

FIA Conference 2024

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Brisbane
28 Feb – 1 Mar

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Why Being Director of Fundraising is the Toughest gig in every Organisation.

LEADERSHIP TRACK

John Burns
Marlin Communications



Leadership Track
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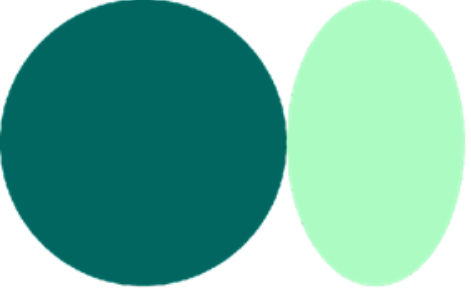




We would like acknowledge the Turrbal and Jagera peoples of the Meanjin the Traditional Owners and custodians of the lands on which we are meeting today, and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present and emerging



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Hello!

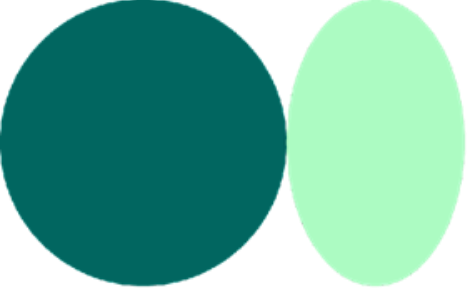
You'll be spending the next hour with me.

John Burns FFIA

Senior Strategy Adviser,
Marlin Communications



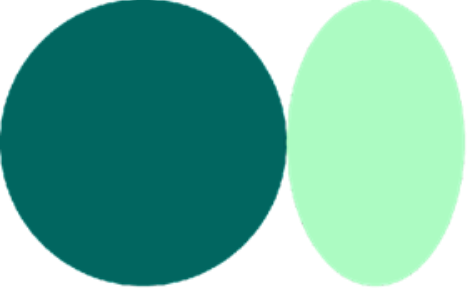
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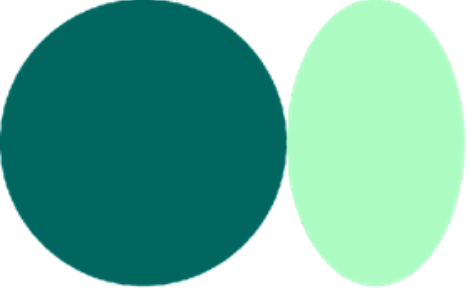
So why is the Director of Fundraising the most difficult job in any organisation?



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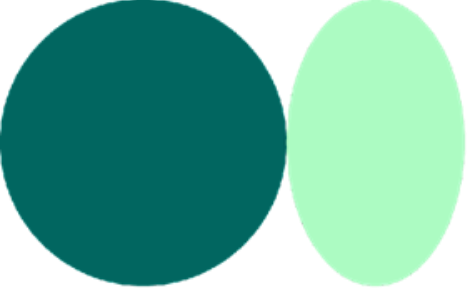
But first...



It is, of course, also the best job.



So why is the Director of Fundraising the most difficult job in any organisation?



There are three significant elements that make this role inherently difficult.



1

You have an outsized role in the financial health of the organisation.



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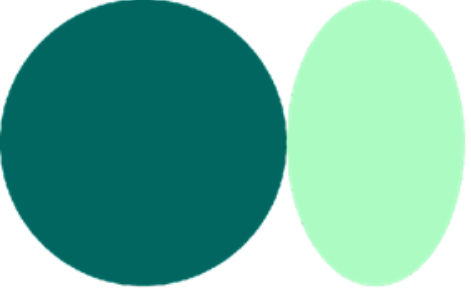


2

The Fundraising Department is often seen as the “Other” with organisations. An organisation within an organisation.



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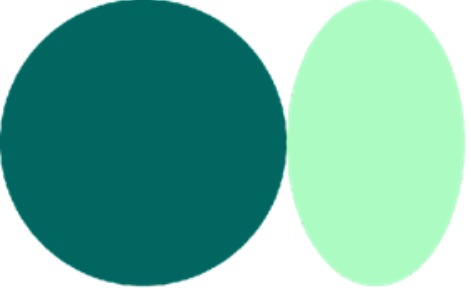


