Kinetic

BEST PRACTICES

2022

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Identification and Qualification

- During board meetings, regularly circulate and collect lists of potential supporters, asking board members to indicate the strength of their relationship (not strong, fair, strong, very strong) to determine whether potential supporters should be contacted and their giving capacity.

- It's always important to uncover new donors, but identify existing donors who could give at a higher level may have a greater impact. They care about the organization. Maybe it's time to find out how much they care.

- Spend time learning how to use your donor database to its full capacity. It can be a powerful tool when used beyond giving history. Use your database as an active tool to track prospective donor moves as well as giving history.

- Undertake an annual review of all your social media platforms to quantify who Likes, Shares and Comments positively about the organization and its mission. Make sure every one of these individuals is included in your database.

- The expression "big hat, no cattle" has an opposite corollary: Some people who look very unassuming may actually have great wealth. One of the markers for wealth is real estate ownership—information which can be found at the county tax department.

- After you've uncovered everything you can about a prospective donor on your own, if you need more information, hire a third party prospect research company to dig even deeper.

- Compiling all your information into one software program that allows you to run reports will lead to enhanced efficiency in qualifying prospects.




Cultivation

- Track the frequency and types of communication provided to donors and prospects to help better tailor follow-up conversations. You can reference information that has been shared with them to find out if they're reading what you're sending, and discern their interest in aspects of the nonprofit's mission.

- Ask prospects for a gift of their expertise before asking for a monetary gift. If the prospect is a writer, ask for input on an appeal letter. If the prospect is a musician, ask for input on music choices for an upcoming event.

- Continually seek excuses to call your best donors. Whether it be good news, inside track information, news or a book, etc.—take advantage of each opportunity to build trust.

- Offer ongoing opportunities for fundraising volunteers to learn, practice and become more comfortable with the solicitation role. Utilize scripts for volunteers as a basic guide to provide clarity about how the meeting is intended to flow, important points to make, when to speak and when to remain silent. In what will likely be a short meeting with the prospect and supporting staff, the volunteer solicitor's comfort level will make for an effective call.

- Create a positive experience for prospective and current donors by orchestrate visits carefully in advance. This well-organized visit will strengthen a positive impression of your organization.

- Almost prospective donors know something that will be useful to your organization. Don't just talk, ask them for their thoughts. Keep in mind the adage, "If you want advice, ask for money. If you want money, ask for advice."

- When potential donors prove difficult to contact or reticent to respond, seek to involve them in other activities such as special events, tours, or any activity that may be of interest.

Solicitation

- Bring a volunteer or staff member along to the solicitation. If appropriate, ask an individual or couple who has given a similar amount to participate. They can say, "We would like you to consider joining us in making a gift of $X ..."

- When the time is right, board members often are the most desired person to solicit their peers, so appropriate time and attention should be given to training and supporting them in being effective.

- People love their own stories and words. Weave a story they 've told you or something they've said into the solicitation meeting to remind them why you are asking them, in particular.

- Anticipate the questions you will be asked, and come ready with the answers.

- Don't talk past the money. Make the ask, stop talking, listen and note the prospect's reaction and response.

- Assume that prospective donors want to give to the organization. Your assumptions will positively or negatively affect your posture, tone of voice, word choice, etc. Your outlook always impacts your outcomes.

Appreciation

- Have a recipient of the services make personal calls to thank donors for their gifts. Tie the appreciation to the mission of the organization.

- Enlist your most creative staff, volunteers or board members to come up with creative expressions of appreciation like a video thank you, t-shirts, posters, etc. It doesn't have to be an expensive gift, if it screams, "We know you, we love you, and we appreciate you!"

- At higher levels of giving, make donor appreciation strategies as unique as the cultivation and solicitation strategies.

- A donor thank you should give the donor relevant information about their gift and connect them to your mission.

- Writing a thank you letter shouldn't be a check off your to do list. It should be a meaningful opportunity to appreciate the donor and the impact the gift will have on those you sere. Before you write, take a breath and don't just knock out a quick letter: truly appreciate.

Send your BEST PRACTICES
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