

# **The ASK: How to Ask Anyone for Any Amount for Any Purpose**

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Summary – # 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.

This summary is organized by chapter just as the author has presented it. It is significantly longer than most because it has lots of lists and much more technical detail than many of the books I generally summarize.

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## **PREFACE:**

Asking for money can bring on a flood of emotions, emotions that have their origins in how a person was raised; the economic climate when he or she was growing up; and the value and emphasis that was placed on earning, saving, spending and giving in those early years.

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

Asking people in person is the only way a group can raise substantial funding year after year. If the professional fundraisers, top administrators, board members, volunteers, and others do not make the ask, the organization may not survive.

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## **CHAPTER ONE: Hesitating to Ask for Money**

Fear and hesitating to ask can be overcome when the asker knows everything necessary about the prospect and the organization. Through cultivation the asker will learn much about the prospect, and because cultivation is a two-way street, the asker should share her or his own passion for an loyalty toward the organization. This personal dialogue is an amazing process, and it usually reduces the fear and hesitation about asking.

The key is to know the prospect inside and out, including her personal views about money and giving and to know that the prospect share the asker's admiration for the group that needs support; then asking will be an enjoyable and rewarding experience. The initial step in this process is to determine the prospects views on money, the lifestyle choices they make, and why. The asker has to be confident in doing the ask: know the prospect, know the organization inside and out, so that the ask is made with conviction. A person making as ask does not get to this point overnight.

## ***What Fears May Prevent or Postpone an Ask?***

This list reflects some of the common issues that can get in the way of an ask:

- I don't know the person's views on money
- I don't know how the person was raised and whether they experienced money as a positive or a negative factor.
- Prospect research shows that the person has the assets to give, but why should he give his hard-earned, invested, or inherited money to our organization?
- I know she supports other causes; why would she support ours?
- There are numerous groups that do similar work, so why us?
- What if she feels insulted that we asked for money?
- What if I ask for too little or too much?
- How can I possibly ask a friend or a relative for a gift?
- I just know she is going to ask me something I don't know. Shouldn't the CEO do this?
- Why can't I ask in writing instead of in person?
- What if they say no and never speak to me again?

Looking over this list you will notice common themes. We will look at them one at a time.

### ***Knowing the prospect well before making the ask.***

Essential to your success is knowing as much as you can about the prospect before the ask. It is important to introduce the idea in the context of the asker's fears. Not knowing how the prospect was raised and the role that money played can make anyone hesitant to ask for money. Yet, how and when they were raised (the era) could be the most important factors that influence giving. Those raised during WWII or the stock market crash in '29 often have cautious spending habits and a need to save, in case something happens. Religious people often feel a need to "give back" or help others in need. If someone's parents, mentor, peers or friends are big supporters of charity, there is a strong likelihood that they will be too.

These things are discerned during cultivation, which is everything you do up to the point of the ask. It is the series of meetings, events, conversations and correspondence you have with the people you will eventually ask for money. *Cultivation is essential before any ask!*

### ***Exhibit 1.1 - Cultivation Techniques***

- Corresponding with and sending emails to prospects.
- Calling prospects.
- Meeting with them at their homes, offices, or a restaurant.
- Having them meet the leaders of the non-profit org, board or committee members, admin, staff, and beneficiaries.
- Give them a tour of your offices, or facility.
- Send them personal messages that are attached to the direct mail they receive from your group.
- Send holiday, birthday, congratulations, sympathy and anniversary cards.
- Ask them for advice on a particular subject that is important to your group.
- Invite them to the group's special events.
- Ask them to volunteer for a special event committee, or advisory board.

- Ask them to write an article for the newsletter or magazine.
- Send them newspaper or magazine or online articles about their particular interests when appropriate.
- Join them on outings or engagements when invited to do so.
- Invite them to give a speech or workshop in their area of expertise to the groups beneficiaries, other prospects, admin staff or fundraising staff.

### ***Learning about your Prospect***

Questions can help you learn more about prospects...questions that are unrelated to money can still reveal views about money.

#### **1) The Soft Approach**

In this approach you ask open ended questions of prospected during visits. Specifically you want to know:

- a) a prospects views on money
- b) how money affected the prospect in the past and how it affects her now
- c) the interest they may have in your group over other groups
- d) the motivation to support your group in the past or interest in supporting now
- e) the connection they may have with your groups leadership, beneficiaries, staff, or volunteers.
- f) the prospect's key area of interest within your organization.

Soft open ended questions, combined with site visits and interaction with the organizations beneficiaries, will help you learn more about your prospect which will help to put you at ease when you do the ask.

Ex. "How old were you when you went to camp for the first time?"

#### **2) The Direct and Sincere Approach**

There is nothing wrong with simply asking someone questions about money. But how you do this makes all the difference in the world. If you are sincere and can weave in some personal observations about them that you have made during cultivation, you should have no problem. You don't have to hit them over the head by asking "How do you feel about money?" but you can take a direct approach by driving closer to the point.

EX. Nancy, we really appreciate your support over the years. Do you mind if I ask you what motivates you to give? Of the 1000's of charities out there, why us?

**GUIDING PRINCIPLE # 1 – The more personal and sincere you are with the people you are cultivating, the quicker you will be able to make the ask.**

Your conversations with your prospects, while remaining professional, should always be on a personal level, they should be warm and fuzzy without being phony. As a fundraiser you have to bring a whole lot of you to the table and be willing to share it. If you are speaking cold and mechanically, I assure you it will take a long time to build trust.

### **3) The Share Yourself Approach**

You can always talk about yourself and why you have a passion for this particular cause. Sharing yourself is often the easiest way to get to know more about your prospects and their views on money, and how they were raised. The caveat I have with this approach is that you must be sure you are comfortable with this approach. Many good and successful fundraisers would rather give up their vacation than use this approach. So, it's not for everyone, but if it fits you...go for it.

Ex. Sarah, you know, I don't think I ever told you that years ago my mother was a patient here. I still remember being in this waiting room. Believe me, it looks a lot nicer now. Back then there were not flat-screens on the wall, of volunteers to let us know expected wait times. We've come a long way, for sure, thanks to people, like yourself, who have cared about the hospital. That's why I work here and support the hospital. What about you? What interests you most about the hospital?

#### ***Giving is the Greatest Gift of All***

It is important to know why someone would part with hard-earned money.

#### ***Exhibit 1.2 – Reasons People Give***

- Belief that giving is the greatest gift of all, and a strong desire to share
- Belief that all the money in the world still cannot buy happiness
- Belief that there will always be someone less fortunate who needs help
- Belief that charity begins at home
- Belief that it's the right thing to do
- Decision that accumulated assets have made it possible to do so without changing their lifestyle
- Desire to emulate others who give – puts them on a level with people they respect
- Life changing experience – accident, near death tragedy, winning the lottery, etc
- Guilt, especially when the money has been earned in less desirable or questionable ways
- Desire to reduce taxes
- Pressure from a friend or peer to support a cause that is important to that person
- Need to be recognized – these people should not be discredited...they will often help set the tone and pave the way for others to give. Some will even be more willing to take on leadership roles. If you have these folks, clone them and you will never have another fundraising worry again.

