

Nonprofit Fundraising Essentials

# Module 1 Workshop

🕒 2.5 HRS



In  
partnership  
with



# INTRODUCTION TO ACUMEN ACADEMY WORKSHOPS

Acumen Academy offers free online courses that are designed to be taken by teams of colleagues or friends.

Why do we design courses for teams? We have found that people who take our courses in teams are more likely to submit their assignments, have meaningful experiences, and translate their learning into real-life change at their nonprofit.

## Course Structure

Every module in this course consists of readings and a workshop. First, you should review the readings independently. Then, you should hold your team workshop.

The workshops begin with discussion questions about the readings, followed by activities related to the concepts introduced in the module. The workshops will build upon each other and conclude with your fundraising plan.

## How to Earn Credit

To earn credit for a module, you are required to submit an output from your workshop, such as a worksheet or a presentation deck, on the online course platform. Remember that each team

member must submit their assignments independently to earn credit.

In Workshop One, you will discuss your feelings about asking for money, and then work as a team to discuss the role of your mission and impact in fundraising.

**Note:** We recommend that you take this course with your nonprofit colleagues. However, if you prefer to complete this course independently, we suggest that you respond to the discussion questions in a journal.

# INTRODUCTION TO ACUMEN ACADEMY WORKSHOPS

## Agenda and Logistics

We estimate this workshop will take about 2.5 hours. At any point in this course, you are welcome to spend more or less time on an assignment depending on your needs.

We recommend that you structure your time like this:

## Suggested Agenda

- + Introductions and Course Logistics (20 minutes)
- + Discuss the Readings and Videos (40 minutes)
- + Refine Your Mission Statement (30 minutes)
- + Discuss Your Theory of Change and Results (1 hour)

## Before You Begin

- + Choose one of your team members to be the timekeeper for this workshop.

## Supplies

- + Scrap paper or a whiteboard
- + Markers, pencils, or pens
- + Desktop or laptop computer



# INTRODUCTIONS AND COURSE LOGISTICS

20 minutes

Discuss these questions as a team and establish expectations to help you succeed in the course.

## 1. Introductions

Get started by encouraging every member of the team to answer these questions:

- + What are your reasons for taking this course?
- + How would you describe your knowledge about fundraising?
- + How much time do you have to devote to the course every week?
- + At the end of the course, what do you hope to have learned?

## 2. Team Norms & Time Commitment

We recommend that you establish a few rules or norms for how you would like to collaborate in the course. Discuss how you can structure your team meetings to create an environment of fun, learning, and respect.

- + How do you learn best?
- + How can you support the learning of your team members?
- + What happens if someone cannot attend a meeting?

## 3. Scheduling

This course consists of five modules over six weeks. To benefit from the team experience, we encourage everyone to attend every workshop. Review the course schedule and decide when you would like to hold your team meetings. The most successful teams schedule all their meetings at the beginning of the course.

- + Who will be responsible for scheduling the workshops?
- + When and where will the workshops take place?

# DISCUSS THE READINGS AND VIDEOS

**40 minutes**

Discuss these questions as a team. Take notes to remember your discussion and reflect back at the end of the course.

1. Discuss your nonprofit's approach to fundraising today.
  - + Who is responsible for fundraising?
  - + What are the challenges, frustrations, or risks related to the way you raise money?

2. The reading shared advice on fundraising without fear or shame and partnering with funders to achieve a shared mission.

- + How did you feel about asking for money before enrolling in this course?
- + What were your reactions to this section of the reading?

3. You read interviews and case studies from nonprofit founders and fundraisers. Each team member should select one and share the key lessons and surprising insights in their own words.

# REFINE YOUR MISSION STATEMENT

**30 minutes**

Your mission statement expresses your goals to potential donors and broader audiences. It should be simple, memorable, and inspirational.<sup>1</sup>

In this section of the workshop, you will discuss and refine your mission statement.

## Warm Up

Take about five minutes to visit the websites of other nonprofits in your sector. Write down the mission statements on their homepages or “About Us” pages. Then share as a team.

- + Which mission statements do you like the most?
- + Which do you like the least?
- + What makes them effective or ineffective?

1- The Bridgespan Group, [Mission and Vision Statements](#)

## Discuss and Refine Your Mission Statement

Now, reflect on your nonprofit's mission statement. (If you don't have one already, you can use this as an opportunity to create one.)

Kevin Starr, Director of the Mulago Foundation, introduced a concept called the "Eight Word Mission Statement."<sup>2</sup> It consists of three parts:

- + A verb
- + A target population
- + A measurable outcome

Kevin recommends that you avoid jargon, such as "capacity building" or "empowerment." Instead, focus on clear actions and results.

## Discuss your mission statement as a team and take notes:

- + Does it describe your purpose and the outcomes you intend to achieve?
- + Is it memorable?
- + Is it easy to find on your website and social media?



# DISCUSS YOUR THEORY OF CHANGE AND RESULTS

**1 hour**

In this section of the workshop, you will discuss your theory of change and impact. Later in the course, these elements will be an important part of your nonprofit's value proposition and case for support.

**Note:** *If you would like to learn more about developing a theory of change and a plan for measuring results, you can enroll in Social Impact Analysis, a free online course from Acumen Academy.*

## Express Your Theory of Change

Your theory of change explains the reasoning or assumptions for why your nonprofit's activities will lead to long-term impact

Discuss your theory of change as a team. (You can focus on a specific program or organization-wide.) Imagine you are speaking with a potential funder:

- + How would you explain how your activities lead to impact?
- + What makes your approach different from other nonprofits?

If you have trouble describing your theory of change, it can be helpful to start with an impact hypothesis: “If we do X, then Y will change, because...”

### Discuss Your Results

Today, more foundations and individual donors are interested in supporting nonprofits that are focused on results and can clearly measure their outcomes.

As a team, discuss your track record of results to build your case for potential donors:

- + What metrics do you track to determine if you are achieving your mission?
- + What are the best examples of your nonprofit’s impact, both data and stories, that you can share with potential donors?