


ANATOMY OF AN ASK

Getting Inside the Skill of Successfully Asking for Donations


Use Your Head

Be quick to process and use all the information you can. No two donors are exactly alike, so think through your memory bank to use anything you can to persuade them. Convince them that your cause is worth it.




Lend an Ear

One of the most effective fundraising techniques is shutting up. You're not just there to ask, you're there to listen. What are this potential donor's needs? What do they want to see happen with the money they donate? Listen. It'll help you create a stronger bond.




Say It Loud and Proud

Just say it like you mean it. What's your NPO's voice? Establish how you want your org to sound and then stick to it. Are you edgy? Maybe your org is conservative or reserved. Find what makes your nonprofit sing and then shout it from the rooftops.




Always Stay Connected

You are! Even if the donor turns you down, send them a thank you note. Ask if you can send them information in the future. Just because the answer is 'no' right now, it doesn't mean they'll continue to turn you down in the future. Be persistent but not pushy.




Use Your Backbone

You have a backbone and we know you can use it. Remember that you can control the outcome (for the most part). You're in the driver's seat. Give them the rundown of your org and stick to your principles. If they love you, great. If not, move on. You can do it.




Calm Your Nerves

Knees are shaking, your hands are clammy and your voice is wavering. Just relax. The worst that could happen is your donor will say 'no.' Plus, if they hear the uncertainty in your voice they'll be less likely to give. So take a few deep breaths and dive in. You've got nothing to fear.




Take a Rejection in Stride

Quite frankly, rejection sucks. And boy does the word 'no' hurt. But the thing about 'no' is that it'll only hurt for a little while. Don't take it personally. Get back in the saddle and make the next ask. Plus, you have ample opportunity to turn that 'no' into a 'yes' later if you stay connected (see the arm above).




Have a Firm Foundation

Without solid ground from the start, your nonprofit would crumble. So stand tall and stand firm to your nonprofit's roots. Don't try to be something your organization isn't just to nab a donor. Only seek people with a true connection to what your organization really is.




Give Your Story a Face

There's much more to your story than meets the eye. Make sure you're groomed on the outside AND inside. You can control how your NPO is perceived. Do that by coaching your volunteers and donors to become advocates for your org.




Don't Blow Hot Air

Enough with the hot air. Your potential donor can see right through it. Try something surprisingly refreshing with your pitch: the truth. Embrace your organization's flaws and tell them how you're getting better. Also flaunt the good things. Simply breathe.




Tug at Their Heartstrings

That's right. We're talking a full on tear-jerker or a triumphant story that'll make them cheer. Skip the boring numbers. Donors want to feel that personal connection.




Show Them How They Fit

Let your donors see where they fit into the grand scheme of things. Show them where previous donors' money was being used and let them know that they can specify how they want their donation to be used. Make them feel like they're a piece that fits.



Assure Protection

Like your ribs protect your lungs, donors want to know that you'll be there to make sure their donation reaches you successfully. Provide secure payment options and make sure that your NPO's documentation is up to date. Make the donor feel secure when they donate.



Have a Leg Up

You wouldn't go into an interview without preparing first. And you shouldn't make an ask without knowing everything you can about the potential donor. Age? Giving tendencies? Other interests? Get a leg up.

