



Principles and Best Practices for Major Gift Fundraising

Complimentary Download for Boost Your Major Gifts I.Q. Webinar

Presented by Focused On Fundraising, Inc. and MajorGifts.com

1. *First, say thank you to donors for new gifts and pledge payments. Practice great stewardship. Gratitude paves the road to great fundraising.*
2. *When soliciting a gift, know who the decision-maker is.*
3. *When a family is being solicited, always ask the family either who should be included in the solicitation, or request directly that all members be at the meeting. Let the family decide who is in the room.*
4. *Family, finances, and business factors all influence the prospect's readiness to consider a major gift. Therefore, pay attention to these factors.*
5. *A major gift prospect must have financial ability and interest in your nonprofit. A fast way to determine that is to ask for a gift, such as a "leadership annual gift."*
6. *The key to successful major gifts fundraising is to identify a prospect's passion.*
7. *Listen with all the senses. "You have two ears and one mouth—use them proportionally." Consider "100 Questions to Help Build Relationships®" before every prospect meeting. Develop a repertoire of questions.*
8. *Listen to the words, hear the tone, and observe the body and facial language of the prospect.*
9. *When sensing incongruence between what is said and what is "heard" using all the senses and means of communications, ask questions to clarify what is being said.*
10. *Make it easy for a prospect to understand a funding request.*
11. *It is easy to ask for the planned gift - "I can see you are committed to the work of our nonprofit. Have you ever considered making a planned gift?"*
12. *A Qualified Charitable Distribution from an IRA does not count as income to the donor.*
13. *The Qualified Charitable Distribution does not count against income, and, therefore, is not allowed as a deduction either.*
14. *A trained fundraiser should be involved in every solicitation. However, others can be involved in the solicitation too.*





15. *Having a person in the room that has a close affiliation with the nonprofit and a close association with the prospect—friend, business or otherwise—can be a very good strategy and should be considered as a possibility for all solicitations.*
16. *Everyone attending a solicitation should have an important role to play, understand that role, and follow an agreed upon plan for the meeting.*
17. *Everyone taking part in a solicitation of a prospect should be a donor.*
18. *Knowing the prospect’s passions and connection to the nonprofit’s mission is important to successfully soliciting a major gift and critical to maximize their giving to a nonprofit.*
19. *Ask for a specific gift. Asking for a specific amount has the highest likelihood of success.*
20. *Let the prospect respond to the funding request. Negotiate the terms before you negotiate the amount.*
21. *Many prospects appreciate being asked for their total support—annual and capital—at one time.*
22. *When you know a donor very well, there is a high trust level, and a donor has sufficient understanding of giving and motivation, a blended major and planned gift ask is an excellent approach, especially when talking with a donor about an “ultimate or lifetime commitment” to your nonprofit.*
 - A. *Always consider the donor first.*
 - B. *Never overwhelm the donor.*
 - C. *When necessary, sequence closing the major and planned gifts.*
23. *Research indicates an average of 7 or 10 attempts may be necessary before a prospect responds to an unsolicited inquiry. Be pleasantly persistent when trying to secure a first meeting with a prospect.*
24. *When a prospect says “no” to a funding request, learn what the prospect means by “no.” Seek clarity. Is it the institution? The project? The amount? The timing?*
25. *Major gift fundraising is about building a relationships and partnerships.*
26. *When soliciting a gift, a written proposal is best practice.*
27. *The best time to solicit a major gift is when prospect is ready to consider your request and say yes.*
28. *Always ask the prospect after solicitation, “When is a good time for me to follow up?”*
29. *Never come away from a meeting without a commitment to something, i.e., the gift or a commitment to meet / communicate again, including when.*
30. *Always strive to know “The Seven Rights of Fundraising®.” The right Person, asking the right Prospect, for the right Amount, for the right Project, at the right Time, in the right Way, and the right Follow-up.*

