

RELATIONSHIP FUNDRAISING

A DONOR-BASED APPROACH TO THE BUSINESS OF RAISING MONEY

THIRD EDITION: THE 32ND ANNIVERSARY EDITION

KEN BURNETT



How this book has changed fundraising

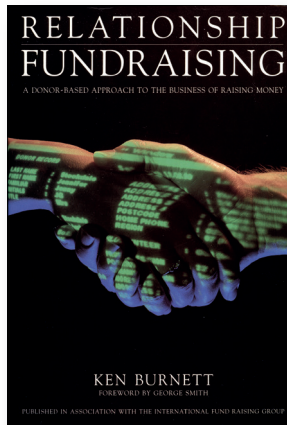
Selections from what people have said about the first and second editions:



‘The translator of the Polish edition of Relationship Fundraising said it was her most interesting assignment in a long time – although she’s not a fundraiser herself she learned a lot from it and thought a lot about it. That’s what happens to all readers of this book: Ken talks about fundraising in such a way that everyone would like to become a fundraiser!’

ROBERT KAWALKO, CHAIRMAN, POLISH FUNDRAISING ASSOCIATION, KRAKOW, POLAND.

“The wisdom, common sense and wit crammed into Relationship Fundraising helped me realise what fundraising truly is. It’s about



humanity. Decency. Treating people really well and helping them to change the world. With that epiphany, fundraising transformed from a job to a lifelong mission for me. And the technical guidance shared in its pages has helped me to be a better fundraiser ever since. An absolute must-read for anyone who comes within an ass's roar of a fundraising department."

COLIN SKEHAN, HEAD OF DONOR RELATIONS, TRÓCAIRE
(COLIN WAS IRELAND'S FUNDRAISER OF THE YEAR RECENTLY. TRÓCAIRE IS IRELAND'S BEST-KNOWN INGO AND TWICE WINNER OF FUNDRAISING TEAM OF THE YEAR).

"World book day; Harry Brown handed this book to me 19 years ago and said: this is all you need. He was right! Thank you @kenburnett1."

JO BALLANTINE, A FUNDRAISER WRITING ON TWITTER.

"Relationship Fundraising changed my life!

"My initial fundraising career was only meant to last a year or so. After that I was meant to get a 'proper' job in law, but then I read Relationship Fundraising and it got me hooked on fundraising as a career.

"From that moment on, I was a professional fundraiser.

"I re-vamped our thank you letters, took responsibility for the database, looked for ways to recognise and thank donors and worked hard to implement as much of the theory and ideas in the book as possible. The book made me proud to be a fundraiser and showed me what a fulfilling, stimulating and enjoyable career it could offer me... I don't know how you can do your job properly as a fundraiser without being aware of the principles it teaches."

CRAIG LINTON, CO-AUTHOR, DONORS FOR LIFE: A PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE TO RELATIONSHIP FUNDRAISING, THE WHITE LION PRESS, 2017.

"Such were the breakthrough insights unveiled 32 years ago in Ken Burnett's now-classic Relationship Fundraising. And now with today's massively updated third edition, new and important revelations abound. Relationship Fundraising is a gift to all fundraisers who prefer to bask in the sunshine of current knowledge and experience rather than labour in darkness as prisoners of the past. This massively updated third edition of Relationship Fundraising breathes fresh new life into Ken's must-read classic."

ROGER M. CRAVER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, THE AGITATOR, AND AUTHOR OF RETENTION FUNDRAISING: THE NEW ART AND SCIENCE OF KEEPING YOUR DONORS FOR LIFE.

“Relationship Fundraising gave me the confidence to talk to my donors not as contributors, but as co-conspirators, together for a better world. Selfishly, more importantly, it made me proud to be a fundraiser. It was my roadmap for a compassionate, honest and collaborative profession, one that I could commit my working life to. If you need inspiration, or have a moment of doubt, turn to it.”

DONNA DAY LAFFERTY, SENIOR LECTURER, UNIVERSITY OF CHICHESTER, UK.

“The ideas contained in this book will revolutionise fundraising in the next decade”.

GILES PEGRAM, FROM 1992, WHEN HE WAS DEPUTY DIRECTOR AND HEAD OF FUNDRAISING AT NSPCC, UK.

