

# Developing Solicitation Strategies

Executive Fundraising Academy  
2017



# Learning Objectives

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1. Discuss the purpose and importance of solicitation strategies.
2. Understand the process involved in developing and implementing solicitation strategies.
3. Discuss effective tools, tips and methods for success.

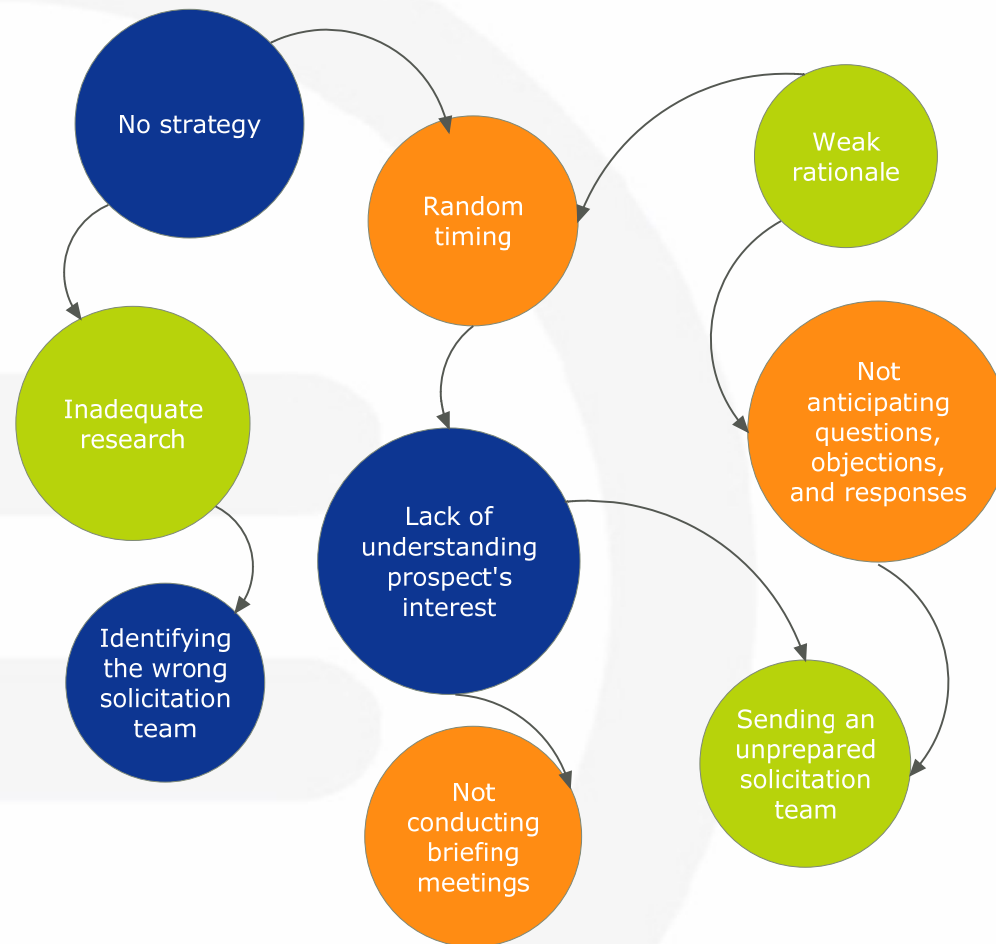


# Purpose of a Solicitation Strategy

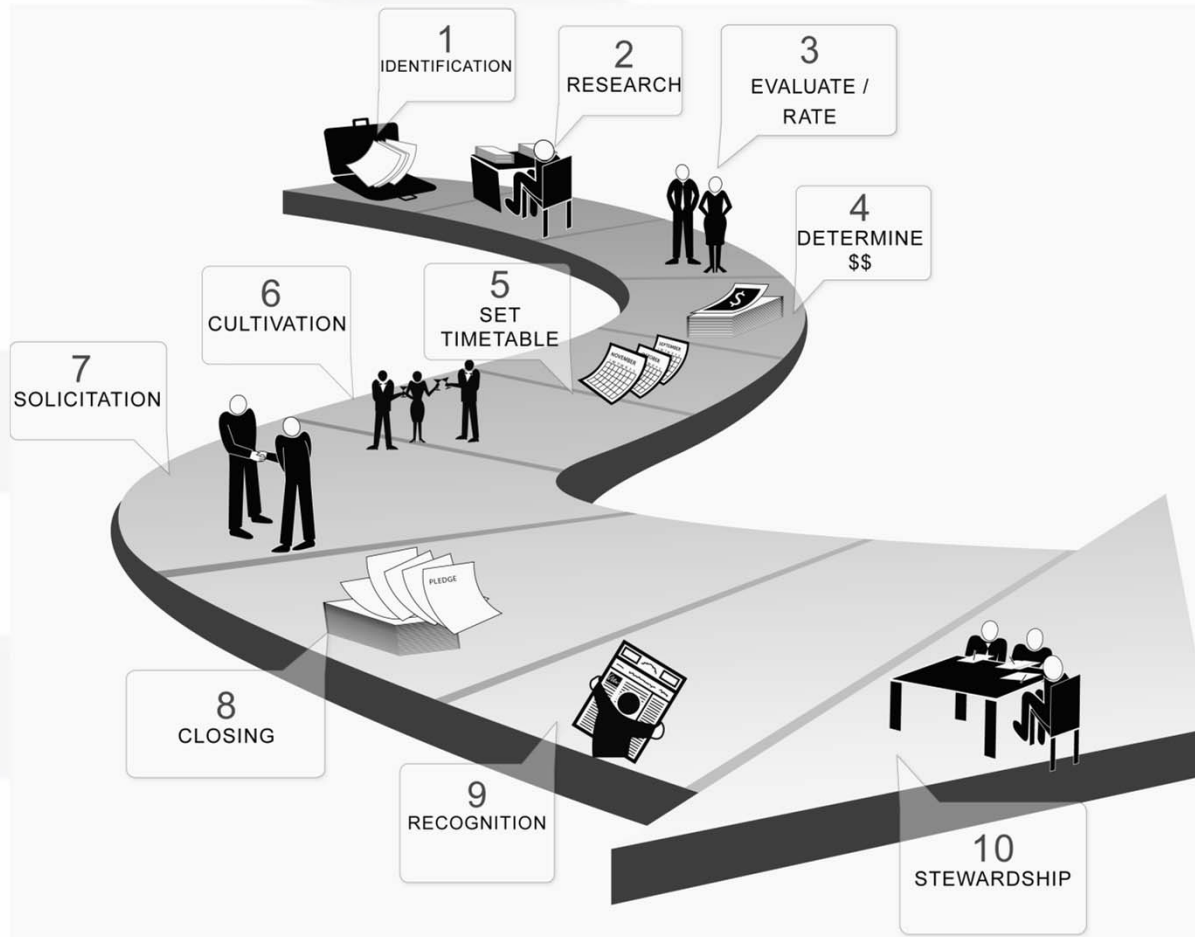
- Tailors the request to the interests of the prospect.
- Demonstrates that the Affiliate knows and listens to its supporters.
- Uses research to determine an appropriate but challenging request.
- Anticipates questions before they are asked.
- Provides focus.
- Gives the solicitation team confidence.
- Increases likelihood of success.



# Strategic Mistakes



# Ten Steps of a Solicitation Strategy



# 1. Identification

- Create “portfolio strategy.”
  - Identify a portfolio of likely prospects.
  - Segment best prospects.
  - Prioritize based on readiness.
- Narrow an enormous prospect pool.
- Keep pool current, in priority order.
- Focuses limited staff resources.
- Transforms research into a prospect/donor tracking system.
- Raises more money.

