

Asking: A 59 Minute Guide to Everything Board Members, Volunteers, and Staff need to know to Secure the Gift

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Original – 111 pages

Summary – 3 pages and some change

Disclaimer – While this summary contains quotes and some small re-produced portions of the original book, this summary is not the work of the author of the book summarized. It contains only my carefully chosen selections of what I personally deem to be the most important and significant aspects of the book. This summary is not meant to replace or re-produce the book in any way, and should not be considered a full substitute for the book.

Key General Points

- Take joy in your role, your job as a fundraiser.
- Meet in person – don't try to accomplish gifts over the phone or mail

Effective KEYS – LISTEN
HAVE ENERGY
ENTHUSIASM
INTEGRITY – tell the truth

- When asking for money – don't provide a range – pick an amount and shoot for it.
- Major gifts often equal 10-25 x consistent annual giving.
- Try to talk for only 25% of the visit – let the person do much of the talking....this means that you must be prepared to ask questions.
- Donors run away from “needs” They give to heroic, bold, audacious programs, not needy institutions. Your organization does not have needs. People have needs. Your organization has answers. Don't sell needs. Sell your answers, your response, your solution.
- What is important for givers....
 - believing in the mission
 - financial stability – no one wants to “save” an organization
 - regard for those involved, especially at the top
- What is not as important – campaign materials and a slick presentation
- Don't fear objections. They are your friend. Probe for hidden or unspoken ones. A gift at the proper level will never be made until every concern, no matter how inappropriate or trivial, is satisfied. Remember, your job is not to prevail, knock down, and win. Your job is to resolve the objection and win over the prospect. Your success will depend on your ability to move from one objection to another

without a loss in your enthusiasm or optimism. Remain poised, interested, completely understanding, confident, and positive. Keep cool and don't freeze.

- Don't let rejection discourage you....MOVE ON.

Key Tips in Order of Application

BEFORE THE VISIT – SETTING AND CONFIRMING THE APPT.

THE LETTER

Send a letter before calling to set an appointment – that way they are expecting your phone call.

Don't call it an appointment, it's a VISIT.

In this first letter, be very clear that you will not be asking for money on this visit...it's exploratory and informational.

THE PHONE CALL

When calling after your letter, write out what you want to say, and practice it...but then don't read it on the phone.

When on the phone, stand and smile.

Keep the small talk brief and get to the point of your call.

When setting the visit, ask for a specific amount of time – ie. 45 minutes or so.

THE CONFIRM LETTER

Send out a letter of appreciation and confirmation after setting the visit.

Don't call to confirm the date...let the letter do it's work. A call might result in a cancellation.

THE FIRST VISIT

SMALL TALK

Keep it brief but establish a rapport. Recognize that you promised not to take too much of their time and what you have to share should really not take much time.

TRANSITION INTO THE DISCUSSION

“I wanted to talk with you today about Life Medical Center. That’s the project that we have devoted the past 2 years of our lives to and are planning to dedicate at least the next 3-5 years too as well. I think you’ll be interested in what we are doing. I think you will really like our creative and well-rounded approach. (Pause) It’s not my plan to ask you for money today. I want to make that clear. I just want to discuss the project. I do want to meet again, however, after you’ve had time to digest the project, and when we do meet again, I like you to consider getting involved. But not today, OK?”

INTRODUCTION

Work hard at putting people completely at ease and making them feel important. Get them talking about themselves and their concerns. Probe. Hold eye contact and listen to how they feel. Understand fully that people are more likely to listen to you later if you listen to them first.

PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT

Take no more than 11 minutes (less if you can) to present the whole idea...the drama, the need, the urgency, etc. When you do this...do the following:

- convey benefits to the donor; joy, recognition, connectedness, etc.
- don’t sell the institution – sell the idea
- tell the story, don’t get bogged down in data and figures

PROBING QUESTIONS

Example 1 – *“I’ve shared with you about our vision a bit, and I think you understand the basic idea.”*

“How do you feel about...?” Ask a couple of these. And “Do you feel this is important?”

TRANSITION INTO SETTING A FOLLOW-UP APPT.

“It’s been very nice having this time with you. Thank you for allowing me to share about this project with you. It’s very dear to our hearts and we feel very strongly about it. I can see that you are interested in it. I was pretty sure you would be. I would like to find a time for another short visit in a few days or a week to discuss how you might be involved with us. Can we find a good time now?”

RESPONSE A

“Oh come on, we can talk about the money now”

MY RESPONSE:

“The truth is _____, I’m not smart enough to know what you should give. That’s really your decision. I thought that for a project like this you might want to make a gift of\$ _____.”

RESPONSE B

"I'm not sure. It's something I need to think over."

"Good, that's exactly what I would expect. I've asked you to make a significant gift; that's an important decision. Can I ask you a few questions about how you are feeling about this project?"

- 1) *(Is it the institution?) "How do you feel in general about what we are trying to do? As we talked I sensed a connection with the overall vision and your interests? Is that right?"*
- 2) *(Is it the project?) "How do you feel about this specific project?"*
- 3) *(Is it the amount?) "I suggested you consider a gift of \$_____. I suggested that because I thought that was about the amount that you might want to give to a program like this. Was I way off?"*
- 4) *(Is it the timing?) "_____, you understand and agree with the vision, and the project, perhaps it's the timing that is a concern. If you had a year or two to make payments on the gift would that enable you to make the gift that is in your heart to make?"*

ASK THESE SAME QUESTIONS...EVEN IF YOU GET A NO...THEY WILL HELP YOU IDENTIFY POTENTIAL PROBLEM AREAS.

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

"Please know that I would never ask you to give to something that I am not already giving to. Since getting involved, my wife and I have donated just over \$_____ to this thing. That's above and beyond all the time, energy and incalculable expenses incurred along the way. I'm not sharing that with you to boast. I wish I could give more...I really do. But I simply want to demonstrate that I would only invite you to be a part of something that I am already significantly vested in and committed to."

*** Add up your contributions and continue doing so and use it in the testimony

USE THIS SIMPLE ASK for A SECOND MEETING or DIFFERENT CONVERSATION FLOW

"I want to invite you to join us by considering a gift of \$_____." -