

“The seven strategies revealed in this report exploded our organization’s fundraising banquet income from \$24,350 to \$312,964. Simply brilliant!”

- Royal H. Benson, M.D., ACOG

THE **7** SECRETS OF HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING BANQUETS



DAVID **BEREIT** & SHAWN **CARNEY**

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MAKE YOUR NEXT FUNDRAISING BANQUET A HUGE SUCCESS

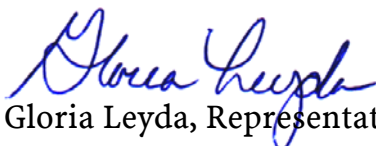
CONGRATULATIONS! You are about to discover the seven secrets that will lead to a breakthrough at your organization's next fundraising banquet. David Bereit and Shawn Carney – two of the most successful and sought-after fundraising speakers and dynamic leaders in the pro-life movement – developed, tested, and optimized these seven success strategies which have been proven to increase the income of fundraising banquets year after year.

In addition to developing a \$21 million fundraising track record, David and Shawn run non-profit organizations every day – just like you. While working side-by-side with these two inspiring men over the last few years, I have personally seen them...

- Tirelessly invest their time and energy into advancing the pro-life cause
- Mobilize tens of thousands of new volunteers into life-saving ministry work
- Re-energize pregnancy centers and pro-life organizations from coast to coast through their compelling presentations
- Equip and empower hundreds of organizations to dramatically increase their funding and further their missions

I have watched in amazement as David and Shawn have repeatedly implemented the seven secrets shared in this report to dramatically increase the results at fundraising banquets for pro-life organizations – both locally and nationally – and I am thrilled that they have finally decided to reveal these proven strategies to you!

Do your organization a big favor. Go lock the door, take the phone off the hook, turn off your e-mail, grab your favorite cold beverage, curl up in a comfortable chair, and study every single word of this report. It's **THAT** important.



Gloria Leyda, Representative

Ambassador Speakers Bureau & Literary Agency



ABOUT THE AUTHORS



DAVID BERIT is the national director of 40 Days for Life, a groundbreaking pro-life initiative that has mobilized more than 300,000 people in 262 cities across all 50 states and seven other countries over the last two years.

David helped to start and build a local coalition in his hometown that rallied 60 churches and thousands of people together for life and slashed abortions in the area by more than 40%. Planned Parenthood recognized the effectiveness of David's efforts when it labeled his community "the most anti-choice place in the nation."

SHAWN CARNEY is one of the youngest and most inspirational pro-life leaders in America today.

At 28 years of age, Shawn serves as executive director of the Coalition for Life, a local pro-life advocacy organization in Texas. He is a member of the board of directors and serves as campaign director for 40 Days for Life, and is executive producer and host of the new pro-life television series, "Being Human," which airs in 128 million homes via the EWTN global television network.



TOGETHER they have raised in excess of **\$21 MILLION** for pregnancy centers and pro-life groups through speaking at banquets coast to coast, advising organizations, and leading their own non-profit ministries. Their work has been featured in the media hundreds of times, including coverage on:



The New York Times



The Washington Post



WHY ARE THESE SECRETS BEING REVEALED NOW?

THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS is taking a heavy toll on non-profit organizations. Giving is down. Many ministries are tightening their belts, reducing staff, trimming budgets, and cutting vital programs.

And indications are that things could get much worse before they get better.

Fox News just reported that as many as 100,000 non-profit organizations could be forced to close their doors over the next 12 months.

The *Wall Street Journal* recently documented how this situation creates an even greater difficulty for non-profit organizations: “When your mission is serving the needy, tough times can be doubly difficult: More people need help, but you have fewer resources.”


Pregnancy centers and pro-life organizations are needed now – more than ever – because when the economy is down, women in crisis pregnancies are far more likely to consider abortion.

With all that is at stake, we have an obligation to overcome the bad news and choose *not* to participate in any recession.

Reversing the downward trend and maximizing funding for your organization is vital to ensuring the success of your mission.

Mastering the secrets of a highly successful fundraising banquet is the most effective way to do that.

We became believers in the sweeping impact a fundraising banquet can have by growing the income of our own small-town organization’s banquet from \$24,350 to \$312,964, raising 90% of our annual budget in just two hours.



“A drop in charitable contributions could shutter as many as 100,000 nonprofits over the next year.”

Fox News

As our banquet began experiencing explosive growth, we started to get requests from other organizations to share with them what we were doing.

In 2006, with only a few hours of preparation, we presented a one-hour training tele-seminar for pregnancy centers and pro-life organizations covering the basics of just one of the strategies we had learned: how to deliver an effective financial appeal.

“Last year we had 220 people attending and raised \$21,500. This year we had about the same amount of people – 225 actually – and our goal was \$22,500. We surpassed our goal with a nearly 50% increase and raised \$32,075!”

*Misty Mehrkens
LifeCare Pregnancy
Center, Minnesota*

We thought only a handful of groups would be interested in participating.

To our amazement, 651 organizations have now gone through that training session. From just the groups that reported their results to us after implementing that one strategy, we know of a staggering **\$2 MILLION** in cumulative fundraising banquet increases.

Since that time, we’ve been inundated with calls, e-mails, and in-person requests for “the rest” of the turn-key fundraising banquet system we developed to multiply the results of our banquet.

Additionally, people have been constantly hounding us for fundraising advice after word leaked out that we’ve developed a track-record of helping pregnancy centers and pro-life groups raise more than **\$21 MILLION** in funding.

But there’s a big challenge.

Like you, we both run non-profit organizations every day. These ministries are growing by leaps and bounds right now, and the difficult reality is that we no longer have the time to work one on one with every group that asks for our help.

However, due to the economic crisis our nation is facing, we understand that “to whom much is given, much is expected,” and we recognize our obligation to help as many ministries as possible.

For the last three years, as our own non-profits have demanded more of our time and focus, we've been assessing the needs of pregnancy centers and pro-life organizations that conduct fundraising banquets, and assembling our proven and simple solutions that consistently generate increased banquet results year after year – for our non-profit organizations and others – even in a down economy.

Due to our increasing commitments, most non-profit ministries may never get a chance to be personally coached by us.

That's why we decided it was finally time to start getting this information out there for everyone to benefit from.

WHY MOST BANQUETS STRUGGLE

While traveling across America, speaking at more than 100 fundraising banquets over the last few years – and while organizing fundraising banquets for our own non-profit organizations – we've come to realize that **lack of a plan and proven systems is the primary reason that most fundraising banquets struggle.**

Many organizations are frustrated and unsure of how to significantly increase the results of their banquet. They find that an enormous amount of time and energy is invested to produce only a small percentage of the annual budget and their banquet just doesn't bring in the level of funding needed to advance their life-saving mission.

In the midst of the current economic climate, many organizations are also now wondering what their banquets will look like over the next 12 months:

- Will our banquet generate the needed funding?
- In times like this, aren't most banquets going down in income?
- Who will come to the banquet as families are tightening their budgets?
- Will donors be able to give at the level they've given in the past?
- Putting on a fundraising banquet isn't cheap – can we even cover our costs?
- Aren't all the non-profit organizations in my town competing for a shrinking pool of funds at the same time?
- If our banquet doesn't produce the needed income, will we have to spend the rest of the year begging people for money?

These are all valid concerns, but every one of them can be overcome by mastering the seven proven success secrets shared in this report.

We learned that through experience.

