

The Midas House Doctor

What is it?

Healthy fundraising requires many things to be in place in a charity: good governance; clear communication between departments; high morale amongst fundraisers; good, clear materials; easy access to decision makers; clear information on what the organisation does and how it monitors and evaluates that; and long term plans that are understood across the organisation. When one or more of these is lacking fundraising can suffer, targets are missed and turnover of staff is high.

It makes economic sense to understand why fundraising sometimes doesn't work as well as it should. Fundraisers are the highest paid of charity employees along with IT staff and keeping them and building their skills is a good use of charitable resources.

Lisa Dowling provides a 'House Doctor' style service within Midas for charities wanting to get to the root of problems around fundraising and develop new ways of working. Much of Lisa's work is with charities who:

- ❑ Are having trouble with their fundraising in one way or another;
- ❑ Are struggling with a wide range of projects that are not attracting funding to the extent that they should;
- ❑ Need advice and practical input in how best to present their charity and projects to funders; and
- ❑ Want to ensure that every area of their fundraising is as near perfect as possible in preparation for a big fundraising campaign.

Some assignments require 'surgery', such as a change in systems, in culture and improvement in understanding, communication and information management. Others are brief, 'health check' projects. Lisa works with the Midas client by discovering and reporting internally on the problems, recommending changes and implementing any where her help is required. She might also suggest bringing in other Midas staff when their particular expertise is needed, such as around monitoring and evaluation or communications.

Why is it useful?

- ❑ It can make practical change happen fast
- ❑ It is cathartic
- ❑ It builds confidence and morale amongst fundraising staff
- ❑ It builds efficiency and encourages team working across the charity
- ❑ It helps prepare for large appeals or organisational shift
- ❑ It helps translate missed opportunities into big hits

Who is it suitable for?

- ❑ Recently merged charities
- ❑ Charities where a senior fundraiser has left or where morale is low amongst fundraisers

- ❑ In charities with a high turnover of fundraising staff
- ❑ Charities where targets are regularly not met
- ❑ Charities with fundraising teams needing development prior to major appeals
- ❑ Organisations with no long term plans
- ❑ Charities in which internal communication is poor

Lisa Dowling: Profile, style and experience

Lisa Dowling has fifteen years' experience in the charity sector, specialising in supporting small and medium-sized charities' efforts to grow, develop services and generate income with confident, supported fundraisers.

Lisa is a strategic and clear thinker with great people skills. She is approachable, friendly and has a very relaxed style that usually puts most people at ease the minute they meet her. She has carried out assignments for EveryChild, the Motor Neurone Disease Association, Bart's City Life Saver (London based health charity), Angels International (small, international medical charity), and the World Society for the Protection of Animals.

'Lisa came to the MND Association when we had senior fundraising staff vacancies and morale was low. She demonstrated an incredible ability to get to grips with the issues, the people and the organisation. Not only incredibly supportive to the staff, Lisa also won over other key senior people in the organisation, acquiring their trust quickly. Lisa was able to focus well on the task in hand whilst taking the people with her. In terms of value for money, she can't be faulted. Her capacity for work was amazing and her sense of humour a real asset – I wouldn't hesitate to use her again.'

Jane Burns, Director of Fundraising at the MND Association 1997-2005.

Cost

The service costs £395 + VAT per day. Assignments are bespoke and therefore costs differ from charity to charity. If you are interested in finding out more please contact Martin Shaw and he can arrange for you to talk to Lisa directly to see if she can help.