

MAJOR GIFTS PROSPECT MANAGEMENT

Guiding Principles for Professional Prospect Management

Guiding principles for the management of major gift prospects are to:

- **Avoid confusion** in the minds of prospects and key volunteers which may result from multiple, overlapping, and/or conflicting requests for support.
- **Maintain meaningful and periodic personal contact** to assure a prospect that his/her involvement with, and support of the organization are valued.
- **Engage Trustees and key volunteers**, wherever possible, in personal contact and communications with a prospect.

Principal Objectives of a Prospect Manager

Based on the assignment of between 10 and 125 individuals to senior staff, with the number depending on other professional assignments and expectations of the position, the following should be defined for each prospect:

- Special interest(s) related to the organization's represented funding goals and priorities which might encourage the prospect's significant gift support.
- Potential "target" dollar level for a significant gift based on the prospect's response/reactions to comments, questions and observations.
- Best person(s) to encourage, at the appropriate time, the prospect to make a significant gift.
- Specific next steps for the personal contact and cultivation of the prospect to bring him/her/them to the judged best time to solicit a significant gift.

Expectations of a Prospect Manager

- **Institutional Memory:** Ensuring that the most salient outcomes of personal contacts with major gift prospects are recorded in the organization donor date base.

- ***“Next Step” Management:*** Reporting on assigned major donor prospects noting previous steps taken, and next step to be taken in bringing the prospect closer to major gift solicitation.
- ***Anecdotal Reporting:*** Sharing with colleagues anecdotal information involving contacts which might be helpful and illuminating to colleagues in their major gift prospect management.
- ***50% to 60% Gift Ratio:*** Expecting that assigned major gift prospects should be expected to make a gift commitment within a reasonable period of time, i.e. 6 months to 18 months, with the balance declining or continuing to deliberate.
- ***Metric Management:*** Assessing the activity and productivity of a prospect manager “by the numbers”, i.e. number of personal contacts made with a prospect over specified periods of time, and categorizing each prospect as to their potential level and timeliness of their eventual gift commitments as well as confirmed gift commitment.