#### ***Every Organization has its own Sparkle and is Deserving of a Gift***

Every organization has its sparkle. Something that separates it from all the other non-profits and that draws in donors, volunteers, leaders, fundraisers, and administrators like a magnet. As the asker, you, in your heart of hearts must believe in the mission of the organization, be dedicated to speaking on your organization's behalf, be proactive and tenacious for the cause, and most of all, have faith in the organization, even when circumstances, whether within or without your control, may be challenging. Your commitment to the group must be clearly demonstrated in every conversation and interaction you have with a person you are going to ask for money. If you

believe in your group and the prospect has an initial inclination to learn more, you are halfway there.

### ***Knowing the Organization Inside and Out***

- Read as much as you can about the group in both internal and external publications
- Meet the leaders, volunteers, and beneficiaries
- Visit the facilities and programs
- Attend events
- Review current and past annual reports
- Frequent the website

### ***Asking Must be Done in Person***

People give to people, not to paper. A written proposal is fine *as a follow-up* to the ask, it cannot substitute for the ask. This is no time to hide behind paper. It is a time to believe in your cause and to ask in person.

### ***Saying NO to the Gift is not saying NO to You***

- When someone says no to your ask, they are not refusing you
- Many prospects are uncomfortable right after the ask, so just sit back, remain silent, and listen.
- If the situation feels awkward because you are friends with, related to, or work with the person, state your awkwardness upfront and emphasize the opportunity to support a great cause, and that 's what is helping you move past the awkwardness.

Also, no does not mean no later. Chances are, if you hang in with these people and continue to cultivate them, they will eventually make a gift. It is all in the timing. That fact alone should shift the weight off you personally. Don't internalize, and avoid focusing on yourself.

Remember, NO is not a reflection on you, and you should not interpret it as a negative reaction to anything you have said or done. It is about the prospect; how they feel at this moment, how they feel about your group, and their ability, financially, philanthropically, mentally and emotionally – to give.

Although asking for money can be anxiety producing, once you understand and can overcome the psychological barriers that can get in your way, you will feel empowered to ask.

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## **CHAPTER TWO – Judging the Prospects Readiness for the ASK**

The last thing you want to do is either jump the gun and ask the prospect too early, or conversely, put the ask off from a long period of time because you do not know every fact and figure about the prospect. There is no exact right time, but there are guidelines that can help you.

### ***Avoiding Common Pitfalls when Judging Readiness***

The whole key to judging readiness to be asked is to treat each prospect separate and distinctly. What works for one prospect does not in turn automatically work for another. No two prospects are alike, and they cannot be treated alike. This is important enough to be a guiding principle.

**Guiding Principle 2: Every prospect must be treated separately and distinctly.**

***Exhibit 2.1 – Readiness Traps***

- Everyone we previously asked for a larger gift said YES so this prospect will too
- I heard they just gave a local group a major gift and we do the same thing on a national level so we should ask for a major gift too
- Our usual cultivation time is 3 months, and that’s how long we’ve been talking to them, so they are ready to be asked.
- They have been “worked on” for many years by numerous people in our organization, so they need to be asked now.
- This prospect always bring up the topic of money and giving, so they need to be asked now.
- We know they have the assets for large gift, if we wait they may give it to another group.
- A board member gave me their name and number and said we should move quickly and ask.
- We need to reach our fundraising goals, so I have to ask them now.

Just as there is no exact right time to ask, there is not exact length of time that determines how much cultivation each prospect needs before she is asked. Some prospects take a few months; others take years. Fundraisers need to take a look at their prospect list and make sure that each prospect is being cultivated to the degree required for that prospect. What a mistake it would be if you set of the ask only according to the amount of time you and others had spent with each prospect, instead of listening to what each one has told you about his or her commitment to the group.

During the early stages of cultivation it is very likely that the prospect will begin to discuss money and gifts given to you and other groups. This is a wonderful thing to embrace. It is not, however, an automatic high sign that is all right to ask for a gift yet. The strategy usually involves a series of high-end cultivation moves such as:

- a) arranging for them to meet and socialize with the head of your organization and board members.
- b) placing them on the board or a committee
- c) honoring them at an organizational event
- d) introducing them to the groups beneficiaries
- e) giving them a private tour of the facilities
- f) asking them to host or attend a high-end reception
- g) keeping them in contact with other existing top donors.

***The Readiness Profile***

Now that we’ve explored what you should avoid when judging a prospect’s readiness to give, it is time to learn the guidelines and principles that will help you define the right time to ask.

## ***Exhibit 2.2 – Contents of a Prospect Readiness Profile***

- Address, employment history, age, education, family members, religion, hobbies, travel and vacation preferences, outstanding honors, recognitions, memberships, committee work, and board appointments.
- Giving history, including pledge payments fulfilled and unfulfilled to your group and others.
- Acknowledgement and stewardship history for all gifts they made to your group.
- Wealth indicators: salary, stocks, bonds, company shares, real estate, family foundation, inheritance,
- Prospects attendance history at your events and dates.
- Communications and emails and direct mail they receive from you.
- Their contacts with any member, volunteer, or beneficiary of your group.
- Publicity, good or bad about the prospect and their business or work.
- Their motivation to give or prospectively give to your group.
- The strategy behind asking them for a gift at this time.

You need most if not all of this knowledge before you are ready for a solid ask.

I am a strong advocate that every contact report should have a section titled NEXT STEPS that lists the next action to take in the cultivation of every prospect. Without it, you may as well have not seen them. Every prospect needs follow up so the report needs to spell out what needs to be done. Build this into your contact reports and you will ensure that you follow up with all that needs to be done before, during, and after the ask.

EDUCATION + INVOLVEMENT + CULTIVATION + INCLINATION + ASSETS = the right time to ask!

### ***Education***

Your prospect should know some or all of the following:

- a) the groups mission
- b) how long they have been in existence
- c) the name and background of the groups CEO or president
- d) the number of people they serve and how they serve them.
- e) the financial status
- f) the size and effectiveness of the board
- g) how much money they raise each year.
- h) the size of the fundraising team
- i) how they communicate with prospects and donors
- j) the types of campaigns or specific fund drives and their progress

### ***Involvement***

Ideally all your prospects should have some level of involvement with your group. Some folks love to read everything you send them or visit your website regularly....and some are even volunteers. The deeper the involvement, the better.

