



It's Not About You...It's About Them: Values Based Individual Donor Fundraising

Five Primary Values

- **Humanism** – a concern for social justice and equal opportunity, appreciation for diverse viewpoints and perspectives; an interest in learning about different cultures; a gratitude for one's good fortune and desire to “give back” to others; a commitment to alleviating others' suffering.
- **Distinction** – an interest in “great works that have stood the test of time” and artists with national or international reputations; a concern for sustaining the long-term future of key arts institutions; a desire to see “world class artistic programming” in their community
- **Localism** – a concern for one's community and for artists living in the community; an interest in awakening people's creativity and ensuring community members' access to cultural experiences; programs that serve children.
- **Bonding** – an interest in civic affairs and community improvement; active in expanding social networks and making new friends; strong family relationships and an active spiritual life; interest in arts programs that reflect one's heritage.
- **Progressivism** – an interest in being “on the leading edge of art and ideas;” individualists with iconoclastic leanings; valuing independent thought.

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Connection Points

Donors respond to these connecting points:

- A **personal relationship with the artist**, someone in the organization or the person who makes the ask.
- A **passion for the art form** or the art medium.
- An **emotional or intellectual interest in the subject matter** or issue being addressed by the project.
- An **involvement with the culture or community** touched by the project.

Other Factors Influencing Giving

- **Live conversation:** Talking directly with potential donors can increase their interest in an artist and his or her project. Direct conversations can also energize the person seeking the contribution. Having a face-to-face conversation with a potential donor that explores that person's interests and values can lead to meaningful and lasting connections as well as financial contributions.
- **Online giving**
- **Giving time as well as money:** Donors often get involved in benefit events, serve on boards or assist with events or programs of the groups they fund.
- **Contact pre-gift is more important than post-gift:** Donors prefer to get engaged with an organization personally before they make a gift; some need a lot of post- gift attention.
- **Write your thank you notes:** Most donors desire timely acknowledgment of their gifts, information about the impact of their contribution and regular notice of upcoming programs or invitations to special previews or openings. There are outliers at both ends of this spectrum – people who want a lot of information and some who prefer very limited post-gift contact. Asking a donor which kind of contact they prefer is an important part of getting to know them.

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Ways To Ask

- **The personal ask: Start with those you know.**

Artists or administrators develop a list of people they knew who might be interested in the project because of the subject matter, the art form, the artist(s) involved or simply because they were friends. They approach those people in person or over the phone with a request for a small contribution (usually less than \$250). They made it clear that this was a one-time gift. Starting with people already familiar with the artist or the organization is considered the most universally successful fundraising technique.

- **The “friend-raiser”: Get those you know to ask others they know.**

Events designed to build a friends network. These events were hosted by individuals, and occur either at that person’s home or at the arts organization. The organization works with a board member, donor or other associate – whoever was going to be the host of the event – to create the invitation list, building on the host’s network of friends and associates. A pitch was made at the event and people write checks on the spot.

- **The “church” ask: Use public pitches as well as private ones.**

Appeals for special funding for a project to audiences attending ongoing programs, and “pass the plate” activities at performances. In some cases, board members give a pitch from the stage before the performance or at intermission, occasionally offering to match the contributions collected at that time and place. These appeals frequently result in small anonymous contributions of cash; sometimes checks were later received through the mail.

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Interviewing Donors

- Donor Interviewing Event
- Interviewers/Teams
- Scheduling
- Payment
- Food
- Data on Values of Donors

Donor Interview Protocol

Personal Passions (10 minutes)

To begin, I have some general questions about how your priorities and passions.

1. *Outside of work, what activities, hobbies or interests are you passionate about? Anything else? [Capture the first few answers]*

2. *How do you express yourself creatively? What are your avenues of creative expression? Any others?*

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3. Are you involved with any groups, associations, or community organizations that indicate something important about who you are as a person? [Note: we are not talking yet about donations, just interests]

Probe: What's important to you about this group/cause/organization? [Look for the underlying value associations, aspirations, beliefs]

Probe: Are there any other causes in the community that you feel passionate about?

Core Values (10 minutes)

3. Think about all of your various activities, affiliations and causes that you support – all of these things that really define you as a person.

Are there any convictions, beliefs, or principles that you have as a person that connect your various activities or that explain why you do what you do?

Take as much time as you'd like. [repeat the question, if necessary]

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Mission and Donor Values Worksheet

1. My organization's mission:

2. What values are inherent in that mission:

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3. How can I talk about my organization from a value perspective?

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Planning for Program Fundraising:

Description of Program:

Program Values:	Possible Donors:	Connection Points:	Approach/Factors/Strategy:
1. Humanism	John A.		
	Sally and Bill B.		
	Amanda C.		
2. Localism			

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Program Fundraising Worksheet

Description of Program:

Program Values:	Possible Donors:	Connection Points:	Approach/Factors/Strategy:

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Program Fundraising Worksheet

Strategy #1

Strategy #2

Strategy #3