

THE ART AND ACT OF SEEKING SUPPORT

The Critical Path to Engaging Potential Major Donors

- Identifying** ⇒ based on prior giving, involvement, and/or indicated interest
- Prospecting** ⇒ gathering pertinent information
- Evaluating** ⇒ determining appropriate “target” gift level, personal interest(s), best person(s) to contact
- Cultivating** ⇒ communicating the merit and need for support
- Soliciting** ⇒ asking for a gift commitment
- Following-Up** ⇒ confirming gift commitment, and cultivating for further support

Considering the Essential Questions

- *“Why should anyone give anything, at anytime, to this organization?”*
- *“What will the organization be able to do more of....or do better...or avoid the risk of losing... as a result of the requested gift support?”*
- *“Who will be served most as a result of the organization meeting this funding requirement?”*
- *“What are the ways in which someone will be recognized for their gift support?”*

Preparing Yourself for Engaging Potential Donors

- Have a positive frame of mind.
- Be prepared to listen to reasons and objections.
- You’re not asking for yourself. Donors don’t give to you. They give to meet an expressed charitable need...and receive satisfaction from that act.
- People give through people to help people.

- Ask yourself questions which a thoughtful donor might ask.
- The most important reason why people give? They are asked!

Rules Of Engagement

Every potential donor should have an agreed upon strategy for personal contact, cultivation and solicitation. And every strategy should include:

1. Evaluation of the prospect's **gift capability**.
2. Selected **"target"** solicitation amount.
3. Identification of possible **areas of interest**.
4. Identification of **best person** to assist in contact.
5. Determination of best **cultivation strategy**.
6. Determination of **solicitation timing**.
7. Confirmation of **terms and conditions** of gift following successful solicitation.
8. Confirmation of **appropriate recognition** in consultation with donor.
9. **Written record** of all contacts submitted to Foundation offices.

"Forget the Pitch, How Much Have You Got Me Down For!"

"I am going to ask for your support, but only after I have provided sufficient information to help you make that decision."

"It's been suggested that you might be interested in becoming a 'leadership' donor."

"There are a number of special gift opportunities at the \$5,000 and \$10,000 levels. Can we discuss those?"

"The 'President's Associates' begins at the \$2,500 level, and we would like to invite you to join us."

What Donors Want to Know

- Will want to be assured that the program(s) which they are helping to finance is the result of careful and sound planning, and is not the sudden inspiration of an organization eager to get their money.
- Will want to know that others are supporting the Foundation and College, especially the Board of Trustees, and that they have not been singled out for a gift just because they have financial means.
- Will be gratified to know that the funding need they are helping to meet is an urgent one, essential to be met now and not at some future indefinite time.

Some Things to Remember

Limit your assignments. Don't take on too many prospects. Not more than five. If you would like more, complete five and then take on a few more assignments.

See your best prospects first. Early success is a real motivator!

See your prospect personally. Use the phone or a letter to make an appointment.... and not to solicit a gift.

Two are often better than one. Consider having someone else join you in visiting with your prospect.

Have several 'talking points' in mind. These should be the most important reasons you have for supporting the College.

Motivating Factors for Major Gifts

- Major gifts usually relate to ***institutional vision and leadership***, not to fundraising campaigns.
- Major donors want their gifts to ***make a difference***, not to replace the need for sound fiscal management.
- Major gifts reflect levels of donor ***involvement***, not simply capacity to give.

Reasons for Not Giving

- Donor is not asked
- Solicitor does not listen
- Solicitor exhibits lack of confidence
- Solicitors do not follow-up