### ***Cultivation***

Cultivation is a 2 way street. It is the series of steps you take with each prospect to learn as much as you can about him, and he in turn needs to know as much as he can about your organization. Without cultivation the chances are highly unlikely that your prospects will give. Cultivation most assuredly will lead to big gifts. One of the best cultivation techniques is to learn the prospects hobbies or recreational activities and whenever you have the chance, to send him some article or small gift that reflects these interests.

As long as you stay active with each prospect and there is a steady stream of information flowing both ways between you and them, your cultivation efforts will help you judge when the right time to ask is.

### ***Inclination***

People can be educated, involved, and cultivated to their comfort level, but without inclination to give, they simply will not give. Inclination is akin to motivation.

### ***Assets***

You cannot ask a person for a gift at a certain level if they do not have the assets to make a gift of that size. It does not get much clearer than that. Three notes of caution: First, prospect research does not reveal every single asset they possess. They probably have private holding you are not aware of, like stock, bank accounts, mutual funds, etc. Second, the best research is done in person through cultivation. You will know whether they spend money on cars, boats, real estate, vacations, children, step children and grandchildren. Third, assets should not be mistaken for inclination. Some never get to the point of being inclined to give. This could be why they have so much stored up wealth. The bottom line is that fundraisers can do only so much with educating, involving and cultivating; they cannot instill inclination or motivation to share assets.

### ***Having some but not all of the Readiness Elements***

What if the prospect has almost all of the readiness elements and you all really feel the time is right to ask. The readiness formula is just a guideline. You do not need to know 100% for each element documented in your database. As long as you have gone through the exercise of checking the elements of the readiness test, you should be in a good position to make the right decision.

### ***The Match***

It is of utmost importance to determine the area, program, or project a prospect would support if he decided to give in a significant way. This is called the match, matching their interests with your organizations opportunities. Sometimes their interest is obvious because you've already been cultivating this area of interest.

### ***The Pre-Ask Conversation***

Preask conversations involve open-ended questions that explore prospect's key interests in an organization. The technique is very simple..

“when and if you were to make an important gift, is there any particular area that interests you most”

“Is there any area within our foundation that you like the most, or just the overall good work we do?”

“Tell me, of all the things we do that the institute, what tugs at your heartstrings the most?”

These are open ended questions that do not ask for money. The purpose is to determine areas of interest, so that you will know better how to ask, when you do ask.

### ***ASKING ON THE FIRST VISIT***

What if you meet a prospect for the very first time and become convinced they are ready to be asked? If you are asking for a special event or for an annual or enhanced gift, and the meeting is going well, by all means ask. Asking on a first visit is appropriate if: First, the fundraiser is on a joint visit with someone who has seen and knows the prospect previously...ideally, well before this meeting. Secondly, if the fundraiser is new and has not yet met the prospect, but they have been asked before by someone who is no longer with the group.

Conversely, if you are asking a major, a planned, or a capital gift from someone you have never met before, I would caution you to not ask on the first visit.

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## **CHAPTER THREE: Selecting the right person or team to do the Ask**

I highly recommend that you define the org’s pool of potential askers before you select one or more people to ask a prospect for a gift. These potential askers might be organizational leaders, members of the fund raising team, administrators and staff, board members, and donors and volunteers. Once you have established a pool of prospects the next step is to give these individuals a firm grip on the groups fundraising programs, past, present, and future. Once the askers are fully apprised of the operation, the organization will have a good idea of who can do the ask as well as who is willing to do an ask. It should not be assumed that just because someone is in a leadership position or a board position they are automatically the ones who should be available 24/7 to do an ask.

### ***Exhibit 3.1 – Factors that Shape the Pool of Potential Askers***

- The size of the organizations leadership and fundraising team.
- The # of administrators and other staff who may be appropriate for this task
- The size and activity level of the board
- The size and activity level of the volunteer group
- # of donors who may be appropriate for assisting with the ask for multilevel gifts
- The level of fundraising expertise and willingness to ask for gifts from among the leadership team, fundraising team, admin and staff, board members, volunteers and donors
- The age of the organization and its history of fundraising
- The types and sizes of gifts the organization needs

- The size of the prospect and donor base
- The time that the potential askers can realistically devote to asking for gifts.

Experience and/or training + willingness = a good asker!

### ***The Time Factor***

All too often, nonprofit groups, large and small, set unrealistic monthly or quarterly goals for the number of people they will ask for gifts. They make this determination by looking at the number of askers and the number of prospects who should be asked, not at the quantity of time each asker actually has to make asks.

I strongly suggest that once you know your potential pool of askers that you assess very carefully the amount of time each person has to ask for gifts. Keep in mind that not every ask will be local and that each ask needs preparation that also takes time.

### ***Exhibit 3.2 – ?'s for determining how much time a person can devote to the ask***

- Is asking for gifts your full-time job?
- What % of your time can you devote weekly, monthly, or quarterly to asking for gifts?
- What other areas of fundraising are you responsible for?
- What other committees do you serve on?
- How much do you travel out of the area for business or pleasure in a year?
- Do you experience heavy business or event months that would prevent you from having time to make asks during certain periods?
- Do you have time to travel outside of the area for asks?

### ***Characteristics of a Good Asker***

The larger the gift the more important it is that a person doing the ask should possess all these characteristics.

### ***Exhibit 3.3 – Ideal Characteristics of any Asker***

- The person is known, liked, admired and respected by the prospect.
- The person played a major role in cultivating them.
- The person has given at the same level being asked at.
- The person has given at a level in relation to his abilities comparable to the level being asked at.
- The person is comfortable, relaxed, and confident with the prospect.
- The person has demonstrated a strong commitment to the organization and is fully knowledgeable about the organization.
- They know the details of the gift opportunity and can articulate the need for support.
- The person has time to prepare for the ask, do the ask, and carry out the needed follow up steps to the ask to ensure receipt of the gift.
- The person keeps everyone involved with fundraising process fully informed on the details of an ask and follow through.
- The person has fun doing an ask and can feel the rewards of asking for money for the org.

### **Guiding Principle #3 – Anyone asking for money must make his own gift first.**

That said, some of your most dedicated and ideal askers do not always have the assets to make large gifts. In these instances, have the person give at a level that is comparable for him to the gift being asked.

The asker needs to know inside and out the amount being asked, the purpose of the gift, the number of gifts received at this level, how the gift can be funded, how it will be invested, and why it is needed now. That is the total confidence package and presentation that is needed for every ask.

#### ***Exhibit 3.4 – Questions for Determining the # of Askers***

- Is the organization small or understaffed?
- Is more than one person available to do the ask?
- What size gift is being asked for? Top asks deserve top askers.
- Does the prospect expect one or more people?
- Can one person cover the complex questions that may arise?

