

# THE ESSENTIAL SEVEN: PREP STEPS FOR CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT SUCCESS

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## *Table of Contents*



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<i>Introduction</i>	3
<i>Step 1. Dream. Bigger.</i>	8
<i>Step 2. Know Thyself.</i>	10
<i>Step 3. Build Your Base.</i>	13
<i>Step 4. Make Great Friends.</i>	16
<i>Step 5. Prove Market and Economic Feasibility.</i>	19
<i>Step 6. Crunch Numbers and Business Plan.</i>	21
<i>Step 7. Live on Two Planes.</i>	24

# READY FOR SUCCESS

## THE ESSENTIAL SEVEN:

### PREP STEPS FOR CAPITAL SUCCESS

#### LOUISE K. STEVENS

Over the past three decades, I have helped hundreds of organizations understand how to prepare for *success in growth*. Through good times, and during plenty of bad times when it seemed like the forces around them – funding, politics, trends – were working against them, these organizations worked with me to prepare for the expansion of programs, new or expanded buildings, and related budgetary growth to support their mission. My clients have been successful in raising just about \$1 billion in capital for their success, and they’ve raised that capital in all ways – from traditional capital campaigns to campaigns that include public funding and financing, and even crowdsourcing.

Your organization can be every bit as successful.

#### *It Starts Long, Long Before a Campaign.*

What do I mean by “success in growth?” For most organizations, it means being ready for a significant opportunity. And big opportunities are rarely funded or financed through annual operating budgets alone. They merit capital campaigns – either funding or financing or both – to raise significant new capital to leverage growth. The growth lever could be a building, a major working capital capacity, new satellites, or a new venture – for example, a museum launching a school. No matter what big opportunity is out there, your organization needs to prepare for it long in advance – when you are years out, not months. This is fundamental to your success!

Every group that has been successful in growth – whether a small rural community center or one of the country’s largest institutions – has followed six key steps to success *before* getting into the capital campaign mode. Before they do the capital campaign study. Before they hire the architects. Before they make the first donor ask.

#### *First, you get to the bottom of the mountain.*

When I was in my early 20's I wanted to learn how to climb mountains. Living in the relatively flat land of the Midwest at the time, I envisioned a process of basically walking up to the start of a climb and then taking on the steep cliff. Sort of "its flat until the bottom of the mountain..."

*The start of the mountain in my mind's eye.*



So, I prepared. I got the training. I got in shape. I planned the trip. I booked the guide. I got to the mountain. And then...

I walked, uphill, for what seemed like an eternity. I stumbled, fell, and even slid down smack on my butt.

*Getting to the start of the mountain.*



As I learned (the hard way), the bottom of any mountain grows from a vast, upward slope of loose rock called scree. It isn't at all stable. It shifts under your feet until you question every step. It tests every ounce of your will, but more so, it tests your preparation – both mental/emotional, and physical. My mind started playing the self-doubt tape loops: "Why am I doing this?" And "why didn't anyone tell me I'd have to go through this before I started the fun stuff?" The exciting stuff – harnessed to the rope, climbing up cliffs to the top – only comes after you've conquered the scree. So, if you want to see that view from the top, you should prepare – really prepare – for that unglamorous but essential first phase.

I learned a lot from that first (humiliating) experience. Yes, I did make it to the top, but it was far more painful and protracted – for both me and my patient guide – than either of us ever anticipated. Then years later, as I was coaching organizations to successful growth, memories of my first attempt at getting up to the base of the mountain flooded back. It led me to increase my consulting focus on the unglamorous but essential prep for success. It led me into digging around in databases and drafting endless scenarios of business and financial models to plot all that could happen to an organizational client hoping to grow. It led me into doing deep dive market studies and debt financing analyses, very often while my clients were

impatiently wanting to rig up and get into the adrenaline pumping stuff of the climb itself.

