



National Environmental Treasure

Fundraising Strategy

November 2000

Introduction

One of the NET's key challenges is fundraising, both for its core operating budget as well as building the endowment fund. The other is building national profile and recognition for the organization, which, of course, is related to fundraising success or failure.

In the last two years, besides its pilot campaign in Ottawa in 1998, the NET has primarily focused on finding developmental funds to build the organization. We have submitted formal applications to 11 foundations and also approached 7 corporations, however, we have been consistently turned down. There appear to be 3 main barriers to receiving funding:

1. The NET is an endowment fund: Most foundations stipulate that they will not fund endowments, considering this to be "pass through" funding, where they will not be able to determine the final destination of the money given. Corporations are also hesitant to fund for the same reason.
2. The NET is a national organization: many foundations and corporations have a regional/local focus, and they do not see the NET's national program providing direct benefits to their focus region(s).
3. The NET is seeking capacity as opposed to project funding: Most foundations focus on project-based funding (one of the reasons the NET has developed its program of capacity-building funding); meanwhile, for corporations, operational funding is a less attractive or "sexy" way to profile their own organizations.

Given the current climate in funding, the NET has shifted its focus for funding. While we will continue to research foundations and submit where appropriate, we will focus attention on the corporate sector and on forming strategic partnerships, as discussed below.

This shift also means increased attention to building the endowment fund, which should enhance confidence in the NET and assist in building our profile. As stipulated in our operating principles, we can use 10% of funds for administrative purposes, therefore, building the endowment fund will also contribute to our operational needs.

The NET fundraising strategy as outlined below is based on relationship-building. Few organizations are inclined to fund on face value, as we are still largely unknown and we do not offer a quick, sexy photo op. Personal contacts, therefore, will be key. Wherever possible, the NET will ask its Board members to open doors to personal and/or professional networks.

The NET has created two principal ways to recognize its donors:

- Friend of the NET: an individual or organization who donates \$10,000 or more to the NET



- Founding Member of the NET: an individual or organization that maintains a longer-term partnership with the NET over time, providing funding support over time.

All donors will be recognized (unless otherwise requested) on the NET website.

NET Priorities for 2001

The NET needs to fundraise for the following 4 areas:

1. Endowment fund
2. Core: Staff positions (Director & Project Manager, possibly Volunteer Coordinator) as well as operational funds
3. Ontario car rally
4. National launch of EcoSavers Coupon Book

Current funding (from Lever Pond's: \$10,000 to support development work over 3 years) will be exhausted by January 2001. The immediate priority is finding funding for the 2 existing staff positions.

The Trillium Foundation is currently considering the NET's application (for \$106,500) and has indicated tentative support. However, Trillium has withheld decision until the NET receives charitable status.

Funding Sources

Priority

1. NET "Tools"

Developing and maximizing the revenue potential of NET fundraising tools must, as a whole, be a priority, as these offer our most immediate donation potential. They are also vital for their ability to raise profile for the NET.

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| <p>a. www.oursafetyNET.org: This is the NET's general information site with a donation page. The website needs to be extensively advertised and linked to other sites. Currently our only "collection centre" for donations, the website is a priority. Donors are recognized on a donor page.
ACTION: communicate website to all partners/networks (including Board networks); identify partners for links</p> | high |
| <p>b. www.givealoonie.org: This site will be developed along the lines of the Hunger Site and Rainforest Site, where sponsors provide donations based on the number of "clicks" by visitors. Developing this site must be a priority as the popularity of this type of sponsorship is growing.
ACTION: identify and approach potential sponsors.</p> | high |



Priority

c. **2001 Ontario car rally:** The car rally will be a primary focus for 2001 as the NET’s first campaign. If funded by Trillium, the NET will have funding for the necessary communications/ marketing to support the rally. However, to ensure that the event will be properly supported, funding needs to be pursued now.
 ACTION: identify/approach companies for sponsorship; approach ENGOs for partnership; identify/approach spokespersons/champions for the event.