HITTING ROCK BOTTOM, READY TO QUIT

Here's the real-life experience (told by David) that led us to the realization that something needed to drastically change:

I had served on the board of a local non-profit pro-life ministry since 1998. Each year, we had conducted a fundraising banquet that hovered between 33 and 37,000 dollars of income, and attendance was typically around 350 people.

To be totally honest, we didn't know what to do – or what NOT to do.

There were absolutely no systems in place, so each year we had tremendous anxiety and many sleepless nights leading up to our banquet.

The results of our banquet were totally dependent on circumstances beyond our control: the facility, room decorations, auction items, the food, the kind of day the guest speaker was having – even the weather!

I was the guy who got up each year to deliver the financial appeal, simply because nobody else was willing to do it. I had no idea if what I was saying was making the least bit of difference as we rolled the dice each year and hoped for the best.

But in 2001, I hit rock bottom.

Our attendance that year dropped to 275 people and our income plummeted 20% to its lowest level ever: \$24,350.

The staff was worried and the organization's entire mission was at risk.

I felt like a failure and was ready to quit.

BREAKTHROUGH DISCOVERY LEADS TO TURNAROUND

In the months following that banquet, our organization stumbled onto a breakthrough discovery that turned everything around – the power of **SYSTEMS**.

It started while reading a business book by Michael Gerber called *The E-Myth Revisited: Why Most Small Businesses Don't Work and What to Do About It*.

The book has absolutely nothing to do with non-profit organizations or fundraising banquets. Instead, it documents that the most consistently successful small to mid-size businesses are *franchises* – like McDonald's and Jiffy Lube – that convert everything they do into proven, turn-key systems that can be replicated over and over again, producing consistent results.

Once in place, *the systems* do all the hard work.

The business owner then simply needs to follow the systems to produce predictable results.

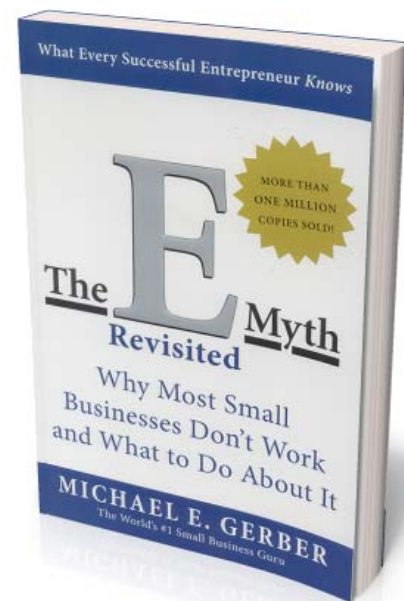
We immediately began to ask ourselves:

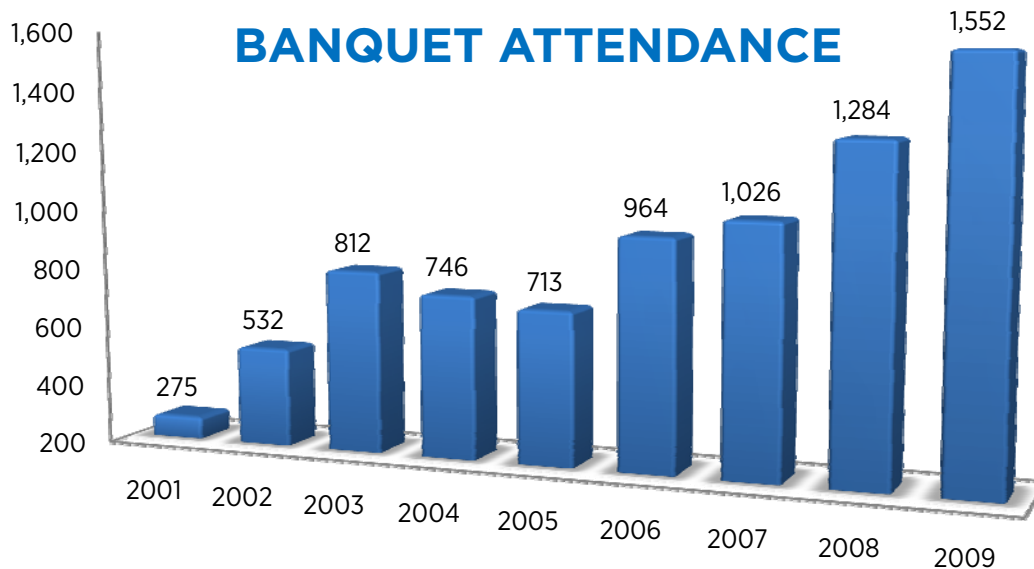
- Would this approach work for our fundraising banquet?
- If so, what areas of focus would we need to develop systems around?

From 2001 to 2006, we diligently sought to identify the key leverage points with the greatest impact on the results of a fundraising banquet. We then worked to develop systems that would maximize the opportunities of these growth areas.

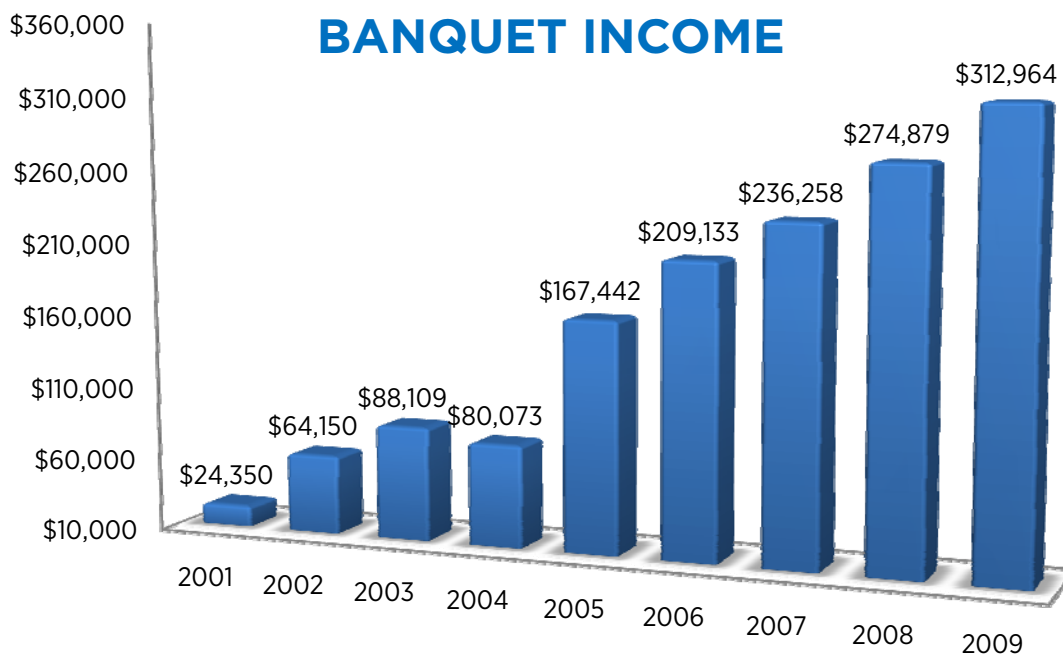
Unfortunately, we were unable to find anyone with experience to coach us on how to do this, so we had to go through several years of learning, testing, setbacks, and adjusting – from 2001 to 2005. But by 2006, we had identified the seven critical growth areas and developed, implemented, and refined systems in each area.

Turn the page and look at what happened to our banquet's attendance as a result...





Things got easier as the banquet grew and we continued working on improving and mastering each of the seven areas. Here is what happened to our banquet's income:



Stop and reflect on this second chart for just a moment. By implementing effective systems in seven key areas, our banquet grew to over **12 TIMES** its previous income.