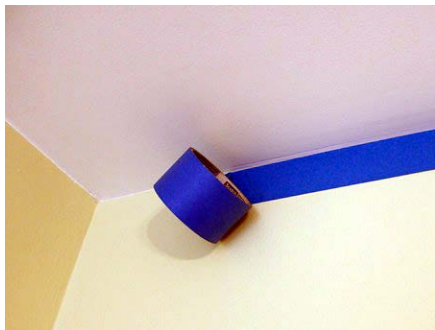
My goal has always been supporting the sustainability and strength of creative and civic nonprofits. And too often, I've seen groups stumble and even fall before they get to the ask on that first great successful campaign gift. That's what led me to codify the *essential prep steps for capital success*.

*Success Begins with Prep. These are steps to take a year or even more before you come close to doing a fundraising feasibility study.*

The need for prep is so universal but is so rarely examined that I want to share my *seven prep steps for capital success* with you. These are *steps to take a year or even more before* you come close to doing a feasibility study. I know – it seems like a lot of prep time when you want to start raising contributions or gaining financing now.

But do you want to double or triple your chances of success? Do you want to not only achieve but surpass your goals?

- ✓ Follow these six steps, and you will be absolutely positioned for success, whether your goal is \$50,000 or \$50 million.
- ✓ Follow these steps, and when you invest in your feasibility study, you will hear that prospects are compelled to support and are interested and ready to hear more.
- ✓ Follow these, and your campaign counsel will be able to guide you up the next part of the mountain.



Let's take another look at the role of prep, with a different story, one I'm sure you'll recognize all too well.

If you've ever painted a room, you know exactly how it feels: all that time spent on taping around the ceiling, the trim, and the windows and doors; spackling and sanding areas where the walls need attention; taking the switch plates off; even putting down drop cloths and organizing your paint area.

Have you ever cheated – just decided you can get the job done without the prep? I know I have, because like many of you I have an impatient streak in

me that comes out whenever I face “prep.” I think I can jump over the prep to get it done faster. You know the rest of the story: the painting job is a mess, and sometimes a disaster. There’s constant clean up where the brush touched the window trim. That paint drip on the carpet will require one of those rental carpet cleaners. Total time spent? Forever, and it still isn’t done. Happy process for everyone involved? Not. Successfully completed quality job? No.

Success requires prep. But because prep can be daunting for even the most organized of us, I’ve put together my six steps for capital success in a mini-diagnostic, a self-help test that you, your staff team members and your board can each take. Score yourself, and then score everyone’s completed diagnostic as a group.

A PERFECT “READY FOR SUCCESS” SCORE FOR THIS DIAGNOSTIC IS “18.” A NOT YET READY SCORE IS “56.” HOW CLOSE DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION COME TO 18?

Look at your strong areas, and then really, ponder areas where you disagreed or didn’t score as high as you hoped. Use this as a discussion starter – a neutral way to have tough conversations that could get pushed aside in a normal board meeting or planning session.

I would love to hear from you about your prep process.

*Email me. [lstevens@artsmarket.com](mailto:lstevens@artsmarket.com)*

Do you want to talk it through? Do you need counsel or coaching to move through the prep? If you need help in the process or want to take it to the next level: email me at [lstevens@artsmarket.com](mailto:lstevens@artsmarket.com) After years of working with clients to position them for success - long before they even know the total amount they plan to raise - I’ve not only developed this diagnostic: *I’ve shaped an intensive, time and cost effective on-site process during which I can lead you through the scree at the bottom of the mountain.* My process will facilitate crucial dialogue and ensure that you move forward to success step by step without falling, to get you ready for the adrenaline rush of planning a campaign and finally to that view from the top of the mountain!

To your success!

*Louise*





## Step 1: Dream, Bigger.

*"Do those involved in your organization have dreams for its future? Are they big, bold, compelling dreams?"*

When I asked those questions twenty years ago, I almost always heard a resounding **YES!** Sadly, years of recession, challenged funding and financing have crushed a lot of nonprofit organizational dreams, to the point where the spark that inspires is gone. And that's more than sad. It's debilitating. Imagine going through life without dreams and without the excitement of planning for those dreams to come true. Lately, for many nonprofits, dreams have been replaced by a status quo that comes from just getting by, staying afloat, maintaining things as they are.

