



To Get Donor Attention, Craft a Compelling Name for Your Campaign

When you launch a capital campaign, it isn't business as usual. You're asking existing donors to dig deeper and potential donors to change their giving plans to support your organization. Your outreach materials must make it clear that this is an opportunity to do something special and worthwhile.

A unique theme and name is the first step in getting donor attention. You need to distinguish your campaign from your annual appeal as well as other competing campaigns, and inspire donors to support your organization.

The theme is the overarching messaging idea drives all of your capital campaign outreach materials, from brochures to presentations. And it informs the name of your capital campaign.

That's a lot to ask of a few brief words, but it can be done.

Key Aspects of a Well-Crafted Theme

Most capital campaigns have multiple benefits for an organization — new programs, the ability to serve more people in existing programs, better location, or other advantages of having a new building. Your theme must convey the overarching idea that conveys the overall impact your campaign will have. You want to pique interest so people dig deeper to find out more.

In developing a theme, you want to take into consideration:

- The mission and vision of your organization.
- The aspects of the campaign that are most likely to inspire donors to take action.
- The ways to differentiate this "ask" from others that donors receive.
- The appropriate tone for this particular campaign.

Looking Beyond the Obvious

In identifying your campaign theme, it can help to step back and take a look at your organization with a new perspective. What originally inspired your board and donors to get involved with your organization? What's changed with this campaign? What's key idea connects your organization and your campaign?

An outside agency like Red Rooster Group can bring the advantage of viewing your organization with fresh eyes and seeing the distinctive characteristics that are so much a part of the fabric of your organization that you don't notice them.

Finding the Core of the Corps

A good example is the U.S. Navy Seabees — the construction corps that builds the infrastructure for the Navy and Marines. A major capital campaign was launched to build exhibits in the Seabee Museum, in conjunction with the 75th anniversary of the corps' founding.

The obvious themes were patriotism, honoring those who served, and preserving history. But those themes are evident in most military fundraising campaigns. We needed to distinguish this campaign from others. So, we focused on what the Seabees did (and still do) for the Navy and Marines — solve tough problems in creative ways.

After researching their accomplishments, we noted that Seabees were remarkably ingenious — and the idea of **ingenuity** became the driving theme of the campaign. Once we had identified this theme, we explored ways to convey that theme in a name:

Creative Construction:

The Seabee Story Continues

Creative Thinkers Support Seabees.

Building Magic: Can Do! Done!

75 Years of Building Under Pressure

Building Wonders for 75 Years

In the end, we tied that problem-solving distinction to the anniversary with the campaign name of **75 Years of Ingenuity at Work**. The campaign website invites donors to discover the Seabee's ingenuity, and the importance of telling these stories to others through the museum.

Focusing on Results

When the Brooklyn Heights Synagogue was raising money for a new building, we looked at what made this congregation special. An amalgam of people from all walks of life coming together as friends to share life's joyous moments of birth, marriage, and holidays suggested that this congregation was all about community.

Building on the theme of **community**, we emphasized how the expanded space would allow more opportunities for members to engage with each other, and that would lead to deeper relationships. From this concept, we developed the campaign name: **Growing Together: Getting Closer with More Space.**

Playing on Words

Georgetown Heritage wanted to raise money to restore the deteriorating locks of the historic C&O canal, ignite interest in the canal's history through educational programs, and develop the recreational and economic opportunities of this central waterway. This latent canal represented a lot of **potential** — the key theme for this campaign.

To create an invitation to support the canal's revitalization, the campaign name, **Unlock the Potential: Creating the Georgetown Canal Experience** plays on the work "lock" (the canal has 74 locks, in fact, over 184 miles), and is reinforced by the gatefold design of the brochure mimicking the locks themselves.

Getting a Running Start

For all of these campaigns, the theme reflects the purpose of the campaign succinctly and distinctively. A meaningful benefit is communicated. And the tone and personality of the organization is appropriate.

All capital campaigns — even ones that seem very similar — will have differences that can be highlighted to your advantage. Find those distinctions, and exploit them to their full potential so that your donors can understand your message and be motivated to support your campaign.