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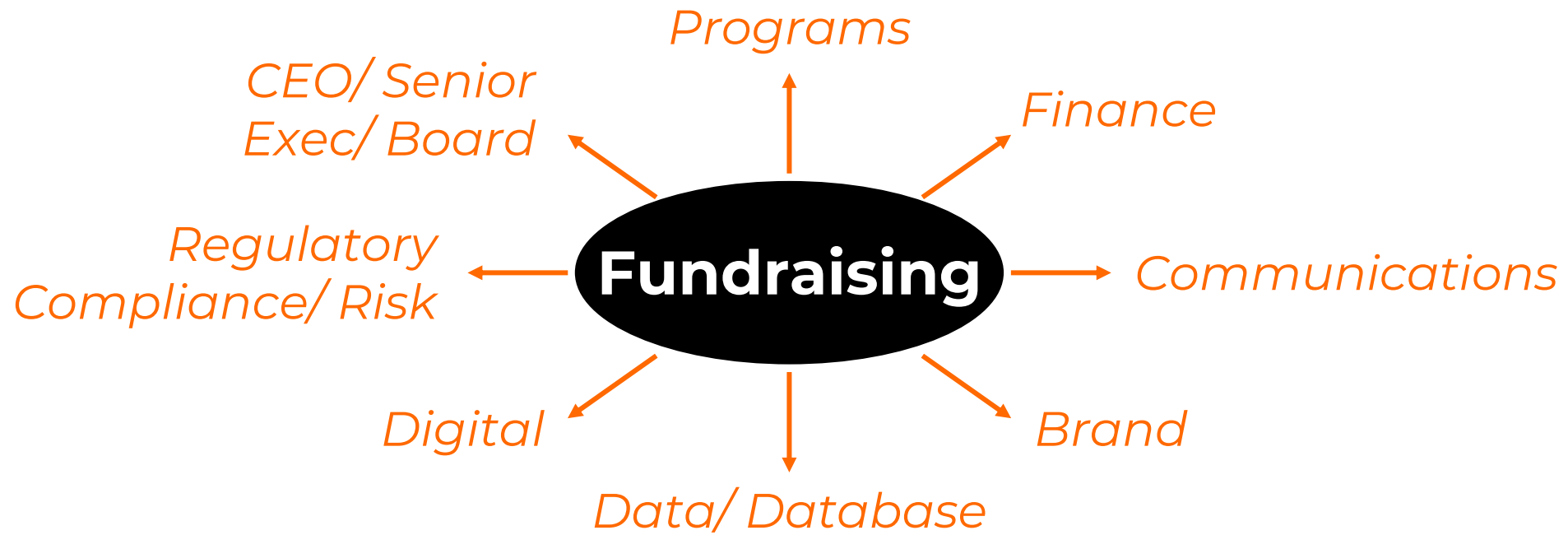
The Fundraising Department has the most complicated stakeholder management framework with an organisation.



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Let's have a look at that...



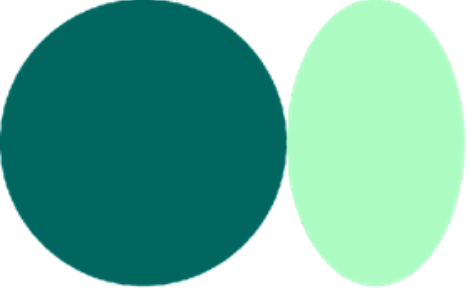


Why is this important?

All three of those circumstances:

- *Financial responsibility*
- *Being the “other”, and*
- *Complex stakeholder management*

Negatively reinforce each other in a way that is not immediately obvious.



So what do we do?

- Your own vision
- Mapping your organisational Fundraising Culture
- Your role
- Identifying and structuring accountabilities
- Considerations in decision making



Your own vision:

- This is not the organisational vision, or the current strategic plan vision, **it is your own.**
- It is where you can sit back, close your eyes and visual where you want your organisation to be and how it operates...





My own vision:

- 1 My team feel confident in their roles.**
They are proactive and forward looking.
- 2 They spend the majority of their time on outputs**
and not on internals.
- 3 Their accountabilities are understood by them,**
their team and the broader organisation and they have
the agency to meet those accountabilities.



Why is this important?

It frames every decision you make.

It allows you to understand the impact of that decision on both the *immediate context* and the *future working environment* framed by your own vision.

The impact of the immediate and the future can be, and is often, different.

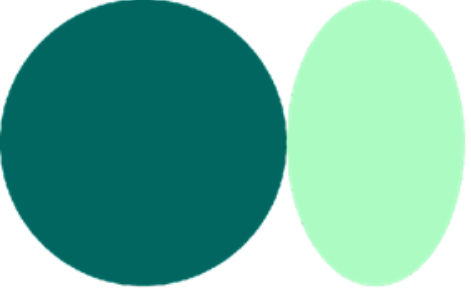


This vision can be shared:

It allows your managers and other staff to know that you have an ambition for your team and organisation beyond budget and other goals.

It provides clarity and transparency on your decision making and encourages others to do the same.