If your organization has not yet experienced that kind of explosive growth, we can help you accomplish that – without the painful learning curve we went through.

HOW A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING BANQUET WILL BENEFIT YOUR ORGANIZATION

Before we get into the specifics of the 7 **Secrets** that lead to highly successful fundraising banquets, let's first make sure you truly understand just how much a highly successful fundraising banquet can benefit your organization.

A highly successful fundraising banquet is **NOT** dependent on:

- The facility
- The event theme
- The decorations
- The type of food served or the place settings used
- The net worth of each attendee
- The number of politicians, pastors, or honorary guests in the room
- The speaker (and yes, as regular banquet speakers ourselves, we are willing to admit that)
- Who came to your banquet last year or who didn't
- Your previous fundraising track record
- The members of your board of directors or their level of involvement
- And, the best news of all is that the success of your banquet does not depend entirely on **YOU!**

Having all of these factors working in your favor certainly helps, but these are *not* the areas where your attention should be primarily focused.

Instead, a highly successful fundraising banquet is one where you have everything under control and nothing is left to chance.

Your banquet becomes a systematic process that takes all the stress off you. It is a well-oiled machine that doesn't consume your life or take away from your mission.

You have confidence in knowing that every minute you invest is producing a return because you are using a proven system that works – regardless of external factors.

Think what it will be like...

Planning your banquet becomes easy and exciting – all you do is follow the simple systems that consistently produce results for you year after year.

You have complete peace, knowing that all the expenses of your banquet are more than covered long before the opening prayer.

As the evening begins, the room is packed with enthusiastic people who are passionate about your organization, its powerful community impact, and they are looking forward to the event with great expectation.

Attendees are led, step by step, through a concise and effective event program which builds their confidence in your leadership and respect for the organization.

Everybody from the organization's founder, to the most dedicated volunteer – to somebody who just found out about your organization for the first time this week – captures the vision of your ministry and wants to help accomplish your life-saving mission.

The attendees are not dreading the appeal – in fact, they're chomping at the bit for it.

With confidence, you know exactly what to say when asking for support. And you know in advance that people will respond generously.

Your banquet finishes promptly on time – maybe even a few minutes early – and you know that *you just raised most, or all, of your organization's entire budget in two hours and your monthly support now exceeds your monthly expenses.*

The next day, while tallying up the results, your phone is still ringing off the




hook with more people wanting to make donations.

You shake your head in amazement while realizing how many more lives you will be able to save in the coming year and you get down on your knees to thank God for His faithful provision.

And, as good as this year's banquet was, you have confidence in knowing that this is just the starting point for next year's banquet – which will be even bigger and better.


If you had ever told us this would happen when our banquet was struggling to bring in \$24,350, we would not have believed it. But that's exactly what happened for us.

And it can happen for you.



“WOW!!!!!!!!!!!! God has proven His faithfulness beyond our wildest imaginations. Our banquet last year cleared \$43,000. Last night's event cleared \$94,000!”

*Karen Pennell
Chester County
Women's Services,
Pennsylvania*



As we now reveal the **7 Secrets**, it is important to understand that these ideas have been developed, implemented, tested, and perfected. They have proven to be consistently effective, year after year, for numerous organizations.

These are *not* fads. These are *not* simply “good ideas.” These are *not* strategies that work once but will not work again. These concepts do *not* only work for specific groups or in certain geographic areas.

These are the seven most important factors we have found that consistently produce results at a successful fundraising banquet.

If you are willing to master each of these seven areas, your banquet could increase this year by 30% ... 50% ... 100% ... **OR MORE.**

Who knows? Over the next few years, perhaps *your* banquet can grow to 12 times its current level of income!

SECRET #1: SUCCESS IS NOT AN ACCIDENT; YOU MUST PLAN FOR IT

When you're gearing up for a fundraising banquet, nothing can be left to chance.

A successful result comes to those who carefully and methodically plan for it. If you fail to plan, you are automatically planning to fail.

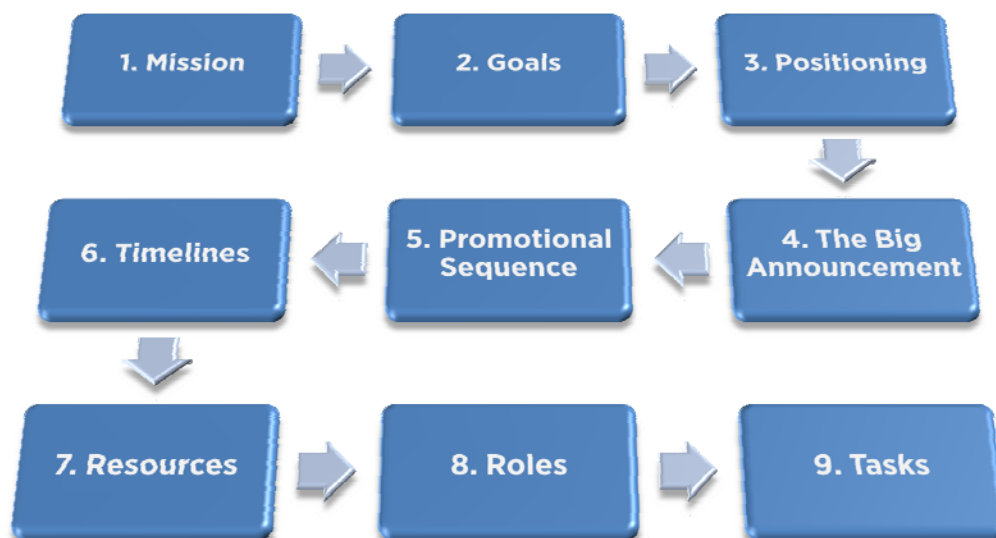
Proper planning gives you the chance to optimize every opportunity for success, at each stage of the fundraising banquet process, long before the event happens. By making everything intentional, rather than accidental, you're not just rolling the dice and hoping for success on the night of your banquet. You are mapping out the exact steps that produce an inevitable result.

In our experience, for every hour of effective planning you invest into your banquet you can save *at least ten hours* of unproductive time.

Every year, well in advance of your banquet, gather a small team of people who have agreed to help with the event, and conduct a systematic initial planning meeting.

Here is the exact 9-step process we developed and found to be most effective:

BANQUET SUCCESS PLANNING PROCESS



Conducted in the proper order, each of these steps leads seamlessly into the next one. The specific details of the methodology are beyond the scope of this report; however here is a brief explanation of what we mean by each step of the process:

1. **MISSION:** To maximize the success of your banquet, it is critical that you begin by focusing on what your organization is striving to accomplish – and then ensure that *everything* related to your fundraising banquet is driven by this mission. For example, let’s say your mission is to “show the love of Christ by providing women in crisis pregnancies with compassionate alternatives to abortion.” Every part of your banquet process *must* point toward this mission and reinforce why it is important. Shortchange this vital step and you run the risk of shortchanging every aspect of your banquet!
2. **GOALS:** You must define exactly what you want your banquet to accomplish. We developed a worksheet that helps us set specific goals each year around the key measurements – underwriting income, table sponsorships, number of table hosts, total attendance, one-time gifts, monthly/quarterly pledges, and income produced by follow-through efforts. Set goals that stretch you to be better!
3. **POSITIONING:** Clearly define how you will position the purpose, passion, attitude, and upbeat expectancy in the minds of supporters for the entire banquet process. This step – *which most organizations have never done* – helps to get people mentally prepared to attend the banquet and give generously from the very first communication they receive.
4. **THE BIG ANNOUNCEMENT:** People want to get on a train that’s going somewhere. If you want people to do more than they have ever done at your banquet, your organization needs to have a bigger vision than ever before. Be prepared to deliver a *big announcement* at the banquet about how your ministry is in the process of advancing its mission to new levels. Maybe you are adding ultrasound technology. Maybe you plan to

We can’t emphasize enough how important it is to have something exciting and new to tell people that ties in directly with your mission, goals, and positioning.

open a satellite office. Maybe you are preparing to launch a new educational initiative. We can't emphasize enough how important it is to have something exciting and new to tell people that ties in directly with your mission, goals, and positioning. By dropping hints all through your promotion about the big announcement which will be made at the banquet, you will see curiosity generating intense buzz and excitement – which in turn produces results.

