

Major Gift Request Guide



DATE

Fundraising is the gentle art of
teaching the joy of giving.

—Hank Rosso

PREPARED FOR:

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ADDRESS
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Time Allocation of the Solicitation Meeting

Time allocation for a solicitation meeting is crucial in effectively pacing the Ask. The solicitor should lead the flow of the conversation with the following time allocation in mind.



Opening Remarks (10%)

Objective: Make the prospect comfortable and identify the purpose of the visit. Topics such as the prospect’s family or common interests are good.

For Example:

“I asked to meet with you to:

1. Thank you for all that you have done to support **AFFILIATE NAME**;
2. To tell you more about the critical mission of **AFFILIATE NAME** and the **CAMPAIGN NAME**.
3. To discuss how you might become involved with supporting the **CAMPAIGN NAME**.”



Making the Case for Philanthropic Support (70%)

Objective: Explain the case statement (i.e. what we are doing, why, and the outcomes.)

For Example:

1. New building
2. New Location
3. Expanded Programs
4. Board’s Commitment

Our priorities are:

1. Capital Support
2. Program Support
3. Endowment Support

We will approach our Campaign in three phases; with a Phase One goal of \$XXXXXXX, over several years.



Asking for the Gift (10%)

Objective: verbalize the gift request.

For Example:

1. In order for us to achieve our objectives and sustain **AFFILIATE NAME**, we will need significant financial support.
2. We have made great strides to date and have raised over **\$XXXXXXX** from current and former Trustees and donors.
3. I am asking you to consider becoming a Founding Partner of the *new* **AFFILIATE NAME** by contributing a transformational gift of **\$XXXXXX** and above, paid over several years to...



Handling the Donor's Response (10%)

Objective: answer questions in a way that induces the prospect to increase the likelihood of making a gift at the requested level.

For Example:

1. "Yes, I'll do it" – Simply thank the prospect and ask the prospect to complete a pledge letter.
2. "I need more time to consider your request" – Confirm a date that there will be a follow-up meeting or a call.
3. "I will give less than what you requested" – Relate to the prospect that you are not expecting a decision today and follow up.

Critical Talking Points

It's a new era for **AFFILIATE NAME**.

- **Bold Vision:** Today, the **AFFILIATE NAME** is *[status/breadth of work in the community/city/state/sector]*. We have a bold vision to *[insert vision statement]* through *[outline Affiliate strategic vision priorities/objectives, such as]*:
 - Expanding programs for...
 - Enhancing services to...
 - Building a new facility for...
 - Launching innovations in...
- **History:** **AFFILIATE NAME** is the *[insert brief statement of legacy/history]*.
- **VALUE ADD TO COMMUNITY #1:** *[Insert brief description of how the Affiliate is a value-add to the community, its role through programming, constituency served, and impact]*
- **VALUE ADD TO COMMUNITY #2:** *[Insert brief description of how the Affiliate is a value-add to the community, its role through programming, constituency served, and impact]*
- **Support:** **AFFILIATE NAME** is supported by a diverse group of funders, including a Board of Trustees comprised of prominent and successful leaders, individual donors, private foundations, government entities, and corporate partners.

- **Recent Milestone:** *[Insert recent Affiliate news or update for stakeholders to demonstrate stewardship]*
- **Recent Accomplishment:** *[Insert a recent Affiliate success, program highlight, award or recognition to inspire stakeholders]*
- **Recent Fundraising Accomplishments:** Board members and friends have raised over \$XXXXXX for the Campaign so far. We will continue to work tirelessly to build, grow, and maintain the incredible work of AFFILIATE NAME.
- **Specific Fundraising Goal:** We have a long-term fundraising goal of over \$XXXXXXXX. We also have a short-term goal of \$XXXXXXXX to address immediate priorities, including *[insert top campaign priorities]*.
- **Commitment:** The Trustees and the AFFILIATE NAME leadership team are fully committed to this effort. We will spend the next X years keenly focused on securing financial commitment to this Campaign.
- **What We Need To Be Successful:** To be successful, we need a several families to make a significant gifts of X to X figures, including X donors to commit to gifts of \$[Top Gift Level] and X families to commit to X gifts of \$[Next Gift Level] in order to set the bar. We will also be asking a number of individuals and families to support the Campaign at the \$[Next Gift Level] level as well as at the \$[Next Gift Level] level. You have been a great partner and friend to AFFILIATE NAME. You are the reason we have been able to bring transformative change to the communities and constituents involved at AFFILIATE NAME. Investing with us in this important Campaign will make a lasting impact on many – and will ensure all that we have achieved together continues on.