Importantly it also provides context in your decision making in both short and long term outlooks.

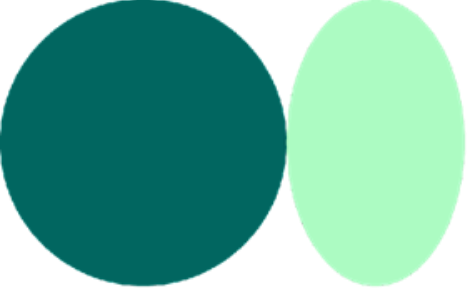


“Culture eats
strategy for
breakfast”

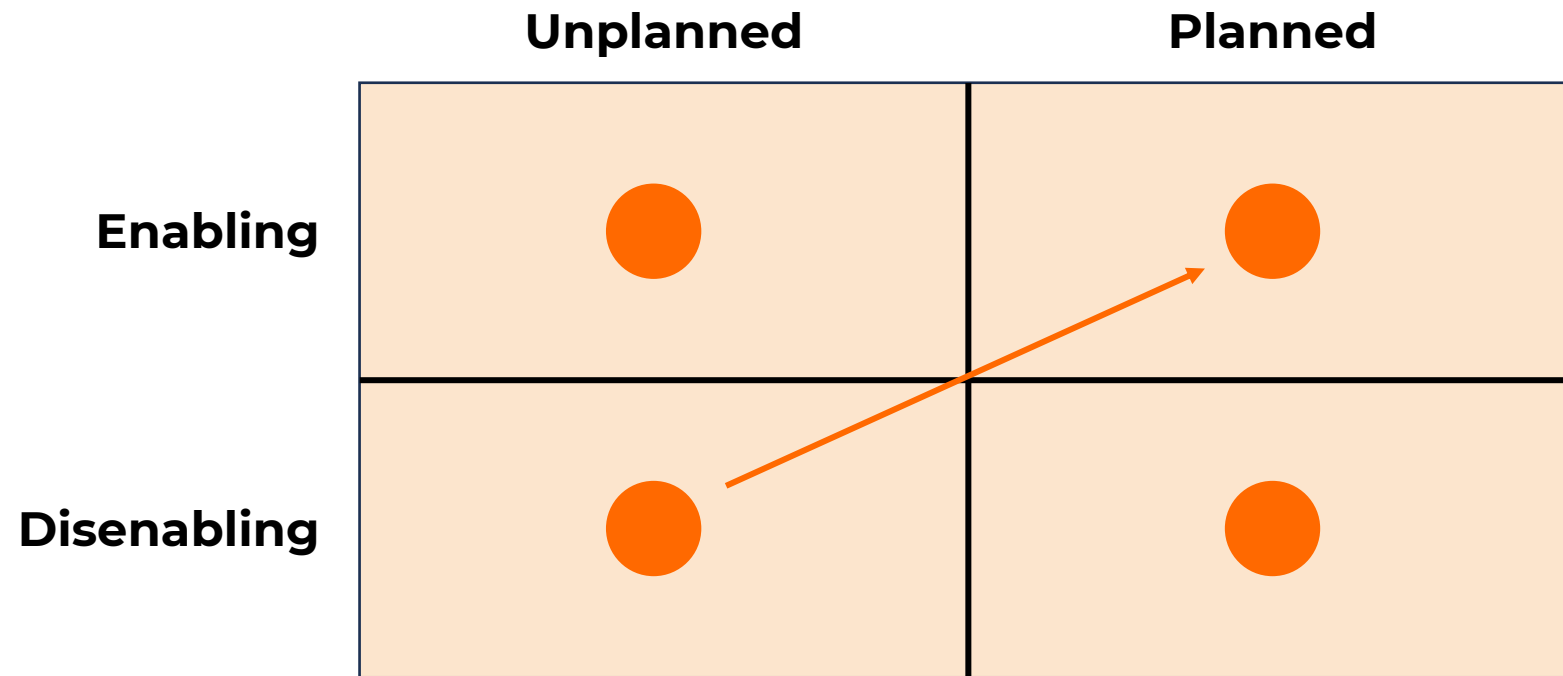
Peter Drukcer

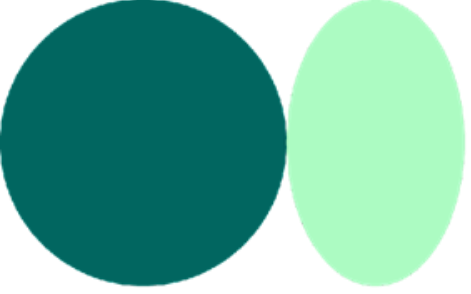


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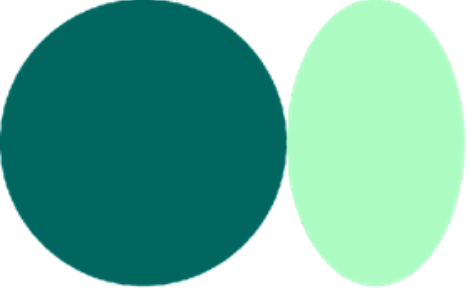
The Organisational Fundraising Culture Matrix





Some of the factors you may consider in determining where you might be positioned on the matrix.