5. **PROMOTIONAL SEQUENCE:** You will not be able to fill the room and break fundraising records at your banquet by only telling people one time about your banquet and why they need to be there. Promotion for your banquet should be a comprehensive sequence of different messages over time using multiple channels of communication. And that sequence must tie in with your mission, goals, positioning, and the big announcement. Everything works together to point your banquet toward success.

“For our first banquet we raised over \$65,000 and with only 215 people in attendance!”

*Diane Toomer,
St. Joseph Helpers
Pregnancy Center,
Arkansas*

6. **TIMELINES:** Only after completing the previous steps are you now ready to map out the timing of when each part of your banquet process needs to happen. We made a list of all the important steps in the banquet process, and from the earliest planning meetings each year, each of these steps is assigned a date in the proper order to ensure that nothing falls through the cracks.
7. **RESOURCES:** This is the where you identify all the things needed to conduct a successful banquet – facilities, catering, speaker, materials, decorations, budgets for expenses, and so forth – and where to get each of these things. Once you have a system and the right tracking tools in place for resources, keeping up with the details is simple.
8. **ROLES:** Through the previous steps, you have defined the *what*. Now you need to define the *who*. By having clearly defined roles and responsibilities, you can easily delegate parts of the banquet process to others, so you don't

have to shoulder the whole load. Additionally, by having checks and balances in place, everyone will become accountable for their parts of the process and you can ensure that proper progress is being made at all times.

9. **TASKS:** Your final step breaks everything down into simple step-by-step to-do lists. Believe it or not, your entire banquet process can be boiled down to a series of easy checklists you use to ensure that everything is on track for success. It's simple and it works every time. We know – we've done it!

Proper planning on the front end sets the tone for your entire banquet. It takes the pressure off you because there is a strategy and a series of proven systems in place. Then let the systems do the heavy lifting so you can focus on your mission.

One final benefit of implementing a systematic planning process is that everything you do this year is an investment in future banquets. Each year builds on the success of the previous year.

SECRET #2: EXCEED YOUR BANQUET EXPENSES THROUGH ADVANCED UNDERWRITING

Most people think of underwriting as getting a handful of people to buy the meals, decorations, and invitations for the banquet to encourage other people to give. While covering costs is certainly important, underwriting is much more than that. It generates the very first revenue related to your banquet each year and is fundamental to launching the fundraising process for the entire banquet.

Once you've gone through the positioning step in your planning process, underwriting establishes a proper giving atmosphere for everyone – before, during and after the actual banquet.

When we were first getting started, we sent out invitations for a fundraising banquet with only \$44 left in our bank account. After implementing an underwriting system, **we walked into another one of our banquets knowing there was already \$100,000 of funding in the bank – before the opening prayer was ever said.**

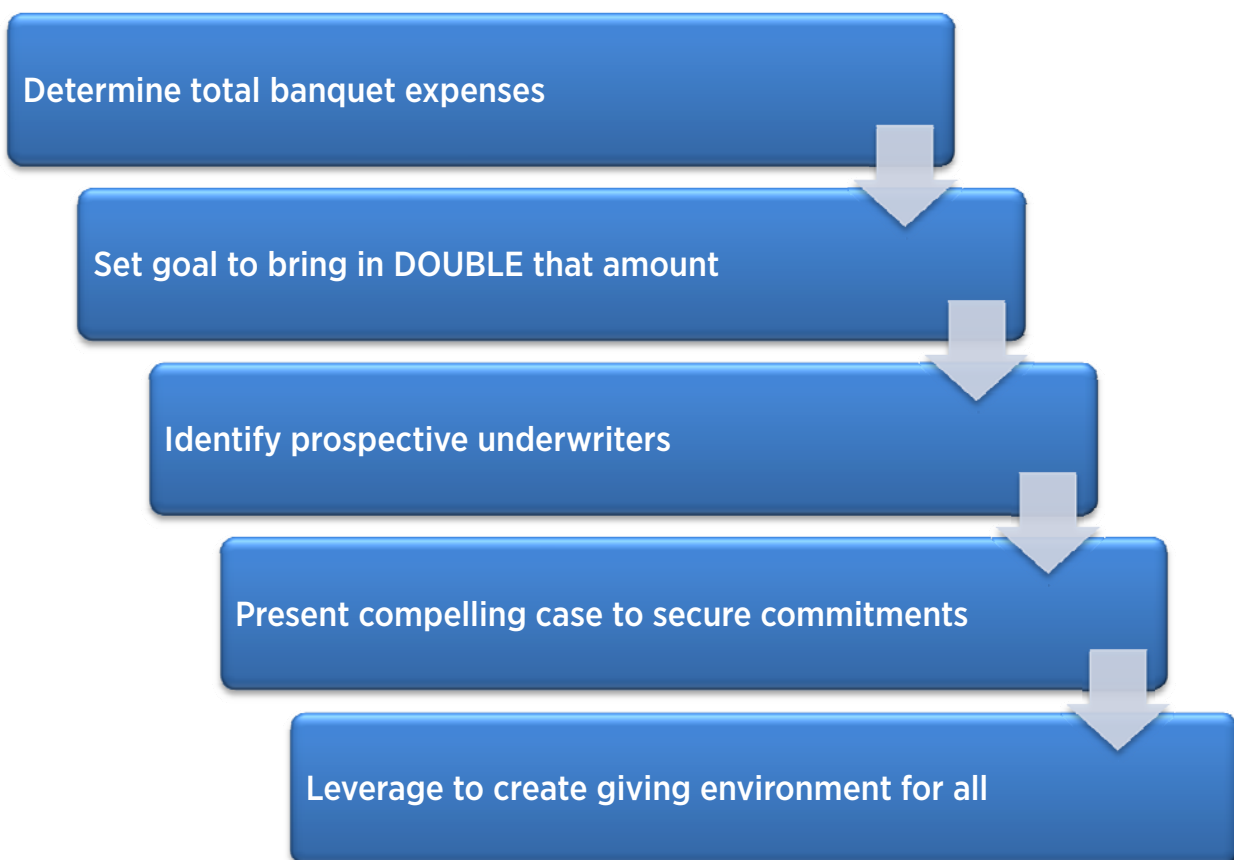
Can you guess which scenario we liked better?

Having *more* than just expenses covered before the event gave us greater confidence going into the banquet. That confidence enabled us to secure the rest of the funds needed throughout the year.

You can also look at successful underwriting like an insurance policy. Having a large chunk of funding in the bank ensures that your event will be a success even if donations at the banquet don't hit the level of your goals.

Here is an overview of the exact underwriting system we use:

BANQUET SUCCESS UNDERWRITING SYSTEM




During step seven of your planning (Secret #1) you identified exactly what it will cost to conduct your banquet.

