move away from high cost production in campaign materials, you still want to ensure your communications look top quality and professional. A budget will also let you navigate the inevitable ideas that will bubble up from volunteers, such a highly produced video or booklet that might be nice, but will simply be too expensive.

What you want to communicate to lead donors in the campaign's silent phase looks different than what you will communicate in the public or closing phases. It's important to look closely at your church's communication platforms and which audiences will receive what messages during each phase. While many members will be comfortable with email, web and other online communication, there will always be some who will need and want printed materials.

As you put your audience, platforms, phases and message development into a plan, be sure to overlay those with your church's main communications calendar so you can make the most of your vehicles, your time and your effort.

The lesson here is that the campaign communications plan takes a team, and it's a significant piece of your overall campaign strategy. Don't let it be an afterthought.

# EVENTS

Capital campaign events can look like anything from a small gathering to a large gala, or a race or golf tournament. Their purpose is the same: to celebrate and energize donors around the campaign's project and mission.

Many organizations and churches establish an "events committee" of volunteers to help plan and execute the public launch kick off as well as any number of town halls, donor dinners or other gatherings related to the campaign. Consider your hospitality-focused members and how their gifts might be used in this way.

Some churches offer a series of dinners or town hall formats with the campaign steering committee and the pastor to discuss the project ahead of a public launch or in a silent phase. Others do these sessions all along the way to keep members excited and informed. Whatever you determine your campaign event schedule will be, factor in the costs and the planning/promotional time you'll need to ensure their effectiveness.

For your campaign kick off event, brainstorm creative ideas and concepts that fit well with your church and your project. It might be a family carnival for a children's nursery wing. It could be a dinner for top donors. It could be a church picnic or a special concert. Determine who your audiences are and what type of launch or kick off would best reflect your campaign's mission and meet those needs.

Like your campaign communications, your campaign events need a budget. It's important to determine what you will spend on the kick off and any other campaign-related events. Many organizations seek underwriters or sponsors whose gifts can offset those costs.

Choose your venue, date and time carefully...then promote, promote, promote! Again, this is where your leadership and volunteer structure can be helpful. Encourage your volunteers to recruit folks to this launch event and consider how to best use them at the event, as greeters, table hosts or in the room as ambassadors.



**CAMPAIGNS ARE FUN AND EXHILARATING WHEN THEY  
ALIGN WITH YOUR CHURCH'S OVERALL MISSION.**

They can lift the entire congregation's vision for the church and its role. But they have to be well-planned and thoughtfully executed. Don't go it alone. ACST now offers campaign services for churches - we'll be happy to come alongside you.

- 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.

 **1-844-467-3256**

 **[solutions@acst.com](mailto:solutions@acst.com)**

 **180 Dunbarton Dr, Florence, SC 29501**