- Do your appeals/projects go out on time.
- Are staff spending an appropriate or perhaps an excessive amount of time on activities not related to their accountabilities?
- Are staff confident in, or frustrated by the approvals process?
- Does Fundraising have an equal seat at the table when organisational financial decisions are made?



Are there any others?

Can I suggest that you spend a couple of minutes discussing this with the person next you...

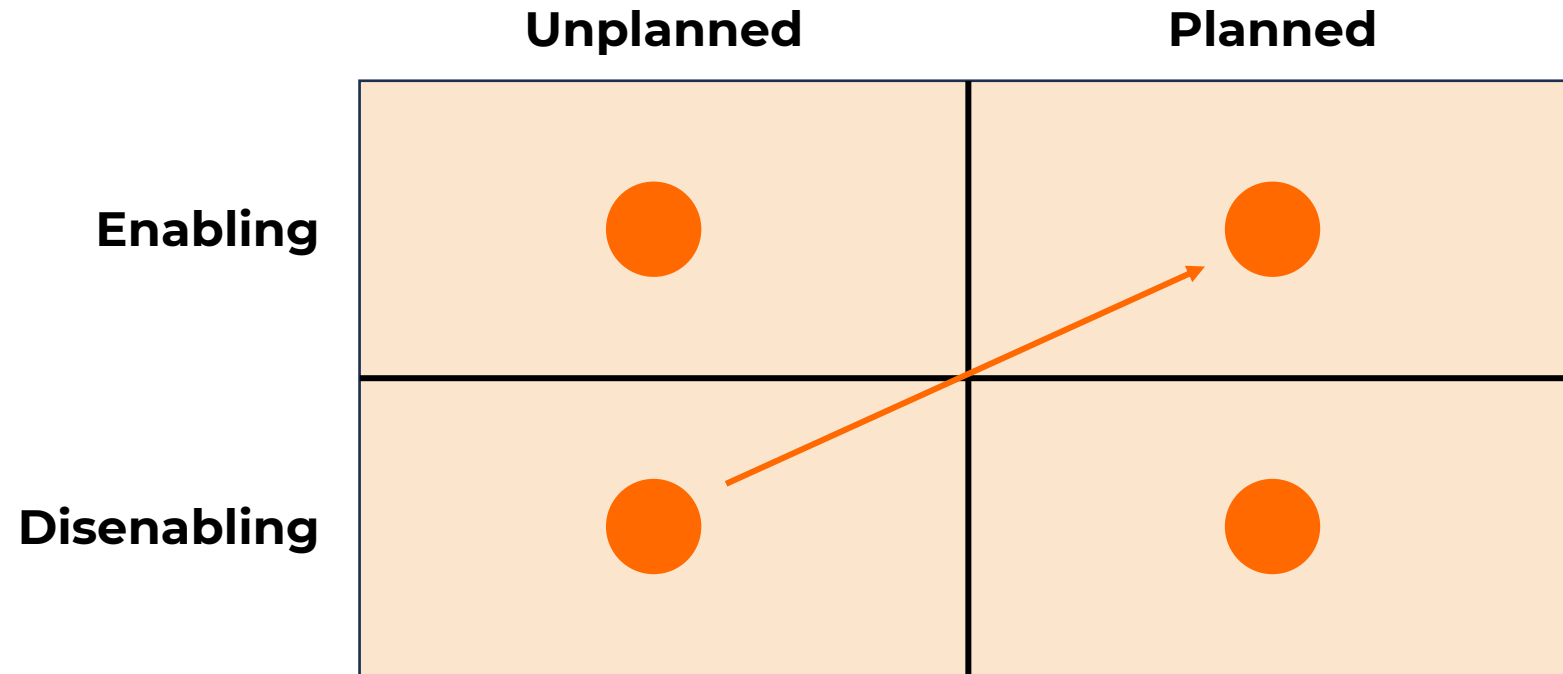
Visualise where you might place your organisation on the matrix and what other factors you may consider

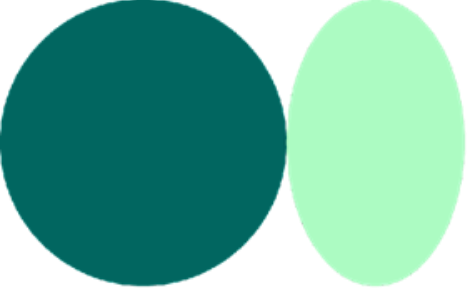


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The Organisational Fundraising Culture Matrix





Why is this important?