Our greatest underwriting success has been accomplished by then establishing a goal of securing *double* the actual expenses of your event in advance. That way, even if you fall a bit short of the objective, you are still way ahead of just covering costs.


Make your initial list of people to ask – supporters who are committed to your organization and want to see it succeed.

As you think about whom you will ask and prepare to approach them, keep in mind that you are not merely asking them to pay for everybody's chicken dinner. **Your underwriters want to invest in the mission and future of your organization.**



“Update on our banquet – we are currently up to \$130,000! PRAISES to our gracious Heavenly King! Thank you, again, for all your efforts, prayers, and working with our center. We are truly blessed.”

*Angela Bennett
SCV Pregnancy Center,
California*



They are *mission* underwriters, not just banquet underwriters. This distinction is crucial to securing larger amounts!

Approach these people three or four months before the banquet in person or by phone. Do not make your initial contact through e-mail.

We found that creating simple talking points for the approach makes it easier for the person asking to ensure that the request is delivered in a clear and compelling way.

Position the request so underwriters can see how their gift will make a life-saving impact and how it will be leveraged into inspiring others to give more generously.

Let the prospective underwriter know they have a unique opportunity. Seeing their investment multiplied while deepening their commitment at the same time is an opportunity that will *not* be given to other people the night of the banquet. By investing in advance, they are joining a very elite group of people.

Underwriting also helps to build pride and a sense of ownership in the event. It motivates this small group of donors to invite more of their peers and to help sell more sponsored tables.

Think about it: their investment is proof they want your banquet to succeed!

Some underwriters may ask to remain anonymous. For all others, ask permission to list their names on the banquet invitations when they go out. This creates powerful social proof for those receiving the invitations to realize the banquet is already a winner because people are investing in your mission months before the actual event.

One more thing...

After you secure underwriting, be sure to leverage the investments by letting your banquet attendees know that – due to the underwriters’ generosity – 100% of gifts given that night go directly toward the organization’s mission, not the cost of the banquet. This prompts greater giving.

SECRET #3: MAXIMIZE YOUR OPPORTUNITIES BY MAXIMIZING YOUR BANQUET ATTENDANCE

The old model for fundraising banquet attendance went something like this:

A room of 10 people who can raise \$100,000 is better than a room of 100 people who can raise \$10,000.

In theory, this sounds good. And, to be fair, in times of greater economic prosperity you might have been able to pull off a decent banquet by inviting fewer donors with high net worth. However, in today’s economic climate, that approach to attendance is **seriously flawed**, and could undermine the results of your banquet and put your organization’s mission at risk.

Can you tell we feel very strongly about this? Here’s why:

1. PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

In 2004, we listened to some well-intentioned fundraising “gurus” who encouraged us to use the approach of inviting fewer donors who we thought were capable of giving more. As expected, our attendance went down – by 8%. But when we finished tallying the totals for the evening, our income had dropped by 9%.

Do you see the correlation?

2. BIG DONORS HAVE BEEN HIT HARDER THAN MOST

Over the last year, there has been a big shift of giving patterns. Many people who previously gave large amounts due to their high net worth are unable to give at the level they did in the past. As mutual funds, stocks, and investments are wiped out by the economic free-fall, there is less money to give away, plain and simple.

The only segment of donors where we are seeing funding actually going **up** right now is *ordinary folks* – good, hard-working people with families and modest financial means who have also been adversely affected by the economy. However, these faithful people believe in your mission and are willing to sacrifice to help achieve it. They realize their money may not do much good in the stock market right now and choose instead to make gifts with an eternal return on investment.

Difficult financial times draw a very clear distinction between people who are *prosperous* and those who are *generous*. You will fare far better by filling your room with people who are generous, than by hanging all your hopes on a handful of people who appear to be prosperous.

“Outstanding! We’re already up more than 50% from last year and donations still continue to pour in!”

*Carol Siedhoff
Montgomery County
Right to Life, Texas*

3. THE NUMBERS DON'T ADD UP

In studying every angle of highly successful banquets, we have identified that there are three – *and only three* – numbers that affect income during the banquet itself:


- **Number of attendees**
- **Average one-time gift**
- **Average monthly/quarterly pledge**

That's it. And since those are the only factors affecting income that you can control at your banquet, *all three* numbers must be maximized to assure the maximum results.

Bottom line: With fewer people in the room, you have a smaller number by which to multiply the average one-time gift and the average pledge – and your banquet falls short of its full potential. More attendees equal a larger number by which to multiply the average one-time gift and the average pledge. That yields maximum results.

Go back and look at the two charts on page 10 to see the direct connection.

In Secret #6, we will share how to maximize the second and third of those numbers – your banquet’s average one-time gift and the average ongoing pledge – but for now, let’s focus on maximizing your attendance.



“By using this new approach we netted 30% more than last year. Our banquet income went from \$72,000 to \$98,000!”


*Helen Posvar
Houston Coalition
for Life, Texas*

Keep in mind that the more people you have in the room at your banquet, the more people who will have an opportunity to take ownership in your mission by investing.

If people aren’t at your banquet, they simply cannot catch the whole vision.

Also, a room filled with people excited about your organization creates tremendous momentum as attendees realize how many others in the community support your ministry.

This dynamic creates trust and makes people far more likely to want to get on board and support your organization as well.



So, how do you fill your room with people who are there for the right reasons?

We evaluated several different models others had developed for attendance at fundraising banquets and found that – while each had positive aspects – all of them were lacking one or more key components. Eventually we took the best practices from each model and developed our own comprehensive system that maximizes every aspect of attendance.

There is not enough space in this report to detail every step of the system that can maximize your attendance, but here is an overview:

1. MAXIMIZE ATTENDANCE USING A PROMOTIONAL SEQUENCE

Sending out glossy invitations in the mail and waiting for people to RSVP is just not enough anymore. We live in an era of information overload, and there is a very high likelihood that on any given day your message will simply be drowned out by the noise of everyday life for some people.

You can ensure that your banquet message stands out by connecting with people multiple times using a sequence of multiple different messages – each serving a unique and intentional purpose.

We have established an entire sequence of communication that gets people excited about attending the banquet and mentally prepares them to give generously.

Here's just one example of how we used this strategy to drive attendance this year: eight days before our banquet – long after printed invitations had been mailed and churches had finished promoting the event – we began sending out a strategically planned sequence of three e-mails to encourage attendance.

These are the exact results produced by each e-mail:

- E-mail #1: 77 people registered to attend
- E-mail #2: 114 people registered to attend
- E-mail #3: 27 people registered to attend

A total of **218 additional people** came to the banquet as a result of those three small steps of our entire promotional sequence. The 218 attendees collectively **donated \$43,922** at the banquet.

Pay close attention to this point and look at your banquet promotion carefully. We'd be willing to bet that you are currently leaving tens of thousands of dollars on the table each year that can be recovered by using a proven promotional sequence.