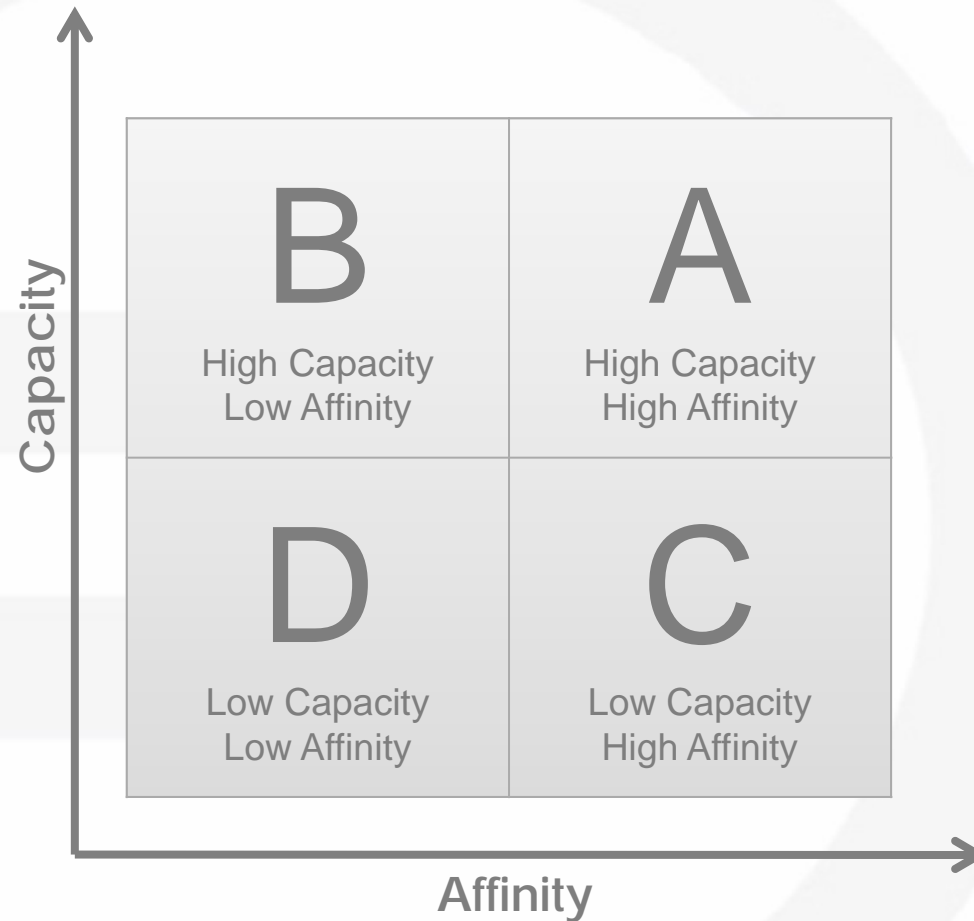


# 1. Identification – Where to Look

- Look at your current donors first.
- Work “top-down” and “inside-out.”
- You may begin with:
  - A screening of your entire prospect pool by an outside vendor.
  - A review by a team of internal development professionals and leadership volunteers.
  - A review of donors and past donors and their giving histories by the internal professional staff.



# 1. Identification – What to Look For



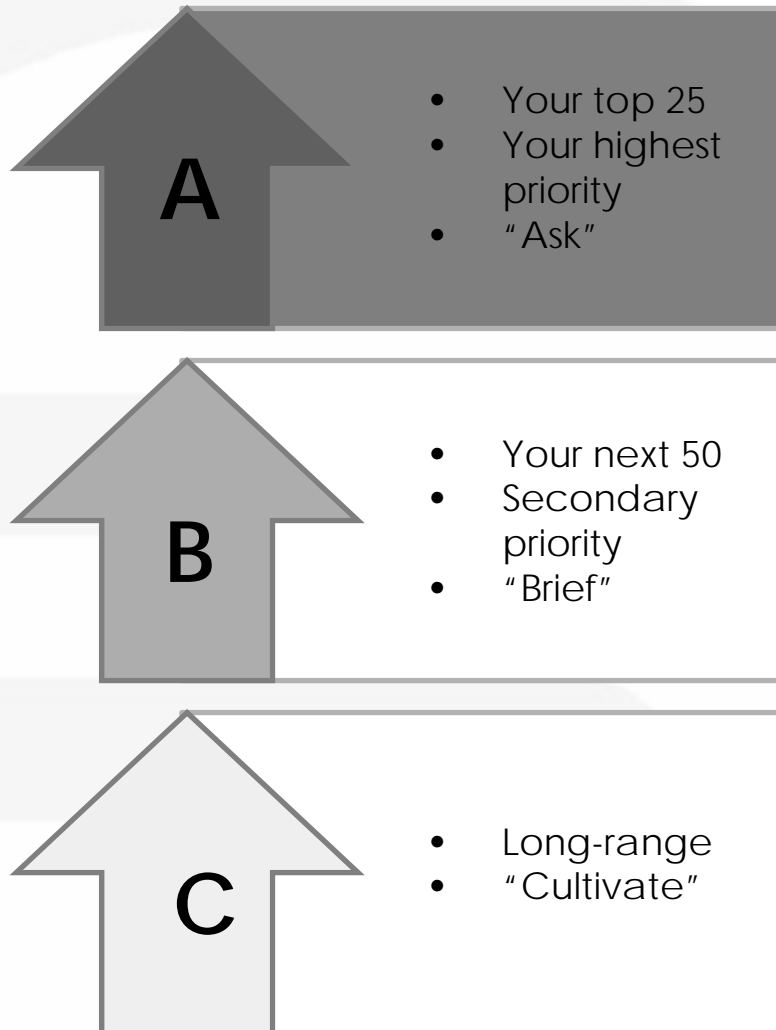
**High Capacity** is determined through wealth screening and traditional prospect research.

