

Case study

# Rambert Moves: Capital Campaign



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**Naomi Russell**  
Managing Director  
**Naomi Davenport**  
Associate  
Wonderbird



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*Rambert is Britain's flagship contemporary dance company. Constantly evolving and with a rich heritage, it is amongst the world's finest and most popular dance companies.*

Rambert's capital campaign, Rambert Moves, was brought about to raise the necessary funds to move the Company to a new home on the South Bank, a crucial phase in Rambert's long-term growth and survival. The previous building in Chiswick, West London was long passed its 'sell-by' date; on a practical level it did not support the creation of the work for which Rambert was renowned. A new home was required to safeguard their future artistic success, and enable them to fulfill their potential for the next 80 years and beyond.

### **Where was Rambert in 2007?**

- Rambert was fortunate enough to have been given a plot of land in central London, opposite the National Theatre. However, plans for the wider commercial and community development of the site had objectors, and this delayed the project. It also started to impact on the belief at Rambert as to whether the project would happen.
- The overall campaign target was £7m but at that stage only £4.2m of potential donor prospects and suspects were identified to deliver against this goal. This was not enough.
- The company had been through financial challenges and had only recently stabilized. The need to balance risk and growth and manage a major capital project in this context were therefore very real issues for Rambert.
- In 2007 there was formal capital scheme at the Arts Council to which Rambert could apply and no immediate prospect of there being one. The campaign started thinking that most of the money would have to come from private sources – which compared to Rambert's peers was very unusual.

Positively, however, there was sufficient will from the then Chairman, Prue Skene, the new Chief Executive Nadia Stern and Board to find a way through the situation;

- Two lead gifts already in place from a trust and individual that would later prove powerful in persuading others to give;
- An understanding that investment needed to be made for results to be seen;
- The opportunity for Rambert's new home campaign re-energise the company and its role in the dance and wider arts sector, which would impact on the ability to fundraise to achieve future ambitions.

## Objectives

Capital projects by nature have a beginning and an end. The period in between the beginning and end can be hugely intense in terms of resources. Organisations that create a successful platform to fundraise see the bigger picture and how this intense period can be used for longer-term gain. With this in mind a series of key objectives for the campaign were agreed:

- To raise significant private sector funds to support Rambert's move to a purpose built new home on London's South Bank;
- To develop Rambert's capacity to fundraise from private sources on an ongoing basis in support of financial sustainability and therefore ensure the capital campaign plan was integrated with revenue fundraising and delivered ROI on an ongoing basis;
- To engage high net worth individuals more comprehensively with Rambert;
- To target high value prospects to make cornerstone gifts to the campaign.

## Process

In order to prepare for a campaign and ensure a stronger development function at Rambert, it was necessary to establish some foundational steps. This included:

### Structure & delivery of campaign (including staffing)

- It was recommended that the staff team needed to be re-structured to ensure integrated and flexible working. This is especially important in organisations where the team dedicated to fundraising numbers no more than 5-6;
- That research and support was built in to the team structure, to enable evidence based target setting and prospect identification; thereby better informing planning and priorities for fundraising;
- The option of consultancy was considered, but with the pre-requisite that capacity must be built at Rambert for the long term, rather than dependence created.

### Prospecting and research

- There was a significant need to build the list of prospects for Rambert and ensure a minimum ratio of 3:1, ideally 5:1, against campaign target. Whilst some of these prospects did not give initially, the very process of building networks and ideas was absolutely crucial to establish as a core practice for fundraising at Rambert;
- Research to back up prospects was also developed strongly in the early stages. The more information one can collect on a prospect, the better the approach will be.

### **Target setting**

- Stronger target setting, and risk profiling associated with it also needed introduction. This started on the revenue budget as means to develop strong reporting and risk management for a target that was increasing. Further tools were subsequently developed for the capital campaign.

### **Staffing and resourcing**

- Rambert was enlightened in understanding that investment needed to be made in fundraising for success to be seen. The fundraising consultant was given the opportunity to build relationships and develop foundations for the campaign, so they were ready to ask for gifts as soon as the campaign was green lighted;
- In terms of overall amount budgeted for the capital fundraising, a ratio of 10% against an initial target of £11m was agreed. In the end, the amount spent, including staff was under 10% of cost against funding raised, thereby providing very good value for money.
- A new team was recruited including dedicated resource for research and departmental finance and admin, thereby ensuring the team members with financial targets could focus more time on cultivation and asking.

### **Board involvement and senior volunteers**

- A sub-committee of the board was formed in the first instance and, once established, new members were co-opted to form a campaign committee. This group numbered 12 people;
- An existing member of the board, Phillipa Suarez, stepped up to Chair the committee.

### **Outcomes**

- Alongside the gift of the land (value £5m), and in the end an Arts Council capital grant of £7m, £7.6m was raised from private sources;
- The campaign reached 95% of committed gifts before the construction contract was signed to build the new home. The usual requirement is 80% of secure funds before going on site.
- The majority of major gifts were £500,000, with one family foundation giving £1m.
- A number of naming rights were agreed for key spaces in the new building,
- Alongside the campaign revenue, income from the private sector increased fourfold, with room for ongoing increase;
- A strong internal development team, and the Head of Development and Development Manager remain in post one year after the new building opened, providing important relationship continuity for donors and fundraising activity at Rambert.

- The quality and range of prospects engaging with Rambert was exponentially increased creating increased potential for Rambert's private sector giving long-term;
- Every member of the board, campaign committee and senior team gave personal gifts to the campaign. This accounted for over 10% of giving against the private fundraising target. This philanthropic leadership at the heart of the campaign was key to the Rambert campaign's integrity and success.

## Conclusions and recommendations

Above all, Rambert learnt to tell its story more powerfully and have confidence to do so. They also learnt that investment is worth making and results are seen for the long-term when this happens. Making the right level of investment is often the greatest hurdle for major projects at the start.

Some key tools were developed during the course of the campaign that made the campaign stronger and easier to track. In particular:

- Target tracker: which evaluated all campaign prospects and gave a risk assessment against the anticipated value of the gift. This allowed the team, CEO and board to have a snapshot at any time of where the campaign was and what the likely end result would be.
- Strong research: was crucial, and undertaken in such a way that informed discussions on tactics at campaign committee meetings. This allowed Rambert to use senior volunteers better in preparing and being involved in major asks to campaign prospects.

In addition:

- Building the sense of campaign and momentum amongst all stakeholders was crucial in the latter stages of the campaign. It included weekly updates and action notes including to senior volunteers!
- The importance of the involvement of all departments in contributing toward fundraising was crucial to success. The sense of a 'mythical' project was increasingly replaced by a willingness to contribute. Fundraising works best when it is understood across an organisation. This improved as the campaign developed, and it's true to say that without the participation of individuals, such as the Rehearsal and Technical Directors, especially in relation to events and access to rehearsal for key donors, the job of the campaign team would have been immeasurably harder;
- Finally, they learnt the importance of commitment, buy-in and active support from board members to mobilise gifts.

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