

NEW HAMPSHIRE LIBRARY TRUSTEES ASSOCIATION
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THE PERSONAL ASK: Moving from Resistance to Results

Summary of Remarks

Sandra Mitchell, Development Resources
P.O. Box 200, York Harbor, ME 03911
603-433-1234, sgm4331234@aol.com

I. ORGANIZATIONAL PREPARATION

A. Elements of Effective Fundraising (please refer to the handout)

B. Your Strategic Plan

- What are your community's needs and your library's plans to respond to them?
- If financial support is necessary, for what purpose, how much, and when?

C. The Case for Support (please refer to the handout)

D. The Table of Gift Standards and Development Plan

- The basis of your development plan (ie, what you will do to achieve the fundraising and, therefore, your library's goals) can be initially and quickly plotted by creating a basic Table of Gift Standards. For example:

# of Gifts		Cumulative
1 Pacesetting Gift @	\$10,000	\$ 10,000
2 Leadership Gifts @	\$5,000	20,000
5 Major Gifts @	\$2,500	32,500
10 Sustaining Gifts @	\$1,000	42,500
20 Principal Gifts @	\$500	52,500
40 Primary Gifts @	\$250	62,500
60 Supporting Gifts @	\$100	68,500
80 Contributing Gifts @	\$50	<u>72,500</u>
100 Community Gifts @	\$25	\$ 75,000

The Development Plan is a written document that translates the Table into the most appropriate strategies (ie, methods) to acquire the various gift levels, including who is primarily responsible for respective initiatives, costs, materials and/or other required resources; timing, record-keeping, and donor recognition/stewardship.

E. Various Ways to Generate Charitable Support:

The personal ask is still the most effective and efficient fundraising method, particularly to acquire major, sustainable gifts.

In 2012, \$316 billion was donated by individuals, corporations and foundations, an overall increase for the third straight year. Of that, 72% was from individuals, up nearly 4% over 2011. With the rebound of the economy, charitable giving is looking more positive.

II. Personal Preparation – Understanding Motivations

- A. Working through the Reluctance to Ask: What makes us hesitate or resist?
- B. Understanding Why People Give
- C. Identifying Prospects for a Personal Request, with a nod to Willie Sutton.
 - The 80/20 Rule and the 4:1 prospects-to-gift ratio at the top levels
 - Rosso's Concentric Circles

III. Personal Solicitation Tips & Techniques: The Right People asking for The Right Amount for the Right Purpose at the Right Time. It is true that if we ask, most often we will receive. Failure to make the call is one of the most frequent reasons fund-raising campaigns fall short of their goals.

Before the Visit:

- Be Prepared. Know all you can about the library's goals, project or program for which funding is needed, etc.
- Make your own commitment first.
- Determine in advance the dates and times you and your accompanying volunteer/s are available to meet with the prospective donor.
- Know as much as you can about the prospect's past history and relationship to the library (including past giving), personal or related interests, or other community involvement. Think about what approach and aspects of the current project may be most motivating.
- Determine in advance the requested gift level, range, or sponsorship opportunity you will be asking the prospect to consider. Decide beforehand which of the volunteer solicitors will specifically ask for the gift.
- Call first on the persons you know best, if comfortable for you.
- Telephone (don't email) to make an appointment at a place of the prospect's choosing. Example: *"I am calling to see if you might have some time next week for John Smith and me to come and tell you about the exciting new plans for our public library. I know you have an interest in providing enriching educational and social opportunities for our citizens and I believe this new program will be of interest to you. Would sometime Wednesday evening be convenient for us to get together?"*
- Occasionally, before you have had a chance to make an appointment to explain the project, a prospective donor may want to forgo the visit and instead will state a gift amount s/he is willing to make, or will ask you to send information. While respecting the prospect's time limitations, make every effort to avoid this situation. It does not lead to optimal giving or understanding of the library's plans and goals.

You might say, *"I know you are extremely busy. Still, as a person who is involved and very respected in our community, it is important that you are well informed about the library's plans and goals. I would be grateful if you can squeeze in a little time for us to meet. We promise not to stay too long."*

- If you feel it is appropriate, or the prospect asks, send the informational material prior to the visit, but only after you have scheduled a meeting. **Do not send the gift card.**

During the Visit

- Have appropriate materials available, but don't rely solely on them to present the case – you do it.
- Present the case orally, in vivid, memorable terms; explain how the project and donor's help will benefit the library and the community.
- If a question arises during the conversation you cannot answer, say so. Take note of it and tell the prospect you will research the question and get back to him/her. Be sure to do so promptly.
- Acknowledge the prospect's involvement with the library or past giving, if any. Express the hope the prospect will again be supportive.
- Mention the names of the prospect's peers who have already given (including your own gift), if appropriate and with permission.
- Describe the various ways donations can be made including cash, check, credit card, stock, paid-up life insurance as well as the tax advantages and how donors will be recognized. Also mention the pledge period, if any.
- Make certain the prospect is **fully informed** before asking for a gift. Then ask for his/her support and a specific amount or gift range, or a sponsorship opportunity if any. Prospective donors frequently need guidance to help them think about how they can help to achieve the goal.

