

FUNDRAISING BROCHURES: MESSAGES NEEDING MESSENGERS

I have been asked on occasion to help an organization write and design a fundraising brochure that *“will raise major gifts”*. My response, which likely frustrates some, is that it can’t be done! To encourage a positive response to clearly-articulated text in an artfully designed brochure, it must be personally and persuasively delivered by an enthusiastic messenger.

In order to maximize ROI (return on investment) for expensive printed brochures, personalized delivery by a volunteer, staff or friend of the organization will enhance the probability for response. And, fundraising experiences over the years have demonstrated that thoughtful personal contact with potential major donors over time can result in gifts from 50% to 65% of those individuals.

With respect to “personalized” delivery, in priority order of fundraising effectiveness, that could be through:

- Personal meeting and discussion focused on brochure content, and most importantly, listening to the potential donor’s charitable interests, intentions and questions
- Mailing/delivering the brochure prior to, or following a personal meeting
- Personal note attached to mailed/delivered brochure indicating a follow-up call

In carrying-out a ‘messenger mission’, you should anticipate questions from an intended potential major donor along with your possible responses. For example:

- **Potential Major Donor:** *“I haven’t got time to meet. Just send me the stuff in the mail, or by email.”*
- **Your Response:** *“I know you’re busy, and it will take time for you to go through and digest the information. How about I just come by, and take 10 to 15 minutes to brief you on what our organization is doing that is likely of interest to you.”*

OR,

- **Your Response:** *“I’ve accepted the responsibility to personally speak with 5 people whose perspectives and advice, after looking over the brochure, are important to our organization. Can we set up a time to talk preferably in person, but if more convenient for you, by telephone?”*

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- **Potential Major Donor:** *“Save your money getting the materials to me. How much have you got me down for?”*
- **Your Response:** *“At some point-in-time, I will ask you to consider your support of our organization, but only after I have had the opportunity to respond to questions you may have, or further information you need in order to make that important decision.”*

A reminder: Patience and persistence pays! Anything less may give the impression to a potential major donor that your message is not very important or earnest. Either impression is not a good one.

How are your organization’s important messages being delivered?