*"The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it." - Michelangelo*

I believe that embedded in the very concept of nonprofits is the belief in doing more, doing better, serving greater, reaching further: in short, dreams that uplift and inspire the organization to do what others can't. Of seeing the opportunity to make a greater difference.

I had a sad experience a few years ago just as the recession was coming to an end. I asked the directors of twenty organizations to share their dreams with me so that we could set to work laying the foundation for them to reach those dreams. How many do you think would articulate dreams? Vision? **Zero.**

*Yes, funders demand plans. But they fund dreams and vision. And timid dreams reap timid funding. Bold dreams WIN.*

## *Diagnostic Questions:*



Can everyone in your organization articulate the big, bold dream for your organization and what it can accomplish in the future, the services it can offer, the people (communities) it can serve beyond what it does now?

Yes (1)  Not sure (2)  No (3)

Is the dream big enough to be exciting, challenging, scary, and wonderful? To REALLY make a difference for those served? To inspire all of you throughout your organization to work harder than you've ever thought possible to make it come true?

Yes (1)  Not sure (2)  No (3)

## *Step 2. Know Thyself.*

Self-awareness is the immediate next step after shaping the big, bold, exciting, and even scary dream. And while dreaming is exciting, organizational self-awareness is tough. The center of self-awareness is self-honesty, and organizational honesty is never more important than when prepping for success in major capital fund development.

*People (funders, donors, financiers) support dreams they believe will come true. They invest in vision when it is supported by capacity.*

To get from here to there, your organization is going to face incredible challenges. Every part of your operation will be under a microscope. Every project and program will be evaluated on some level by every funder or financing agency out there. And your leadership – your staff and above all, your board – they’ll be under the microscope as well. Are they not only on-board with the dream but on-board with facing those challenges, directly, personally, with 100 % investment? Can your team get you over the finish line?

Organizational assessment is an absolutely essential task long, long before dialing your favorite capital campaign consultant. And it isn’t just the assessment that needs to be completed: your organization needs to put the assessment recommendations into action. That may mean changing or adding to job descriptions and responsibilities. It may involve improving internal communications and breaking down silos between departments – all important tasks if your organization is going to be able to handle the challenges of offering more, providing better, and going beyond. It may involve backing up top staff with others who can take on essential roles so your best leaders can spend more time out there sharing the vision.

Self-assessment can reveal other hurdles you’ll need to address. Maybe there is a pattern of deficits. Or maybe the board is inactive. Neither of these stops future success if your organization has addressed how to change, and you can put new steps in motion to do so.

Take a self-assessment a look at your board, those of you gathered to support and lead the organization. Is yours a strong governance group with well-

defined governance policies that foster success in growth? Does it have an arms' length distance from you and staff so that it can help you and your organization by looking objectively at all that is done? Is the board deeply engaged in the organization? Is the board completely, absolutely, a financially giving board, at a viable level of significance?

Now add to the self-assessment with a program evaluation or outcomes evaluation that examines everything your organization offers and all the impacts it makes. Understand both the strengths and weaknesses and how to use the findings to guide success.

*“True genius resides in the capacity for evaluation of uncertain, hazardous, and conflicting information.”*

*-Winston Churchill”*

Program and outcome evaluations are the foundations for growth because they provide objective views of what has succeeded – your strengths – and what needs to improve in the context of your world. *Being able to know why certain achievements have eluded the organization is just as important as knowing what has succeeded beyond imagining.* In just a few chapters (months, during your prep process), you'll be actively engaged in business planning which can't be done well without an evaluation of impacts and outcomes.

Do yourself one last favor, right at this juncture. Look at that evaluation with total honesty, with no rose-colored glasses. No matter how hard it is to read, your evaluator's news - especially the hardest parts of it – will be powerful in setting your organization on the course to success.