“Today there is research to back up the author’s observations and advice, but there certainly wasn’t when the first edition of Relationship Fundraising was published. Ken Burnett got it right. Simply put, he is a visionary.”

PENELOPE BURK PRESIDENT, CYGNUS APPLIED RESEARCH, INC. CANADA.

“In late 1992 my agency Robejohn brought Ken Burnett to Australia to inspire and challenge our clients and all Fundraising Institute of Australia members. Relationship Fundraising won immediate acclaim as he was booked solidly across Australia, delivering priceless, ground-breaking advice on building long-term donor-centred relationships. This new revised edition will be absolutely essential for every passionate fundraiser.”

KATHY JOHN FFIA, FOUNDER ROBEJOHN 1987, SEMI-RETIRED FUNDRAISING ADVISOR 2020.

“Ken Burnett has done it again with his updated release of Relationship Fundraising. Prior editions profoundly influence how I approach lasting individual donor engagement and especially the development of major gifts. This is a brilliant must-read for every fundraising professional and nonprofit leader!”

TAMMY ZONKER, MAJOR GIFT EXPERT, KEYNOTE SPEAKER AND HOST OF THE INTENTIONAL FUNDRAISER PODCAST , USA.

“Relationship Fundraising is a rare modern classic that has both defined and advanced an entire discipline. It was the first book given to me at my first job in the charitable sector. It cast a compelling vision for me that we

in the nonprofit space should never be content with mimicking the tactics of the private sector, but that we had both the opportunity and the duty to adapt and evolve them. Previous editions have inculcated donor-centricity in a generation of nonprofit professionals – I am eager to see the powerful impact of this next edition.”

LORI POER, DIRECTOR, THE BLACKBAUD INSTITUTE, USA.

“Ken Burnett’s wisdom and insights were crucial when I first began fundraising. I absorbed the first edition of this book cover-to-cover and then back again, and again. Ken helped me understand potential donors not as ‘cash-on-legs’ but as living, breathing humans with their own hopes, worries and dreams. And he helped me understand that my job was to connect good people with charities that could put their resources to good use. I still keep the first two editions near my desk. Thank you Ken for writing and updating this book, and for helping so many of us to understand and practice better fundraising.”

BETH BREEZE, DIRECTOR, THE CENTRE FOR PHILANTHROPY, UNIVERSITY OF KENT, UK.

“Relationships are the heart and soul of brilliant fundraising – I know, if you asked them, this is the one book your donors would tell you to read.”

JESS WINCHESTER, FUNDRAISING AND MARKETING MANAGER, NEW ZEALAND.

“Relationship Fundraising was a total game-changer for how the fundraising sector looked at and communicated with its donors. It still is.”

DARYL UPSALL, FOUNDER, DARYL UPSALL INTERNATIONAL, SPAIN.

“Relationship Fundraising was in many ways a book ahead of its time. I remember reading it when it came out and being inspired by its simple truths. It is a book I have recommended to many people and the well-thumbed copy on my office shelf has been consulted by many of my colleagues over the years.”

SIMON COLLINGS, FORMER DIRECTOR, THE RESOURCE ALLIANCE, WRITING IN PROFESSIONAL FUNDRAISING MAGAZINE.

“I still remember reading Ken’s book a year after it was first published. In fact, it was practically engulfed in a single sitting by virtue of starting on a long flight from London to Chicago. (I simply could not put it down!).”

JAY LOVE, CO-FOUNDER, BLOOMERANG AND eTAPESTRY, USA.

“We saw what happened when some fundraising turned into something like factory farming. And it’s been brilliant to see how real relationship fundraising has returned in response, not just in lip service but in full-fat life with fundraisers going so much further to treat their supporters like partners.”

KARIN WEATHERUP, CAMPAIGNING FUNDRAISING CREATIVE DIRECTOR, UK.

“Burnett...has provided a new framework for thinking about fundraising strategy.”

ROB PATON, JOURNAL OF NONPROFIT MARKETING, UK.

“This book is the fundraiser’s bible.”

CONRAD LAURITSEN, STROËDE AB, SWEDEN.

“...it will revolutionise the way in which development officers treat their donors and prospects.”

DR JUDITH E NICHOLS, CFRE, AUTHOR AND CONSULTANT, USA.

