



Better Fundraising. Better Results.

**Funding Feasibility Study and Capital Campaign Management
Proposal**

Prepared For



Fort Bragg, California

June 2016

CONFIDENTIAL

**This proposal for fundraising services is intended solely for use by
Three Rivers Charter School**

Convergent Nonprofit Solutions – Firm Overview

Introduction

Convergent Nonprofit Solutions (Convergent) is a national fundraising consulting firm that specializes in managing feasibility studies and capital campaigns for nonprofit organizations. Although Convergent flexibly customizes fundraising solutions to meet our clients' needs, we primarily provide comprehensive campaign management services that minimize the burden on their staff and professional solicitations that minimize the burden on their volunteers. Convergent also utilizes the Investment-Driven Model™, an approach we pioneered, to raise more money than our competitors. We move donors from a “charity” mindset to one of “investment.” The result is larger pledges, more stakeholder engagement, and greater long-term organizational success.

Convergent is highly interested in partnering with Three Rivers Charter School (TRCS) and is pleased to provide this proposal for consideration.

Primary Contact

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Key Reasons to Partner with Convergent

Convergent is the perfect fit for TRCS for a host of reasons, including:

Extensive Relevant Experience – The Convergent team of experts has experience raising money for hundreds of nonprofits in 50 states and several foreign countries. The vast majority of Convergent's business is focused on managing major fundraising campaigns or conducting feasibility studies to position such campaigns for maximum success. They take place in small, rural communities and major metropolitan areas. They include community-based, regional, statewide and national projects. We have extensive experience working with educational institutions, including charter schools.

Flexible Approach – Convergent doesn't take a cookie-cutter approach to campaign management. Convergent recognizes that one size does not fit all and strives to bring intelligence

and creativity to the table and work with you in structuring sensible solutions. If some aspect of our proposed process does not meet your expectation, let us know and we will adapt accordingly. Every step of the way, Convergent will be committed to customizing solutions that meet your specific needs, circumstances, budget, and preferences.

Hands On Campaign Management – We can do more than “coach and counsel” you on how to implement a campaign. We can actually manage the day-to-day details and do the heavy lifting, minimizing the burden on your team. We can offer a more traditional “periodic counsel” arrangement if desired, but most of our clients opt for the value derived from the full-time comprehensive campaign management model that sets us apart from other consulting firms.

Professional Solicitations – Over our many years of fundraising, we have found few volunteers who truly like asking their peers for money. We can take that burden off their shoulders. When engaged for a full-time comprehensive management campaign, we attend each solicitation, make a consistent and professional presentation, and actually make “the ask” for money. We still need volunteer support, but it’s more of a door-opening and conversation-starting role. Having said that, if your volunteers prefer to ask for money, we will customize an approach that meets your needs and maximizes funds raised – whatever makes the most sense from your perspective.

Top Notch Team – Convergent has brought together the best and brightest in the industry with a diverse array of experience and expertise. The following team members at a minimum will be assigned to your project:

Mark Bergethon, Principal—Project Team Leader

- Worked on more than 80 feasibility studies and capital campaigns.
- Conducted dozens of successful high-profile six, seven, and eight-figure funding requests.
- Former attorney, published author, successful entrepreneur, and regular speaker on fundraising topics at conferences across the country.
- B.A. from Emory University and J.D. from University of Georgia.
- Member of Florida and Georgia Bar.
- Will serve as Project Team Leader.

David Popen, Principal—Director of Project Operations

- Seasoned fundraising veteran with more than 25 years of campaign management experience.
- Has directed or supervised more than 100 feasibility studies and capital campaigns, raising more than \$300 million for schools, hospitals, museums, libraries, arts centers, public/tourist attractions, institutes, foundations, and many other nonprofit organizations.
- Served as the first CEO for the Arthritis Foundation, Southeast Region (AFSE) and was the national foundation’s youngest regional CEO.
- Served as Senior Vice President and Chief Development Officer for Sumner Regional Health Systems in suburban Nashville.
- Earned a cum laude law degree from Tulane University.

- Will provide a quality control and supervisory function throughout the engagement.