*Diagnostic Questions:*

Has your organization gone through an honest and comprehensive self-appraisal of organizational strengths and weaknesses within the past year?

Yes (1)  Somewhat (2)  Unsure (3)  No (4)

Have strategies been developed to address the weaknesses, and action started to do so?

Yes (1)  Somewhat (2)  Unsure (3)  No (4)

Can those actions – to get over the weakness-hurdles – lead to *measurable* improvement within a year?

Yes (1)  Somewhat (2)  Unsure (3)  No (4)

Has your board done an objective self-assessment testing its strength as the governance leadership for the organization?

Yes (1)  Somewhat (2)  Unsure (3)  No (4)

Has the organization engaged in an objective, third-party outcomes or impacts (or both) evaluation that have delivered critical findings you can act upon to grow the success of your organization and your organization's work?

Yes (1)  Somewhat (2)  Unsure (3)  No (4)

### *Step 3. Build Your Base.*

Your base – your constituents, attenders, participants, members and donors as compiled on your database - is your chest of gold. It is your biggest lasting asset. Think of that: you have the power, within your chest of gold, to build for your future – but, only if you use it wisely. Here are two examples from groups I worked with.

Group A had a database of some 25,000 households of participants. After I examined these by demographics and interest and other variables, I suggested that about 30% of them could be cultivated to give: these were households that were regulars with the organization but had never or rarely contributed any money. I also found about another 20,000 very similar households in their market, which they could target through direct marketing, first to become attenders and then to cultivate as contributors. They responded that they didn't have time to do this since they were focusing exclusively on their top giving households, those already giving.

Group B had a database of only about 10,000 households. Just as with Group A, they asked for a deep dive examination into their database to help them understand their base. Again, I found a significant number of regulars with significant liquid assets that could be cultivated. Group B jumped on it, setting in motion a year's worth of very targeted outreach to these, each focused on bringing the prospects closer to the organization. Sure, they maintained their close communication with their best supporters, but they recognized the importance of converting more participants into supporters whose closer relationship to the organization could continue to be strengthened over time.

Guess which group built its base in preparation for a capital campaign far in the future? Knowing that they were a good two years in front of a major campaign, Group B worked methodically and strategically to expand its base.

*“Predicting rain doesn’t count: building an Arc does.”  
- Warren Buffet*

I love Buffet’s quote because it shows us how to take positive action long in advance of anything. *Your base is your gold. Prepare for success by broadening your base and examining all the opportunity there is in your base.* Don’t let it sit tucked away in a database so that you never can really, truly see it. (Too often, the base is hidden in year by year layers that no one in the organization can truly examine because no one knows how to dig it out of its framework.)

Extract it. Get it out of its box and look at all of it. I always urge clients to examine all your years of data as a “flat file” so you can see multi-year patterns. Dig for your gold.



When I examine a multi-year database, I’ll look for opportunities that may be hidden away. For example, those individuals who show up as attendee year after year, whose loyalty is proven, but who have never been approached because they’re not on the “most wealthy” list. Or that lapsed member who at one point never missed an opening for years in a row. Knowing all the opportunities you can pursue within your base helps you calculate out an early predictive model for capital success. The many capital fundraising models that are out there will show you how many prospects you need at each level of giving to reach your goal: these models are built on years of field-wide experience. Test your database against the models. If you come up short, invest in cultivation and expansion of your base, just like Group B did, above. (By the way, Group B went on to successfully launch and complete its campaign two years later, after organization-wide focus on building its base.)

*Diagnostic Questions:*

Have you taken all the steps to identify where and how to prospect for your gold from your own base? \_\_Yes (1) \_\_Only partially (2) \_\_No (3)

Do you have a multi-year strategy to fully cultivate that portion of your base you haven't yet developed?

Yes (1)  Only partially (2)  No (3)



### *Step 4. Make Great Friends.*

I'll bet that like most of us you've memorized that old line "it's not fund raising, it's friend raising" and you probably apply it rigorously to annual fund development. But where it really, truly counts is in the prep stages long before rolling out your ideas or rolling out the capital campaign fundraising study. When it comes time to start a feasibility study, your campaign consultant will tell you that a lot of the success of your fund development strategy relies on your circle of solid, proven friends.