“...this classic guide to fundraising is probably the most widely read amongst UK fundraisers.”

PHILANTHROPY UK MAGAZINE, UK.

“Thanks, too, to a Scotsman named Ken Burnett, author of Relationship Fundraising and other seminal books on the topic, we’re learning how to practice our craft in a sensitive manner that strengthens rather than undermines our relationships with donors. We’re coming to understand that the line between annual giving and major gifts, long a hard-and-fast divide in most nonprofit organizations — is arbitrary and largely counterproductive. We’re picking up the techniques to involve donors — by mail, by phone, and in other appropriate ways — so that they become, to lift the title of another of Burnett’s books, Friends for Life.”

MAL WARWICK, AUTHOR, A NEW DIRECTION FOR TOMORROW’S DIRECT MAIL, USA.

“It was the original edition of Relationship Fundraising that framed much of my initial fundraising approach many years ago, with the ISPC/Childline and RNLI in Ireland. The importance of relationship building remains of fundamental importance to NGOs.”

CLAIRE BRENNAN, NGO SECTOR, IRELAND.

“Treat your donors as people with dignity and valid – in fact, tender – emotional needs. DON’T treat them as just an endless passing parade of purses you might potentially pick. THIS was my newbie takeaway from Ken’s mood-altering book.”

TOM AHERN, AUTHOR AND MENTOR, USA.

“Burnett’s thoughtful approach possesses terrific value. Its application has helped many garner billions of resources to forward the good works of nonprofit institutions.”

KATHY JOHNSON BOWLES, INSIDE HIGHER EDUCATION BLOG, USA.

“The ONLY book I could find when I joined the sector 15 years ago that mentioned legacy fundraising. Thank you! As a guiding principle, I couldn’t have hoped for anything more suitable.”

CHRIS MILLWARD, LEGACY STRATEGY CONSULTANT, TRAINER AND FOUNDER OF LEGACYGIVINGEXPERT.CO.UK.

“Relationship Fundraising was the first fundraising book I read, and I still refer to my original copy today.”

REBECCA SCELLY, HEAD OF PHILANTHROPY & DONOR DEVELOPMENT
GREENPEACE EAST ASIA.

“This book found expression through me in a dozen seminars globally. It changed my thinking and orientation to donor management very profoundly.”

ALICE PREMA ANDREW, CONSULTANT AND INTERNATIONAL TRAINER, INDIA.

“I bought my first copy of Relationship Fundraising in 1995, when we were enjoying rapid growth in Amnesty International. It really opened my eyes to donor-focussed fundraising. This shift from transactional to relationship-based thinking led us to shift investment from volume-based acquisition to quality-based retention. That’s a principle I’ve brought with me to practice for many wonderful causes, with great impact on their ROI. Since then, I dip in and out of Ken’s writings, whether I’m looking for new ideas, challenging existing practice or simply reminding myself that the principles of good donor care transcend all the technological change.”

BRUCE CLARK, INDIVIDUAL GIVING MANAGER AND DIRECT MARKETING CONSULTANT, IRELAND.

“Ken Burnett has no idea the gifts he gave to me as a fundraising copywriter, through Relationship Fundraising. Today I’m telling you: Relationship Fundraising offered a philosophy, a touchstone, a home base to return to again and again. All these years later, it still does. Because when you get it right, the soul of truly great fundraising – and the soul of every great fundraising story – is no less than, to paraphrase the book itself, the triumph of the human spirit. Equal parts how-to guide, essential primer for new fundraisers, heartfelt pep talk and refresher course for old veterans, may the knowledge and insight that awaits in Relationship Fundraising help you, and your supporters, to change the world.”

LISA SARGENT, AWARD-WINNING FUNDRAISING COPYWRITER,
FOUNDER OF SOFII THANK-YOU CLINICS AND AUTHOR OF *THANKOLOGY*, USA.

“After 28 years of fundraising, it’s for me still the one and only book for everybody who asks what fundraising is all about. I wonder why there is no German translation?”

ULRICH C. REITER, GERMANY.

“This book is a game changer for fundraisers and the most important gift for Polish fundraisers so far. Anyone who receives this book from the Polish Fundraising Association has a big smile on their face after just a few minutes of reading. I’ve seen several vacation photos with Ken’s book on a deckchair or on the sand, with the sea in the background. But going on vacation is not necessary because Relationship Fundraising is also a journey to a land where goodness, sensitivity and joy rule.”

