



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Campaign Feasibility Report

“Double Our Impact”

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Prepared by:



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“One hundred times a day I remind myself that my personal and professional life depends on the fruit of the work of other people, living and dead, and that I should make every effort to give in the same measure in which I have received and am receiving.”

– Albert Einstein (1879-1955)



Executive Summary

Rotary Club of Des Moines & RCDM Foundation Campaign Feasibility Study & Strategy Process

The Rotary Club of Des Moines (RCDM) and its Foundation engaged TPG Companies to create a Case-for-Support and to assess its potential to conduct a capital campaign. The Campaign Feasibility Study & Strategy Process began February 15, 2017 to test timing, giving capacity/interest, leadership, project appeal, organizational capacities, etc.

Rotary / TPG phases of work included: Case-for-Support including strategic articulation, positioning and credentialing; study process planning; RCDM leader invitations and interviews; RCDM member cultivation survey; data and records evidence gathering, synthesis, and analysis; development of findings, and formulation of conclusions and recommendations as expressed in the written report and/or conveyed to Rotary leaders via prior communications.

Background research has included Rotary events as platforms to connect with members (prospects) and with Rotary and community leaders, six Steering Committee / Board sessions, plus additional TPG/Rotary Steering Committee Leader meetings and communications. A detailed Preliminary Case-for-Support was developed for use with a series of personal meetings, cultivation surveys, and one-on-one interviews. Initially a minimum of 25 interviews were planned; ultimately 33 were conducted by TPG's President, Paul Kirpes and Business Strategist & Engineer, Jake Kirpes (both are Rotarians).

Feasibility Study results indicate exceptionally favorable reviews for the mission, vision, *Double Our Impact* concept as well as the overall current leadership, programming and offerings of the Rotary Club of Des Moines / RCDM Foundation. Individual prospective donors / members confidentially strategized with TPG's Paul Kirpes to identify giving strategies, ways to expand and structure their potential commitments, and how to prioritize options to attract potential givers (major and other donors as well as volunteers). Individuals from diverse settings are expressing their support for the *Double Our Impact* vision and many have volunteered to help in raising funds for this potential campaign.

As of September 26, 2017, more than \$25,000 from multiple individuals & businesses (plus significant pro bono services and scores of volunteer hours) have been received toward the Double Our Impact initiative – all of which was not formally solicited.

Elements Necessary for Success

In TPG's experience, no two campaigns are identical in terms of objectives, circumstances, people, priorities, or execution. However, several elements rise to the top as being essential in order to assure reasonable probability of campaign success. These are:

1. **Compelling Case-for-Support:** The organization and project, by virtue of their contributions to society, their image and reputation for excellence, and record of service must be deemed worthy of support from its potential giving and investing constituencies. This includes a high level of quality, strong management, and soundness of plan. A persuasive Case-for Support must tell the story in a way that is clear, concise, compelling and accountable.
2. **Urgency:** There must be a high degree of understanding of the need for the proposed project, the optimum timing for beginning the project, the optimum timing for beginning funding / fundraising for the project, and the planned progression of campaign/financing phases. The plan to meet those needs must be acceptable to the project's potential stakeholders and other constituencies.
3. **Potential for Support:** The funds sought must be available within the constituencies (financial capacity), and the funds must be obtainable (organization has or can develop linkages and attraction to the funder prospects).
4. **Receptivity:** A project must have a reasonably high priority in the philanthropic, economic, and social consideration of the institution's constituencies; those constituencies must be receptive to a pro-active fund-raising / capital campaign on behalf of the project and organization.
5. **Internal Preparedness:** There must be the capacity to plan, organize, and carry out a major fund-raising effort. An organization must have experienced professional staff and effective management support systems in place to prepare for and to manage a funding initiative and/or fund-raising campaign.
6. **Leadership:** The responsible leadership group must form a dedicated unit behind the resource development program and/or campaign. They must exemplify a willingness to give and to work to bring the effort to a successful conclusion.
7. **Organization of Volunteers:** There must be an organization comprised of informed, well-trained, enthused, and influential leaders.



I. FINDINGS

A. **Reputation of Club, Foundation, & Leadership**

1. **Highly positive Club reputation** – responding members have high regard for and appreciate this Club.
2. **Highly positive about Club & Foundation Leadership:** President (Jaimie Boersma), Board/s Leadership, Management & Administration – they see current leaders as very strong (including Feasibility Study Steering Committee).
3. **Most like the Foundation** and its awards, scholarships, & club service projects.
 - a. Reputation of Community Grants is mixed. Many feel the grants are too small to have much impact, and there’s confusion about who makes the decisions, how they happen, Club and recipients’ accountabilities thereof, communications of selection criteria and process, etc.
4. **Strong interest and support for enhancing and growing the membership (influence and numbers):**
 - a. Some concern regarding changing membership, especially:
 - Fewer members than prior years (270 versus nearly 400 some years ago).
 - Fewer “high-level” business people (e.g. business owners and C-suite).
 - b. Positive about changing demographics: younger, more diverse membership.