**High Affinity** is based on how well your Affiliate knows the prospect. There may well be a "point system" by which you award each prospect points based on certain actions.





# 1. Identification – Prioritize Top Prospects



- Segment your prospects into:
  - Top 25
  - Top 50
  - Long range prospects
- Use an A, B, C ranking system.
- Better to have organized interaction with a few prospects than to be overwhelmed with too many.



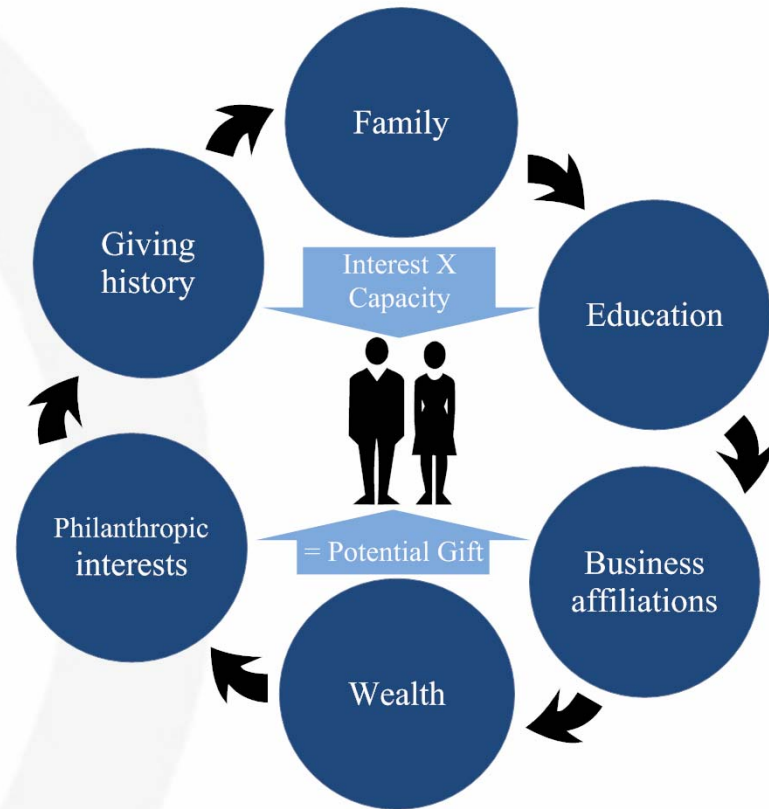
# 1. Identification – Prioritize Top Prospects