Who are they?

- ✓ They're the ones who will open their homes for dinners that let you mingle together with prospects in a warm and supportive setting.
- ✓ They're the ones who will go out of their way to tell business associates how great your ideas are and that they need to get to know your organization – and then they follow up by asking that associate to come with them for a visit.
- ✓ They're the ones who you've told about your ideas for years before they were ready to consider a grant application from you, who listened to you and encouraged you, who now ask for a major application they are ready to take to their board.
- ✓ They're the ones who've given you feedback and ideas but have never written you a check until now, but whose growing belief in your vision and capacity is manifested in a lead gift pledge.

*"The best way to find out if you can trust somebody is to trust them." -Ernest Hemingway*

Hemingway nailed it. The feasibility study interview is too late to know if you can trust a prospective funder or fund gate keeper to support your dreams with commitment. When you make "the ask" is way, way too late to know.

Trust builds slowly on both sides. And trust grows from trust. It begins with your ability to speak about your dreams to gatekeepers – the foundation officers you know, for example, who you can early on ask for advice. It begins when you have a board member you can ask to invite some of her friends to get together to hear your ideas.

The need for well-developed trust has never been more important in fund development than today, when major funding is increasingly seen as investing and when donors seek lasting partnerships with organizations they support. These kinds of partnerships don't start up overnight, and they rarely happen when the prospective investor is approached too late to share fundamental ideas that are incorporated into the plans you have. When the prospect sees the architectural rendering for your building before having a chance to weigh in with a dozen questions that could shape the future design, it's too late.

True friends are those who forgive and move on, and who stick with you when you stumble. To do that, they must believe in you. And to believe in you, they need to have heard - from you, not others - about those stumbles. Now that's hard – especially in the realm of donor development. It's darn hard to go to a gatekeeper and say “we really had a setback this year, but we've learned from it.” Some out there will even counsel you to never, ever do this. As I look over the clients I've been fortunate to work with who have been brilliant in their capital campaigns, one trait always stands out: *those that succeed are those who've been honest with friends whose support they will need* later, during the campaign. These successful organizations have been totally honest through thick and thin with the board members who in turn open doors for them. And when their friends – prospects and gatekeepers to funding - have asked if they've evaluated the impact of their programs or have gone through a careful internal capacity assessment, these organizations brief their friends on the findings and on the action-steps their organization is taking in response.

There's one last, crucial point to emphasize in this section on having friends who have come to believe in you: *Successful capital development begins with the biggest commitments.* Not the smallest. Not the middle-ish. Successful capital development begins when the lead group of donors pledge serious dollars in gifts or financing, which in turn creates an atmosphere of confidence that inspires others. *You, alone, won't be able to get those big commitments.* It is then – at the very start of your campaign, that you most need your fabulous friends. Start building those friendships early, and nurture them, so they are there for you on day one.

*Diagnostic Questions:*

Have you and your organization developed a significant circle of friends who have come to trust you and your organization as able to deliver on your promise?  Yes (1)  Somewhat (2)  No(3)

Have you shared your dreams and vision with them and given them ample opportunity to provide their input and know that their ideas are being addressed?  Yes (1)  Somewhat (2)  No(3)

Are your board members actively cultivating new friends and providing forums to connect them to you and your organization?

Yes (1)  Somewhat (2)  No(3)

### *Step 5. Prove Market and Economic Feasibility.*

Why do you need to do this piece of prep? Sure, you can do it “just” as a pro forma because this is often a requirement by a government funding agency. But seize the opportunity! This is a centrally important step for your organization to take before your detailed facility planning and prior to doing your business planning.

A few years ago, a client came to me with plans for a community arts center that included a school, gallery, and performance space. If you follow facilities such as this, you know that they are increasingly popular, starting up in community after community – especially those where metro sprawl means it can take forever to get to your child’s afterschool music lesson if you are facing freeway traffic for a 10-minute drive that turns into an hour in gridlock.