When you combine your own vision with your own assessment of your organisational fundraising culture on the matrix. **It becomes a powerful tool.**

It allows you to visualise how the impact of your decisions exert influence on the operating environment both short and long term.



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Why is this important?

Again, alongside your vision this can be shared with managers and other staff, senior managers as appropriate.

It again provides clarity and transparency on decision making in context of the short and long term and other departmental priorities.



In a moment we'll look at considerations in decision making, but before we do, consider this.

Your Role:

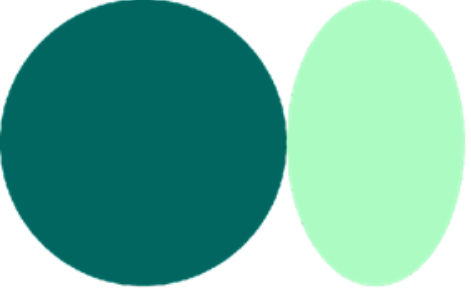
Represent the Organisation to your Department



Represent the Department to your Organisation



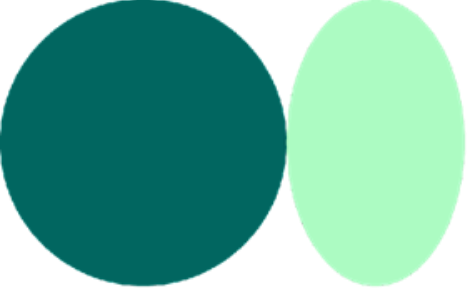
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Why is this important?

It is fundamentally the job...

It is key to maintaining confidence both throughout your team as well as the senior leadership and the organisation

