

From the Donor's Perspective: What Every Fundraiser Should Know

By Paul J. Meyer

Just because donors are the ones writing the checks does not mean they have everything in the world. You might be wondering what donors could possibly need, but when you see things from the donor's perspective, you could be surprised. To meet these needs is to succeed as a fundraiser — and that is the benefit of having the donor's perspective!

Among other things, donors need to believe in the cause they choose to support. They need to have answers, feedback, and understanding along the way. They want to play an important part in their cause, and they want assurance that their gifts are being used effectively and efficiently. And, of course, they need to be treated with kindness and respect — to be thanked and appreciated.

The most successful fundraisers are the ones who help donors fulfill their vision for what they feel God has directed them to do with their money. Donors are stewards, and your job as a fundraiser is to help them fulfill their stewardship role. To do this successfully it is invaluable to learn from donors themselves what they believe every fundraiser should know:

About relationships

- Think of your donors as a trust from God.
- Help your donors realize God's plan for their lives (not just for their money!).
- Help donors to find fulfillment in their giving.
- Cultivate relationships before seeking funds.
- Make only one request per year for funds.
- Learn the passion of the prospective donor.

About giving

- Realize that the general public is inundated with requests for funding.
- Once a donor has given a gift, do not immediately ask for another.
- Donors usually start out with a small donation and increase the amount as they get to know and trust the charity.
- Don't send a gift to try to make the donor feel obligated.
- Know that giving is often based on your level of commitment and enthusiasm.
- The tithe goes to the church — giving to a charity is not part of the tithe.
- Explain why the donor should give, and explain the beneficial results of giving (this does not mean the tax benefits!).

- Learn each donor's particular giving pattern.
- Know the donor's background and be able to relate that donor to your need.
- Never talk negatively about another charity.
- Recognize that donors have to be taught how to give, which is partly why you must support your own charity.

About questions that must be answered

- How much of the donor's donation goes directly to the cause?
- Do you, as a fundraiser, give to the charity you are working for?
- Where does the money go?
- What are the charity's goals, and are you on target?
- How will giving benefit the donor?

About being courteous

- No means no — it does not mean to go to the next page in the script.
- Know that your job as the fundraiser is to present the material. Period.
- Time is valuable — see if your donors have time to see you, and don't overstay your welcome.

About handling rejection

- Don't give up.
- Just because some people don't give doesn't mean they don't care about you or your cause.
- Don't take "no" personally.
- Not everyone can give to everything.
- Not everyone will start out with a giving attitude, but you may be sowing seeds that eventually lead to changed hearts.
- Maintain a positive, yet humble, outlook.
- Remember that you have never taken your donor's last dollar.

Armed with the donor's perspective, you can become a successful fundraiser!

Since 1960, New York Times best-selling author and one of the founders of the self-improvement industry, Paul J. Meyer, has helped people become successful fundraisers. To learn more invaluable tips on fundraising, order *Fundraising ... from the Donor's Perspective* today, available at www.pauljmeyer.com.