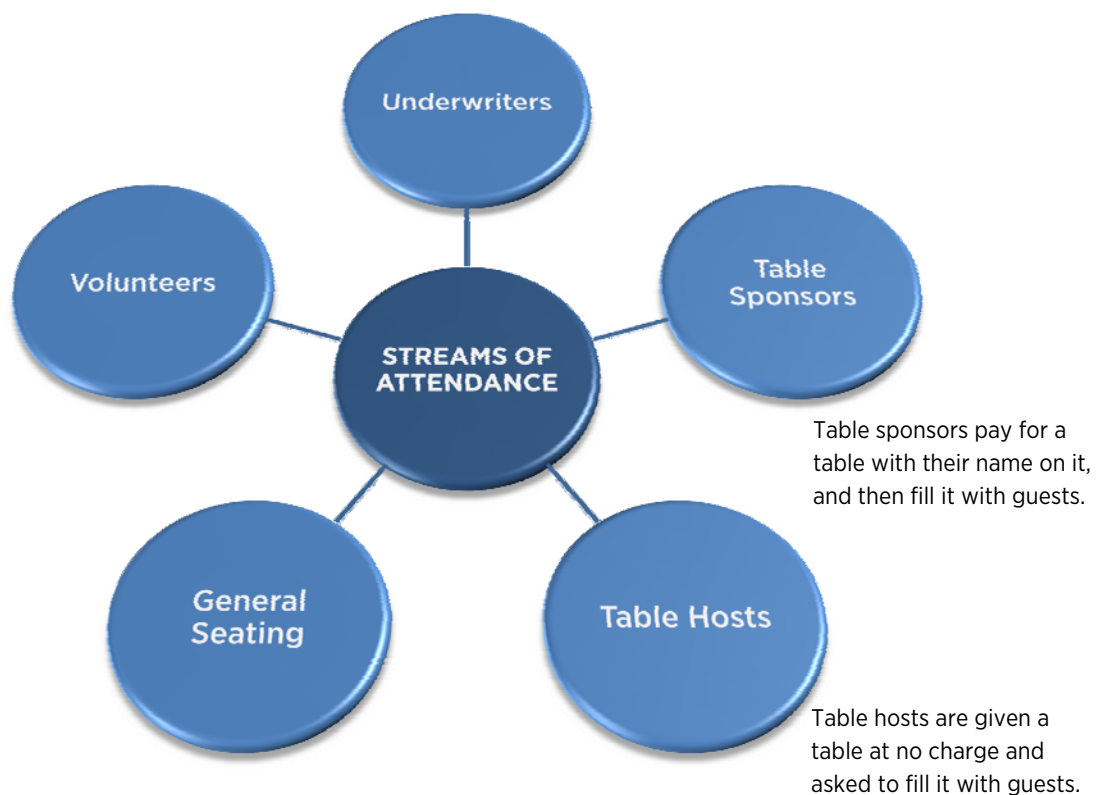
We'd be willing to bet that you are currently leaving tens of thousands of dollars on the table each year that can be recovered by using a proven promotional sequence.

2. FILL THE BANQUET USING FIVE STREAMS OF ATTENDANCE

We found that approaching attendance in a methodical way helps to maximize your turnout without ever becoming chaotic.

Below is a chart of the five streams of attendance we found to generate the greatest results. Begin filling your banquet room with *underwriters* (at the 12:00 position on the chart below) and go around clockwise, focusing on each area in order:

STREAMS OF ATTENDANCE



The various messages of your promotional sequence for each group should convey:

- Hope and excitement
- This will be a big community event
- Banquet date and details
- The organization's mission, goals, and positioning
- Who the speaker is, and why attendees would want to hear this person

- We're moving upward and onward and want you along for the ride
- We will be making a big announcement at the banquet
- If you don't come, you will be missing out on something special
- Different ways people can participate: table sponsor, table host, attendee

Every single message must also provide very clear and specific instructions on how people can register to attend.

3. UTILIZE ALL SIX STREAMS OF COMMUNICATION

Recognize that different people prefer to get their information through different channels of communication. You will increase the odds of connecting with everyone by having a system that uses these six streams of communication, beginning with *in person* (at the 12:00 position) and going around clockwise, in order of effectiveness:

STREAMS OF COMMUNICATION



SECRET #4: LEAD ATTENDEES THROUGH AN EFFECTIVE, STEP-BY-STEP BANQUET PROGRAM

You've planned ... You've secured underwriting ... You've filled your banquet room with people ...

... **Now is the moment of truth.**

Everything you've done up to this point has brought you to the make-or-break moment – the program at your banquet.

A strong and efficient program takes attendees by the hand and leads them through a step-by-step process that helps them understand:

- Your mission and why it's important
- What the organization does to advance that mission
- The impact your efforts are having and any significant accomplishments
- How you are moving forward from here
- Exactly how their financial support will help

People don't want to be overwhelmed. They don't want to be forced to think too hard during your banquet or have to connect the dots to figure out what you do.

Help them clearly see how your organization is positively impacting the community so they can prayerfully discern how God is calling them to invest in your work.

Keep your program concise, focused, and clear of distractions. This means cutting *everything* out of your program that does not directly lead attendees to the reason they are there: giving. This is very hard to do, but necessary for optimal results.

A well-planned and well-executed program also creates a pattern of trust.

As attendees are led confidently through a purposeful – *and on-time* – program, it builds their confidence in your leadership. That confidence then translates into a greater response at the financial appeal.

Here are the program components we have found to be most important, in order:

BANQUET PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- 1 • Be there early to meet and greet people as they arrive
- 2 • Opening prayer
- 3 • Set the tone by establishing confident leadership and high expectations
- 4 • Dinner
- 5 • Transition into program
- 6 • Introduction of executive director, establishing credibility and authority
- 7 • Organization report
- 8 • Testimonial that provides strong emotional connection
- 9 • Summarize report and emotional connection to demonstrate mission in action
- 10 • Keynote speaker
- 11 • Appeal 1: one-time gifts
- 12 • Appeal 2: monthly/quarterly pledges
- 13 • Wrap-up and closing prayer
- 14 • Stay after to meet and greet attendees as they depart

All of this can easily be accomplished in two hours. Anything much longer than that begins to wear down your attendees and distract from their giving.

A few final points on your program...

1. In everything, **give praise and glory to God.** Give Him the proper credit for the blessings and accomplishments of your organization. Most people who support your organization and come to your banquet do so because of their faith in God. Don't squeeze God out of your program.

2. Realize the **three key expectations** most people have for your banquet are a) Fun and fellowship, b) Learning about your mission and c) Giving. Create an environment that fulfills all three of these expectations, doing your best to convert the first two expectations into the third.

3. **The speaker.** Boy, do a lot of groups mess this up! Remember that attendees are at your banquet to support your organization and its mission. The speaker is a bonus. Introduce the keynote speaker quickly, emphasizing why people should listen to what they will say. Make sure the speaker keeps their presentation short and related to your mission. *The event is not about the speaker*

– everything is driven by your mission. Prayerfully select the best speaker you can find, but do not allow your banquet's success to depend upon the speaker. If the speaker hits a home run that night, consider it an extra blessing.

4. Be sure to **thank the audience** for what they have done to achieve the results of the past year. All of your organization's accomplishments were made possible because of their generosity.

“We asked Shawn to implement their system that has worked so well for pro-life groups to help our evangelization ministry at its banquet. By using just one aspect of the banquet system we increased by 42%, going from \$45,000 to raising an all-time record amount of \$64,000. This works!”

*Paul Laudadio
Fullness of Truth
Evangelization, Texas*

SECRET #5: CAST THE VISION AND INSTILL THE MISSION OF YOUR ORGANIZATION

Regrettably, most organizations do not effectively cast their vision or instill their mission in the hearts and minds of attendees. This shows up in the financial results of their banquets.

“We used your methods and the figures coming in are more than triple the donations we received last year. Last year we only raised \$8,000 net. This year, using your new methods, it appears that we will raise around \$32,000 net.”

