



BlackBallotPower

HOW TO ASK

The most cost-effective donation is sitting down with someone and asking him or her for a contribution.

1. Getting started...

- ◆ Write a letter in advance requesting a meeting - or phone and request a meeting, whatever is more comfortable.
- ◆ If you write a letter, follow up with a phone call to set up the meeting.
- ◆ Be direct, say you want the meeting to talk about a donation.

2. Introducing yourself...

- ◆ Explain who you are and why you are meeting with them.
- ◆ It is okay to be honest and to say you are not a professional and you feel a bit awkward or are inexperienced.
- ◆ If they are past donors, thank them for their past support.

3. Why are you here....

- ◆ Be direct, tell them you will be asking them for a donation, but you want to talk to them about the organization and its plans first.
- ◆ If you are also looking for volunteers or board members, mention this as well.

4. Talk about the organization....

- ◆ What you do, how you do it, who you serve, how you are special.
- ◆ Tell stories.
- ◆ Engage the listener.

5. What we need the money for....

- ◆ Describe where your funding comes from.
- ◆ Describe your new needs and explain them.
- ◆ Explain how they can help, and review gift opportunities.

6. THE ASK....

- ◆ Ask for a specific amount or range.
- ◆ Think big if your research has not helped you to assess the size gift.

7. Then what....

- ◆ BE QUIET - let the person think and react.

8. The response....

- ◆ YES!

Thank them, reiterate what the money will accomplish. If they said yes too quickly, you may have asked for too little. If you have the nerve, ask them to give more.

- ◆ NO

Be prepared for no, this is common. It may be a maybe. Ask questions and try to find out it. If a real no, don't feel hurt, the person may not have the capacity to give at that time.

Ask if you can return in 6 months or a year. Thank them and leave. Write a thank you note for their time.

◆ If NO is really MAYBE

Find out their concerns and respond, or have a staff person respond if you do not know the answer.
Find out when you can come back and talk - do they want someone else there? a spouse?
Tell them you respect their process for making a decision and ask how you can help.
Emphasize that you need their support and soon.

9. Then what....

- ◆ Thank them no matter what the outcome and leave.
- ◆ Write a (hand-written) thank you ASAP.
- ◆ Follow up quickly with whatever information needed to make a decision.
- ◆ Call to set up another meeting.

10. Why people say no...

- ◆ Bad timing - something you don't know about happened to them (got fired, had a fight with a family member, just gave away all their money for the month, etc.)
YOU can go back to them at a better time.
- ◆ Not familiar enough with your group.
BUILD a relationship, then you can go back and ask.
- ◆ You were too nervous to ask directly and clearly for a specific gift.
PRACTICE, stay in touch and return to ask.
- ◆ You were too nervous to listen and talked too much.
PRACTICE, stay in touch and return to ask.
- ◆ You were too nervous to ask questions and get them involved in the conversation.
PRACTICE, stay in touch and return to ask.
- ◆ Maybe you talked too much about the numbers and not enough about the specific people and benefits to them.
PRACTICE, stay in touch and return to ask.
- ◆ Maybe you were so upset when they said no, you were not able to be flexible and bargain with them. (what could you give?)
PRACTICE, stay in touch and return to ask.
- ◆ Maybe you asked too soon.
BUILD a relationship, practice, stay in touch and return to ask.
- ◆ You were so nervous you spoke, rather than remained silent, after asking for a specific gift.
PRACTICE, stay in touch and return to ask.

Major errors in personal solicitations

- Not asking for a specific gift.
- Not asking for a large enough gift.
- Not listening.
- Not asking questions.
- Not talking about benefits to people.
- Not being flexible about alternative ways to give (quarterly pledges, etc.)
- Not knowing about the prospect before the visit.
- Asking too soon.
- Settling for the first offer, even though it is lower than you expect.
- Not being quiet after the ASK.
- Not being prepared - practicing - for the solicitation.