

Major Donor Development *GENERAL* guidelines:

1. Focus on the Donor's Passion, Not just the Organization's Need

Major donors rarely give simply because an organization needs money. They give because they want to have an influence (and help make a difference) in an area that matters to them.

Advice:

- Learn what motivates the donor.
- Ask questions before making an ask.
- Connect the organization's mission to the donor's personal values and interests.

Example: Instead of saying, "We need \$100,000 for this program," say, "Your interest in helping disadvantaged youth aligns perfectly with the impact this program creates."

2. Build the Relationship Before Asking

People give to people they trust.

Advice:

- Spend time cultivating a relationship.
- Share stories, impact reports, and opportunities to engage.
- Make several meaningful contacts before discussing a major gift.

A good fundraiser should strive to be:

- A listener first
 - A trusted advisor second
 - A solicitor last
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3. Present a Specific Opportunity and Impact

Major donors respond better to clear outcomes than general appeals.

Advice: Describe:

- What the gift will accomplish
- Who will benefit
- How success will be measured

Instead of:

"Would you support our annual campaign?"

Try:

"A gift of \$50,000 would fund the mentoring program for 100 students for an entire year."

Specificity creates confidence.

4. Make the Ask Clearly and Confidently

Many fundraisers work hard to build relationships but become hesitant when it's time to ask.

Advice:

- Be direct.
- State a specific amount.
- Then pause and listen.

Example:

"Based on your commitment to education, would you consider a leadership gift of \$25,000 to help launch this initiative?"

The donor deserves the opportunity to say yes.

5. Stewardship Is More Important Than Solicitation

The most successful major-gift programs focus on retaining and growing donor relationships after the gift.

Advice:

- Thank donors promptly and sincerely and OFTEN.
- Report back on results.
- Show the impact of their investment.
- Continue the relationship even when you are not asking for money.

A donor who feels appreciated and informed is far more likely to give again.

One Simple Formula

Major Gift Fundraising = Listen . . . Align their Interests with your Work . . . Show Impact . . . Ask Clearly . . . Steward Well.

If a fundraiser consistently follows those five steps, they'll dramatically increase both donor engagement and major-gift success.

ALSO -- HAVE a GOAL or GOALS . . .