Whenever possible use 2 people; this number is ideal for any ask. This team can be more effective because two people have twice the talents and strengths as one. Team members can use their individual strengths when making the ask and can feed off each other's energy and enthusiasm. While one member of the team is speaking, the other member can and should be a human sponge, absorbing the prospect's eye contact, body language, and tone of voice and judging the prospect's level of comfort. I always use the expression "four eyes are better than two" With two people making the ask, there is less chance that the team will miss something the prospect said, suggested through intonation, or expressed through body language. The bottom line is simply there is strength in numbers, so every chance you have do to a joint ask, take it.

If you have a board member who satisfies most of the ideal characteristics of a good asker, then whenever possible have one on the asking team. They lend prestige to the ask. Be conscientious about their time. They should not be asked for more time than they can handle. Another thing, nothing succeeds like a quick success. During a board members early asks, try to have them ask people who are likely to say YES. This will empower them and make them feel as though they are good at asking. Then they will be more willing to do asks for a longer period of time because their success rate is pretty good. Lastly, have the staff do all the admin work for them, scheduling appointments, preparing letters, and reminding them of calls and visits that need to be made to keep the ask viable.

Your group may also have staff who could make an excellent contribution to an asking team. Remember, before, during, and after the ask the more people you can involve who made a difference in the life of the prospect, the better the chance you will get the gift.

Some donors may also be appropriate for a joint ask, and some may not. The fact that they have made a significant gift or series of such gifts is not a signal that they should automatically be made part of any ask, however if they possess the characteristics of a good asker...great!

Consultants can also help in asks at times, particularly in a capital campaign when they have done the feasibility study and has personally interviewed the prospects.

One final note, don't overload the prospect by having too many people in the room during the ask. Two is a comfortable number. Three may be too much for most prospects. Some prospects may feel outnumbered, ganged up on, or that the sheer number of bodies in the room is a turn off.

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## **CHAPTER FOUR: Preparing for the Ask**

### ***Exhibit 4.1 - Preparing the right Atmosphere for an Ask***

- Select a calm and quiet location
- Bring energy, enthusiasm, and charisma to the meeting.
- Present a confident and professional image.
- Be extremely aware of your body language.
- Speak in a clear and convincing tone.

#### ***Location, location, location***

Doing the ask at your organization, for example in the CEO's office, a conference room, study or library, may be an excellent choice. You ensure that there are no interruptions because they are within your control.

Unless your prospect is available only during a meal time or expect you to take her out, I would avoid asking for money when food is involved. You also cannot predict the amount of noise around in a public place, and you have to navigate the awkward moment when the check arrives.

#### ***Professional and Positive Demeanor***

Even when asking for a gift from a studio artist, a florist, a retiree, or someone who generally does not wear a suit or dress clothes every day, you should do the ask looking crisp, professional and polished. Wear appropriate business attire and you will never go wrong.

Your energy and enthusiasm should be contagious. This is the big moment, when the asker or team will be doing the final *sell* of the fabulous opportunity for your prospect. Realistically, not everyone has a good day every day, and we all have personal and professional issues that sometimes prevent us from feeling 100%. When that occurs, I recommend two things to get you back on track and feeling more positive. First – think of yourself not as yourself but as someone you admire. I used to imagine that I was a famous actress or politician. I focused on what that person would say or do at a given moment. Second – concentrate on things that make you happy. A favorite CD, dance, sing, buy yourself flowers, etc. It may just force you to smile and in turn feel better for the ask.

#### ***Body Language and Tone of Voice***

Body position is very important because it can send so many different signals. The asker does not want to appear nervous by looking around, looking past the prospect, reading from notes, reading the whole proposal, or re-arranging the pillows on the sofa. The should also avoid feeling too comfortable, lounging on a sofa or leaning back too far in a chair, putting hands on head or stomach.

### ***Pre Ask Review***

Before each ask the person or persons doing the ask must do three things 1) review the prospect's file, and 2) review all aspects of the gift proposal, and 3) review contact and cultivation activity recorded in the fundraising database.

There is no substitute for preparing for an ask, reviews the prospect files, and understand the gift opportunity well.

### ***Exhibit 4.2 – Essential facts every asker needs to know about the proposal***

- Why this gift is the perfect match for this prospect.
- The purpose and benefits of the gift
- How the gift can be funded, what assets will be accepted to fund the gift.
- The timing and the maximum years over which a pledge can be paid.
- The possible income, capital gains, estate, and gift tax benefits of the gift.
- Why the gift opportunity “costs” this much
- Other donors who have made gifts at this level.
- The number of gifts the organization has received or will ask for at this amount.
- The suggested recognition that will be given for the gift

### ***The Prestige of the Proposal***

No one likes to be the lone wolf when it comes to making a gift at a certain amount. Remember there is strength in numbers. If you have donors who have given at the level you are asking for, let the prospect know.

### ***The Script for Each Ask***

A script is a road map that askers should use to rehearse the ask so that they are well prepared to do it. The script is for rehearsal purposes only and should be comfortably in their heads before doing the ask so that they will not need to read from paper.

### ***Exhibit 4.3 – Essential Components for a Script***

- Time frame for the ask
- The Warm up
- The Ask
- The anticipated Response
- The close and Follow up
- Who speaks and who listens during parts of the ask

## ***Time Frame for the Ask***

As a rule, I believe it should not take more than a total of 25 minutes.

- 5 minutes – warm up
- 6 minutes – the ask
- 10 minutes – the prospect's response
- 4 minutes – the close and follow up

## ***The Warm UP***

This drives home the point made earlier about the need to review the prospects file in advance. You cannot possibly remember all the details of every prospect without this review, and you do need to know these details in order to weave them into the warm-up. The most important part about the warm up is that the prospect is reacquainted with the asker or team.

## ***The ASK***

### ***Exhibit 4.4 – Essential Components of the Ask***

- Make a compelling case for the organization and the need for support
- Using transitional statements that specifically reference the prospect's interests or prior support,
- Ask for a specific amount for a specific purpose
- Detail the benefits of the gift
- Remain silent

***A compelling Case*** – the first thing the asker must do is make a compelling case, which includes emphasizing the reason the group needs funding now. A short couple of sentences that encompass the basics of the case statement and conveys vision, need, and urgency.

Ex. – Jack, our college was just ranked in the top 10 Best Values in Money Magazine. We feel the timing could not be better for us to launch a comprehensive campaign. Let me share with you the goals for the campaign.

Or... Bridget, our women's clinic just received a substantial foundation grant that must be matched by private sources. We have such a loyal following, we are confident that we can meet this matching sum over the next three years.

