



Schultz & Williams

development, management, marketing

Finding and Approaching Individual Donors

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Resources Realized



Goals of this Workshop

- Learn where to find individual gift prospects in your own organization and the community
- Learn what makes a good prospect and how to find information about them
- Learn how to cultivate prospects so they are ready to be asked
- Learn how to ask for gifts so prospects will say “yes”



Individuals: Why Do They Give?

- Because they are asked
- Because they believe in the mission of your organization
- Because they know and respect individuals involved with your organization
- Because they believe your organization is well managed and produces measurable results



Individuals: Why Do They Give?

- Because giving makes them feel good
- Because they want to give back
- Because they want recognition for their gifts
- Because they want income tax deductions



Giving in Tough Economic Times

- \$300+ billion given to charity in the U.S. in 2007.
- 75% of gifts are given by living people; 10% are made as bequests.
- Seven out of 10 Americans give to charity.
- People continue to give in tough economic times.
- Corporations, foundations and government grants are more likely to be impacted by the economy than individual giving.



Giving in Tough Economic Times

- People less likely to add charities to their giving when money is tight.
- People will make hard decisions about their philanthropic choices in a bad economy.
- Tough economic times are ideal for cultivating individual donors and marketing planned gifts.



Who Are Good Individual Prospects?

- Board members
- Former board members
- Current donors
- Event guests
- Volunteers
- Clients and their families
- Vendors
- Staff
- Leaders in the business and philanthropic communities



Fundraising is Everyone's Business

- Enlist the support of all staff and board members to be your eyes and ears in the community.
- Give others regular reading assignments and ask them to report to you.
- Ask board members to invite senior staff to be their guests at community events and to connect them with people of means.
- Record everything you learn in a database.



Fundraising is Everyone's Business

- Provide board members and staff with business cards from your organization.
- Provide name tags for staff and board members to wear out in the community.
- Provide board members and staff with quick facts and figures about your organization – include current needs with \$\$ amounts.



Fundraising is Everyone's Business

- Use part of each board and staff meeting to educate your board and staff members about a particular aspect of your organization.
- Informed and confident staff and board members make better fundraisers.



How Many Prospects Do You Need?

- Plan on 3 or 4 prospects for every gift you need.
- Full-time major gifts officer should have 75 prospects, maximum.
- Development officer should have no more than 50 prospects.
- Executive Director should have only 25 top prospects.
- Always have an A list, B list, C list.



Assign Your Top Prospects

- Determine who knows whom – and who is the best connection.
- Enlist the support of all who know the prospect and who have agreed to help.
- Everyone can be of help in some way: information; entrée; secure a meeting; host a small cultivation event; share personal testimony; ask; thank.



Assign Your Top Prospects

- Meet with each team member to review, assign and prioritize prospects.
- Provide a tracking chart for each team member with next steps.
- Serve as the coach and check in with team members frequently, preferably by phone.



Cultivate Your Prospects

- Determine an individual plan for each prospect.
- Goal: to make them feel a part of the “family.”
- Invite them to tour your facility one-on-one.
- Invite them to see your client services first hand – and to learn how that service is funded.
- Invite them to programs at your organization and give them the VIP treatment.



Cultivate Your Prospects

- Get acquainted personally: ask to visit their home or office.
- If they do make an unsolicited gift, thank them within 48 hours. Tell them how their gift will be used.
- Communicate with top prospects frequently and personally.
- In all ways, treat top prospects like family and prepare them to be asked.



Finally – Ask for the Gift

Get the appointment

- Determine the best pair to make the ask.
- Best connected member calls to set appointment.
- Make the meeting for a quiet time and place.
- Inform staff of date, time and place of appointment.



Finally - Ask for the Gift

Prepare for the Appointment

- As a team, determine the target ask and the program it will support.
- Development staff provides a strategy paper to the solicitation team with all details.
- Solicitation team rehearses the visit.
- Informed and confident staff and board members make better fundraisers.



Finally – Ask for the Gift

Prepare a script for the meeting

- Staff member thanks for the visit.
- Board member asks prospect how he/she got involved with your organization
- Board member shares why he/she is personally involved with your organization.
- Staff member shares information about the program the gift will support.



Finally – Ask for the Gift

Script for the meeting

- One team member asks for the gift with these words:
“(Name), you’ve heard all about the critical need to provide free after school programs for 40 additional Bradenton school children this year. I would like you to consider making a commitment of \$\$\$ (target ask) to our after school program by June 30 to help us register 30 new children for the fall semester, regardless of their ability to pay.”
- **Do not talk after you make the ask. Let the prospect speak first – in reaction to your request.**



Finally – Ask for the Gift

Meeting objections

- “The amount is too high.” Offer options.
- “The amount is still too high.” Ask the donor for amount.
- I need to talk this over with my wife/husband or financial consultant.” Affirm that this is a wise decision and set a time frame for response.
- “This is not a good time for me.” Ask when would be a good time.
- “I’ve changed my philanthropic interests.”



Finally – Ask for the Gift

Ask to follow up again in two weeks

- Try to set a return visit on the spot.
- If unsuccessful, call soon after you return to your office and thank for visit and try to set the return appointment.

Thank, thank, thank for any new commitment

- You cannot say “thank you” too often or in too many personal ways to donors.

Continue to steward actively after the gift is made.



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