Tom Ralsler, Principal—Outcomes Lab Director

- Pioneered application of investment analysis to nonprofit fundraising.
- Has helped more than 500 nonprofits adopt Investment-Driven Model™.
- Authored *ROI for Nonprofit: The New Key to Sustainability* and the recently released *Asking Rights: Why Some Nonprofits Get Funded (and Some Don't)*.
- Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) and Certified Management Accountant (CMA).
- Founding Director of Western Colorado Bureau of Economic and Business Research at Mesa State College, where he was also a tenured Professor of Finance.
- Highly acclaimed keynote speaker at dozens of conferences nationally.
- Historically has been sub-contracted by several fundraising firms in the industry but now works exclusively with Convergent.
- Will develop impact and ROI analyses for your projects and programs to help us demonstrate potential benefit to the community, the economy, various industry sectors, and, most importantly, specific prospective investors.
- Will also conduct a half-day on-site workshop at the outset of the engagement incorporating principles from his books into efforts to maximize the investor appeal of your plans.

A specialized Project Director will be assigned full-time and exclusively to this project in addition to the above team. Other team members may also be assigned as needed. We strongly emphasize a team approach to all client engagements.

Emphasis on Outcomes and ROI – In today’s economic environment it is more critical than ever to effectively demonstrate the impact, value, and benefit of your work to the businesses, foundations, government entities, and wealthy individuals you are asking to invest in that work. More than any other fundraising firm in the country, Convergent places a special emphasis on demonstrating potential ROI (return-on-investment) and the value of organizational outcomes to its clients’ prospective donors – aka, *investors*. This outcomes-based approach doesn’t displace other traditional fundraising techniques, like emotional appeals or peer-to-peer influence. However, it is a valuable supplement to those approaches. It’s an important weapon to have in the arsenal. It never hurts; it often helps; and it sometimes is truly the “silver bullet” that makes all the difference.

No one in the country has more experience demonstrating value to potential investors in a fundraising campaign context than Tom Ralsler, Director of Convergent’s Outcomes Lab. Tom pioneered the approach, continues to innovate in the field, and literally “wrote the book” (*ROI for Nonprofits*).

Track Record – Convergent consistently delivers successful results for its clients. More than 90% of our campaigns achieve goal. And the few that don’t are still a success in absolute terms, raising sufficient funds for clients to implement their plans and provide additional value to the constituencies they serve. Moreover, in every campaign our focus is not only on attaining goal, but doing so on time, under budget, and with a delighted client.

Funding Feasibility Study

Project Overview and Implementation Plan

A feasibility study is the first step in launching any major fundraising campaign. The process we implement is based on a combination of decades of experience and the results of extensive objective testing. Ultimately, we are able to position our clients' fundraising campaigns for success while also providing a wealth of information from which to make other crucial organizational decisions. Through a Convergent feasibility study we will:

Outline a multi-year action plan encompassing projects and programs to be funded.

Establish preliminary measurable goals for your projects and programs.

Assess community support for your proposed plans.

Measure funding potential among likely investors.

Identify desired priorities among your organization's constituency.

Obtain key constituency feedback on your organization's performance.

Determine a feasible fundraising goal.

Collect prospect information that will be useful during the fundraising campaign.

Garner valuable confidential insight from top community leadership.

Provide a risk/reward analysis for launching a major campaign.

Build awareness of the planned fundraising campaign.

Synthesize diverse viewpoints into a core consensus and often a mandate.

Conduct appropriate due diligence for your proposed plans.

Position the planned campaign for success.

Make specific recommendations on whether and how to launch a successful campaign.

Convergent will facilitate further development and packaging of TRCS's planned projects and programs. In our experience, putting forth a preliminary draft of an inspiring and "investable" plan during the feasibility study interviews greatly enhances the likelihood of identifying major funding potential. A little extra time and effort on the front end will pay off tremendously in terms of study results. Convergent proposes to conduct a Project/Program Development and Organizational Value Proposition® Workshop designed to refine and package TRCS's plans with a focus on using the Investment-Driven Model™, optimizing prospective "investor" appeal, and planning an effective feasibility study. The workshop will be conducted by Convergent Principal Tom Ralser, author of *ROI for Nonprofits: The New Key to Sustainability* and *Asking Rights: Why Some Nonprofits Get Funded (and Some Don't)*, and will focus on the following:

- Determining capabilities, direction, and opportunities.
- Determining the most appropriate external needs that can be filled on a cost-effective basis.
- Clarifying overall project plan, goals, objectives, and budgets.
- Incorporating the Investment-Driven Model™ into overall funding plans.
- Focusing on the delivery of outcomes, and the value of those outcomes, to stakeholders.
- Establishing a consistent message for the donor/investor and sponsorship community.
- Developing answers to the questions that will be asked by potential funders.
- Determining the proper positioning of TRCS and its proposed funding needs.