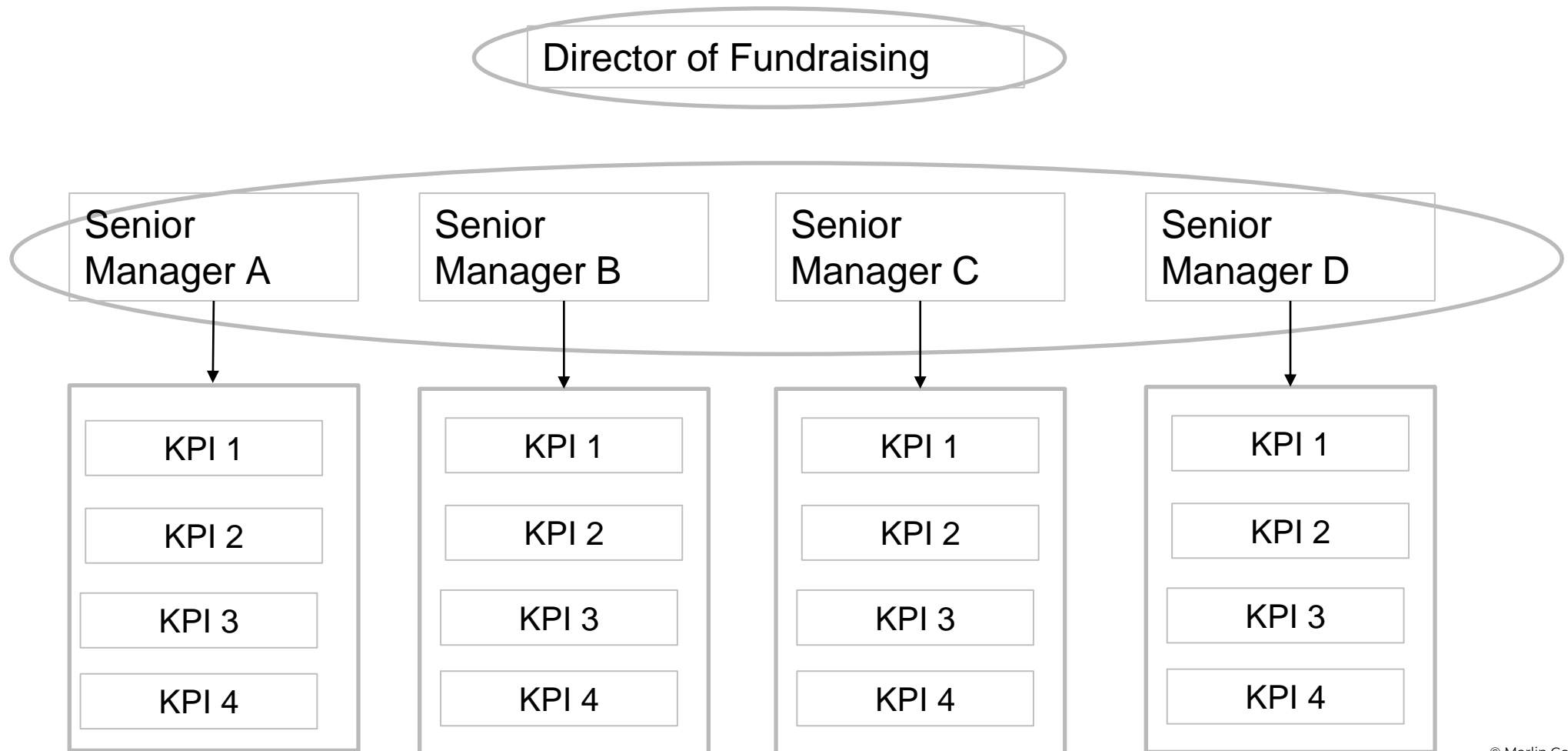


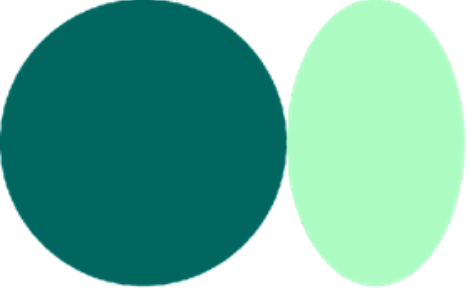
Talking about your role:

Your job is to manage the Fundraising Department, right?



Understanding how structure and accountabilities inter-relate





Why is this important?

It elevates the roles of senior managers from a vertical experience to an additional horizontal cooperative experience.

It means they are also accountable for the whole department meeting KPIs not just in their management column.



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It's not just fluffy

- *Be an active participant in the Fundraising Management Team collaborating with other members as jointly responsible for the overall effective and efficient management of the Department.*
- *Together with other members of the FMT be jointly responsible for the active development of a Departmental culture that empowers staff to meet accountabilities, exceed in their roles, builds trust and mutual respect for all organisational activities and enhances the organisation's reputation as an employer of choice.*



And it's accountable

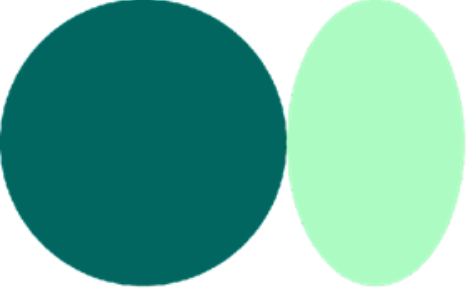
- *The primary success measure for this position is the successful development and implementation of a broad-based Individual giving strategy that meets the operational objectives of the department and organisation*
- *In addition, non-tangibles including a positive and active contribution to organisational culture and relationships with both internal and external stakeholders are also vital to the successful fulfilment of the role.*