	ASK	BRIEF	CULTIVATE/INTRODUCE
<b>Status of Prospect</b>	"A"	"B"	"C"
<b>Meeting Description</b>	a. An immediate and direct request for financial support	a. A "pre-ask" briefing	a. A meeting or activity to cultivate interest in the Affiliate or project(s).
<b>Action to be Taken</b>	a. Prepare a personalized solicitation proposal b. Establish the solicitation team c. Prepare a briefing or script for solicitor(s) d. Schedule the meeting	a. Prepare a case statement or "briefing paper" b. Prepare a listing of naming opportunities c. Prepare a development overview d. Prepare a briefing or script for briefer(s) e. Schedule the meeting	a. Organize a site visit or tour to showcase programs in action b. Schedule meeting with Affiliate executive c. Invite to a reception, event, breakfast or other cultivation activity
<b>The Meeting</b>	a. Meet with the prospect in a quiet, private setting b. Review fundraising progress c. Review naming opportunities and/or gift recognition d. Request gift e. Establish a targeted decision date	a. Introduce the project and need b. Review Affiliate's goals and objectives c. Review the case statement or briefing paper d. Highlight particular areas of interest e. Review naming opportunities and/or gift recognition f. Determine area(s) of interest g. Determine gift request level, if appropriate h. Schedule a next meeting	a. Introduce the Affiliate and Urban League movement b. Highlight the mission and achievements c. Outline challenges for the future d. Provide financial background, if appropriate e. Describe projects of importance and future vision f. Expose to clients who benefit from programs g. Note others who are involved
<b>Appropriate Materials</b>	a. Case statement b. Personalized solicitation proposal	a. Case statement b. Briefing paper c. Assessment findings report d. Newsletter e. Solicitation proposal excluding gift request	a. National Urban League materials b. Affiliate brochures c. Newsletter d. Client testimonials



## 2. Research

- Information and research fuel good strategy.
  - Determines the donor's area of interest.
  - Explores gift capacity of the donor.
  - Enables you to tailor the gift request strategy.



## 2. Research



### The 10-Minute Search

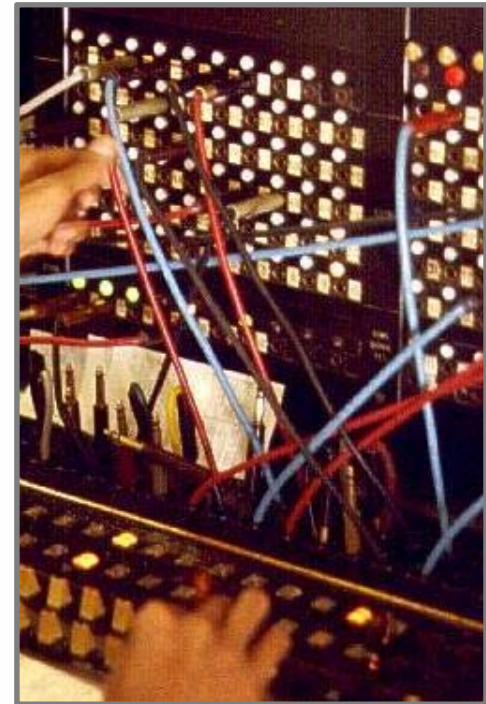
- **Your Affiliate's Donor Database (e.g. Raiser's Edge)** for notes on previous contact, giving and address(es)
- **White pages.com** to find or confirm address(es)
- **WealthEngine.com** for Advanced, detailed prospect report (*requires paid subscription*)
- **Zillow** for real estate
- **Google** for news and affiliations
- **Marketwatch** for stock info
- **Guidestar** for charitable giving entity
- **NOZA** for philanthropic giving (*requires paid subscription*)
- **Opensecrets.org** for political donations
- **Muckety.com** for connections among high-profile individuals

- Organize what you already have and know by:
  - Checking the donor's files.
  - Looking for key information.
  - Talking to colleagues for additional information.
- Conduct general background research.
- Explore financial wealth indicators.
- Explore real estate wealth indicators.
- Research political and charitable giving history.
- Use each donor interaction to learn more about your prospect.



## 3. Evaluate/Rate

- What aspect of the case and/or project will most interest the prospect?
- What to look for?
  - Giving history (including any special designations)
  - Volunteer history
  - Giving to other Affiliates
  - Foundation giving
  - Ask!
- Use your time with the prospect to address his or her interests, as well as the Affiliate's needs.



## 3. Evaluate/Rate

- Use a tracking chart with A, B, C system.

Name	Staff	Project	Request	Next Step	Readiness	Timing
Ann Smith	Al	STEM Academy	\$ 100,000	Board Chair to schedule solicitation	A	Q2 2016
John Adams	Barb	Capacity Building	\$ 50,000	Follow up after cultivation event, schedule briefing	B	Q3 2015
Michael Jones	Charlie	NULITES Program	\$ 25,000	Invite to EOD Dinner	C	Q1 2016

- Converts information to strategic tool.
  - Research
  - Rating
  - Assignment
  - Timing/Sequencing
  - Progress and next steps
- Helps manage your calendar.
- Anticipates work flow.



