**Solicitation**

Articulating the financial support the Affiliates is request can oftentimes be challenging. The gift request, also commonly referred to as “the ask,” is the most important part of the solicitation meeting. A Solicitation Script has been developed as part of the Fundraising Toolkit. The Solicitation Script provides a suggested approach to conducting an effective solicitation meeting and details how to address various key components:

1. Opening remarks
2. Making the case for support
3. Asking for the gift
4. Handling the donor’s response
5. Scheduling a follow-up discussion

Moreover, the Solicitation Script emphasizes the fundamental elements of an effective ask.

1. **Anticipate the prospect’s questions** in advance of the meeting and have answers ready.
2. **Verbalize the gift request** using a close-ended, clear, specific and simple “ask sentence;” an example of an effective ask sentence is “I ask that you consider a gift of $5,000 a year for three years for a total gift of $15,000.”
3. Once the ask has been made, **remain silent** and allow the prospect to respond.
4. **Express appreciation** to the prospect for consideration of the request regardless of the prospect’s response to the ask.
5. Establish an appropriate opportunity **to follow-up** with the prospective donor.

**Handling Responses**

The manner in which a prospective donor is solicited for a gift is just as important as the solicitor’s response to the prospect. It is important to be familiar with the six (6) possible and most likely responses to the ask:

1. Prospect agrees to gift.
2. Prospect agrees to greater amount.
3. Prospect asks for time to consider.
4. Prospect offers less than requested.
5. Gift offered is considerably less.
6. Prospect declines the gift request.

While no solicitation meeting is the same, there are some general replies that would be appropriate to each of the six (6) prospect responses previously identified. The table below provides a summary.

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| **When the Prospect…** | | **The Solicitor may reply with…** |
| 1 | Agrees to the Gift Request | 1. “Thank you so much! That is a generous commitment.” 2. “May I ask you to sign the pledge agreement?” 3. “I will send you a pledge agreement for your signature.” |
| 2 | Agrees to a Greater Amount | 1. Same as above, but with a bigger smile than ever! |
| 3 | Asks for More Time to Consider | 1. “May I call you in a week to check-in?” 2. “Would you like to come on a visit and have lunch with the president/CEO?” |
| 4 | Offers Less Than What Was Requested | 1. Emphasize one or all of the following: 2. “While generous, that offer cannot be recognized in the way we would like.” 3. “We need you to be included among those leaders mentioned earlier.” 4. “Keep in mind that we have asked for a five-year pledge. Would it help to increase the payment period to six or seven years?” 5. “Would you like more time to consider the request? We really need you to make this commitment to influence others to do the same.” 6. “Thank you for your time and hospitality (if the meeting is in the prospect’s office or home). Can I call you in a week to discuss the gift again?” |
| 5 | Offers Considerably Less Than Was Requested | 1. “The initiative is in the Major Gift/Leadership Gift phase and we need you to join with others to set the pace for the remainder of the initiative.” 2. “Do you have a concern that we can resolve?” 3. “We want to provide you with a visible naming opportunity and it is tied to the gift we invited you to consider.” 4. “Can we re-visit our request at a later and better time?” 5. “May I ask you to review the proposal and these materials… I will call you in about a week to answer all your questions and concerns.” |
| 6 | Declines | 1. Indicate your disappointment — pleasantly. 2. “May I ask you to take time to review the proposal and materials.” 3. “Would you like to visit with the president/CEO?” 4. “I will call you in a week to review our meeting.” 5. “Thank you for your time.” |