- Uncovering the outcomes most valuable to investor/donor and sponsorship prospects.
- Determining the general areas of focus for future Organizational Value Proposition® development.
- Determining interviewee targets and study logistics.
- Determining a cost-effective path to securing full project/program funding.

The Convergent team will then interview several dozen top business and community leaders, foundation directors, public officials, parents/grandparents, and other individual sources of philanthropic support. Interview targets will be selected as a result of discussions during the workshop, TRCS's contacts and known supporters, Convergent's contacts and research, Convergent's relationship with Grant Station (identifying funding entities currently donating/investing in similar programs and initiatives), and corporate and foundation databases. The confidential interviews will verify and/or modify TRCS's plans (reality check), determine a challenging yet realistic funding target (goal assessment), and start marketing the benefits of any planned programs (consensus-building).

The feasibility study will gauge the funding constituency's perception of TRCS, obtain input and feedback on the proposed new projects/programs, reveal the amount of funding realistically attainable through a fundraising campaign, identify potential leadership for such a campaign, and provide guidance on governance and oversight functions.

Although we will work with you to construct a feasibility study plan that meets your specific needs, circumstances, and preferences, we preliminarily anticipate implementing the following action steps:

Project/Program Development and Organizational Value Proposition® Workshop

- Conduct workshop to facilitate project/program development.
- Utilize Investment-Driven Model™ to develop proposed strategic action plan.

Pre-Interview Phase Preparation

- Incorporate the outcomes developed in the workshop into a draft prospectus to be used during feasibility study interviews.
- Review, edit, and format prospectus into final format.
- Design the questionnaire/script for the interviews.
- Produce an appropriate investment table.
- Determine interview targets.
- Develop interview request letter to be mailed to interview targets.
- Provide guidance in scheduling interviews.

Interview Phase

- Conduct three weeks of confidential face-to-face interviews (typically 40-60+).
- Conduct supplemental phone interviews as warranted.
- Obtain input and feedback from prospective investors.
- Elicit indications of potential financial commitment.
- Build consensus for support.

Expert Analysis

- Synthesize and analyze all information, input, and data.
- Determine findings, options and recommendations.
- Develop comprehensive written report.

Report Presentation

- Present findings, options, recommendations, and written report.
- Establish campaign goal, plan, and timeline.

In preparation for interviews, Convergent will work with staff to develop a brief written summary of the proposed plans as a draft outline. When this document is completed, Convergent will oversee the mailing of it to a targeted number of prospective funding sources throughout the region. Included in this mailing will be a letter summarizing the importance of this project and requesting that each recipient spend an hour of their time sharing their candid input and feedback. One week following this mailing, an assigned member of the TRCS team will begin contacting recipients to schedule appointments. Convergent can provide guidance and training on this process.

Typical items of focus during each interview include:

- Assessment of organization performance
- Inquiry into organization strengths
- Suggested areas for improvement
- Rating proposed project/program components
- Feedback on individual components
- Overall assessment of proposed plan
- Perceived value of project
- Opinions about willingness and ability of constituency to fund the plan
- Brainstorm of top prospective investors
- Indication of own willingness to invest
- Range of potential investment
- Variables impacting decision
- Decision-making process and timeline
- Potential changes that could induce increased investment
- Brainstorm of most effective campaign leaders
- Inquiry into willingness to serve as leader
- Knowledge of other campaigns that could impact effort
- Factors that could be barrier to success
- Other insights and guidance that could help us position campaign for success.

Other areas of interest may be explored as appropriate.

At the conclusion of the interview phase Convergent will synthesize and analyze all information acquired, and develop a comprehensive report with our:

- Observations, findings, and conclusions
- Aggregated response data
- Guidance on whether and how to proceed
- Determination of an appropriate fundraising goal
- Recommended campaign plan and timeline
- Roadmap for campaign success, including specific action steps for moving forward.

