

Fundraising Reality Checklist

Strategy

- Clear one-line explanation
- Community-focused problem
- Differentiation clarity
- Not chasing every RFP
- Impact-driven design

Reality check: If strategy changes with every donor, you don't have one.

Donor Engagement

- Research donors
- No generic proposals
- Follow-up consistently
- Build relationships
- Listen more than pitch

Reality check: If you only send proposals, you're emailing, not fundraising.

Proposals

- Answers why/what/why now
- No copy-paste
- Realistic budgets
- Honest about uncertainty
- Can explain in 3 lines

Reality check: If it takes 25 pages, it's unclear.

Internal Alignment

- Teams collaborate
- Not donor-driven design
- Leadership understands time
- Track progress
- Learn from failures

Reality check: If it lives in one laptop, it's not a system.

Pipeline

- Live tracking exists
- Track stages
- More conversations than proposals
- No assumptions on silence

Reality check: If unclear, pipeline is weak.

Emotional Truth

- Accept rejection
- Don't take it personally
- No overselling
- Manage expectations
- Celebrate wins

Reality check: Fundraising = resilience + patience.

Your Action Plan

1. One thing you will STOP:

2. One thing you will CHANGE:

3. One thing you will START:

FINAL SCORE (BE HONEST)

25–30 → You're doing fundraising

15–24 → You're trying hard (but leaking somewhere)

<15 → You're surviving on hope and templates

Fundraising is not about convincing donors.

It's about being clear, credible, and consistent, until someone says YES!

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