

AFP Member Profiles

Name: Roger Sheffield

Date Joined: 10/1/1991



1) How did you get into fundraising?

- Completely by accident! In high school, I started working on political campaigns. Then, during my undergraduate years at the University of Nebraska Kearney, I worked for the college president and he learned that I was a first generation college student on scholarship. Since I also previously worked on political campaigns, he had me accompany him on philanthropic meetings with donors to demonstrate the impact of their support, introducing them to a first-generation college student on scholarship. Later in my undergrad experience, he came back to me encouraging me to become a fundraiser (which, at the time, I didn't know was even a career)!

I was then enrolled in a Public Administration program at the University of Nebraska of Omaha, as this was the closest thing to getting your Master's in Fundraising back in 1989. Incredible mentors introduced me to this opportunity to be a fundraiser, and I've been doing it ever since!

2) What keeps you in the field and loving it?

- What keeps me in this field is witnessing the transformation of a person moving from a donor to becoming a philanthropist. The amount of money is irrelevant to this process. When you see the pride and passion and purpose of a donor in that transformation process to becoming a philanthropist, this just opens up a whole new world for them! That's what keeps me going.

3) Can you provide any advice to other fundraisers about fundraising during times of uncertainty?

- Fundraise. Don't stop. Even if you feel that your organization doesn't have a direct connection to the crisis itself, there is something that's happening in organization that is providing service. On top of that, your organization doesn't stop because of a crisis! People become very generous in times of a crisis.

Reach out to your donors, check in on them, see how they're doing, if they need help and if appropriate, offer your organization's services.

On top of that, continue to send eNewsletters, direct mailings, etc. Keep your donors informed on how your organization is responding to this pandemic and offer tips or services if your organization directly ties to helping people through these strange times.

4) What is one thing you enjoy doing when you're not fundraising?

- Travel! As a previous fundraiser for colleges, I had the good fortune of travelling nationally and even internationally to meet with alumni and friends all over the world. Since then, I've had a passion for exploring and hope to hit all 50 states in the years to come... I only have six/so more to go!