ROBERT KAWALKO, CHAIRMAN, POLISH FUNDRAISING ASSOCIATION, KRAKOW,
POLAND.

“Academic interest in nonprofit relationship marketing grew sharply following the appearance of Ken Burnett’s seminal text Relationship Fundraising, which reported the essential differences between nonprofit relationship fundraising and ‘transactional’ fundraising.”

RELATIONSHIP MARKETING AND BRANDING ANALYSED, ROGER BENNETT, 2019.

“The consequentialist version of donor centrism requires you to put the donor at the heart of your activities because this is the best way to raise more sustainable income: the better the experience you give them, the more they will give. This is how Ken Burnett describes relationship fundraising in his eponymous book.”

RIGHTS-BALANCING FUNDRAISING ETHICS, IAN MACQUILLIN, 2019.

FOR YOUR LIBRARY

Storytelling Can Change the World

By Ken Burnett, 272 pages, \$40.00

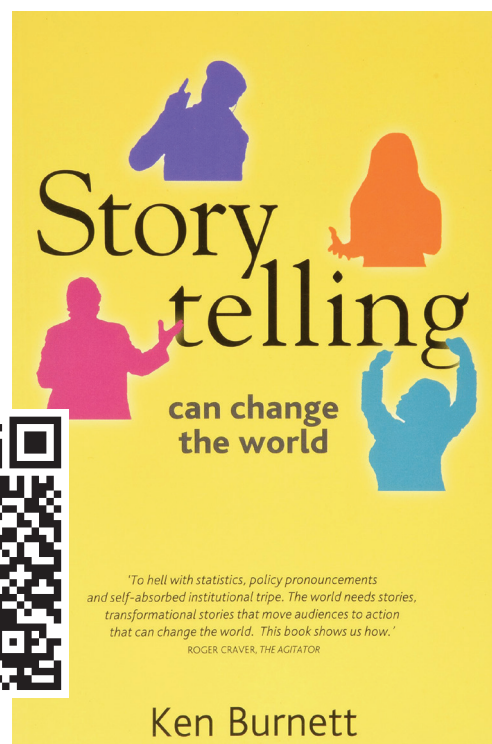
Persuading others effortlessly, painlessly and willingly to do something that otherwise, most likely, they would not is the most valuable asset for anyone working in any number of professional and technical business areas.

We do that best by telling them stories. How to do transformational storytelling is explained here.

Why transformational storytelling works so well is not in doubt. Receptiveness to stories is hard-wired into our DNA. Stories engage us easily, draw us in naturally, excite our curiosity, pique our interests and lead us to the satisfying conclusion that we can do something now, to make a difference. So for any kind of aspiring communicator or influencer, storytelling is the one skill they need more than any other. If you seek to understand and access any human emotion, study stories.

In the modern world of massive information overload stories get through where woggles of bump and formal reports, however filled with information, won't. Endlessly versatile and satisfying, stories stick where whatever's picked up from sitting through lessons and lectures quickly fades. Stories are how people learn.

Transformational stories have an extra dimension—the power to move people to action, to make a difference, to make change.



The Zen of Fundraising: 89 Timeless Ideas to Strengthen and Develop Your Donor Relationships

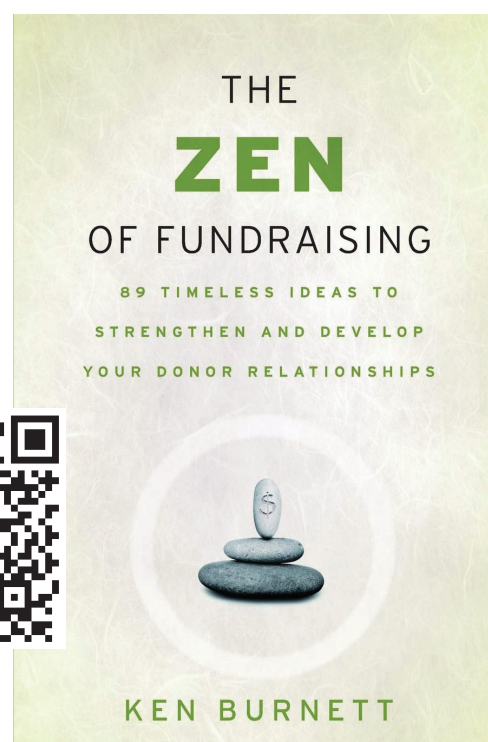
By Ken Burnett, 176 pages, \$39.00

If all that has ever been said and written about the art and science of fundraising could be distilled down to just what really matters—what fundraisers everywhere need to know—there would be only a small number of true gems deserving of the description, “nuggets of information”.