B. **The Proposed *Double Our Impact* Campaign**

1. **Vision & Case-for-Support**
 - a. Most are complimentary or very complimentary of the professionalism, vision, process, and quality of the Feasibility Study and Case-for-Support.
 - b. Virtually all were very pleased, impressed, and even inspired by the Case-for-Support; saw some components being useful in other ways i.e. Membership.
 - c. Most support the *Double Our Impact* vision – especially if they’ve been closely involved with Foundation-funded programs, prior Foundation campaigns, or are long-time Rotarians.
 - d. Respondents generally felt that a fundraising campaign first and primarily focused within the Club is the appropriate way to raise additional funds for the Foundation, as opposed to seeking funding from grants, corporate sources, or individuals outside the Club.
 - e. Many want (and will require) examples or more specificity about how the funds would be used. There’s a desire to define how we help the Des Moines community in ways that fit Rotary and are even “distinctively Rotary,” i.e., as convener, catalyst, inspirer, collaborative leverage, etc.
 - f. On a related note: Scores indicated that the case for larger/more impactful or even transformative Rotary grants could be more compelling if they had more clarity of what are the criteria, who decides, how will accountability be better than the current grant process, etc. to grab hold of and get excited about – i.e., how we’d hold grantees accountable; how we’d involve & engage club members more completely and effectively; how we’d share information about each grant recipient’s outcome, results, and impact our grant catalyzed; and more.
 - g. Case & Member Engagement Considerations:

- A few indicated they would not support a Foundation campaign at this time. An effective counter: Engage capable campaign leadership and a clear but adaptable plan, including regular member engagement and communications.
- We noted potential real or perceived “competition” from Rotary International. Some who care deeply about Rotary already feel highly fulfilled by their giving to the RI Foundation, and don’t currently have that same positive feeling about giving to the Club’s Foundation. Increased clarity and specificity in the *Double Our Impact* campaign message could boost interest among these members.

2. Willingness to Serve

- a. 9 yes and 10 perhaps of interviewees (33), and 11 yes or “already involved yes” of Survey respondents (50) said they’d be willing to help with the Campaign, but most did not automatically step up as willing to be a campaign leader (not unusual, unless they’re specifically recruited). A handful said “yes if asked” – depending on others involved, the goal, timeframe, prep work completed, etc.
- b. 72 individual names were shared with us as potential good campaign leaders or workers from within the Club.
 - However, many of those declined campaign leadership and/or leadership-gift level commitment indications.
- c. Types of people who would be good leaders, as suggested by members:
 - Club Presidents. Current & past presidents, because they’re well known and well respected in the Club.
 - “Younger” Club members. Older members who have led many campaigns in the past indicated that they would like others to take on such roles now – but could be convinced to be advisors. Several also indicated that leaders in their 30’s to 50’s may connect better with younger Club members.

3. Willingness to Give

- a. Most indicate they will give something – but don’t see the Foundation as a high priority for a major gift, at least as the campaign is described/defined now.
- b. We don’t have top level gifts yet. Six interviewees so far have indicated they have made plans or may consider commitments (pledge and/or estate) of \$100,000 or more – some with contingencies or other qualifications and most would be via estate giving.
 - a. Responses were mixed as to whether members believe the \$1.4 million goal is attainable. At best, most thought it would take hard work.
 - b. We noted an underlying tension and sense of potential coming instability – a sense of “angst” from people, related to societal, economic, political, weather conditions. If one or more triggers happen this could impact their willingness to make large commitments.
 - c. Some told us they have already allocated estate commitments (planned gifts) to the Foundation. You could count these gifts in a campaign total if you are able to confirm such legacy commitments from people.

4. **Internal Readiness**

- a. We heard strong desire for further clarity and perhaps tweaks regarding how the Foundation does its work, and communicates with the larger club membership. For instance:
 - Enhance clarity about how the “pieces” fit together – i.e., how does Carl Weeks Circle membership fit into/with this campaign?
 - Re-think the Foundation’s Donor Acknowledgement processes to include more “timely, personal and heartfelt Thank-You’s to donors (beyond the IRS-required acknowledgements).”
 - Design Donor Recognition Program including consider adding naming opportunities for community grants, Social Entrepreneur and Impact Grants, scholarships, awards, camperships, etc.,
- b. Some expressed concern that the Foundation may need additional “infrastructure” to support increased activity that comes with a campaign. They are concerned there is not enough staff and/or volunteer capacity in place – but note that perhaps it could be added to as needed.