*Donna Phelps
Healthy Beginnings,
Ohio*

We’ve all been to fundraising banquets and enjoyed good food, good fellowship, good music, and a good speaker – but you never learn much of anything about the organization conducting the banquet. They just assume everyone **knows**. *This is a huge tactical mistake.*

Nobody can give to your vision and mission if they don’t know what they are.

By casting your organization’s vision, you take people systematically through what you do and why you do it. From the opening prayer to the closing prayer, this is what people will be thinking about – and this is why they are willing to respond generously when it comes time for the appeal.

Do this one thing poorly, and the rest of your banquet is an uphill battle – especially the financial appeal at the end. Do this well, and the appeal is a piece of cake.

Most of the visioncasting is done by the executive director during Step 7 (the organization report) in the sequence shown on page 27, however you need to weave your vision and mission throughout every part of the banquet program.

There are three primary objectives at the banquet for casting your vision:

- **Educate the audience**
- **Move their hearts**
- **Expand their giving mindset**

We found that these objectives are easily accomplished by implementing a sequence of proven psychological triggers throughout the report that help to instill the vision and mission in the hearts and minds of attendees.

Report on what you do to accomplish your mission. By this we do *not* mean boring people by detailing the money trail of where you spend every dollar of funding. The people at your banquet are supporters – they don't need the same depth of information as board members. Do not overwhelm them with too many financial statistics.

To cast your vision during the organization report, relate three simple things:

1. **THE PRACTICAL PROBLEM:** Demonstrate why your organization is needed and how nobody else can do exactly what your organization does in the community. This is a good place to share a few statistics and facts that wake people up to the realization of how bad the problem is, and how urgently your organization is needed to solve that problem.
2. **WHY YOUR ORGANIZATION IS THE BEST AT WHAT YOU DO:** After explaining why your organization is needed, show how your organization is the best in your community at doing what you do. Use real-life stories to show this, and provide evidence of how the organization is growing and having an expanded impact.
3. **THE EMOTIONAL CONNECTION:** Show how your ministry is full of selfless heroes. This part usually includes stories of volunteers or staff, a testimonial – either a video or a live presentation – featuring someone who has been blessed by your work. The emotional connection brings the problem and the solution together in a powerful way and humanizes your work. It draws people into the heart and soul of your mission.

These steps also set the stage for the *big announcement* you planned back in Secret #1. Having news of exciting growth demonstrates that your ministry and its mission aren't just surviving – they are thriving.

SECRET #6: DELIVER A WINNING FINANCIAL APPEAL

When conducting a fundraising banquet, keep in mind the words of Pat Reilly when he was coach of the Los Angeles Lakers basketball team:

The main thing to remember is to keep the main thing the main thing.

The financial appeal is the “main thing.” Securing funding is the primary reason you are having your event and everything must point towards the appeal.

Do not be timid when inviting people to support your organization’s mission. Keep in mind: **you can’t accomplish your mission if you can’t keep your lights on.**

Your planning, promotion, and program has all been building toward the appeal. This is the one area you cannot shortchange if you want your fundraising banquet to be a success. Done right, you can raise an enormous percentage of your organization’s budget for the entire year during these 10 to 15 minutes.

First of all, recognize that nobody can do the appeal better than you.

It doesn’t matter if you have a celebrity speaker with a household name that everybody came out to hear. That person cannot help people to understand the importance of investing in your work as much as you can – *as long as you follow a proven process for delivering a winning financial appeal.*

A winning financial appeal entails four things:

1. **SIMPLICITY:** Let people know with absolute clarity what they will be asked to do. Then ask them to do that. Finally, recap and remind them what it was they were asked to do. Keep it simple.
2. **PASSION:** Share your enthusiasm and personal commitment to your mission. If you aren’t excited enough about the work you do to ask people to invest in it, you probably shouldn’t be doing the work in the first place.
3. **CLEAR DIRECTION:** Walk attendees step by step through the process of investing into this work. First, recap the organization report that was shared by the executive director and summarize the testimony. Go through the problem,

the solution, what your organization is the best at, and the emotional connection. Demonstrate how the organization is growing from where it is today. Then let people know **exactly what is needed** to further your mission and how it will make an impact. Use real stories to make the needs come alive.

4. **PRAYER:** People will respond far more generously to the convictions God lays on their heart than anything we can suggest. Invite people to pray and respond to each part of the appeal as they feel led.


By working these aspects into your appeal, attendees will become excited about the opportunities to invest and they will become your greatest cheerleaders. They want to see their team win at raising funds, because that translates into accomplishing the mission they believe in.

Having an effective appeal process, and walking people through it, greatly relaxes the donors and puts the entire ask at ease. There are no surprises for supporters who know what to expect. They know you are providing them with information about how their help can make the greatest impact.

Since the banquet appeal teleseminar training we conducted back in 2006, we've become widely known for promoting the two-tier appeal process which was originally taught to us by Karen Pennell, a pregnancy center director in Pennsylvania, and which led to our own banquet's growth from \$80,073 in 2004 to \$167,442 in 2005.


The reason this appeal method is so highly effective is that it is split into two distinct parts: a first appeal for a one-time gift at the banquet and a second appeal for a monthly or quarterly pledge of ongoing support.

By making the case for both types of support and having two completely different appeals, people have an opportunity to prayerfully discern their response to each request, as opposed to choosing between a one-time gift **OR** a pledge.



“We tripled our two fall banquets! Our monthly and quarterly pledges nearly tripled!”

*Debbie Nieport
Elizabeth's New Life
Center, Ohio*



Many more people will make a one-time gift AND a monthly pledge to your ministry if they are properly asked!

We advocate using two separate response cards – one for each appeal – to help distinguish between the two. This may seem counter-intuitive; however, when we have tested the response using just one card with space for both responses, the results have *never* been as strong as when we have used the two separate cards.

Now, to be totally transparent, a handful of people have raised questions about the two-tier appeal since we conducted that training call in 2006:

- **Sounds great, but does this work more than just the first year?** *Yes.* Look at the chart on page 10. We began using the two-tier appeal in 2005 and have used the exact same appeal every year since. Our banquet has grown every single year as a result of implementing this approach.
- **Isn't asking for funds a second time deceptive?** *Absolutely not.* By following our appeal system, you let people know several times throughout the evening that they will have two opportunities to respond and you clearly explain what those are. By letting people know exactly what the organization needs to further its mission, you are exhibiting good stewardship. Supporters appreciate knowing how their help can be most effective.
- **Have other organizations found this approach to be effective?** *Yes.* We have now taught this method to 651 ministries. From just the ones that reported their results to us, we have seen cumulative increases in banquet funding totaling over \$2 million. The two-tier appeal has worked successfully for pregnancy centers, right-to-life groups, maternity homes, and many non-profit groups outside of the pro-life movement.
- **Doesn't the two-tier appeal consume too much time at the banquet?** *No.* If the reason you are holding a fundraising banquet is to raise support to accomplish your mission, then *there is nothing more important than the appeal.* Prioritize the time in your schedule to address your immediate financial needs *and* your ongoing needs. We typically spend a total of 12-14 minutes to conduct both appeals. Stay diligent about keeping your program focused and on schedule and this can easily be accomplished in a two-hour banquet program.

Because of the importance of the financial appeal, we have developed this system to a precise science, leaving nothing to chance.

Here's a quick example of the importance of getting your appeal right:

One year we had a guest speaker who bombed. This person rambled on at great length about current events that had nothing to do with our organization or its mission, made insensitive comments that offended many people in our audience, and ran overtime by more than 25 minutes. Things were looking bleak.