Ken Burnett, author of the classic *Relationship Fundraising*, has identified and defined 89 such nuggets for his new book *The Zen of Fundraising*, a fun read, one-of-a-kind look into what makes donors tick and—more importantly—what makes them give.

Nearly three decades as a leading international fundraiser have taught Ken what donors want and how fundraisers can best deliver it. To achieve their true potential fundraisers now have to really understand their donors and their causes, to communicate more effectively, to engage, involve and inspire their donors more consistently, to be extraordinarily good to do business with, to play smart and keep themselves and their colleagues motivated as they do it.

In short, fundraisers have to ensure their thinking is right so they can get all their important messages spot on, appreciated, remembered and acted upon. This book will show fundraisers how to do all that and enjoy their work too, while they make the world a better place.



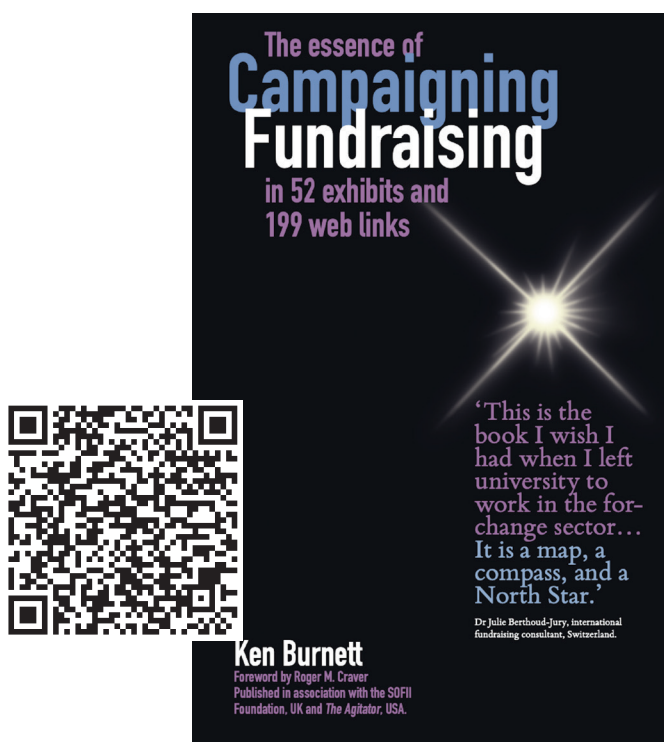
The essence of Campaigning Fundraising in 52 exhibits and 199 web links

By Ken Burnett, 208 pages, \$57.00

What do you mean, campaigning fundraising?

Fundraising above all is about the change charities and their supporters want to see in this world. So, in referring to this activity merely as fundraising we made a basic big mistake, a mistake we've paid dearly for and are still paying for, so should rectify once and for all... People don't give for things to remain as they are—they give to see change, always. So campaigning fundraising it has to be.

This book describes in detail campaigning fundraising as it should be, how it should be structured, implemented and explained so that our publics, particularly donors and fundraisers themselves, see it as the positive, transformational force for change and good that it surely can be, and as the best career going for any creative, committed individual who really wants to make a difference, to change the world.



Tiny Essentials of an Effective Volunteer Board

By Ken Burnett, 83 pages, \$24.00

When Warren Maxwell suddenly finds himself propelled into accepting the chair of the medium-sized voluntary organization on whose board he serves, he has to think and act fast. How can he stop his board from sinking into irrelevance? How can he ensure that his board becomes a beacon of best behaviour, a paragon of all that's excellent in nonprofit governance?

Warren decides there's only one way and that's to uncover and learn as quickly as possible what it takes to build a volunteer board that's truly effective. Join Warren on his brief yet enlightening quest as he sets out to expose the shortcomings of too strong and too weak boards and so reveals the secrets of what makes an inspiring, balanced and highly effective volunteer board.

