

## EMPHASIS ON EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

I'm sure we agree that effective leadership, both volunteer and professional, is essential in guiding a non-profit organization to achieve its potential in both service and support.

In my experience, from the perspective of potential major donors there are a number of questions, spoken as well as unspoken, which underscore the need for effective leadership in gaining their support; for example:

*“At both the volunteer board and professional executive levels, does the organization have the perceived strength and resolve of leadership to sustain its fundamental mission?”*

*“Does the organization’s leadership have the confidence and respect of both internal and external constituencies to take the lead on key issues and opportunities, as well as address problems and conflicts as they arise?”*

*“Are there apparent conflicts among the leadership that may impede the organization from achieving its potential... which donors are being asked to fund? And do those conflicts, in fact or in rumor, foster hesitations in giving?”*

Considering these perspectives and questions, here are three leadership characteristics I have witnessed and respected in working with nonprofit institutions successfully engaged in major gift and campaign fundraising:

- **Clarity in Communications:** Ensuring that major decisions are clearly-articulated both orally and in writing to the people responsible for implementing them as well as those affected by them.
- **Openness to Ideas and Concerns:** While not every idea and concern may be equally valued, leadership’s thoughtful consideration and response will be.
- **Taking the Lead:** Once key decisions are thoughtfully considered and approved, whether agreeable or not to all, taking a manifest role in supporting those decisions illustrates valued leadership. Outwardly disparaging and disregarding such decisions is not.

***How would you characterize your organization’s volunteer and professional leadership?***