Timeline

We preliminarily anticipate a 10-week process:

- Weeks 1-4 – Hold Program Development and OVP Workshop; develop all necessary study materials
- Weeks 5-7 – Conduct three weeks of on-site interviews (target 40-60+)
- Weeks 8-10 – Analyze data; determine findings and recommendations; develop comprehensive report and campaign plan; present results to the Board.

Management Fee and Expenses

The flat management fee for conducting the feasibility study as outlined above is \$22,500 plus expenses.

Out-of-pocket travel expenses such as lodging, car rental, and airfare are reimbursable at actual cost. Per diem while on-site or traveling is \$45. In-kind or discounted arrangements for items such as lodging or on-site transportation often decrease these expenses considerably. No expenditures will be made without TRCS's prior budgeted approval.

We regard the feasibility study as a standalone engagement. TRCS may retain Convergent for the study without obligation to utilize our firm during the campaign.

Capital Campaign

Project Overview and Implementation Plan

Convergent provides a variety of campaign management options and can flexibly customize a package to suit your specific situation. Decisions in this regard are usually better made *after* the feasibility study.

Under Convergent’s most popular service—comprehensive campaign management—the Convergent team will plan, organize, and implement the entire campaign process, assigning a full-time, on-site campaign director and providing supplemental support from other specialists. We minimize the burden on client staff by managing the day-to-day details of the campaign ourselves. We also minimize the burden on client board members and campaign leaders by attending each solicitation, making a professional presentation, and making the “ask.” Finally, we utilize the Investment-Driven Model™ to maximize funding by demonstrating the value and impact of your programs to prospective investors.

We can also scale down our level of involvement in implementing the campaign plan, working collaboratively on a half-time on-site basis, or even just periodically coming on-site for very key meetings and providing mostly remote guidance. However, we find that the full-time, comprehensive management option optimizes results and is the most satisfying to our clients.

Although Convergent will work with you to construct a campaign plan that meets your specific needs, circumstances, and preferences, we preliminarily anticipate implementing the following action steps:

Quiet/Planning Phase

- Finalize campaign plans, timelines, budgets, and logistical and operational protocol.
- Refine and finalize multi-year program of work based on input from the feasibility study and key stakeholders.
- Develop Organizational Value Proposition® (OVP) to effectively document and demonstrate the impact, return-on-investment (ROI), benefits, and value provided by the organization and its projects and programs.
- Finalize detailed case statement providing rationale for investment.
- Produce all other campaign collateral materials.
- Establish a campaign marketing plan.
- Develop and launch an e-communications program.
- Research, identify and evaluate prospects.
- Enlist team of high caliber campaign leaders.
- Prepare and present customized investment proposals to the top tier of campaign prospects.
- Secure well more than half of the goal.

Public Phase

- Hold a high-profile local campaign kick-off event.

- Conduct 100-250+ in-person solicitations.
- Conduct an extensive phone, mail, and/or Internet mass solicitation campaign to further broaden the base of support.
- Follow-up to secure and document pledge decisions.
- Track all campaign pledges in a customized database.
- Mail thank you notes summarizing pledge details to all investors.
- Prepare a cash flow statement based on pledge commitments.
- Achieve and exceed campaign goal.

Post-Campaign

- Hold victory celebration event.
- Transfer campaign database and detailed records to staff.
- Deliver a comprehensive *Campaign Summary Report*.
- Provide a “best practices” investor relations plan to keep all funders informed and to ensure that pledge payments are paid on-time and in full throughout any agreed upon pledge period.

Management Fee and Expenses

Following the feasibility study, Convergent will develop a customized and cost-effective management solution appropriately scaled to the magnitude of the campaign and the extent of desired Convergent involvement. Below are three management options for you to consider based on your needs and budget. *If one of these options does not satisfactorily meet your expectations and needs, we can craft and price a customized option that does. Decisions about the scope and nature of our involvement in the campaign don't need to be made until after the feasibility study.*

Full-Time Management

Full-time management includes a project director, assigned solely to your project, who manages the day-to-day activities of your fundraising efforts from start to finish. He is assigned to your project – *and no other*. Other members of the Convergent team will be involved in specialized supplemental roles throughout the engagement. Convergent’s full-time comprehensive management fee is \$22,500 per month plus expenses. Most community-based campaigns can be completed in an 8-12 month timeframe.