For most voluntary organizations identifying, recruiting and developing a truly effective board remains a wonderful but usually distant and elusive dream. This small book has been written for all board members and nonprofit staff whose job it is to deal with 'the board'. Its purpose is to help any board to do its important job better.



Friends for Life: Relationship Fundraising in Practice

By Ken Burnett, 599 pages, \$32.00

Amid the widespread acclaim that greeted the 1992 publication of Ken Burnett's *Relationship Fundraising* was one persistent qualified comment—does it work?

This sequel provides the answer through 16 detailed and informative case histories and seven chapters of new and additional explanation and illustration. It is packed with usable and practical advice and examples that will enable anyone concerned with donor development to put relationship fundraising into practice effectively.

In *Friends for Life* fundraisers from Canada, the USA, and United Kingdom tell their own stories of how they are putting relationship fundraising into practice. Will it help raise more money? Their voices add to a groundswell of evidence that says it will.

Review for *Friends for Life: Relationship Fundraising in Practice*

"If like me and thousands of fundraisers around the world you thought *Relationship Fundraising* heralded a greater understanding of what fundraising is all about, be prepared. Unlike most sequels, *Friends for Life* is better."

– Stephen Lee, former director,
The Institute of Fundraising, UK.



Donors for Life: a practitioner's guide to relationship fundraising

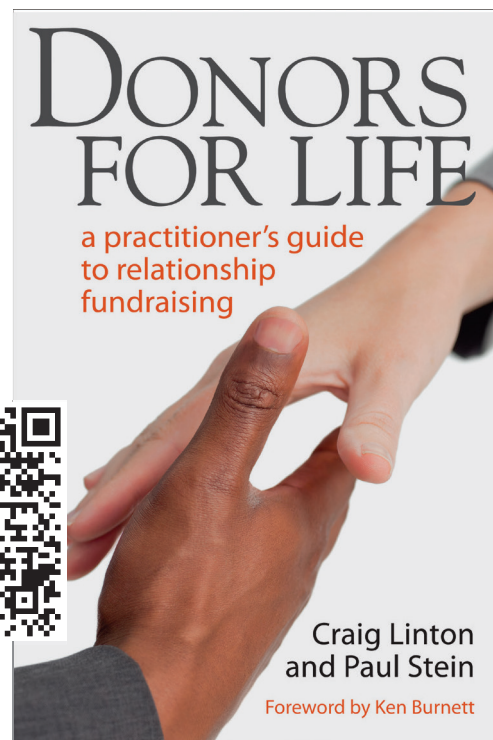
By Craig Linton and Paul Stein, 370 pages, \$46.00

It's a great theory, but how does it work in practice?

In this defining new book two experienced fundraising directors tell all, sharing tips, pitfalls, ideas and inspiration on every page. Through 20 packed chapters Paul and Craig explain the theory too, shining bright light on what commitment to a relationship fundraising approach means for fundraising colleagues, other staff, volunteers, trustees, donors and your charity's bottom line—your ability to deliver on its mission.

Chapter topics include:

- Fundraising and nonprofits in the twenty-first century
- Relationship fundraising: what it is
- Why people give and the importance of emotion
- Developing a relationship fundraising strategy
- Creating a culture of relationship fundraising
- Recruiting your donors
- The seven elements of successful donor recruitment
- The seven elements in action: four outstanding donor recruitment campaigns