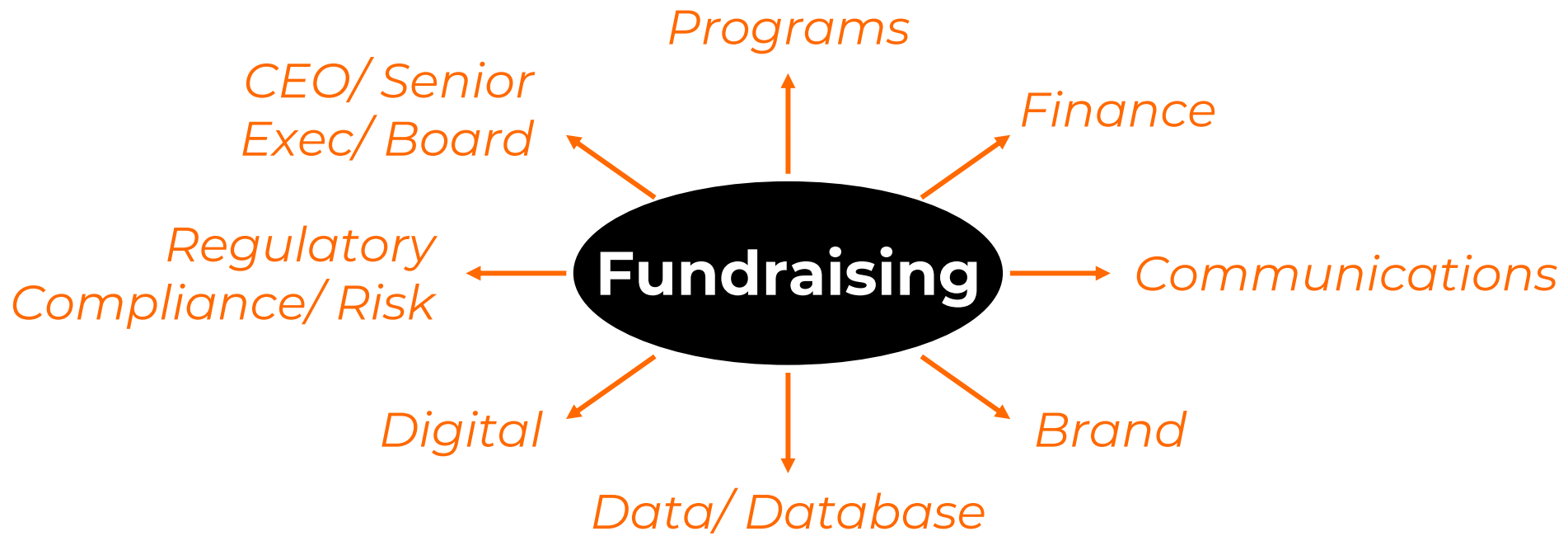
From little things....

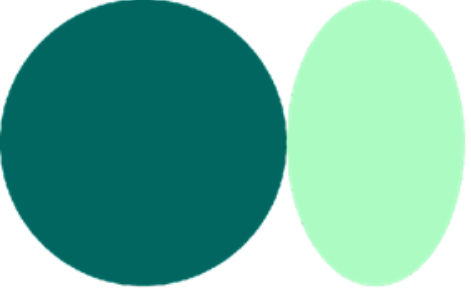
By demonstrating the success of a cooperative and mutually accountable management culture within your department you can export this to other parts of the organisation.

Including your organisational Senior Management Team.



Which makes this a little less daunting...

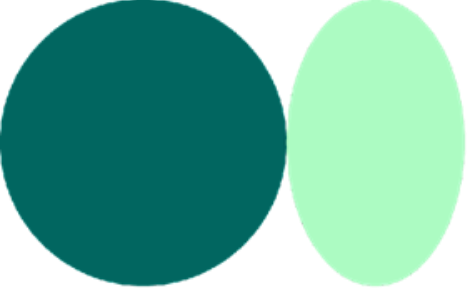




Considerations in Decision Making

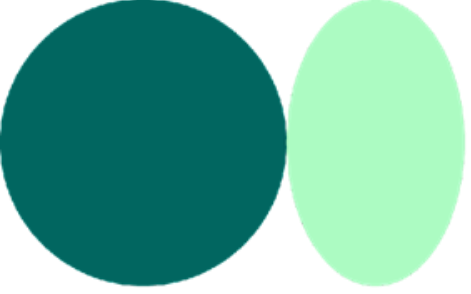
We've looked at:

- Your own vision
- Mapping your organisational Fundraising Culture
- Your role
- Understand structural accountabilities.



So now some considerations into how those decisions are made:

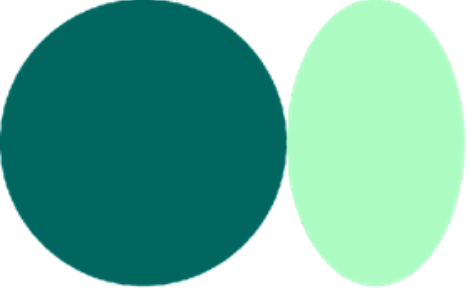
- 1 The Managerial Response:** Focusses on formalised processes, procedures and standardisation. Designed to provide structure and certainty. Usually focuses on the individual.
- 2 The Cultural Response:** Focusses on how humans operate in complex environments. What is their inner emotional response. Designed to create confidence. Usually focusses on the organisation.



Let's take an example:

Implementation Time vs Organisation Time.

This is the dilemma whereby increasing hours from a finite time budget are spent on activities not directly related to the output of that role.



A wholly managerial response would perhaps require staff to fill out timesheets on time usage which are then scrutinised for efficiencies. This focusses on the individual and strips them of agency.

A cultural response requires the organisation to understand the accountabilities of individuals and provide an environment which makes them achievable. This focuses on the organisation and increases the individual's confidence and agency.