Half-Time Management

Half-time campaign management includes a project director assigned to your project two weeks per month. Other members of the Convergent team will be involved in specialized supplemental roles throughout the engagement. Convergent’s half-time management fee is \$13,500 per month plus expenses. The timeline for half-time campaigns is almost always longer than for full-time campaigns. The extent to which the duration is elongated is determined largely by the degree of staff and volunteer involvement in pushing the campaign forward on Convergent’s off weeks.

Part-Time Campaign Counsel and Support

This option includes a project director assigned to your campaign in mostly a consulting role. He can still handle the most critical solicitations, but we will need significant engagement and support from your staff, board members, and volunteers throughout the fundraising effort. Other members of the Convergent team will be involved in specialized supplemental roles throughout

the engagement. Convergent's part-time campaign counsel fee is \$9,500 per month plus expenses. The duration of part-time counsel campaigns depends very heavily on how diligently and aggressively internal resources and personnel are utilized in implementing the process.

Staff, Board, and Volunteer Leader Support during Campaign

The extent of needed support from staff and board during the campaign will vary depending on the scope of Convergent's campaign management role. Assuming a full-time, on-site comprehensive campaign management scenario, the following staff and board support will be needed at a minimum:

Staff

- Dedicated campaign administrative support for the Campaign Director and the Campaign Leadership Team (at least part-time and preferably full-time).
- Weekly one-hour meeting with top TRCS staff to review progress, strategize, plan, approve documents, etc.
- Attendance by top TRCS staff at any Campaign Leadership Team meetings (usually every other week).
- Attendance by all or most all staff at major public campaign events like the Kick-Off and the Victory Celebration.

Board

- Pledges committed relatively early in the Quiet Phase to demonstrate strong internal support prior to "going public."
- Active and enthusiastic comments publicly and privately in support of campaign efforts.
- Attendance at major public campaign events like the Kick-Off and the Victory Celebration.

In addition to staff and board support, we will strategically recruit a volunteer Campaign Leadership Team. Roles and duties for each position will be spelled out clearly and in writing as part of the recruitment process. Our comprehensive approach minimizes the burden on campaign volunteers. We will utilize our campaign leaders strategically and sparingly, focusing their time and attention on a handful of tasks that can have the biggest impact on campaign results. For example, most of the money in any capital campaign comes from a relatively small numbers of investors. We will enlist the strategically appropriate volunteer leader to accompany us on those asks to maximize results. But even in those instances the volunteer role is usually limited to establishing rapport and credibility, exerting influence, and leading by example. Other common leadership responsibilities include signing letters, being pictured in a campaign brochure, attending strategy meetings, "opening doors" to contacts, etc.

Convergent Clients, References, and Testimonials

Sampling of Current/Recent Clients

Convergent serves a wide variety of nonprofit organizations. Current clients include organizations as varied as the Montana Chamber of Commerce; Marin Advocates for Children in San Rafael, California; Kay Yow Cancer Fund in Raleigh, North Carolina; Air Force Enlisted Village in Fort Walton Beach, Florida; Gordon Hospital Foundation in Calhoun, Georgia; the Chester County Council, Boy Scouts of America in West Chester, Pennsylvania; the YMCA/YWCA in Dubuque, Iowa; Vance Charter School in Henderson, North Carolina; PromiseNet Fund in Newport, Kentucky; Rutherford County Chamber in Murfreesboro, Tennessee; Beacon of Hope in Lynchburg, Virginia; Evergreen Academy in Racine, Wisconsin; Roanoke Regional Partnership in Virginia; Midland Care in Topeka, Kansas; Rockingham Recreation Foundation in Virginia; Northwest Houston Chamber in Texas; Southwest Wake Academy in Holly Spring, North Carolina; Scotland Memorial Hospital Foundation in Laurinburg, North Carolina; the Coast Guard Foundation based in Connecticut; Arapahoe Charter School in North Carolina; Luther Manor Communities in Asbury, Iowa; Northeastern Technical College in Cheraw, South Carolina; Main Street Alabama based in Birmingham; University System of Georgia Foundation; Washington County Economic Development Council in Johnson City, Tennessee; Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, North Carolina; and American Center for Investigative Cardiology in Washington, D.C. Our broad spectrum of clients provides a comprehensive understanding of the ingredients necessary for a nonprofit organization's success in an increasingly competitive philanthropic marketplace. *(We would be happy to provide contact info for any of the clients mentioned above, as well as many others.)*

