

# American Public Gardens Association

## What's The Big Idea?

Ensuring that your organization is ready,  
internally and externally, to launch a campaign

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# Today's Discussion

What is (and what isn't) a campaign?

The Case Statement – answering six key questions.

Is your organization internally ready?

Is your board ready?

Is your organization externally ready?

Planning for a marathon, not a sprint

Today's campaigning environment

Discussion

Final Thoughts

# What is (and isn't) a campaign?

## What isn't a campaign?

A new building	Incremental improvements or enhancements	An increased endowment
New programs	A bundling of smaller ideas	A naming opportunity
A big price tag	Unstructured	Just the purview of the ED, Board, Director of Development

These are all a means to and end...

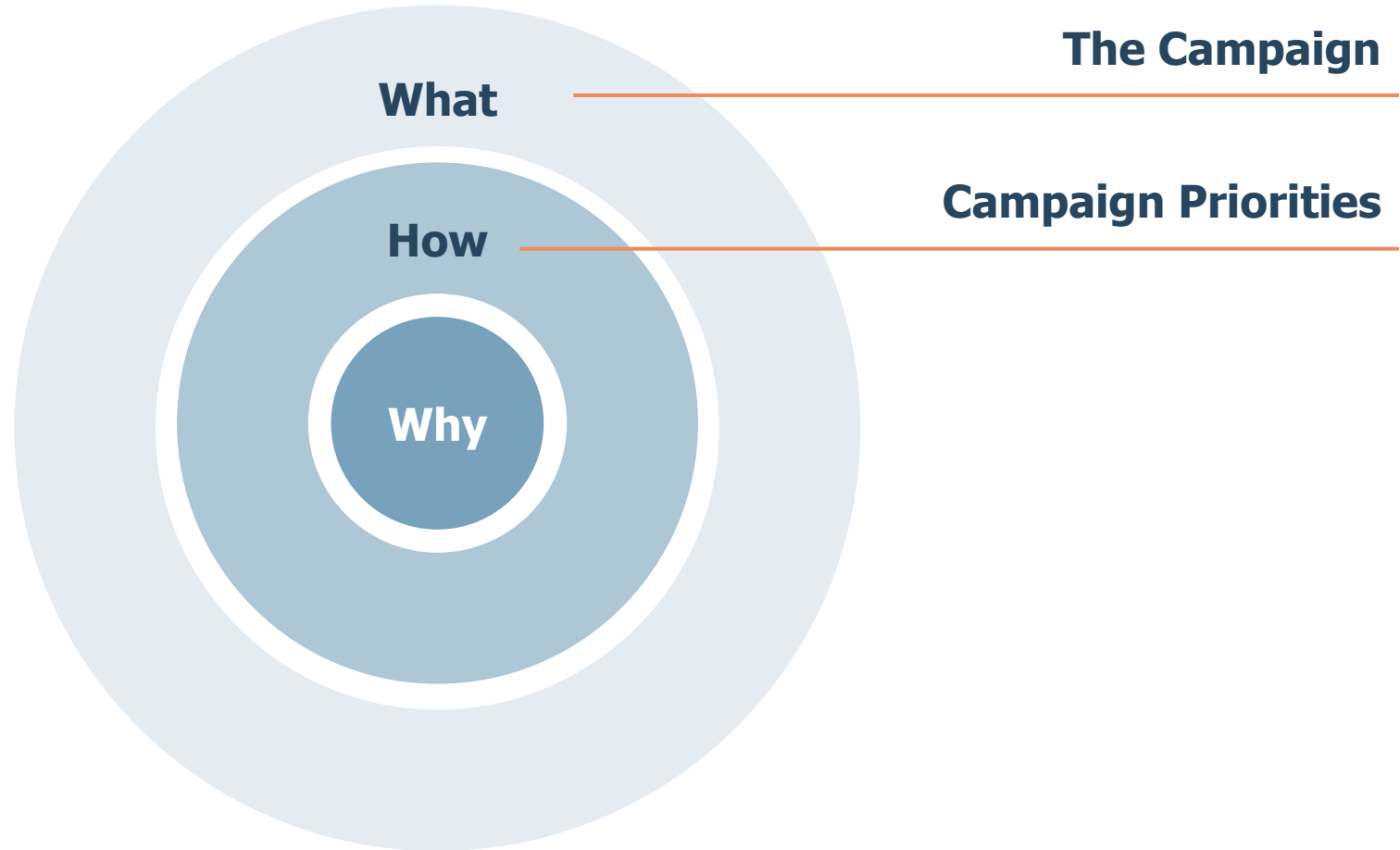
# What is (and isn't) a campaign?