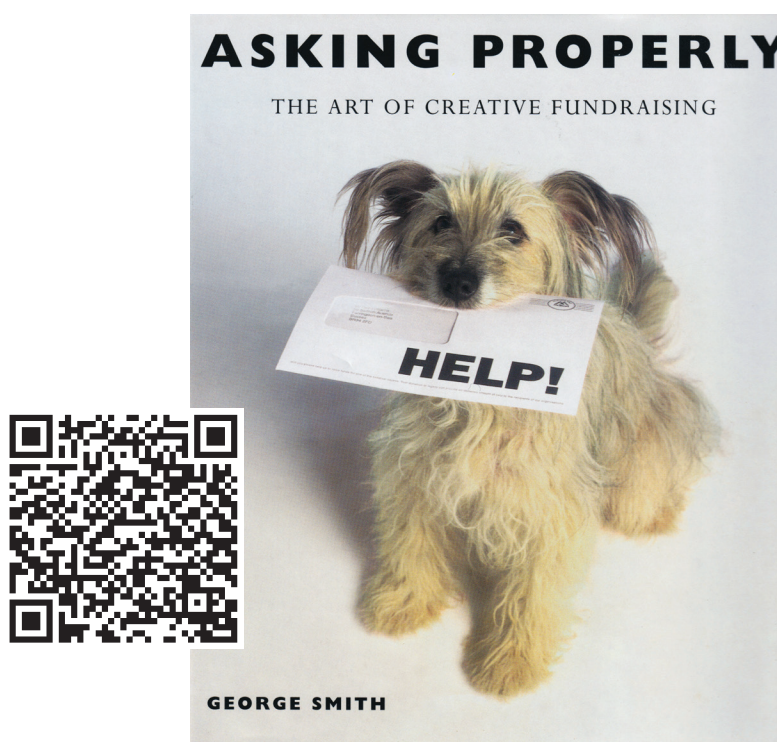
Asking Properly: The art of creative fundraising

By George Smith, 220 pages, \$32.00

George Smith tears open the conventional wisdom of fundraising creativity. *Asking Properly* is that rare thing—a book that changes the rules of an apparently established trade.

Irreverent, funny, savagely critical and genuinely inspiring—often on the same page—this is perhaps the most authoritative book ever written about the creative aspects of fundraising and is likely to remain a key text for years to come. The author offers a profound analysis of donor motivation and criticises the extent to which charities take their supporters for granted. But it is no mere commentary on current practice—it offers a comprehensive checklist on how to optimise the creative presentation of the fundraising message. The whole gallery of creativity and media is surveyed and assessed, with hundreds of examples of fundraising campaigns from around the world illustrating the need to ‘ask properly’.

Asking Properly is provocative, refreshing and, above all, highly instructive. Read it, apply its lessons and it will enable you to raise more money, more happily. Only George Smith could have written this. We should all be glad that he has.





About the author

Ken Burnett is an internationally recognised author, consultant and inspirational speaker on fundraising, marketing and communications for for-change organisations worldwide. He was UK director and director of fundraising and communications at ActionAid from 1977 to 1982, when he founded the influential Burnett Associates agency group, the first marketing and communications agency in Europe to specialise in working with campaigning social change organisations. In 2003, working with Alan Clayton, Ken was chairman of Alan's agency, Cascaid, then together they set up Clayton Burnett/Revolutionise.

Ken is author of several seminal books including *Relationship Fundraising*, *Friends for Life*, *The Zen of Fundraising*, *Tiny Essentials of an Effective Volunteer Board*, *Storytelling can change the world* and *The essence of Campaigning Fundraising in 52 exhibits and 199 weblinks*. In 2008 his first non-fundraising book, *The Field by the River* was published, an affectionate natural history of 2.4 hectares of ancient field and forest in Brittany, Northern France. Ken has served on several trustee boards for charities large and small – from 1998 to 2003 Ken was chairman of trustees of ActionAid International, from 2012 to 2018 he was also an independent trustee of the UK Disasters Emergency Committee. He is a former vice chair of the UK's Institute of Fundraising, was co-founder and a trustee of SOFII, the Showcase of Fundraising Innovation and Inspiration and a trustee of the World Land Trust. In 2016 Ken Burnett co-founded the Commission on the Donor Experience, with Giles Pegram CBE, which led to the largest ever mobilisation of volunteers in the UK's fundraising sector, to redefine fundraising best practice.

When not travelling or giving seminars Ken spends his time at home in rural Suffolk, where in addition to discovering a love for writing,

directing and acting in amateur village plays, he's now an enthusiastic fledgling potter. In 2021, with his partner Virginia, Ken walked all 800 kilometres of the *Camino Frances* in just 39 days, from St. Jean Pied de Port in Southern France to Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, Northern Spain. He still addresses the Haggis every Burns Night at his local pub, the Huntingfield Arms.

© Ken Burnett, June 2024

Curtain call for the cast of *Mildred: the power of a dream*. As well as writing and directing, Ken played the misogynistic and blinkered Bishop of Norwich, who eventually gets to see the light. Photo: Edward Watson