***Transitional Statements*** – Transition from general case statement to a more personal feel that ties the person to the case. It is a precursor to the actual ask. Remember you don't want to blurt out the request for money too quickly; the prospect may feel attacked and uncomfortable. You want to make a natural and smooth transition to the ask

Ex. – Leslie, your support for our mentoring program has put us on the map as a model for these sort of community programs. We have the chance to take the program to a national level. It's exciting and equally challenging. Let me take a few minutes to share with you what needs to be done to make that dream come true.

A transition lets the prospect know the organization did it's homework, it listened, and matched interests with the right gift opportunity. You have their attention which is what you need before the ask.

### ***The ask amount and purpose***

#### **Guiding Principle #4 – Ask for a specific amount for a specific purpose.**

If you do not ask for a specific amount, they may supply their idea and it is likely to be well below what you were hoping or anticipating they will give. It's also important to ask for a specific purpose. Asking for \$2500 to support the organization will likely not do much good. Be specific and straightforward.

Ex. – Glenn, we would like you to consider a gift of \$25000 for a named endowment scholarship at your school. We can work with you and whomever you desire on the terms of eh scholarship.

Or Fred, we ask this only of our top donors. We would like you to consider joining other top donors with a leadership gift of \$1 million to support the construction on the new surgical wing.

### ***Remaining Silent***

This is a cardinal rule. The next person to speak is the prospect. It is their immediate reaction that will let you know your next strategy.

### ***The Prospect's Response***

I suggest you devote the most time, at least 10 minutes, to dealing with this reaction, because it is the pivotal part of the ask. If the prospect has more time and the questions and concerns are complex, then give him all the time he can spare so that he can state his concerns and you can address them the best way possible. It is not necessary that everything be covered in the initial meeting, and in most instances a lot more information needs to be explored and exchanged before the prospect can make a final decision.

### ***The Close and Follow UP***

The close contains several key elements.

#### ***Exhibit 4.5 – Key Elements of the Close***

- Thank the prospect for taking the time, and for listening to you.
- Restate the gift opportunity and its benefits.
- Give them a date when you will get back to her with further information.
- Ask them if they have any additional comments or questions.
- Speak with them as if they WILL make the gift.
- Where appropriate, ask the prospect, if and when the gift is made, how they would like to be recognized.
- Set a date and time for the next meeting.

The last element is the most important. Do not leave the room until you have set a date and time for the next meeting.

Once you are back in your office, send them a thank you letter, keeping it as personal and in the moment as possible. Reference elements of your conversation with the prospect, and if you have set a date for the next meeting, reiterate the time and place. If you have not set a date, tell the prospect that you will call soon to do so. Most of all...thank them.

Finally, be sure to record the meeting for the ask in a contact report, using your fundraising software, and to gather and send any additional information, data, stats, they have requested.

### ***The 4 Questions***

In addition to carrying out the activities described earlier, anyone asking for money needs to answer the following 4 questions, which can be a bit soul searching:

- 1) do you like who you are,
- 2) do you like what you do,
- 3) do you like whom you do it for,
- 4) Do you like whom you do it with?

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## **CHAPTER FIVE: Asking for Special Events/Community Projects/and Increased Annual Gifts**

### ***The ask for a special event or community Project***

Don't ask...

*"Would you be willing to help us out?"*

*"Can you help out?"*

*"Would you give what you can?"*

*"Can we count on your support?"*

None of these gives the prospect an idea of what the asker really wants.

Try this...

*...would you consider making a \$250 gift for the soccer league? We only have a handful of families we can ask, and your gift would spark others to give. Your gift would not only strengthen the league but also our community."*

The ask is direct, contains a stated amount, and a stated benefit. There is no guessing about what is being asked. The ball is now in the prospects court and they have to respond.

The next task is to ask them to help in the effort...

*"I'm so glad you will consider making this generous gift of \$250. We also need sponsors and people to take ads in our tournament program. I'd be happy to sit down with you at your convenience to go over the details. We have a list of local businesses we'd like to approach, forms to give them, and*

*scripts to help make it easy to ask for their support. We have a volunteer who is coordinating lists of the businesses and people being asked so we are not tripping all over ourselves. Of course if you know personal friends or business owners who might help, it would be great to add them to the list to the extent you feel comfortable. We'd like to do this over the next 3 months. We have 6 families who have already agreed to help us in this way. Before I go any further, do you think you could give us just a little bit of your time to help us raise money for sponsorships or ads? I promise we will do everything we can to streamline the process and be considerate of your time."*

In this example, the asker clearly communicates that this is an organized approach. When asking others to ask others for money, you must make their asks as easy and effortless for them as possible. A time frame within which they will be expected to complete their task is essential. Lastly, you need to emphasize that they will not be doing this alone, that others have already agreed to help or will be asked to help.

### ***The Ask for the Enhanced Annual Gift***

For many groups the annual giving program is the foundation of the organization's fundraising. It is where the greatest volume of people become involved with the group. Any annual giving program also involves identifying and recruiting new prospects as well as renewing and upgrading current donors.

The goals for the annual fund program are:

- 1) renew donors at a higher level than their last gift or pledge
- 2) minimize the number of lapsed donors
- 3) win back lapsed donors
- 4) acquire new prospects
- 5) engage donors in participating in all aspects of the organization
- 6) recognize donors for their giving, usually through gift clubs or levels
- 7) coordinate prospects with the major, planned, and capital campaign areas
- 8) turn annual fund donors into major, planned, or capital donors

### ***Ensuring Systems are in Place for the Ask***

Each organization should have a definition of what constitutes an annual gift. This will be largely dependent on the organizations definition of a major gift. For instance, if a major gift is \$2500 then any gift less than that should be considered an annual fund gift. If a major gift is \$25,000, then anything lower than that is an annual fund gift.

### ***Exhibit 5.1 – Checklist for the Ask for an Increased Annual Gift***

- Levels for what an annual gift and a major gift is
- Gift tiers within the annual program have been established
- Recognition guidelines for each annual gift have been established
- Budget for travel, meeting, thanking is available
- System to accept and acknowledge pledges and gifts is available
- System to send pledge reminders is in place

Creating tiers and the benefits for each is important.

Ex.

- \$100 – 249 – Century Club
- 250-499 – Silver Club
- 500-999 – Gold Club
- 1000-1999 – Presidents Circle
- 2000-4999 – LIFE GIVERS AMBASSADOR CLUB
- 5000 + considered Major Gifts

A system to acknowledge and thank each level needs to be established. The level of recognition should be creative and increase at the level increases.

Ex.

- First level - receipt and thank you letter.
- Middle Level – All the above + a phone call from the director
- Top Level – All the above + a special gift presented at a dinner with the President and his wife, or at a dinner with the board and other top donors.

**Guiding Principle 5 – Consistent givers can and will make larger gifts.**

Consistent givers can and should be upgraded as soon as possible, in person. Take the top-tier givers and work your way down to the next tier and the next tier. Even focus on the lowest end. Don't ignore them or put them on the back burner. I consider the likelihood that they will give increased gifts to be as good or better than those who have made larger one time gifts. Consistent people obviously believe in what you do.