The downside of this is they are cropping up everywhere! My client needed to understand the market nuances so the organization could determine how to position their center among the many in the metro sprawl. A detailed market study that also included an examination of other similar centers in metro areas with similar sprawl and competition helped focus their ideas and shaped the architectural program for the space. They added spaces for classes and programs they’d never envisioned.

*A good study should not just test market and economic impact, but open doors and discover opportunities to make the vision financially viable and deepen the social - as well as economic - value to the community.*

The market study also looked at potential facility partnerships. Turned out that graduates from the local university wanted to stay in the community, but needed affordable studio work space. Again, this bit of market knowledge directly shaped the architectural plan and while it would increase the capital budget and expand the original vision, it transformed the concept from good to fantastic.

Next came the economic modeling. With the right location choice, this center had the potential to anchor a redevelopment zone and as such spur on increased development and property values in the blocks surrounding the site. Armed with this as well as the employment and other economic data, the Center successfully secured a commitment of TIF (Tax Increment Financing) from its municipality.

*None of this opportunity would have happened without this study and the doors it opened.*

*Diagnostic Question:*

Has your organization undertaken an independent study that evaluates *opportunities for the best possible market and economic value your vision can offer* to your community?  Yes(1)  
 No (2)



## *Step 6. Crunch Numbers and Business Plan.*

If you've been wondering when this guide would finally get to the subject of business planning – now is the time. There's a reason why it hasn't come earlier in the process: getting the first five steps going, and getting input and feedback from each of them will give your organization a much stronger foundation for moving forward.

Remember, before you plan, you'll need these tools in place:

- ✓ The vision.
- ✓ A solid, strong base.
- ✓ The self-awareness from operational and governance assessment and program evaluation.
- ✓ A growing circle of friends.
- ✓ An independent evaluation of market and economic opportunity and options.

*Now you are ready to plan, putting all this insight and knowledge to good use in growing your success.*

There are three iterative elements to a solid business plan.

- 1) Study others, both your competition and peers and those you hope to have as peers. This means looking hard at others who have done something similar, in other markets around the country. Don't just study the organizations that prove your point or that support your intent: study those that haven't done well, and examine their challenges.

- 2) Use all the work you have already done as the foundation for your plan. This includes the vision, the data on your base, the internal assessments and evaluations and the input you have received from your circle of friends, and your market/economic studies. Combine this with the internal study work you have done on peers and competitors. Make a briefing book out of this. This is the foundation for your plan and needs to be reviewed cover to cover by every board and team member!

*With a completely engaged team of board and staff - no one leaves early, no one skips this step - set key business goals to reach the vision.*

*This must be based honestly and thoughtfully on a thorough understanding of your strengths and weaknesses.* Use the study information to inform your goals and objectives. Consider everything your organization will need to do to “get ready” for growth, during growth (your capital development phase/ramp up) and supporting growth (the new programs and services that will be expected at the new level of operations).



From time to time, I've been called on to examine an organization after it has completed a capital project. Typically, the organization is financially floundering in its new space and is unable to either meet debt obligations or to satisfy donor conditions. In fact, the board chair of my very first consulting client some 35 years ago came to me with this problem.

*“We built it and now - just a year later - they are about ready to padlock the doors,” he said. “What do we do now?”*

Their problem – like those of many other organizations – grew out of insufficient market and financial planning as well as board participation in the process that wasn't as deeply invested as necessary. The board didn't examine all possible scenarios and didn't set internal benchmarks that would help them identify unpredicted issues throughout the capital and initial operation.

- 3) To be sure this doesn't happen to your organization, develop detailed – extremely detailed – budget scenarios to support each phase of your business plan. Accurately identify the cash flows that will be necessary – and in this, pay special attention to the “get ready” and “ramp up” stages. In doing this, be honest about real operational requirements to forge ahead. In fact, your cash flow planning may lead to short term strategies that build cash working cash reserves now, leading to stability through growth later. My first client hadn't predicted the ramp up cash flow needs of operating in their new space. Many, many clients since then have had the exact same issue.
- 4) Be sure your board is 100% committed to the business strategies and the financials. Add to that commitment: test the business plan and assumptions while they are in draft format with your circle of friends, and welcome their insights as you shape the final version of the plan.

