THE ART OF ASKING

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
The Art of Asking

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THE ART OF ASKING

- 5:00 p.m. end time
- Context/Environment
- Before the Ask
- During the Ask
- After the Ask
- 2 or 3 solid ideas
WHY PERSONAL ASKING?

• Mail, telephone, email, digital, group.

• Why Ask? Donors are reactive, rarely proactive.
Fundraising Cycle

- Identification
- Stewardship
- Cultivation
- SOLICITATION
CONTEXT

• Contributed Support vs Earned Income
• No money, no mission
• Culture of Philanthropy
MACRO-CONTEXT

• 2017 – Hurricane Harvey
• 2014 – Energy prices tank
• 2008 – Great Recession
• 2001 – 9/11
• 2000 – .Com crash
Most organizations never fulfill their potential because they do not ask enough people often enough for enough money.

Why?
CONTEXT

• Lack of compelling vision and plan.
• No need for growth = no need for more money.
• Fear of asking.
FEAR OF ASKING

• Asking is an imposition.
• Fear of rejection.
• Too personal.
• I am not a salesperson.
RICH PEOPLE & MONEY

• They talk about money all of the time!!!

• They are fine talking about their money.
WHY US?

• They want to be a part of something bigger than themselves.
• Seek meaning and beauty.
• Make a difference.
WHAT IS OUR REAL JOB?

• Help people achieve greatness in their lives.

• Raising money is a by-product of what we do, if we do our job well.
Build strong relationships before you need to Ask!
Family/Friends/Colleagues
Coin in the relationship bank.
WHY DO PEOPLE GIVE?

• **SAVE** lives/**CHANGE** lives
  - Healthcare - **SAVE**
  - Disaster Response - **SAVE**
  - Education – **CHANGE**
  - Opera - **CHANGE**
ASKING IS AN INVITATION

- “Come to dinner”
- Participate
- Make a difference
- Reaffirm their values
- Achieve Greatness
We can’t risk making our donors feel pressured. **JOB #1 = Honor Relationships.**
PERMISSION TO SAY NO

• Traditional sales approach – Features, Benefits, Overcome Objections----Advesarial!

• We invite people to participate and some say yes, some say no.
PERMISSION TO SAY NO

• Salesperson vs Fundraiser.
• The truth is that making this gift may or may not be a good fit.
GREAT SOLICITORS

- Passionate
- Direct, non-threatening
- Genuine
- Curious
GREAT SOLICITORS

- Smart
- Caring
- The Golden Rule
STRATEGY - RAISE MORE $

Only 2 ways:

• Current Donors = Give More
• Non-Donors = Start Giving
WHOM SHOULD YOU ASK?

HAPPY LAND!

AFFINITY
WHEN SHOULD YOU ASK?

1

Barely Know

7-8

BFF

10
B E F O R E

• For what should you Ask?
  ➢ Restricted vs General?
  ➢ Their passions?
  ➢ What’s the need?
BEFORE

• For how much should you Ask?
  ➢ Previous Giving
  ➢ Capacity
  ➢ Project
  ➢ 5, 10, 20 times Annual Gift
B E F O R E

• Getting the Visit
  ➢ No visit. No $.
  ➢ Be persistent: call, email, write, text, seat visit
  ➢ Be direct. No surprises.
  ➢ Time/Agenda/Outcome
TIME/AGENDA/OUTCOME

- “We’ll visit for about 30 mins.”
- “I want to discuss your financial support of HGO and a specific initiative.”
- “And, if you are interested, we’ll talk about next steps. If not, I hope you feel comfortable enough to let me know.”
B E F O R E

• Where should you meet?
  This is a business meeting.
  ➢ Up to them.
  ➢ Quiet. Private.
  ➢ No restaurants!
B E F O R E

• Solicitation team
  ➢ CEO?
  ➢ Artistic Director?
  ➢ Board Chair?
  ➢ Board Member?
  ➢ Development Director?
B E F O R E

• Role of the Volunteer?
  ➢ Credibility
  ➢ Ask?
  ➢ Give Testimonial!
7 FACES – DONOR MOTIVATION

- Communitarian – 26%
- Devout – 21%
- Investor – 15%
- Socialite – 11%
7 FACES – DONOR MOTIVATION

- Altruist – 9%
- Repayer – 10%
- Dynast – 8%
THE ASK BEFORE THE ASK

• Provide an introduction.
• Write a thank you note.
• Review a proposal.
• Attend an event.
DURING

• Keep it simple.

• Breathe!

• Tell a story.
An Ask is a conversation, not a presentation. Ask questions!
Two ears. One mouth.

How long?
30 minutes.
It’s not about what you say, but how you say it.

Mirroring.

Fast vs Slow; High Energy vs Low Energy; Intense vs Laid Back
DURING
DURING

• Case for Support.
  ➢ Important. Change lives.
  ➢ Urgent. Why now?

• Case is bigger than your project, and organization.
START WITH WHY
DURING

• Opening. Quick catch-up.
• Time. Agenda. Outcome.
• Case. Start with Why.
• Questions. Their experience.
• Project. Specifics. Urgent.
**DURING**

- **Questions.** Check for interest.
- **Testimonial.** Endorsement.
- **Ask.** Invite.
- **Next steps.**
“Mary, I would like you to consider a gift of $50,000 to help bring this production to Houston for the first time.”
DURING

• Objections.
• Lots of “objections” are not objections, but simply statements of fact:
  “Wow, that’s a lot of money.”
DURING

• “I am not sure I can afford that.”
• “I am not sure.”
• They are simply thinking out loud.
During

- Most likely response: “I am going to need to think about this.”
- “What are you thinking about?”
- Schedule follow-up visit.
“I can’t give $50,000, but I can give $25,000.”

“Mary, I understand, what if you could pay the $50,000 over the next couple of years? Would that work for you?”
OTHER “OBJECTIONS”

• **Timing**: Kids/Grandkids college; Retirement; Health; Economy/Business

• “What are other Board Members giving?”
OTHER “OBJECTIONS”

- “Isn’t the Opera in financial trouble?”
- “Is this project really that important?”
- “The Symphony needs my help more.”
A F T E R

• Debrief and record details of visit—immediately.

• Send a thank you note—immediately restating the Case, project, $ amount of Ask, and follow-up date.
A F T E R

If **NO**, you must find out why.

- Amount?
- Organization?
- Project?
- Timing?
AFTER

If YES,

- Thank, Thank, Thank!
- Thank 7 times: In-person, call, write, letter, email, recognize at an event, etc.
- Out love your donors!!!
A F T E R

- **Draft Statement of Intent**
  - Amount of gift
  - Use of gift
  - Recognition
  - Payment schedule
AFTER

- Celebrate!
STEWARDSHIP

- Travel to see production
- Invite to rehearsals
- Time with creative team and artists
- Backstage experience
STEWARDSHIP

• Performance reviews
• Audience feedback
• Ticket sales
• Production rental
CONTACT INFORMATION

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