Ex. *“Renee, your generosity has been so encouraging. Given our current dreams, and your dedication, can we turn to you now and ask you to join with others and consider your next gift/pledge to be at this important \$1500 Presidents Level?”*

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**CHAPTER SIX: ASKING FOR MAJOR GIFTS**

The next step up from asking for an increased annual gift is asking for a major gift. Most of an organizations major funding will come from 10% or fewer of its donors. Every organization should place emphasis, time, and attention on getting these types of gifts. A successful major gifts campaign takes an organized approach and a clear understanding of the tasks and responsibilities of the group's major fundraisers and volunteers.

An organizations major gift prospect pool should contain:

- 1) all donors who have made high tier annual gifts
- 2) individuals who have potential to make major gifts regardless of prior giving history
- 3) steady and consistent cumulative givers who's total giving puts them beyond the top annual fund level and near or at the major level....cumulatively speaking.

The org. needs a clear goal and strategy for a major campaign. Ex. We will increase our endowment by 5% each year so that at the end of 5 years we will have 100 million.

Whenever possible convince the leadership that your group will be far more successful if it has a plan that it can share with prospects and donors. Major gifts will arrive quicker when the organization has a plan because a plan supplies a timeline and creates a sense of urgency.

***Exhibit 6.1 – Elements of a Major Gifts Program***

- 3-5 year strategic plan with major gift goals
- a base of major gift prospects or a plan to identify them
- a leader to run prospect management meetings, assign prospects
- Ability to store and track activity, proposals, gifts, and pledges
- A budget for travel, cultivation, thanking, meals, etc.
- Legal counsel to draft and review gift agreements
- Finance department (or hired) to invest major gifts and create and send financial reports to donors.
- Planned giving expertise or advisors
- Materials to promote and advertise major gift opportunities
- A board adopted gift acceptance policy

Examples of good gift acceptance policies can be see on [www.afpnet.org](http://www.afpnet.org) click on Resource Center

***Major Gift Asks***

How one does the ask for a major gift is important. The goal is to create a sense of inclusion, that the prospect is a part of a winning and successful team. Avoid using phrases like, “the organization is not in good shape” If the organization is having a rough time, say, “We have our challenges, but with your help, our future looks bright.” An ask cannot be focused solely on money. That presents the organization in a desperate situation and that is not how you want people to think of you.

***Guiding Principle 6 – Always use “we” instead of “I” when asking.***

We give strength, power, and confidence to any ask.

Do not assume they remember the details from previous visits and conversations. Some do; many will not because they are busy and support many organizations. Do not leave anything to chance. Lay out a full and complete ask by covering all the details.

Words like contribution and donation are archaic, dull and one-dimensional. Use words like investment. The ask should be about fulfilling dreams and conveying passion.

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**CHAPTER SEVEN: ASKING FOR PLANNED GIFTS**

*“A lawyer friend of mine was once asked to make a big gift to a charity by the managing partner in his firm. He wrote the check and as he handed it over, he said, ‘You don’t know how much this hurts.’ His partner took the check, looked at it, and then tore it into little pieces. He looked his friend*

*straight in the eye and said, 'Give generously to others when it makes you feel good, not when it hurts.' – Allan Pekor Chairman, Lennar Financial Services*

Planned gifts can and should play an enormous role in non-profit organizations of any size. They take the longest time to acquire, and require knowledge not only of the prospects philanthropic interests and history of giving, but also of economic circumstances and needs, not and in the future. The planned giving ask must focus on the benefits, both economic and philanthropic, that can be derived from these important and complex gifts and not on the technical jargon which can confuse and complicate the ask. A key factor in the success of a planned giving program is that it must be coordinated and integrated with the organizations other fundraising programs. Organizations should start out simply with a bequest program and then build up to gift annuities and deferred annuities, life insurance policies, charitable trusts and retirement plan gifts.

### ***Exhibit 7.1 – Characteristics of Planned Givers***

- They know the organization and its mission, priorities, and direction.
- They have confidence in the leadership.
- They are satisfied with the organizations fiscal management.
- They believe the gift will be perpetuated well into the future, and that their gift will have a lasting legacy in the organization.
- They give when the time is right for them economically.
- They may have supported in the past with smaller gifts, but some will have no giving history with you.
- They can give without compromising their current economic comfort level.
- They want to ensure that loved ones are taken care of in conjunction with their gift.
- They tend to make several planned gifts over their lifetime.
- They consult tax advisors, financial planners, lawyers and family members first.

A mistake many fundraisers make is to use their own timing or the organizations fundraising goals or campaigns to drive the planned gift process and in some instances to try to force the gift. Again, although every fundraiser should keep steady and close contact with planned giving prospects, these prospects need breathing room to think and reflect. They will make the gift when the time is right for them, financially, emotionally, and philosophically.

Some planned givers have no or little history of giving in the past. That is often because they tend to be conservative givers and may have been waiting until they had sufficient assets so as to be able to give and not affect their lifestyle. They are often overlooked for this reason.

### ***The Planned Giving Prospect Pool***

This pool has less definition and fewer guidelines but it has the widest range of potential givers. 43% of those naming a charity in their wills and 34% of those making charitable trusts were UNDER the age of 55. Legacy pledgers were more likely to be female and older and less likely to have children. Age, sex, family history may be factors, but they do not dominate or determine with any great precision who will make planned gifts.

### ***Planned Giving Program Pre-requisites.***

The organization does not want to be in the position of asking for and accepting planned gifts when it lacks a means to produce planned giving forms and agreements, to invest these gifts, send payments to donors, or have legal counsel available to review complex situations.

### ***Exhibit 7.2 – Considerations before starting a Planned Giving Program***

- The number of years the organization has been in existence.
- Approval by the CEO, CFO, and Board
- Board approved gift levels for each type of planned gift.
- Board approved investment policies and spending rules for planned gifts.
- Incorporation of planned giving into the organizations strategic plan.
- A budget to cover all program costs.
- A financial organization that will oversee the gifts from agreements to payments.
- Legal help to answer donor questions and organizational questions.
- Forms and agreements ready to give prospects.
- Acknowledgement and stewardship programs for planned givers.

Groups need to set the minimum amount it will accept for a charitable gift annuity and for a trust. Many groups set a minimum of \$5000 for annuities and anywhere from \$100,000 - \$250,000 for a charitable trust. Additionally, the policy should state how the gifts are invested and the amount of interest they will generate for donors. Without a written policy the organization can find itself in an uncomfortable place with prospects and face bad press and ill will.

