

FUNdraising Good Times: Making the ask – Part two

Written by Mel and Pearl Shaw
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Fundraising provides nonprofits with the money they need to deliver on their missions. When you ask others to join you in giving you become part of the nonprofit's success team.

In part one of this series we discussed how to prepare to solicit a gift. In this column we cover setting the appointment and what to say when asking.

Here's what we believe: asking for a gift should be done in person whenever possible. Make an appointment to talk with your colleague, family member or friend about giving. Let's use an example of asking Jesse for a gift. "Jesse, would you have time to meet with me about All In For Children? I am committed to working with them to raise money for their new programs and I want to share that information with you and explore how you would like to be involved." All you want from the conversation is a time to meet. If Jesse says, "Oh, we don't have to meet. Put me down for \$100," you can respond with, "I understand. Would you make some time for me just the same? You might want to give even more after we talk!" Keep the conversation light, but get that appointment.

As you prepare for your meeting, make sure you have brochures or online information you can share. Practice your presentation. You will want to talk about the organization's history, current activities and vision for the future. You will also want to cover what specifically you are raising money for and how the money will be used. Be prepared to communicate using emotion and facts. Talk about what the organization means to you and why you are involved.

During the solicitation be sure to **ask for a specific, reasonable and challenging gift**. Know the amount you will ask for. It shouldn't be too small an amount, nor too large. Remember to **talk about the gift**

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. If your gift is similar to what you would like your prospect to give, state the amount you gave and why.

Always remember to make the ask. Be very clear and specific when asking: "Jesse, I would like for you to make a gift to *All In For Children*. Would you be willing to contribute \$___?"

Pause after you ask for the gift. Do not rush to fill the silence. Give Jesse time to respond, for he will. If he says "yes", thank him and ask how he would like to make his gift. If he says "no", ask what would be the right amount at this time. If Jesse says this is not the right time, ask what would be a good time. Regardless of the outcome, thank him for his time. After the meeting, send a thank you note. You can do it! Your nonprofit depends on you.

Mel and Pearl Shaw are the authors of "Prerequisites for Fundraising Success." They provide fundraising counsel to nonprofits. Visit them at www.saadandshaw.com