II. **CONCLUSIONS**

Using our proprietary methods and decades of experience and expertise and based on what’s currently known, we find a Base Goal of \$500,000 could be achieved (and a Challenge Goal of \$625,000 or more can also be considered) **with the following understandings:**

1. Campaign leadership is effectively recruited and engaged – enthusiastic and committed.
2. Campaign leaders wholeheartedly set the campaign goal.
3. ALL commitments count toward the goal – whether they are pledged, outright, or legacy/estate gifts.
4. RCDM builds upon the unexpected number of members who have already included the Foundation in their estate plans, particularly by cultivating a broader array of members to include the Rotary Foundation in their estate plans.
5. The campaign is planned & implemented effectively. In fact, we find when entities execute extremely well, it is possible to exceed Feasibility Studies’ findings.
6. You regularly and effectively communicate about the Foundation and Campaign to RCDM members.
7. The campaign launches by early November (ideally in October) to cultivate and enable year-end gifts.
8. The economy – particularly in central Iowa – and prospects’ economic conditions – remain at least as strong as they are now.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

As Rotary Club of Des Moines / RCDM Foundation leaders make next-steps decisions, TPG offers the following recommended actions.¹

A. Update/Refine Case-for-Support before announcing campaign

1. Add **complementary content that provides clarity and specifics** about how the newly raised funds would be used and managed.
2. **Define** the kind/s of transformation you want to catalyze in the community.
3. How is this **distinctly Rotary**? Articulate what's different about what RCDM will do with these resources, as opposed to other places people can direct their support.

B. Prospects / Potential for Support

1. Acquire / confirm **Leadership Gifts**.
2. **Determine for each prospect:** amount to ask, who will ask, what approach to use, when to ask.
3. **Promote multiple ways of giving.** Such as farms, properties, estate/legacy gifts; fine art, antiquities, collectables, appreciated assets, income-generating gifts/annuities, etc.
4. Begin a **Memorial & In-Honor Gifts Program**. A Foundation program that allows people to give to RCDM in memory of / in honor of someone could be a valuable way to raise Foundation funds – and a key connector to a Planned/Estate Giving program.
5. Develop potential **naming and recognition opportunities** for major Foundation / campaign donors.

C. Activate Leadership

1. **Recruit Campaign Leadership** before launching campaign. Chair/Tri-Chairs, Leadership Team and Advisory Cabinet.
2. **Follow through** with those who indicated their interest in being involved with the *Double Our Impact* campaign, wanted more information, know others with whom they want to share information, or want to become more involved with the Foundation.

D. Organize and Prepare

1. Have the **Foundation Board** take formal action to recommend moving forward with a campaign, with a stated campaign goal and time frame.
2. Have the **RCDM Board** receive and review the Foundation Board's recommendation, and take formal action to approve the campaign and goal.
3. Evaluate and identify options for **Campaign Support / Operational Capacities**. Establish campaign organizational structure and roles, prospect allocation and coordination, define roles and ensure capacities are in place.

¹ *Note: these recommended actions do **not** constitute a Campaign Implementation Plan. Such a plan should appropriately be designed by campaign leaders, after considering this Report together with their own priorities, capacities, knowledge, and experience.*

4. **Campaign Prep and Materials.** Prospect Commitment / Pledge Card, Sample Letter of Intent, Asker Training, Prospect Allocation and Coordination, affirm current Gift Acceptance and Acknowledgement Processes and Procedures; etc.
5. Review and improve the Foundation’s **Donor Acknowledgement** processes to include more “timely, personal and heartfelt Thank-You’s to donors (beyond the IRS-required acknowledgements).”
6. **Communicate regularly** and clearly with Club members about Foundation processes and practices, the impact of Foundation grants and activities on recipients, and the ways in which RCDM members can be involved with Foundation activities.

E. Additional Opportunities / Considerations

1. **Foundation Grants.** Many responding members would like to see fewer, larger grants made, and a focus on projects that are distinctively Rotary, make a difference in “moving the needle”, and will have a clear, durable or even transformative impact on the Des Moines community and our Club.
2. **Planned/Estate Giving.** The Foundation could do itself and the Club membership a service by actively helping members in this arena, including drawing on the resources of the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines to educate members about options and help them through the process.
3. **Widows and Widowers.** We see large opportunities down the road if the Club choses a model that keeps those folks engaged both during and after their Spouse is alive/active Rotarian. There are models from clubs in other countries (European countries / Ireland do this well).
4. **Membership Retention and Acquisition.** Targeted initiative/s designed to enhance and grow the RCDM membership – both continuing to bring in new members and also to help keep members involved and engaged over time. Many options here, including strategies to continue to enhance spouse and family member engagement.