The one factor that can make or break a planned giving program is its budget. They must consider whether they have the funds now or in the future to support

- Salaries for planned giving directors, officers and support staff.
- Trustee fees for administering charitable gifts
- Computer software for planned giving illustrations
- Attendance at seminars and conferences for planned giving staff.
- Marketing materials to promote planned gifts to targeted constituencies
- Planned giving seminars you may want to host for prospects.
- Recognition events
- Stewardship activities
- Travel to cultivate prospects
- Fees for legal counsel

I strongly suggest that when possible all financial and technical activity be covered by an outside financial group. The point is not to get wrapped up in bookkeeping that takes precious time away from donors and prospects.

### ***Coordinating the Planned Giving Program with all other Programs***

***GUIDING PRINCIPLE 7 – Any organization’s planned giving program must be coordinated with all the other fundraising programs.***

There is no room for prospect territorialism, and it is totally inaccurate to think that if the prospect makes a large annual fund gift she will not at the same time consider a planned gift. Use your prospect management meetings to form solid strategies for each prospect so that you will

never face the problem that can arise when one department or person is working with a prospect at the same time another department is, and neither knows about each others work.

### ***Building a Planned Giving Program***

Start with the easiest planned gift to market, manage and maintain, and then add more complex vehicles when the organization is ready.

**Bequests** – the transfer of wealth that occurs on the donor’s death and that include transfers by means of a will or a trust.

- Specific Bequest – a certain amount of cash, securities, or property – Ex. – 5000 shares of IBM stock, or 10,000 dollars.
- General Bequest – property that is similar to all other items distributed – usually cash
- Percentage Bequest – a stated % of the donor’s estate – Ex. – 35% of my gross estate.
- Residual Bequest – all or a portion of what remains after specific and general bequests are distributed.

**Charitable Gift Annuities** – an agreement where the charity accepts cash, securities, or property and agrees to pay a fixed dollar amount to the annuitant. The gift is irrevocable and the organization is responsible for paying income for the lifetime of the annuitant. These gifts can be complicated and therefore a discussion of them is best left for another text.

**Deferred Gift Annuities** – Same as above, but the organization is not required to begin payments until a set date in the future. For this reason, the return to the donor is usually higher.

### ***Marketing a Planning Giving Program***

Again, start slowly. Start by using your existing publications, website, and special events to advertise planned gift options. Make sure you list a single specific person as the contact person with a telephone number, email address, and mailing address, to keep things simple.

ASKING for these type of gifts – the 3 most important questions are:

- 1) what assets are most logical to use to fund the gift for you?
- 2) what gift vehicle is most suited to the donor and beneficiaries?
- 3) when will the gift be made?

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## **CHAPTER EIGHT – CAPITAL CAMPAIGN GIFTS**

Like most fundraising programs the capital campaign needs to be all inclusive, meaning that everyone and anyone should be invited to give at some point during the campaign. So why are capital campaigns unique?

### ***Exhibit 8.1 – Unique Elements of Capital Campaigns***

- Its goals are ambitious
- It asks people to make stretch gifts

- It drives the entire focus and direction of the organization until goals are met
- It includes or can include all other forms of giving together.
- It is definite, with a beginning, middle, and end.
- It forces the organization to expand its volunteer base.
- It is usually highly cost effective, compared to what is raised
- It can create positive change in the culture of the organization

Before any organization can have any idea of what goal to set for the campaign, it should have a feasibility study done by an outside consulting group. They are then in a position to know what they could realistically raise.

### ***Phases of a Campaign***

#### **PREPARATION PHASE**

A feasibility study will test the initial efforts and will help define the goal, determine the projects, programs, and identify prospects who can make gifts at various levels to achieve the goal. Once this is completed a case statement should be drafted, which is the blueprint for the campaign. It tells us where we are beginning, where we want to go, why it's important and unique, what the priorities are, and how leadership will ensure success.

#### **SILENT PHASE**

The second phase is kept inhouse and top prospects are asked to make gifts before the campaign is officially announced publically. There are two components to this phase.

First, anyone who is a prospect for leadership gifts is asked to support the campaign. Leadership gifts are considered the biggest ones the campaign will received. Each one is unique and is a mini-campaign within the larger campaign. These include all gifts from the board and organizational directors.

The second component to this phase is that additional prospects are asked until the organization has raised 50-60% of the total goal. The time required to do this will vary.

#### **PUBLIC PHASE**

This is where everyone is invited to participate. Direct Mail campaigns kick in, employees are asked to contribute, and phone-a-thons often used. This is the home stretch, and by going public it can and should gather new momentum for the final push towards the goal.

#### **CLOSING PHASE**

This is where all asks are followed up and solidified. Prior gifts are stewarded, publicity continues, leaders, volunteers and donors are continually thanked and recognized. Reports continue and administration is consistent.

***GUIDING PRINCIPLE 8 – Every campaign prospect must be asked for a specific amount, with guidelines on how to fund the gift and with a proposed time frame.***

### ***Asking for Campaign Gifts***

The amount is not as important as the way the ask is made and tailored for each prospect.

EX. *“Bill and Maria, we turn to you now, two of our most trusted and treasured family members, to ask you to consider a transformational \$2 million gift for the campaign. We are asking top supporters like you to consider this stretch gift. We have a handout prepared for you to look at later describing the variety of areas to which you can target your gift, the timing of the gift, and suggestion for naming opportunities. Your pledge would have the exponential effect of raising the sights of other families and supporters because it would give them incentive to join with you in a significant way. Will you consider making this gift at this level for the medical center?”*

Always include the family member/spouse in the ask when possible.

Ex. Of a transitional statement to bring the talk to the campaign. *“Mary, I would like to spend the rest of our time together bringing you up to date on our capital campaign and your prospective involvement.”*

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## **CHAPTER NINE – Addressing the Response to the Ask**

Every ask will result in a unique response. How you handle this is crucial to keeping the ask alive and viable. Only by preparing can you respond in a confident and honest manner.

Before any ask – sit down and make a list of things you think the prospect will say. You will not guess everything right, but the exercise will help tremendously. During your visit, pay close attention to body language and voice. Let the prospect talk as much as they want and listen closely. It will give you the most complete picture of what is in the prospect’s mind. Do not interrupt or show negative body language reactions. Keep the atmosphere conversational, inviting, and accepting. Being overly aggressive will not win anyone over. Closing takes time and it is highly unlikely that your prospects first words will be OK, ALL RIGHT, WHERE DO I SIGN.

### ***Exhibit 9.1 – Steps for keeping the ask on Track***

- Anticipate the prospects response.
- Listen to every word the prospect is saying.
- Pay close attention to the tone of voice and body language.
- Don’t be overly aggressive
- Know that confidence, passion and patience will lead to the gift.