SHOW THE GIFT TABLE.

Some examples: *"The goal of this year's special campaign is to raise \$75,000 which will enable the library to provide more materials in electronic format and to introduce this new children's program. **Would you be willing to be the Pacesetter donor to inspire and raise the sights of others by committing a gift of \$10,000?**"*

"Will you please consider a gift of \$5,000 to help us meet the goal? Or you can say: "We would like you to consider a pledge of \$5,000."

"If you are unable to pledge \$5,000, is there another amount you would consider contributing?"

"As you can see by the Table of Gifts, in order to achieve the goal, we need quite a few Sustaining Gifts of \$1,000. Can you be one of the donors at this level?"

"If \$1,000 is not possible, could you manage a gift of \$500?"

- Ask. Then be silent. Listen attentively to the prospect's reactions to the project.

DO NOT SAY: "Are you interested in giving to this?" "We have you down for \$10,000." "Come now, I know you can afford to be one of the top donors if you wanted to." "By that fancy car you drive, I can tell you could easily give \$5,000." "Any amount will be fine."

- If you have had an informative visit and asked for a gift, but the prospect says no, consider these possible responses.

“I understand. Is there another gift amount you might be willing to consider?”

“Is there any additional information I can provide that might help you to be able to contribute to this important project?”

“Perhaps this is not a good time for you. Our program includes the option to make a pledge and to plan the payments to begin at a future time. Would it be helpful for you to make a pledge now with payments to begin next year, for example?”

“I can see that you have other commitments right now. May we contact you again, say, before the end of the year?”

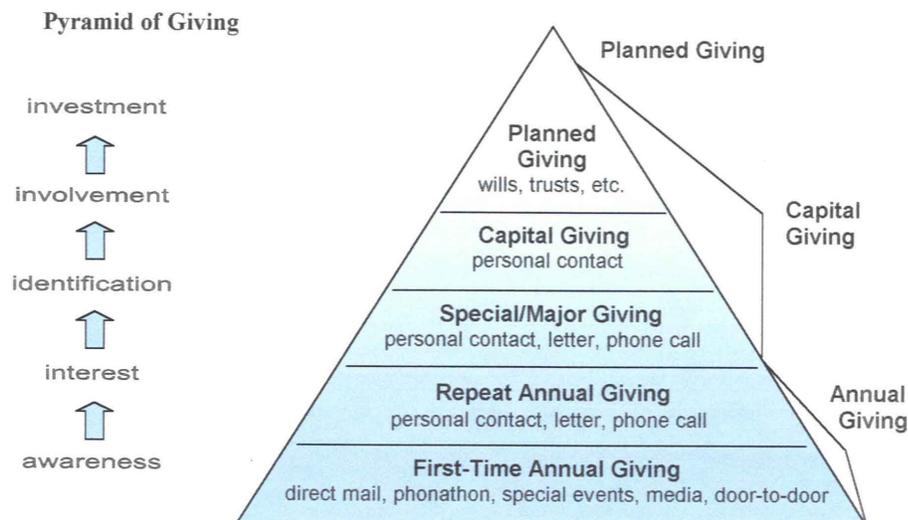
- Be prepared for a second visit. However, be certain to agree upon a specific date when you should be in contact again.
- **DO NOT provide the gift form** until the prospect is prepared to make a contribution and has determined the amount s/he wishes to make. Also, unless it is absolutely necessary, **DO NOT** leave the gift card behind to be returned later by the donor.
- Thank the prospect for his/her time and consideration, no matter what the response has been. Follow up with a personal note thanking the person for meeting with you.

After the Visit:

- Immediately return the completed gift form to headquarters. Do not accumulate gift cards to forward in batches. It is important donors are acknowledged promptly.