Here are a few examples of campaigns completed in recent years:

Rev. Nancy Yancey, Executive Director
Rainbow Village
Atlanta, GA
(770) 497-1888
nancy.yancey@rainbowvillage.org

Project Type: Social Services Organization

Goal and Amount Raised: (Another firm conducted the study and concluded \$2 million could be raised; the client hired us for the campaign and we raised over \$4 million with an additional \$1 million+ coming in after our engagement)

"I love the ROI work Convergent's Outcomes Lab did for our anti-poverty, homelessness, and domestic abuse programs. Truly genius! We definitely made the right decision choosing Convergent to manage our campaign!"

Terry Robinson, Executive Director
Hospice of South Texas
Victoria, TX
(361) 572-4300
robint@hospice-vic.org
Project Type: Hospice/Healthcare
Goal: \$5.25 million
Amount Raised: \$6 million+

“Had it not been for Convergent we would not have been able to make such quick inroads to our communities’ gracious giving spirit. Their campaign leadership methods are effective and adaptive to the needs of the communities we serve. I can recommend Convergent without reservation and feel that when we have future capital campaign needs we would consider them our go to team!”

Tim Coffey, President
Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce
Clear Lake, IA
(641) 357-2159
tim@clearlakeiowa.com
Project Type: Fireworks Endowment Fund
Goal: \$1 million
Raised: \$1.2 million+

“We had a very unusual fundraising need - endowing the continuation of fireworks in our community over the 4th of July (a 136-year tradition spanning generations) in conjunction with two other events, which combined bring in \$10 million to our community during that week long holiday period. Convergent rose to the challenge of this unique endowment campaign. Our initial goal of \$1 million was attained in six months. We revised the goal to \$1.2 million, which we also met. Convergent was a major reason for our success, with their professional counsel and outstanding personnel to guide us. I highly recommend them to meet your organizational needs, from a feasibility study to a comprehensive campaign.”

John Dorward, Executive Director
Inter-Faith Council for Social Services
Carrboro, NC
(919) 929-6380
Project Type: Homeless Shelter
Goal: \$3.7 million
Raised: \$3.75 million

“We looked at four different companies to help us meet our goals for funding our Community House - a transitional housing facility for homeless men. We were most comfortable with Convergent’s ROI approach and their ability to handle all elements of the campaign from start-to-finish. Having a Convergent consultant on-site made a significant difference, as he truly became part of our team and kept us focused on our goals.”

Sampling of Client Testimonials

We pride ourselves on client satisfaction. Here are some recent testimonials:

Ms. Karen Pettay
Humane Society of Greenwood
Greenwood, SC
(864) 223-2498

“I can’t express enough how grateful I am to Convergent. This is the second feasibility study I’ve been through and it was SUCH a positive experience.”

Ms. Natalie Brozy
Roxboro Community School
Roxboro, NC
(336) 597-0020
brozynn@roxborocommunityschool.org

“We set a very ambitious goal for our school, and Convergent’s guidance allowed us to reach farther and achieve success sooner than we could have accomplished on our own.”

Mr. Jason Hutcheson
Greater Burlington Partnership
Burlington, IA
(319) 208-0043
jhutcheson@greaterburlington.com

“We just completed our second capital campaign with Convergent. After two successful campaigns, our financial resources have tripled. The professional team at Convergent completed our fundraising efforts ahead of schedule, under budget, and significantly past goal. What more could I have asked for?”

Ms. Dion Davis
Jekyll Island Foundation / Mosaic Museum
Jekyll Island, GA
(912) 635-4100
ddavis@jekyllislandfoundation.org

“The strategy and support offered by Convergent Nonprofit Solutions helped our Board expand its vision for the Foundation, which in turn helped to refocus and redefine the organization's impact in our community. The methodology behind Convergent's capital campaign process not only helps to raise more money in the near term, it also builds best practices for long-term investor relations and lays the groundwork for the success of future funding initiatives.”

Mr. George Miner
Southern Tier Economic Growth
Elmira, NY
(607) 733-6513
gminer@steg.com

“After conducting several campaigns internally or with other consultants, we selected Convergent and they helped us increase our funding by 60%. Their approach gave the ‘ask’ so much more credibility. I now understand why their history of success is so consistent.”

