

“Friend Raising” – Building a sustainable donor base for your
ministry that focuses on relationships first.

Christian Camp and Conference Center Association
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Description: Loving those who love your ministry is crucial to your success in the fundraising arena. Communicating to them in such a way that they know they are valued, and that their objectives are being met through your work, is both science and art. Principles, practical advice and fresh ideas work together in this seminar.

I. The Context

Drucker says something like, “The primary focus of an organization during tumultuous times is to ensure its future, its survival.” (total paraphrase)

We are pursuing our missions and seeking to fund them during the greatest economic crisis in our lifetimes, not only for our nation but globally.

What are you experiencing? What are you hearing about recovery?

II. A New Approach to this Topic

Strategies, systems, intentional planning, data-driven decision making, crystal clear mission/vision/values are all still critical.

But today we’re going to look at the softer side of donor relationships.

III. The Marriage Analogy

Flirt – Date – Engagement – Vows – Building a life together
Win – Keep – Lift

The Principle of Entropy

When a relationship is broken due to the erosion of intimacy or attentiveness, you restore it. You don’t just let it lapse, but you work to regain lost ground and move forward if the relationship is truly meaningful to you.

IV. How do we build any relationship?

I’ve always been taught that donors can be known by their generation ... boomers, busters, x-ers, millennials, traditionalists, etc. all have characteristics that inform you about how they will be motivated to give, how they want to be treated, etc. True, but...

I’ve also always been taught that businessmen and grandparents and widows and moms and foundation officers have common traits that inform you about when to visit them,

what your presentation should look like, how to make the appointment, what they will give to, etc. Also true, but...

If our deepest human need is to be known, and to know others, then I don't want to be known as I fit those categories, but for how I am a distinct and unique individual influenced by all of this and more. I want you to know ME.

Some ideas:

A. The Love Languages

This is the amazing concept that we need to show love to others, or appreciate them, in such a way that THEY experience our love, or our gratitude. This may have little or no resemblance to the way that we experience love or gratitude ourselves.

1. Time
2. Words of Encouragement
3. Acts of Service
4. Gifts
5. Physical Touch

What might it look like if we KNEW that a beloved donor had one of these love languages?

How might it change how we thank them?

How might it change how we communicate with them?

B. Learning Styles

This is the well developed body of knowledge that people learn and process differently. If you use the right medium and even carefully choose your words to communicate with a person in their primary learning style, you will immensely enhance the effectiveness of your interaction.

1. Auditory
2. Visual
3. Kinesthetic/Tactile
4. Multi-sensory

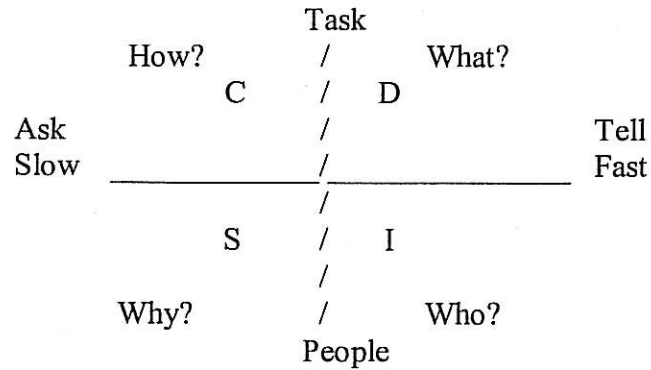
What might it look like if we KNEW that a beloved donor had one of these as their primary learning style?

How might it change how we thank them?

How might it change how we communicate with them?

C. Personality Profiles

Again, a universally understood tool that we all use for developing young leaders, maximizing the effectiveness of our teams, resolving conflict, even counseling couples and families. If you know a person's profile and are intentional about responding to it, you are deliberate about every interaction with that person.



The DISC personality test is only one simple way to understand the basics of a person's personality, but it is a good example for this discussion.

How would it impact our interaction with a donor if we knew that they were a "S", i.e. people oriented rather than task, slow in pace, a person who likes to be asked rather than told, and who's primary question is 'why'??

Think this through for each learning style.

How might it change how we thank them?

How might it change how we present a giving opportunity?

D. What if we knew all of this about a donor? Pretend for a moment that you had a beloved donor who you know is a Driver, a visual learner, who's love language is time?

Are we having fun yet?

E. The Other Essentials

1. Medium: What are an individual's preferences about use of print versus digital media? In our experience, you can't make assumptions based on generation. How do you pick up the cues to make sure you are doing what is right for the individual?

2. Who is the decision maker? Who writes the check? When does a couple like to be seen as a couple versus and individual? When must you bring your spouse (if you have one?)

3. What else do they care about BESIDES your ministry?

4. Other?

V. When a relationship is strained how do we behave?

When a relationship is strained either party may feel awkward.

When that happens our tendency is to withdraw.

This is the wrong thing to do.

The current scenario with our major donors.

Our response cannot be to overanalyze, become paralyzed, recoil, procrastinate.

We need to press in to these relationships with the same degree of diligence that we always have had ... no more, no less.

ASK with genuine care and affection.

Do not let them HIDE.

A note or phone call to reinforce that the relationship means more to you than money will relieve the awkwardness of expectation.

VI. My Challenge to You for 2010

A. Set a number of donors that you will profile with some of the individual characteristics above so that you can really get to KNOW them in a meaningful way. 20, 40, 100, 200 ... the number is less important than that you have a goal that you will commit to reach.

B. Create a system ... a form, database, index card file, something! where you will document and keep this information and make it available to others on your staff who interact with these beloved friends.

C. Utilize your staff, and your board if appropriate in your situation, to take responsibility for 3 to 5 donor relationships, and have them get to KNOW those people using the above system.

VII. If you love, really love, your donors, you will go out of your way to KNOW them, and you will share your life with them, too. Your relationships will become real and deep, your appeals and communication will be effective, your appreciation will be received and acknowledged. And it will be a beautiful thing.

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