- **THE ASK:** I am asking you to make a gift of \$XXXXXX a year for X years, for a total gift of \$XXXXXX to become a Founding Partner of the Campaign. This would provide critical financial support to our mission and advance the [*insert impact statement*]. Your gift will inspire other donors to make extraordinary contributions as well.

Remain silent and wait
for the prospect to respond



Handling the Donor's Response



- Stop selling/talking. Thank the donor
- "We will follow up with arrangements"
- Go home happy



- Absolutely
- Control the visit and incorporate time
- Let's meet/talk again at the end of next week



- If within range agreed upon, follow response #1.
- If significantly below range, try to defer the decision.
 - Your offer is very generous and I thank you, but I really want you to think about what we have discussed. I did not expect or desire a decision today.
 - I just wanted to take the time today to explain how important this campaign is to me, and how important gifts at this level are to the campaign.
 - I'd like the chance to meet again to answer questions you might have and to look at all aspects of this gift request: the impact of the gift, how it will be affected by other things we are doing, and how the gift can be given over time with some interesting tax or estate planning considerations.

Handling Some Unique Challenges

Donor says...	You can say...
<p>Request is not what we were thinking of...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I can understand. I know it’s an extraordinary request. ▪ But I also know we both share the same goals. For us to achieve these goals we can’t get there with “the business as usual.” ▪ We need an ambitious plan and an ambitious campaign. ▪ For the campaign to be successful I not only need you to stretch your giving, but to help me get others to think bigger as well...
<p>Where did you get this number from?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be assured we have no idea what your finances or obligations are. ▪ We ask for gifts at this level because we know from the experience of other institutions that we’ll need at least X families to contribute X to X figure gifts to achieve our goal. ▪ I don’t know if you can do it, but I know that we share the same aspirations for AFFILIATE NAME, and wanted to invite you to be one of these X families...
<p>Why are you picking us for this level?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We’re not picking you for this level. ▪ We have no idea what your capacity is, but I know that you have been so generous to AFFILIATE NAME, and that you and I want the same thing for AFFILIATE NAME – to take it to the next level. ▪ There aren’t many people that have been as close to AFFILIATE NAME as you. ▪ We wanted to invite you to be one of these families because I know what a gift like this would mean to AFFILIATE NAME...

Donor says...	You can say...
<p>I've already thought about it...here's a check for (significantly lower amount). Or, it doesn't matter what you say, I already know what I'm going to give.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Thank you for your generous offer. ▪ I'd appreciate it if you would just indulge me... ▪ I'd appreciate the courtesy of your time/attention to listen to our plans...
<p>This is not a good time for us...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I understand. ▪ Because this campaign is so important I'd like the courtesy of your time in the future to continue our conversation...
<p>(Planned Giving) We already have AFFILIATE NAME in our will...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Thank you. We are asking many of our donors and friends to do the same because that can help us in the future. ▪ The reality is we need your giving in three ways: will (deferred support), annual, and extraordinary support for the campaign ▪ A gift for the campaign is important because...
<p>We are over committed as it is. We will continue to make our annual gift.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ That is terrific and annual giving will benefit certain ongoing programs. ▪ The effort we are discussing today is an urgent and immediate priority... ▪ We are asking all to consider a significant campaign gift because to do extraordinary things we need extraordinary support...
<p>No, but thanks for asking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Thank you for taking our request seriously. ▪ Is there any particular reason? ▪ We will gladly address your concerns... ▪ I'd appreciate the courtesy of your time in the future to revisit this again.

Closing the Gift

RECOMMENDED STEPS

1. Control follow-up and establish timing for next contact prior to ending solicitation visit.
2. Send a follow-up letter thanking the donor for their time and include additional information/statistics to help answer remaining questions.
3. Invite to future events/activities, such as groundbreakings, tours of the facilities, galas, and receptions.
4. Debrief with the appropriate persons.
5. Send additional information on the project.
6. “We have a Board meeting in two weeks and I’d really like to share the good news about your gift.”