Ms. Lisa Zaken
Leadership Gwinnett
Duluth, GA
770-232-8803

“In the span of six short months, our Board went from being nervous about the initial campaign investment to being ecstatic with the attainment of our goal, and our subsequent stretch goal! Convergent can do it like no other. Their system is rigorous and extremely effective. We have nothing but great things to say about this organization and have already started referring them!”

Dave Spencer
Wyoming Business Council, Northeast Region
Gillette, WY
(307) 685-0283
Dave.Spencer@wybusiness.org

"I have had a chance to observe the campaign experts at Convergent implement four economic development funding campaigns for communities in my region. All projects were highly successful and the consultants we worked with from Convergent were absolutely top notch. I hope to see them working with more communities in my region and throughout the state."

Jonathan Smith, CEcD
Grant County Economic Development Council
Moses Lake, WA
(509) 764-6579

“Thanks to our capital campaign the increase in time I and my staff are able to spend on economic development activities vs. fundraising activities and events is hard to put a price tag on. It has fundamentally changed the way we do business as an organization.”

Sampling of Praise for Tom Ralser's Workshops

“Our program staff gained a critical understanding of how to communicate our organization’s value to the community.”

Gwen Lee, Executive Director, The ARC of Anchorage

“Tom Ralser pushes the envelope in advocating a business approach to nonprofit management and strategic fundraising. He touches on all the right issues and does so in a very practical way that will stimulate thinking in the right direction for any leader of a nonprofit enterprise.”

David Stravers, President, Mission India

“No one else explains the difference between outputs and outcomes better than Tom.”

Eric Foley, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Seoul USA

“This has been both organizationally and professionally transformational.”

Teresa Mills, Development Manager, Helen R. Walton Children’s Enrichment Center

“The concepts translated into our many areas of service, and inspired many spirited discussions on how we could demonstrate our value to funders, improve our development department, and position ourselves for future success.”

Danielli Navarro Nieto Lopez, Development Director, Albert Einstein Hospital System, Sao Paulo, Brazil

“We have done logic models, SMART goals, and outcome measures for years. But after completing Ralser’s OVP analysis, our staff and board members’ enthusiasm for the mission increased, as they saw the significant economic value we contribute to our community each year. His OVP tool helps us make a compelling case for support that resonates with local donors and supporters beyond emotional appeals.”

Marina Sampanes Peed, Principal at Insights Plus, Former Executive Director of the Impact! Group

“You have captured the convergence of market changes with great clarity! In the new philanthropic marketplace, ‘need’ is no longer the value proposition of aspiring nonprofits.”

Mark Brewer, President/CEO, Central Florida Foundation

Project Team Bios

Mark Bergethon **Principal / Project Team Leader**

As a founding Principal of Convergent Nonprofit Solutions, Mark focuses on empowering nonprofits to accomplish more for the communities and constituencies they serve by dramatically increasing their financial resources. He is recognized as one of the leading national experts in funding nonprofit organizations and community initiatives through large fundraising campaigns.

Mark has managed and consulted on fundraising campaigns for a broad array of nonprofits including schools, community colleges, museums, hospitals, women's and children's services, workforce development organizations, associations, foundations, arts & culture organizations, Boy Scout councils, historic theatres, human service organizations, community foundations, YMCAs, animal shelters, hospices, social service nonprofits, community centers, chambers of commerce, and economic development corporations.

Summary of Experience

- Directed and provided oversight for more than 80 feasibility studies and fundraising campaigns for organizations nationwide, raising hundreds of millions of dollars for a wide variety of nonprofits.
- Conducted dozens of successful high-profile six, seven, and eight-figure funding requests.
- Managed major feasibility studies or capital campaigns with eight-figure goals in large metro markets like Orlando, Atlanta, Indianapolis, and Seattle.
- Served as Chief Executive Officer of Sage Fundraising Solutions, a national consulting firm specializing in the management of capital campaigns for nonprofits.
- Taught, spoke, led workshops or seminars, or sat on panel discussions at more than a dozen statewide, regional, national, and international conferences and events for economic development professionals, chamber executives, and nonprofit leaders.
- Authored two legal reference books, a research paper in an international academic journal, and numerous articles on fundraising and other nonprofit concerns.
- Earned a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Emory University and a law degree from the University of Georgia, School of Law. Member of the bar in both Georgia and Florida.