#### *Diagnostic Questions:*

In advance of business planning, have all your team members thoroughly reviewed their “briefing books?”

Yes (1)  Some of the information (2)  No (3)

Have you included various realistic cash flow scenarios within your business plan along with revenue strategies to meet each scenario?

Yes (1)  Some of the information (2)  No (3)



Have you invited friends who have insight into the challenges your venture will face as it ramps up in its new programming and/or facility to review your business and financial models and give you their thoughts?  
\_\_ Yes (1) \_\_Some of the information (2) \_\_No (3)

## Step 7. Live on Two Planes.



You're almost there – almost ready to dial up your architectural team to put their final touches on your plans and call in your capital campaign consultants to start that feasibility study.

The next months, even years, are going to be a wild ride. Your time and that of your board and all your staff and team members will be pulled and pushed in ways you never imagined. Are you ready for the ride?

*"You've got to think about big things while you're doing small things so that all the small things go in the right direction." - Alvin Toffler*

Saying this is a challenging time is an understatement: it is a time when your organization can become fragile and damaged if you as a leader and your board as governance leaders don't master the skill of living on two planes at the same time.

This is when using your business plan to guide every month's actions will make a difference. (Be sure your business plan addresses this ramp up time!) On one hand, your team will be engaged in the same good work they have always been engaged in, day by day. At the same time, they and you will be engaged in building capacity in every way to be able to operate at a new, higher level in a short few years. You'll be launching those new programs and expanding those offerings. To be ready, that means building the new programs now, and that typically means securing funding to study and pilot programs in the short term so you will be able to announce them when those ribbons are cut.

After thinking about this ramp up period, go back to your business plan. Have you built in all the ramp up work you need to?

The one negative that often impedes ramp up capacity development is a lack of operating funding at this critical juncture. Be sure that your business plan is honest about the cash flow you'll need to support capacity development during this time: you can't possibly hire a full new team, for

example, in the month or two before or after an opening! This is where board giving and other early and quiet giving by close friends makes your organization successful in growth and it is one of your board's most important proving points to move your organization to the starting line for capital development. Their giving to support growth now, before the campaign, will prove (or not) their shared belief in every bit of the prep work you have done so far. It exemplifies their belief in the vision - and its viability for your organization - as tested and proven through all the steps you've taken. It is the final indicator of success – the indication that those closest to the organization are ready to step up with support - that your organization needs to proceed.

Now, go ahead and commission that architectural plan. Call your capital campaign consultant. Success is within reach.

#### Diagnostic Questions:

Does your business plan detail out the realistic ramp up actions you must launch and complete to be “ready” for expansion, with the financial resources required to support this? \_\_Yes (1) \_\_No (2)

Have your board members committed financially – not by tapping future capital campaign prospects prematurely – but through their own giving, to this ramp up stage? \_\_ Yes (1) \_\_ No (2)

*“Board giving to support growth now, before the campaign, will prove (or not) their shared belief in every bit of the prep work you have done so far. It is the final indicator of success your organization needs to proceed.”*

## *About the Author*

Louise Stevens co-founded the consulting firm ArtsMarket with her business partner and husband John Stevens in 1982 and has counselled hundreds of organizations to success through these prep stages for growth in nearly every state throughout the US. She's reviewed organizational capacity to move forward through major capital development on behalf of foundations and government agencies. She also leads market and financial feasibility studies and provides business planning for clients in the arts, culture, museum, heritage, and creative sectors. You can reach Louise at [lstevens@artsmarket.com](mailto:lstevens@artsmarket.com) More information can be found at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/louisekstevens> or at [www.artsmarket.com](http://www.artsmarket.com)