

Major giving? There's an app for that

Liz Henderson delves into the evolution and possibilities of an app for major gift fundraising. The app is based on a systematic approach to building relationships with donors and prospects, that has already proven successful in the real world.

The great divide between charities' aspirations for more major gifts and the reality of what they were actually achieving led fundraising consultant, Mark Quigley, to look for a way people could be successful more often when asking for big gifts.

"Those involved with major gift fundraising who I talk to, such as board members, CEOs, fundraising managers and major gift officers, all tell me that securing more major gifts is one of their top priorities," explains Quigley. "But those same fundraisers are not sure of what to do when, and why, to actually get more major gifts. So I thought what about an app?"

In April Quigley's lightbulb moment is taking shape with the launch of his new 'My Major GiftGetter' app, available from iTunes. Being calendar based, "The app will help people who are seeking major gifts to action their major gift fundraising activities week by week, month by month, quarter by quarter," Quigley anticipates. "It will help them to plan smart, work clever and get more gifts."

How does it work?

For a modest cost, My Major GiftGetter helps automate the process of major gifts fundraising, demystifying it while supporting charity staff to keep providing the personal touch that is the fuel of this income channel.

The app uses a calendar to plot out the steps over time that major gifts fundraisers need to take to engage existing and potential donors. Users can set up information specific to their own organisation and priorities, such as their major gift target. They also select their country, as milestones can differ by location and dates vary for financial year-end.

They then have a tailored plan of regular actionable tasks due by a certain deadline that

they can start on immediately, be reminded about by e-mail, and 'tick' as they complete. Activity can also be 'paused' if key staff members are not available, and restarted again.

Education is built into the app through information icons that users can tap to learn more about a task's importance in their major gift fundraising, so it is essentially like keeping a major gifts consultant in your pocket.

Incorporating insights from users and experts

My Major GiftGetter not only shares the significant knowledge and experience of Quigley – a BA FFIA, he has spent nearly 20 years in the field, and has helped organisations of all sizes to raise millions as the founder and director of Sydney agency, Social Venture Consultants.

During the development phase, Quigley also sought plenty of advice which has moulded and refined the end product. This included nutting

helping me with critical thinking at the start. I came back to Australia really inspired."

McKinnon, too, is excited about the potential of My Major GiftGetter. "If Mark's app helps you to get just one extra major gift, or improves your efficiency by even 1%," he says, "that makes this an incredibly invaluable product."

Principles that boosted income for The Fred Hollows Foundation

The My Major GiftGetter approach already has 'runs on the board' in the real world. Recently, the Partnerships team at The Fred Hollows Foundation used the app's framework as the basis for their major donor activities. Each team member saw her average major gifts income increase significantly during the period, and the organisation achieved a substantial growth in funding from the previous year.

"For me as a fundraising professional, I have a team with varying levels of experience," says Penny

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out the details with two of the world's foremost fundraising authorities, Bill Toliver – the renowned American social change consultant whose client list includes the likes of UNICEF and the Oprah Winfrey Foundations – and Canada's leading direct mail copywriter, trainer and author, Harvey McKinnon.

"I took my idea to a few people in the sector whose opinions I value and each saw the value of the idea," he says. "Then I went to the US and Canada and saw Bill and Harvey. They were great to talk to – providing their thoughts and really

Tribe, who is senior executive – partnerships at The Fred Hollows Foundation. "So what appealed to me in working with Mark was his systems and processes which encouraged my team to engage more major donors more often and results were regularly reported back to me."

"If the app replicates that, it will be a great tool for senior fundraising managers to have, to manage their team's major donor activities." **1232**