Make a follow-up telephone call
within a week to ten days



Closing Thoughts and Reminders

1. Be enthusiastic about the campaign. This is our moment.
2. Know what you want to say before going into the solicitation.
3. Be aware that you may be preempted at any time.
4. Expect some disappointments.
5. Do not be negative or apologetic about your visit.
6. Set the prospect at ease.
7. Remember to listen to the prospect.
8. Ask for the gift.
9. Follow-up promptly.

Think big and keep your sights high



SOLICITATION TRAINING GUIDE
APPENDIX

Psychology of the Donor

Effective solicitors are aware of how their prospects are thinking. Below are some general thoughts to help understand the perspective of potential donors:

1. People are asked for money all the time.

- The philanthropic world is a highly competitive environment. In all likelihood, other organizations asked our prospect for a significant gift in the recent past, and other institutions will ask our prospect in the near future.
- We must distinguish ourselves from the competition.

2. People are going to give their money to somebody.

- People are generous by nature.
- If we do not make our case and ask for a gift, we can be assured that their money will go elsewhere.

3. Major donors view charitable contributions as investments.

- Like investors in businesses and in the financial markets, donors expect a return on their investment.
- They will choose to invest in the institutions and the people that have their confidence.

4. Prospects want to be led.

- Prospects want to know what **AFFILIATE NAME'S** needs are - and how much of an investment is required to make the campaign successful.

5. Donors want to be recognized.

- People like recognition. We must offer opportunities for their gift to be publicly acknowledged.
- Even donors who give anonymously want – and deserve – personal recognition.

6. Donors give in relation to who asks.

- Peers and the respected leaders of the institution have a positive influence on potential donors.
- “Don’t send a \$1,000 donor to ask for a \$1,000,000 gift.”

7. Donors are impacted by how they are asked.

- Our approach to asking should be serious and business-like, but also positive and energized.

What You Are Trying to Accomplish

- Set the donor at ease.
- Make the donor see the situation in a different light.
- Make a better case than any other organization.
- Demonstrate the power of philanthropy to **AFFILIATE NAME**.

Put the donor in a position
to be a hero



Focus on What You Can Control



WHAT WE CAN CONTROL:

- How well you make your case
- The style in which you ask
- The setting for the meeting
- Who is present
- How much time you have
- What you talk about
- The amount you ask for

WHAT WE CANNOT CONTROL:



- The donor's financial well-being
- How the donor will react
- How interested the donor is
- What the donor will initially offer
- What reasons the donor will have for not giving
- What questions the donor will have

Solicitation Logistics

Solicitations can take different forms, but the setting is critical.

The setting should be a quiet, undisturbed place, such as:

- Private home
- President's Office
- Private room in a club



Avoid:

- A business office
- Restaurant
- Crowded room
- Golf course
- Cocktail reception



Solicitations can take different forms

- President and prospect
- President and prospect couple
- President and trustee with prospect(s)
- President and senior staff with prospect(s)
- President and CCS with prospect(s)
- President, trustee, and CCS with prospect(s)
- Group meeting with trustee, senior staff and prospect(s) (presentation format)

Solicitations can feature different presentations:

- No paper or material
- Simple proposal
- Elaborate presentation
- Talking points for each presenter

What's most important is to find the style that is most comfortable for you – the style that makes you most effective as a solicitor.

ILLUSTRATION

REQUESTING A MAJOR GIFT

KEY QUESTIONS | KEY ANSWERS

WHY ME?

- Personal thanks
- Acknowledge past giving

WHAT IS THE VISION AND THE CASE?

- History
- Mission more relevant than ever
- Strategic plan

WHO ARE THE LEADERS?

- Board strengthen and solidify
- Campaign: build the best leadership team

WHAT IS THE CAMPAIGN?

- Initiate goal \$26M
- Unprecedented
- Leadership gifts



WHAT IS YOUR COMMITMENT?

- Build leadership
- Meet these goals

WHAT IS THE STRATEGY?

- Approach top companies and individuals
- High board participation
- Attract significant gifts
- Symbolic leadership
- Consider naming building payable over time

WHAT IS YOUR REQUEST?

WHAT IS THE RECOGNITION?

- Name building
- Endow programs and senior positions

WHAT IS THE IMPACT?

- Instill confidence
- Add credibility
- Attract others
- Ensure success

WHAT IS MY ASSURANCE?

- Accountability
- Stewardship
- Hard work
- Quality
- Vigilance
- Commitment

NOTES:



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