Tom Ralser

Principal / Director of the Outcomes Lab

Tom has worked with organizations of all kinds, from Chambers of Commerce to religious organizations, from national museums to rural health networks, and from local youth organizations to international research institutes. Tom pioneered the concept of applying return on investment (ROI) principles to nonprofit fundraising. Fundraisers have described his work as the “silver bullet” that justifies larger investments in nonprofit organizations. Clients in every field of the nonprofit sector have benefited from increased funding by using his innovative ROI analyses and applications.

Hundreds of organizations have utilized Tom’s sustainability planning techniques to ensure they can thrive in a tight money environment. He holds the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) designation, which provides the framework his *Investment-Driven Model*[™] of fundraising, and led to the development of the *Organizational Value Proposition*[®], which is widely used by corporations, foundations, and individuals as confirmation that the nonprofits in which they invest are truly delivering outcomes with value. His specialty of utilizing for-profit concepts and methods in the nonprofit world has helped nonprofits raise over an estimated \$1.1 billion in the 18 years he has worked with them.

Tom is a frequent and highly acclaimed speaker, usually addressing topics revolving around the *Investment-Driven Model*[™] for fundraising, outcome-based sustainability planning, and delivering value to nonprofit investors.

Summary of Experience

- Been personally involved in over 500 nonprofit funding projects in all 50 states.
- Authored the best-selling book *ROI for Nonprofits: The New Key to Sustainability* and the recently released *Asking Rights: Why Some Nonprofits Get Funded (and Some Don't)*.
- Holds the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) designation, ranked by *Economist* magazine as the “gold standard” for investment analysis. He also holds the Certified Management Accountant (CMA) designation.
- Session leader at dozens of conferences, including the Center for Excellence in Nonprofits, the National Center on Nonprofit Enterprise, the Nonprofit Excellence Conference, the Foundation Center, the Council of Officers for Resource Development, the International Economic Development Council, the Association of Fundraising Professionals, and many more.
- Founding Director of Western Colorado Bureau of Economic and Business Research at Colorado Mesa University, where he was also a tenured professor.
- Earned a BS in Marketing from Illinois State University and an MS in Finance from the University of Utah.

David A. Popen

Convergent Principal / Director of Project Operations

David offers clients an impressive background in fundraising, economic and community development, nonprofit chamber and association management, healthcare administration, voluntary health organization management, government affairs, and commercial litigation. He excels at guiding organizations through major funding initiatives and strategic plans, possessing highly effective project and people management skills.

Over the past 20 years, David has directed or supervised over 100 fundraising campaigns and studies raising over \$300 million in funding. He has a solid track record of securing significant six and seven-figure investments.

Past professional experiences include serving as the Arthritis Foundation, Southeast Region's (AFSE) first chief executive officer, and the national foundation's youngest regional CEO. He was instrumental in securing the foundation's first seven-figure personal major gift in its 64-year history. David served as Senior Vice President and Chief Development Officer for Sumner Regional Health Systems in suburban Nashville, TN and led the \$400 million, not-for-profit integrated health system's strategic planning, business development, marketing and public relations, strategic communications, construction and real estate development, legal functions, corporate contributions, community affairs, government relations and fundraising. He also served as Vice President of the Susquehanna Alliance in Harrisburg, PA; a regional umbrella including the Capital Region Chamber and Capital Region Economic Development Corporation.

Summary of Experience

- Directed and supervised more than 100 feasibility studies and capital campaigns, raising over \$300 million.
- Thousands of successful solicitations including hundreds of six and seven-figure investments from individuals, corporations, foundations, and public entities; interaction with over 10,000 business, civic and community leaders throughout US, providing a very comprehensive understanding of donor, volunteer and leadership motivations.
- Successful and diverse economic development campaigns ranging from countywide efforts to regional and statewide efforts, small to mid-size to major market areas, and goals ranging from \$3M to \$15M+; skilled in public/private partnerships.
- Executive of six-state, voluntary health organization; \$400 million integrated health system; national fundraising firm; and, regional nonprofit business umbrella.
- Earned cum laude law degree from Tulane University, Bachelor of Arts from Colgate University, and studied at University of Mississippi; completed economic development studies at University of Kentucky; graduated from the Chamber Institute for Organization Management at University of Delaware.