## 4. Determine the Ask Amount

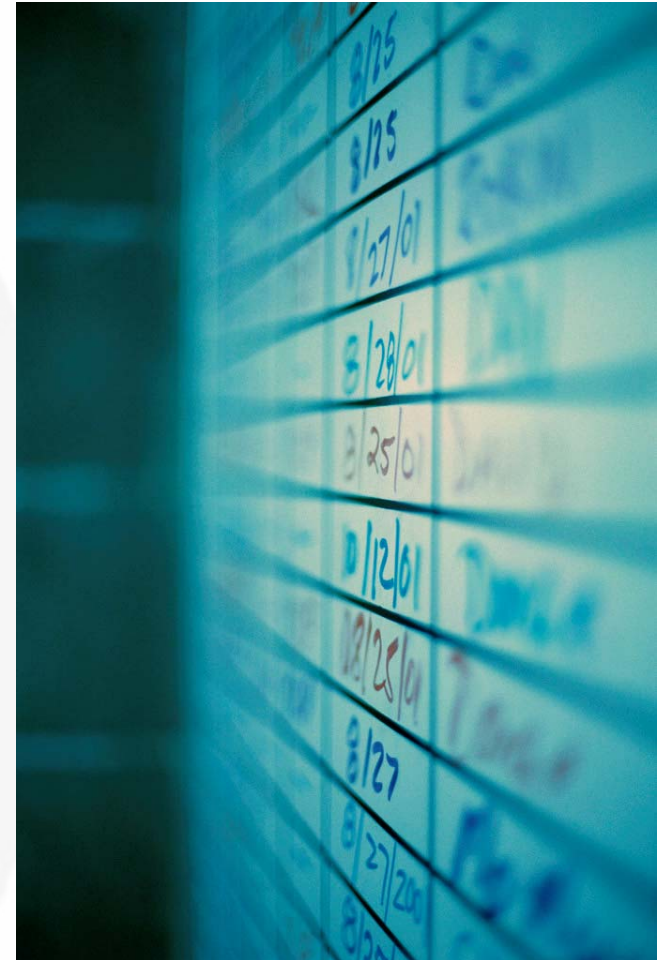
- The “ask” amount must be tied to a specific need and can be determined by reviewing the following:
  - Previous giving, with your Affiliate, NUL and/or other organizations
  - Wealth indicators, known assets
  - Input from anticipated solicitor
- The gift request should warrant the donor’s careful consideration.
- A table of gifts should be available to illustrate the Affiliate’s needs and how funds are expected to be raised.

Gift Range	Prospects Needed	Donors Needed	Total Giving
\$1,000,000	3-5	1	\$1,000,000
\$500,000	6-10	2	\$1,000,000
\$250,000	12-20	4	\$1,000,000
\$150,000	24-40	8	\$1,200,000
\$75,000	36-60	12	\$900,000
\$50,000	60-100	20	\$1,000,000
\$30,000	90-150	3	\$900,000
\$15,000	150-250	50	\$750,000
\$10,000	240-400	80	\$800,000
\$5,000	432-720	144	\$720,000
Below \$6,000		Many	\$730,000
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>1,053-1,755</b>	<b>351+</b>	<b>\$10,000,000</b>



## 5. Set Timetable

- Set a time frame for each request.
- Timing and sequencing.
- Ask best prospects first.
- Sequence your requests strategically.
  - Influence the next ask.
  - Open doors.





## 6. Cultivation

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- Increase involvement in your Affiliate.
- Strengthen natural ties and relationships.
- Move the prospect closer to gift decision.
- Ascertain the 6 "Rs:"
  - Right purpose
  - Right amount
  - Right person
  - Right time
  - Right solicitor(s)
  - Relevant factors



## 6. Cultivation



- Cultivation is important, but asking is more important.
- Strike a balance and use wisely.
  - In advance of a very large request
  - To interest an, as yet, uninterested prospect
  - Targeting a new audience



## 7. Solicitation

- Select the solicitation team carefully.
  - Who has the best relationship with the donor?
  - Peer solicitor, executive staff or combination?
  - Has the peer solicitor made an equal or larger gift?
- Who else has influence?