E. Donor Recognition, Stewardship and Retention

- Develop several ways to say thank you (at least 7) within the organization and publicly to make the donor feel special including, especially, utilizing the donor’s gift for the purpose for which it was requested, and reporting to the donor how the gift has helped. *You can’t turn a cucumber into a pickle simply by squirting vinegar on it. It has to soak a while.”*



REQUIRED COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING INITIATIVE

1. **An Honest and Sound Case for Support.** The organization seeking contributions must need those funds for genuinely desirable purposes, and must demonstrate that it is able to, and will, utilize the funds wisely and responsibly. The Case for Support must include a thoroughly defensible explanation for the amount of the objective.
2. **An Effective Statement of the Case for Support.** Narrative explanations of the project plans and campaign must be developed in various formats to generate the interest and support of a diverse donor constituency.
3. **Unqualified Fundraising Participation by the Institution.** In all good conscience, your library (or any other organization, for that matter) cannot ask for the significant support of others if its own leadership has not demonstrated an exemplary degree of investment in the campaign.
4. **A Standard of Giving.** Goals and standards of giving must be established to reflect the magnitude of the campaign objective, possible obstacles to its attainment, and the unique circumstances of the organization.
5. **Sound Strategy.** An effective and workable plan must be drafted prior to the official public announcement of the campaign. A structure for the overall campaign and strategies to attain smaller goals within it must be creatively developed. Varied approaches and plans may be modified as necessary during the course of campaign activity as circumstances dictate.
6. **A Working Organization.** An effective organization must be created to correspond to the size and characteristics of the potential donor base. The plan must include an adequate number of volunteers who have an ability to describe the project intelligently and persuasively to others. They must also have the time, diligence, and willingness to pursue the necessary financial support.
7. **Genuine Exemplary Leadership.** Leadership must emanate from those who have committed themselves wholeheartedly to the program, not merely "loaned" their names. Campaign leaders must thoroughly understand their roles and must be willing to give of their time, influence, and expertise to carry out their responsibilities.
8. **Thorough Preparation.** All volunteers must be well prepared for their assignments through businesslike, informative and motivating meetings.
9. **Effective Volunteer Contact.** Campaign workers should meet together in groups of planned and manageable size, and as frequently as necessary to maintain enthusiasm, momentum and achievement.
10. **Thorough, Accurate Mechanics.** Support systems and personnel must be secured to ensure complete and timely records and communications. All lists, assignment materials, investment records and the like must be up-to-date and maintained with scrupulous accuracy.

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THE CASE FOR SUPPORT

People should (will want to) support my library because _____



I. WHAT IS A CASE FOR SUPPORT?

- A. It is a written statement of your cause and:
1. is driven by your library's mission and plans
 2. describes your library's programs, services and history (not too much on history) and anything that sets it apart
 3. tells how the library impacts the community
 4. describes problems or needs, both the library's and community's
 5. explains your goals and objectives to address these needs
 6. shows how the new project or program will benefit lives
 7. illustrates how giving can advance your goals and gives reasons why prospective donors might want to support the cause; and
 8. should focus on constituents' needs.
- B. There is one comprehensive Case Statement for your organization that, in turn, is adapted for varied programs and potential donor groups.
- C. The Case may be for unrestricted support, restricted gifts for operation, or restricted gifts for special needs such as capital or endowment.
- D. The Case is used to build organizational consensus, ownership and consistency; to recruit new Board members and volunteers, and to provide a basis for other communications such as grant proposals, direct mail appeals, public presentations, annual reports, newsletter and newspaper articles, tag lines, bumper stickers, etc.

From fundraising guru, Harold Seymour: *"The case statement tells all that needs to be told, answers all the important questions, reviews the arguments for support, explains the proposed plan for raising the money, and shows how gifts may be made..."*

From the Complete Guide to Successful Campaigns, by Ted Bayley: *"...the case for fundraising should aim high, provide perspective, arouse a sense of history and continuity, convey a feeling of*

importance, relevance and urgency, and have whatever stuff is needed to warm the heart and stir the mind.”

II. DRAFTING THE CASE FOR SUPPORT

A. Collect information about your organization and identify needs from:

1. Your strategic long range-plan. Where are you headed?
2. Review the operating budget. What are the needs? Include staff input and constituent feedback. What do patrons want?
3. Review of other community needs.

B. Identify priorities:

1. What are the directions envisioned?
2. Do programs and services need to be expanded or improved?
3. What are the most critical resources needed? Space, staff, funding, materials?

C. Write it down, pass it around, generate feedback, then edit, edit, edit

IV. CASE STATEMENT CHECKLIST

- Does it generate emotional as well as rational reasons to give?
- Does it tell your potential donors how their gift will make a difference?
- Does it evoke a sense of the history and long-term impact of your organization and its work?
- Does it offer proof that your plan will work?
- Are the benefits to the donor clearly stated?
- If charts or graphics are included, are they attractive and easily understood?
- If there are photographs are they effective and properly cropped to maximize impact? (not more than 3 people, tells a “story”).
- Is it easy to read? With short sentences and paragraphs; lots of white space?
- Is it concise; as long as it needs to be and no more?
- Is the information well presented and in logical order? Is the need or plan introduced fairly early on?
- Is it reader (not organization) focused?
- Does it emphasize an opportunity for the prospective donor rather than an institutional need?
- Is the typeface appropriate for your organization and the reader?
- Is there an appealing cover? Is the paper stock attractive without looking too expensive?