

"Committing to a Major Gift: A Donor's View"

Factors that motivate donors:

- Feeling good by doing good;
- Passion for the organization's mission;
- Everlasting glory for donors and their name in lights;
- tax savings;

Finding out which factors motivate particular donors:

- Research in the public record
- Interviews of those who know them
- Interview of donors themselves
- Limitations of research: what research can--and cannot--tell you.
- Pitfalls of making assumptions about capacity or interest

Dealing with large families:

- Who are the key decision makers?
- Is family wealth controlled jointly or individually?
- Should members be solicited separately or together?
- Has the baton passed to the next generation, without notice by outsiders??

Cultivating the donor: Learning to Listen

- Do they want to play an active role or just be let alone?
- How much contact is just right...or too much?
- Devising a plan that plays to the donor's prime motivating factors
- Matching the donor's interests with the needs of the institution
- Not revealing just much you know about them

Dealing with difficult donors:

- How to "say no" to a donor's pet project, by deflecting his or her attention to a higher-priority need.
- Dealing with donors who want to run your organization
- Avoiding committing the institution to future obligations it can't keep

Keeping the faith with major donors:

- Using their money as you promised you would
- Keeping them apprised of how their past gifts are benefiting the institution;
- Seeking their advice and permission before using their money differently

Making the case for endowment gifts:

- Explaining the power of income-generating endowment
- Convincing donors to transfer a chunk of their capital to your organization's control, rather than making regular operating grants from their capital

Selling planned gifts:

- Explaining planned-giving options without boring or baffling the prospect to the point of paralysis
- Finding out the prospect's hopes and fears (for example, outliving their assets) and devising a way to address them

The future of estate taxation:

- Prospects for elimination or drastic reduction
- Implication for planned giving

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