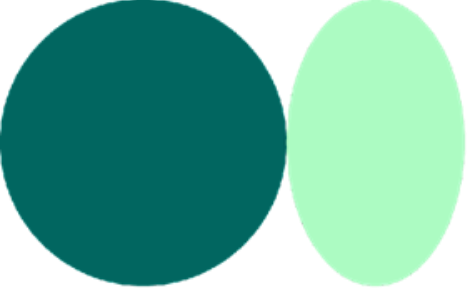




Let's take another example:

The approvals process.

We all know what the approvals process is...



A managerial response requires the fundraiser to gain the approval, authorisation or sign off for elements of their work (contracts, donor facing content, etc)

It is a process, formalised or not, designed to create certainty for staff.

However, it removes agency from the person accountable for the outcome and transfers it to those who are not accountable. The individual is then also accountable for a process which hinders their work.





The approvals process.

Hi everyone

Does anyone know of any free or budget proofing platforms? We have many levels of approval and would be great to have a platform to compare changes and get approvals at the same time.

Thanks in advance.



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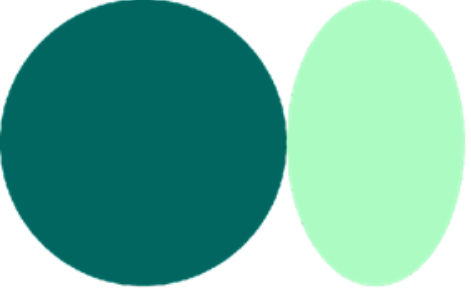
The cultural response recognises the organisational accountability of individuals in their roles.

It provides for feedback not approval. It allows the individual to determine what that process is, who they need to engage and holds them accountable for their decisions. It returns agency to the individual

It is an organisational response to accountability that increases the confidence of individuals.

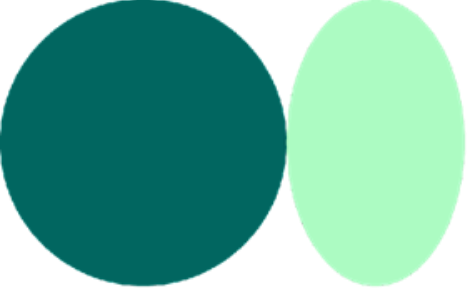


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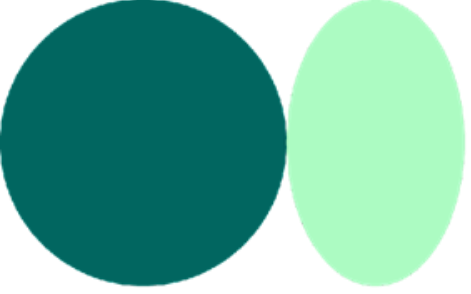
There is a common point to these two examples:

- Both highlight the confidence factor in individuals.
- Confidence comes both within an individual but also externally. We must get that balance right.
- **People will always remember how you made them feel much more than any other aspect.**
- Do they feel constrained by process or agile in an environment?



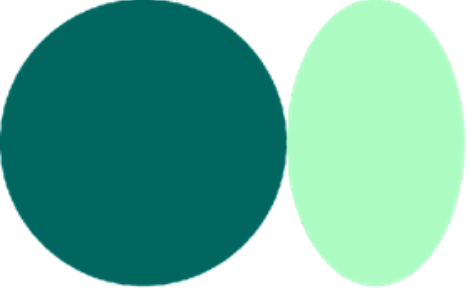
This is important because:

Every decision you make that impacts the operating environment will impact an individual's ability and confidence to navigate that environment.



Key Takeaways:

- Recognise the three characteristics holding you and your department back.
- Develop your own personal vision.
- Do your own assessment of the fundraising cultural maturity of your organisation.
- Understand your role
- Reframe senior accountabilities and expectations
- Use these to guide your decision making.



And finally!

Make decisions that return agency and confidence to where accountabilities lie and encourage/require others to do similar.

People remember how you made them feel.

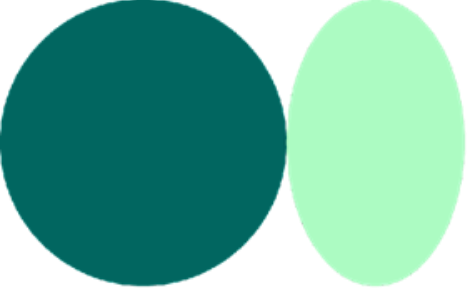


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Further Reading:

- Dr Margaret Scott PhD - *What influences the dyadic relationship between the nonprofit CEO and board chair that drives fundraising and mission?*
- Peter Dalton, Robinson Roe – *Giving Hope*
- Rogare – The Fundraising Think Tank - *The Critical Fundraising Forum Blog*



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Thank you