Then Shawn got up to deliver the financial appeal as people were starting to leave the room. In about 12 minutes, he was able to reconnect attendees to the organization and its mission. He used the elements of simplicity, passion, and clear direction before leading people to prayerfully respond – first with a one-time gift, and secondly with a pledge of ongoing support.

After thinking that the banquet was going to be a dismal failure, the staff tallied up results and found that our organization had just **shattered all its previous fundraising records**.

If nothing else, use a system to nail your appeal. Your organization will grow like wildfire if you do.

SECRET #7: FOLLOW THROUGH TO GENERATE DONATIONS AFTER YOUR BANQUET

By following this entire banquet process, you have created a mentality where people want to invest in your organization to help accomplish its mission. As a result, you will see funds given before, during, and after the event – and fundraising becomes virtually effortless.

However, one of the biggest missed opportunities for most organizations is their follow-through *after* the banquet.

If you don't follow through after the event, you are potentially missing out on a significant amount of additional funding.

There are three major components of your follow-through:

1. FOLLOW THROUGH WITH THE PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED

It is much easier to nurture relationships with the people who have already expressed enough interest in your organization to come to your banquet than to go out and find new people who *might* be interested in what you do.

Add all banquet attendees to your database, mailing list, and e-mail list if they aren't already on them. For those who contributed one-time gifts and monthly pledges, be sure to send personal thank-you notes and/or make thank-you phone calls. Build on the reports and testimonials they heard at the event. Share the results of the banquet with them once everything has been tallied.



For those who attended, but did not make a donation, consider sending them more information

about your organization to help them learn about your work and to prayerfully discern supporting you at a later date. It may simply be a bad time for them right now, or it could take them time to develop trust. It is also possible that their spouse was unable to attend the banquet, and they want to share what they learned at the event with their spouse so they can make a decision together. Make it easier by providing information that can help with their decision.

An example of one easy way to do this: develop a sequence of automated e-mail messages that can be sent to people over a period of days, weeks, or even months. Each message can share a different aspect about your mission and how the organization is accomplishing it. Build a request for financial support into the sequence. There are

several e-mail services that can handle this type of automated sequential campaign. You set it and forget it. The computer takes care of the rest.

2. FOLLOW THROUGH WITH THOSE UNABLE TO ATTEND

By making your banquet an exciting *event*, many people have gotten caught up in the momentum and want to feel like they are a part of what is happening.

However, many people who care deeply about your mission were unable to attend due to schedule conflicts. Following through with everyone who couldn't come to the banquet lets them experience a little bit of the excitement and gives them a chance to take ownership in the mission by helping.

This is support you would not have gotten otherwise, and it sets the stage for an even more successful banquet next year, when many of these people will be able to attend.

3. FOLLOW THROUGH TO MAKE NEXT YEAR EVEN BETTER

The final part of your follow-through is assessing this year's banquet and its results, as well as planning for the future. Next year's banquet begins the moment this year's event is finished.

Wait a few days after the banquet to allow your team members some time to catch their breath. Then, while things are still fresh on everyone's minds, gather your team and discuss the results, the feedback from attendees, and look at the key banquet indicators you established during your planning.

Talk about what went well, what needs to be done better, and how you can improve each of the seven secrets that you implemented this year to make them even more effective for next year's banquet. We created a debriefing worksheet that systematically helps us to measure every aspect of our banquet and establish benchmarks for the next year – a huge time-saver when beginning to plan the next banquet.

By going through this simple follow-through process of assessing your banquet and beginning to plan for next year, the results that you just accomplished become the foundation that next year's banquet builds upon.

Finally, your follow-through leads you right back to Secret #1 (planning for next year) so you can repeat the entire process again and ensure that your banquet continues to grow and thrive every single year – **so you can accomplish your mission.**

SKYROCKET THE RESULTS OF YOUR NEXT FUNDRAISING BANQUET

This report has provided you with a simple road map to the seven key areas that can have the greatest impact on increasing the results of your next fundraising banquet:

- Planning
- Underwriting
- Attendance
- Program
- Visioncasting
- Appeal
- Follow-through



If you are concerned about current economic conditions – and you recognize that your mission

is far too important to leave to chance during these difficult times – then it is critical that you implement proven success systems in each of these seven areas to maximize your opportunities for success.

By doing this, you can ensure that your banquet goes *up* – even in a *down* economy.

Over the coming weeks, we will be releasing additional **FREE** fundraising banquet tools to help your banquet achieve greater success – including videos, case studies, and a training teleseminar. These materials will reveal many strategies that you may have never heard before, whether you are gearing up for your first banquet or your twentieth. The concepts are so powerful that they will help increase your banquet results *even if you do them wrong*.

To be notified the moment these new tools are available, be sure to sign up online at: <http://www.BanquetSuccess.com>

As mentioned at the beginning of this report, our current commitments prevent us from being able to consult on fundraising banquets for individual organizations. However, for those those wanting more advanced fundraising banquet guidance –

including every tool, tip, tactic, template, and timeline of the proven step-by-step system we use to consistently achieve banquet success – we have decided to release our entire Banquet Success training program.

This training program is not for everyone. If you're looking for a silver bullet or some quick fix that doesn't require any work, this program will *not* be a fit.

But if you're serious about getting **maximum results from your next fundraising banquet with the least amount of effort invested** – as well as setting systems in place that will help your banquet continue to grow and serve your organization well into the future – then this program is for you.

To be frank, the secrets shared in this report are just the appetizers. The main course is our comprehensive Banquet Success training program.

The training will be laser-focused and the program will be limited to a small number of groups so we can provide the level of attention necessary to help your banquet grow. This will also be the only way to get training on these proven banquet strategies directly from us.

To get more information, sign up for updates at: <http://www.BanquetSuccess.com>

BOTTOM LINE: SAVE MORE LIVES

So, it all adds up to this:

The reason we put these free tips and our advanced training program together is the same reason you have a banquet – *our shared passion for saving more lives.*

In the past, your banquet may have been a source of frustration that distracted you from the critical life-saving work you do every day.

From today forward, you can choose to implement the success systems that can completely turn things around and ensure that your banquet becomes a key that unlocks the door to future growth of your organization.

Imagine the satisfaction when your next banquet is an overwhelming success because people are on board with your mission and the financial results reflect the passion your community has for saving lives.

Our systems have been developed to help you make that a reality.

And if the Banquet Success training program is right for you, one day you will look back on today as the day that changed *everything* for your organization – **and moved you down the path toward accomplishing your vital mission.**

Stay Tuned,



David Bereit & Shawn Carney

P.S. The knowledge of how to conduct a highly successful fundraising banquet has richly blessed our pro-life ministry work and we have seen it bless the efforts of numerous other organizations that have utilized these same strategies.

The seven strategies discussed in this report can substantially increase your banquet income – which will ultimately result in saving the lives of innocent children in the womb, and protecting women and men from the pain of abortion. With everything that's at stake, these can't remain secrets any longer.

This special report has been provided to you at no charge as our way of saying thank you for the noble, life-saving work you do on a daily basis. We only have one simple request.

If this information blesses for your ministry, we simply ask that you let other organizations know – so they can also experience greater blessings. Fair enough? 😊

Simply encourage them to download this report for free at:

<http://www.BanquetSuccess.com/freereport>

P.P.S. What did you like best about this information? What more would you like to learn? Why do you feel that other ministries need to get their hands on this report?

Tell the world what you think of “The 7 Secrets of Highly Effective Fundraising Banquets” by posting your comments at the bottom of this blog post:

<http://BanquetSuccess.com/updates/free-special-report/>

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