high

d. **EcoSavers Coupon Book:** The NET has printed 5000 EcoSavers books to date, with a revenue potential of at least \$25,000 (one-third of total) for the NET’s general operations. We are currently targeting corporations for bulk buys, as the Christmas season offers greatest potential for this strategy. For the new year, we will need to further identify partners/vendors.
 ACTION: identify and approach organizations/corporations for bulk buys; identify partners to act as vendors.

med

2. Grant Sources

a. **Foundations:** While foundations will no longer be our primary focus, the NET needs to keep abreast of foundation program changes and/or new foundations whose criteria are amendable to NET.
 The Muttart Foundation (Alberta) has recently changed its program focus to support capacity building (in particularly for charities who support other charities), hence we will be submitting to them immediately.
 The Kendall Foundation has stated its interest in the NET and has asked to stay apprised of new developments. A possible funder for the future.
 ACTION: for Muttart application, strengthen regional focus on Alberta, Saskatchewan, Yukon, NWT areas; update Kendall Foundation; stay abreast of foundations.

med

b. **Government**
 Environment Canada funded the EcoSavers Ontario pilot. No immediate other opportunities.

low

c. **Individual Philanthropists**
 While one-time large donations are one of the more difficult to receive, if we have a direct contact to such a philanthropist, this should be pursued.
 ACTION: identify possible connections to larger philanthropists.

low

3. Partnerships

As mentioned above, developing partnerships will be the NET’s main fundraising focus for 2001. These partnerships will take a variety of forms:

high



Priority
high

a. **Corporations**

We are in the process of identifying corporations to support the following partnership/donation options:

- Sponsorship of www.givealoonie.org as described above
- A one-time cash or stock option donation to become a Friend of the NET
- A longer-term partnership that will include cash donation/stock options to become a Founder of the NET
- Percent of sales donation
- Bulk buy of EcoSavers
- Workplace advertising

Corporations are increasingly feeling the pressure to be involved in their communities, to demonstrate a social/environmental conscience. The NET's appeal lies in the following characteristics: as a virtual, electronically-based organization it promises low overhead and efficiency in the modern economy; with its campaigns, it promises visibility at the community level; with an end-goal of a self-sustaining endowment fund, it promises self-sufficiency in the long-run. For corporations that have no particular environmental focus, the NET's general program may also appeal.

ACTION: identify corporations that have reason to develop an environmental/community profile; focus on newer, more innovative organizations that are more prepared to develop innovative partnerships.



Priority

high

b. Other Potential Partnerships

Other types of partnerships will also be pursued to gain the following

- Collection centres for loonies
- Percent of sales donation
- Member/clientele contributions
- Vendors for EcoSavers
- Profile

The type of partnership will depend on the type of organization approached, though we are targeting those with either a large membership/clientele from whom loonies can be collected and/or on whose behalf the company would donate. Examples high on priority list:

- i) Banks (in discussion with Citizens Bank & CIBC): to manage the endowment fund, develop an affinity card, ask members to donate \$1 from accounts
- ii) CAA/provincial branches: as automobile sponsors and insurance providers, CAA may have an interest to foster an environmentally-friendly profile. Can ask for: \$1 from members/\$1 per member renewal.
- iii) Magazines (Canadian National Geographic, Canadian Gardening, Parenting, Harrowsmith, Equinox, Alternatives, Green Teacher): free advertisement in magazines; \$1 donations with subscription renewals
- iv) Professional sports team: donations from season ticket sales/concessions.
- v) Utility companies: With climate change high on the national agenda, utility companies (gas, electric) may be more inclined to support environmental initiatives.
- vi) Unions

ACTION: identify top candidates for partnership and strategic contacts within organization.

c. Champions

high

The NET already has Raffi Cavaukian on board to lead children and youth campaigns once campaigns begin. We need to further identify similar individuals who can take leadership roles in campaigns, create national profile and/or donate to the NET in a public way.

Musicians will be approached for donations from CD sales, authors for book sales, actors for direct donations.

ACTION: identify artists who have demonstrated social activism (Bruce Cockburn, Artists Against Racism) and any possible direct relationships to artists.