# 7. Solicitation

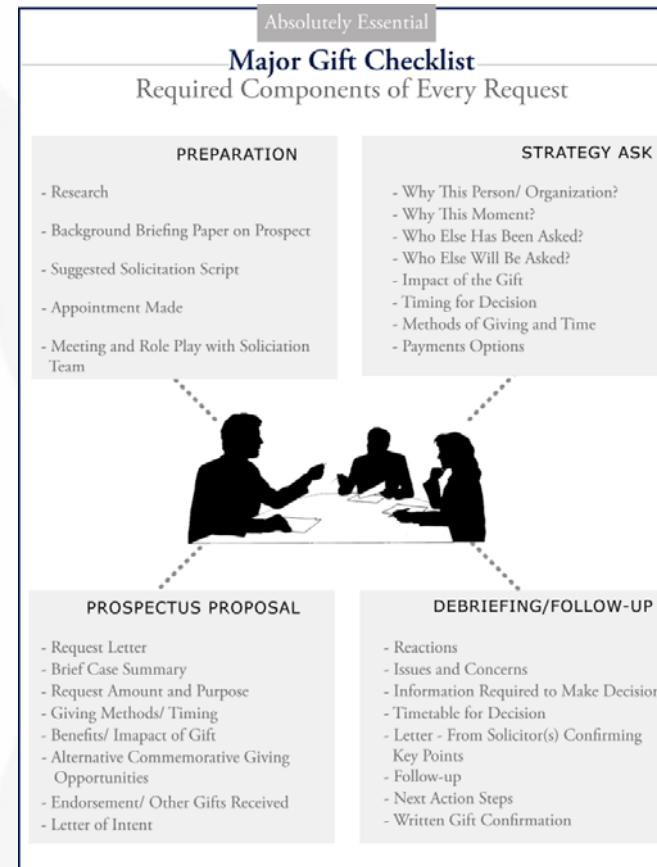
GIVING LEVELS	GIVING AMOUNT	RECOGNITION
Leadership	\$1,000,000 and above	Permanent Name Recognition on Outside of Building Permanent Name Recognition on Interior Drive Wall Naming Opportunity to Specific area
Founder	\$500,000 to \$999,999	
Benefactor	\$300,000 to \$499,999	
Diamond	\$150,000 to \$299,999	
Platinum	\$75,000 to \$149,999	
Gold	\$25,000 to \$74,999	
Silver	\$10,000 to \$24,999	
Crystal	\$5,000 to \$9,999	
Bronze	\$1,000 to \$4,999	
Friend	\$100 to \$999	

- A "prospectus kit" should be prepared well in advance of the solicitation meeting and should include:
  - A request letter
  - Personalized solicitation proposal
  - Case statement
  - Description of a specific commemorative opportunity for the prospect's consideration, if appropriate
  - Suggested letter of intent or gift pledge agreement form
  - Business cards and/or contact information of all members of the solicitation team
- Prospect/donor profile
- Briefing/strategy memo
- Solicitation script



# 7. Solicitation

- Brief the solicitation team.
- Define solicitor roles.
- Practice, practice, practice!
  - Role play
  - Anticipate questions
  - Solicitor's gift first



## 8. Closing

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- Have a follow-up plan.
- Agree upon appropriate time to follow-up for a decision.
- Address any issues or concerns raised during the solicitation as soon after the meeting as possible.



# 9. Gift Recognition and 10. Stewardship

- Commensurate with level of ask.
- Do the giving opportunities reflect the prospect's style, interests, etc.?
- Should one opportunity or several be presented?
- Determine how the donor has been recognized in the past.
- Recognition options should be incorporated in proposal and solicitation.
- Be as personal as possible.



# General Strategies for a New Economy

- Focus on mission and case.
- Increase activity.
- Increase prospect research.
- Prioritize prospects.
- Introduce new gift structures and payment flexibility.
- Include beneficiaries in donor engagement.
- Target requests.
- Publicize new gifts.





## For Discussion

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1. Does your Affiliate currently follow a solicitation strategy?
2. What has your experience been in implementing any of the ten steps?
3. Which steps do you anticipate using and expect to be most successful/impactful?
4. Are there elements of solicitation strategies you would like to use, but feel unable to?
5. Other questions and/or comments?



# Thank you



Thank you for your participation in the NUL Executive Fundraising Academy and for your commitment to furthering the Urban League movement!