### ***Responding to Concerns***

*“That’s a lot of money” or “That’s too much” or “What makes you think I have that kind of money?”*

- We understand perfectly, and believe us, we don’t ask for this everyday.
- You are but one of a handful of people we can turn to for this very important gift.
- Is it the amount or the timing that seems troubling to you now?
- We realize our goal is ambitious, but we are asking only our closest supporters to consider such a stretch gift at this time. We hope you take this as a compliment. We would be happy to talk to you about ways to fund the gift as well as favorable timing for pledge payments.
- We can assure you that no one can determine what you will give except you and your family. We respect your honesty.

*"We don't think we can do this. Our daughter is starting college, and we have medical bills from my father" or "As you know, I am nearing retirement. This may not be a good time." Or "I'm single and still need to work 40 more years."*

- Selecting the right school is an important decision. You must be really proud right now. We realize that taking care of family comes first and we appreciate your honesty. Just for the moment, putting those two concerns aside, or assuming you were able to handle them both, how do you feel about this gift opportunity?
- What is important for all of us today is to know how you feel about the gift opportunity we suggested. If you are interested we can work for as long as it takes until you are comfortable with the timing and making this type of gift to our group.

*"You could not have asked at a worse time. Business is down and I did not get the big contract I was hoping for."*

- Thanks for being honest. I know disappointments are not easy to share. We are sorry to hear that. If there is anything we can do, please let us know...we are here to help if that's at all possible. When things come back on an upswing can we revisit this possibility? For now, we promise to stay in good contact with you as we have in the past.
- We are extremely grateful that under these circumstances you gave us the time to share with you. Our Campaign will continue for several years, and for now what is important is that at some point in time you would like to make this type of gift to our organization.

*"I'm really not interested in supporting that type of project."*

- Thanks for being so candid. Please know that we did think long and hard before asking you to get involved. From previous conversations we thought this gift opportunity would match some of our interests.
- Can you tell us where your key interests lie. We want to understand your visions better.

*"We support a number of worthy causes and making a large gift to you would mean less for the others."*

- Our purpose here today is to simply introduce you to the exciting opportunities we are engaged in and hear your thoughts about them. Most people are involved in more than one good work, but right now, how do you feel about the gift opportunity we just described?
- This request is really for our future needs and for the community. We welcome and are grateful for your continued annual support, but right now we are focused on a particular project that will ensure the future success of the organization for years and decades to come.

*"This is a really serious request, and I'm going to need a lot of time before I can decide."*

- Important decisions take time, and we are grateful that you will give this serious consideration.
- How can we help you while you take time to make a decision? Do you need any additional information from us?
- Right now, how do you feel about the gift opportunity that we just described?

- We would like to contact you in about 2 weeks. If you need more time than that, it's perfectly understandable, but we would like to revisit it to note and listen to your thoughts and answer any questions that come up as you reflect on this opportunity to get involved.
- We understand and are sure there are many factors you must consider. But right now, how do you feel about the gift opportunity we just described?

*"I really need to talk about this with my spouse, or Attorney, or Accountant..."*

Absolutely. You need to discuss this with the important people in your life. We would be willing to help answer any of their questions too. Would it be helpful if we met again in say 2 weeks, all together? That way we can answer all the questions at once, and not take too much of your time.

*"The market is down and I cannot make a gift like this now"*

I know how you feel. I've been watching it too. Things are still a bit uncertain in this world. But what I was hoping to accomplish today was simple to gauge your excitement or interest in this gift opportunity. Putting the stock market aside and the economy aside, just for a moment, all else being equal, is this something you would very much like to do?

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Even if you think prospects are really leaning in the direction of NOT making the gift because of their response, thank them for their time, any past support, but most of all for their honesty. It is important to use the words we instead of I and our, to make them feel inclusive.

### ***Key Concepts for Responses to Any Ask***

- Thank them at every opportunity.
- Use inclusive words
- Don't argue or be overly persuasive.
- Share insights about your own giving and the giving of others with similar reactions.
- Tell them why you are suggesting this gift at this level for this purpose.
- Stay committed to the ask amount.
- Have alternative ways they can make the gift.
- If the timing is not right, suggest a definite time to meet or speak again to keep things alive.

If the asker tries to argue with the prospect, even with good intentions, they will be turned off. Don't be overly persuasive or aggressive. This is NOT the time to come off as the only person in authority who knows what is good for the organization. It's time to listen and calmly discuss the issues the prospect has presented. Dedication should be conveyed in a compassionate and convincing manner.

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLE 9 - At the initial ask, stay committed to the ask amount**

Stick to the original ask amount ask the prospect to think about it before giving a definite answer. While sticking to the amount, show creativity and flexibility in the ways the gift can be funded, and the years over which it can be funded.

The higher the ask amount the more time prospects will need to consider the offer.

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## **CHAPTER TEN – Following Through with Each Ask**

Important steps need to be taken after each ask to keep it in the forefront of the prospect's mind and ensure that questions are answered and additional material or expertise is provided. A check off list of what to do after each ask is essential.

Immediately at the close of the meeting in which a person has been asked for a gift, the asker or asking team needs to look them in the eyes and with all the warmth and sincerity possible, thank them for their time, pass support and most importantly, for giving the gift opportunity serious consideration. This should then be followed up by a formal letter or personal note within 48 hours. It should include more than a thank you but should trickle in something from the discussion to show that you were listening and that it was a personal meeting.

### ***Checklist for After the Ask***

- Thank them in persona and then in writing
- Convey the importance of the gift and the urgency.
- Set a date, time and place to continue the discussion.
- Send appropriate and promised follow up information in the shortest time possible.
- Fine-tune or clarify the proposal if the prospect has requested this.
- Continue to meet, speak on the phone, email, etc, if the person indicated that they will need a long period of time to consider the opportunity.
- Maintain a positive attitude and treat each prospect as if he has already said YES.

The ball is now in the prospects court. Don't let it sit there too long. Be gentle yet persistent, by calling or emailing the prospect to schedule any appropriate meetings.

Use a tickler file, donor database, or your personal calendar notification system to remind yourself of who needs communication and when. Communicate in some form regularly.

### ***GUIDING PRINCIPLE 10 – The Ask without the follow-up will result in no gift.***

One of the hardest things is learning how to strike the balance between organizing time asking for gifts and then staying on track with those you've already asked. If you find that you are overwhelmed and things are getting out of control, then you need to cut back on asks and focus on proper follow up. Then when you see a clearing, introduce asking again.

THE END.

There are sample forms in the appendix of this book that cannot be recreated. They, however, are nothing special and are something that could easily be found online. Here is the list:

- AFP Code of Ethical Principles and Standards of Professional Practice
- Thank you Letter Sample after the ask

- Notification of Bequest Form
- Sample Prospect Materials for a Charitable Gift Annuity
- Sample Prospect Materials for a Charitable Remainder Unitrust
- Sample Capital Campaign Marketing Material