## What IS a campaign?

A big idea and a big vision that will transform an institution and take it from one level to the next

Transformative	Unique	Has a beginning, middle and an end
Raises awareness	Engages the entire institution	Amplifies Impact

# What's the Big Idea?



# The Case Statement – answering six key questions

Your case is the heart and soul of your campaign. It is the articulation of the **BIG VISION** and **BIG IDEAS** and the means to get there.

## Key questions

**1** Where are we going?

**2** Why does it matter?  
(what is the impact?)

**3** Why are we the right ones to do it?

**4** Why now?

**5** What will it take?

**6** How can the reader/listener help?

Your case should consider all the communities you intend to serve.

A case statement should have specifics – e.g., How many more people served? How many more programs?

A case statement is a tool, not a crutch. By itself, it won't raise you any money. But it has a lot of hard work to do.

# Internal Readiness

- ✓ Does your organization have a culture of philanthropy?
- ✓ Does your organization have a strategic plan?
- ✓ Has your organization done financial forecasting?
- ✓ Have you done a comprehensive development assessment?
  - How good is your data?
  - Do you have staff capacity?
  - Do you have the systems and processes in place to support a campaign?
  - Is there a prospect management system?
  - Do you have prospect research capacity?
- ✓ Do you have potential lead donors identified? Do you have a well warmed up cohort of major gift prospects? Do you have engagement/cultivation strategies developed for these prospects?
- ✓ Is your Chief Executive ready to dedicate a significant portion of their time to the campaign?
- ✓ Is there a stewardship plan in place?

# Is your board ready?

- ✓ Is there a culture of philanthropy on the board? Is there fluency around philanthropy on the board?
- ✓ Do they fully understand and support the strategic plan?
- ✓ Are 100% of board members supportive of executing a campaign?
- ✓ Is the board prepared to invest in a campaign?
- ✓ Is your board a "fundraising" board?
- ✓ Is the board afraid to ask for money?
- ✓ Are there board members who can serve as chairs/co-chairs/committee members?
- ✓ Is the board prepared to support/make stretch gifts in support of the campaign?



# Are you externally ready?



## The Feasibility Study

- Moves questions from the “we think we know” column to the “we know” column
- Is a powerful engagement/cultivation tool for your best prospects and new prospects
- Puts your best prospects on notice of what might be coming down the road
- Forces you to be very clear about the vision and campaign priorities and then helps to refine the case for support



It is critical that the board (board committee/board task force) be engaged in the feasibility study.



Do you have a strong external communications strategy? Are you viewed as essential to your community?



Do you understand the environment in which you will be campaigning?

# Planning for a marathon, not a sprint

The importance of a campaign plan with timelines, goals and milestones

Having a “working campaign goal”

The importance of the gift pyramid – a critical road map

Campaign plans are guides, not rigid rules

Don't just plan for the top of the pyramid. What is your major gift strategy?  
What is your strategy for broad participation?

Campaign timelines are momentum-builders.

How can you use your campaign to prepare for the next campaign?

What is the stewardship plan?

# Typical Campaign Planning Timeline



# Today's campaigning environment

There is more money out there than there are big ideas.

It is important to understand what might be holding donors back.

Is it critical that your campaign be clear, focused, transformative and well-planned. Other campaigns will be, so be ready to take your place at the table.

Now is the time to think big and be very very bold.

It is vital to be donor-centric, understand donor motivations, craft thoughtful engagement, cultivation and stewardship strategies.

Build the right team.

Don't let the Annual Fund suffer.

Storytelling compels – don't talk about what the campaign is, talk about what the campaign will do and the impact it will have.

Go at the right time but also understand there will always be competition.

# Some Final Thoughts...

If done right, campaigns work! You never get the best gift out of someone in an annual giving situation.

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Nobody ever gives away their last \$1 million dollars.

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Nobody is ever offended if you ask for too much money. Don't risk leaving money on the table.

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Don't treat donors like ATM machines. Gift conversations are not transactions, they are opportunities to activate donor priorities. People who are philanthropic are looking for reasons to give.

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Stewardship plans should be meaningful and should be responsive to the donors' wishes/needs.

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This isn't your last campaign.

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# Thank You!

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