Welcome

HOW TO PREPARE FOR A SUCCESSFUL MAJOR GIFT REQUEST

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Non Profit Consulting Group Inc.

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WEBINAR OUTLINE

- Characteristics of a Major Gift
- Characteristics of a Major Donor Prospect
- Preparation – Ingredients for Success
- Getting the Meetings – Asking for Conversations

WEBINAR OUTLINE

- Questions to Ask Prospective Donors
- The Ask - Making it Happen
- Closing the Meeting and Follow-up
- Q & A

Getting to Know You

Tell us a bit about:

- Your role in Major Gift fundraising
- Your experience with Major Gift fundraising

Characteristics of Major Gifts

- Relationship-based
- Face-to-face solicitation
- Focused on meeting a specific need or opportunity (i.e. rarely "unrestricted")
- Often involves peers (volunteers) – as influencers and solicitors
- Focused on the donor's interests
- Often pledged over a period of time

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Characteristics of Major Donor Prospects

- Strong linkages to your organization
- Demonstrated interest in the work of your organization
- Capacity – ability to give
- Open to giving – history or philanthropy, life stage, etc.

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Preparation – Ingredients for Success

At least 80% of the work you do will happen before you make the request.

- What do you need specifically, and why is it important (ie impact)?
- Who are your best prospects and why would they support this?
- Who are my authentic influential helpers and advisors for each prospect?
- What do I know about the prospect, their interests, ability to give, and their history with out cause?

Successful major gift requests are dependent upon the right person making the right ask for the right amount at the right time for the right project.

We are proponents of the two-step system…a pre-ask conversation, followed by the ask.

Asking for a Conversation

Pre-ask conversations, warm-up visits and discovery calls are important precursors to the "ask" visit. If you're unsure how to get in the door for a conversation, try these tips:

- Ask for a meeting to thank donors who have reached a giving milestone (# of years, cumulative giving amount, etc.)
- Ask for a meeting to seek advice and feedback on elements of your Case that you know are of interest to the donor
- Ask a donor if they would agree to be featured as an inspirational donor story in your organization's publication – and arrange a meeting to interview them

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There are many other ways to secure a conversation.

Remember that the key is to focus on learning more about the donor.

Important Questions to Ask A Prospective Donor

1. “What kind of impact do you want to have in the world/country/community with your social investments?” (You’ll learn their about their giving priorities.)

2. “What do you know about us?” (You’ll learn about their awareness of your work, plus it will give you the opportunity to reinforce or debunk opinions.)

3. “How is our organization doing in advancing its mission, in your view?” (You will find out their opinion of your value as a charity, as well as the relative importance of your mission.)

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4. “What aspects of our plan appeal to you the most?” (They will help pinpoint what interests them, so you can focus the discussion in this area.)

5. “How can we keep you informed of/involved in the life and work of our organization?” (They will tell you how to keep the channels of communication open after the meeting.)

The end objective of these conversations is to learn more about the donor, thank them for their time and input and, importantly, to set the stage for the ask.

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Remember, if you've secured the audience, chances are you're in the company of a willing participant in a two-way exchange of information.

Don't be afraid to open the door to discussing sometimes challenging topics with these open-ended questions….it's always better to know about hidden issues so that you can address them.

The end objective of these conversations is to learn more about the donor, thank them for their time and input and, importantly, to set the stage for the ask.

For example,

"Mrs. Green, we've so enjoyed and benefited from this conversation. We'd like to follow up with you about the critical XX project you seemed so interested in, and put forward a request for support for you to consider. How and when would you prefer we do that?"

IT's SHOW TIME ("the ask")

Before you book the meeting,

- Determine who should be involved in the meeting. Should the meeting include the donor's spouse? Family members? Others?
- Anticipate questions you might face. Make a list and be ready to address them.
- Ensure your volunteer solicitor(s) are well-trained and well-informed. It is important that they feel comfortable and confident. Have a practice run, if it helps.

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The Ask - Making it Happen

By the time this meeting happens, you've done at least 80% of the work. The Ask should:

- Be done in person, whenever possible (preferably with a solicitation team of two)
- Involve a simple, cogent request that details specific amount, specific purpose, terms, recognition and impact
- Make the case from the donor's vantage point – show that you understand what interests the donor
- Include a concise, written summary of the request, along with supporting materials, to leave behind

After the ask is verbalized, remain quiet and allow the prospect to respond. Fight the urge to fill dead air with chatter.

Closing the Meeting and Follow-up

- Be prepared to discuss a deferred gift.
- Be specific about when and how you will follow up.
- If a second meeting is necessary, endeavor to schedule the next meeting at the conclusion of the ask meeting.
- No does not necessarily mean never. Sometimes it means "not right now." Sometimes it means "not this project" or "not this amount". Leave the door open for other options.
- Always close with a thank you, regardless of the response or outcome.

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Regardless of the outcome of the ask, don't drop the prospect from your cultivation radar. Keep record of all interactions and their important details, and remember that on average, it takes 18 – 24 months to secure a major gift commitment.

Just because a donor doesn't respond to today's request, doesn't mean they aren't an important future prospect.

Q & A

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