



## Securing Major Gifts:

### A Realistic Goal or a Fantasy?



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National Housing Endowment

**Rick LaRue**, Development Director  
Solar Electric Light Fund

Association Foundation Group  
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## Outline

- Introduction – Donor Motivations
- The Baseline – the Association Environment, the Non-Campaign Campaign, the Major Donor Gift Club
- Major Gift Requests – Check List, The Ask, The Meeting, Overcoming Objections, The Close – Do's and Don'ts

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## Why People Give



- They are asked by someone they respect in person
- Sense of belonging – respect the other leaders and donors – want to be part of the effort
- Emotional / not Rational
- Relevant/Important to them (already care about mission)
- Giving Back/ Recognition – posterity
- Tax Incentives
- Consider themselves leaders/givers

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## The Donor's Motivations

- Personalization
- Cultural Differences
- Access to emotional relationship with Organization
- Recognition Opportunities
  - Permanent Display
  - Reports/Articles/Press Releases
  - Address Peers
- Perks
- Chance to "feel the mission"
- Seeing others recognized is a major marketing tool!



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## Why People Don't Give

- Not asked
- Mission isn't emotionally relevant
- No clear mission
- Will their gift really make a difference?
- Not asked by right person – or right people aren't donors
- Didn't do your homework
- No cultivation



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## The Association Environment: Benefits and Taking Advantage

- WHAT WE DO NOT (or may not) HAVE
  - 1 Burning Issue
  - 2 Traditional/competitive Appeal
  - 3 Stand-alone compelling value

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## The Association Environment (cont'd)

### WHAT WE DO HAVE

- 1 People with common interests meeting regularly
- 2 Unique social/cultural relationships
- 3 Time – the relationships are for their careers, if not lifetimes
- 4 Easily identified prospect pools
- 5 "Give Back" Appeal

= USEFUL, POSITIVE, ENVIRONMENT FOR NUTURING PHILANTHROPY

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## The Association Environment (cont'd)

### WHAT WE CAN CREATE

- 1 A place where major donors are treated differently
- 2 A place for senior or ambitious members to congregate and be recognized
- 3 A place where people can step forward and give back to their profession
- 4 A more significant philanthropic presence within the organization
- 5 Stronger and Deeper Connections

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## The Major Donor Gift Club: The Non-Campaign Campaign

- A focused fundraising effort without the hurdles of a formal capital campaign
- A safe "Quiet Phase" campaign
- Can be used independently of, before, during, or after capital campaigns

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**Creating the Gift Club:  
What you need**

- Willingness to have an elite, self-selected constituency within the association's "leadership"
- Willingness to offer this club special, exclusive benefits – to serve them
- Sense of the Culture
- Volunteers – to start, to lead, to continue

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**Creating the Gift Club:  
What you need (cont'd)**

- Name for the donors
- Agreed upon Minimum Gift Level to Join – still a Leadership Level Gift
  1. pay at once or over a period of years?
  2. count prior gifts (annual or capital)?
- Purpose – where does the money go (the Case)
- You – the development professional

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**Club Recognition and Benefits**

- Reserved Tables/Seats at General Session Events
- The Club's own events – at the Association Meetings (e.g. reception with keynote speakers)
- Options: pins/ribbons, being thanked on stage, financial incentives (?), awards in the club's name, separate events

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## Recruiting Club Members

- Not in lieu of appointment work (next)
- But one-on-one, peer-to-peer is possible
  - Makes it easy for solicitors
  - The Association Culture
- Screening Sessions & Prospect Lists
  - Makes it easy/fun for your volunteers
- Goals: Numbers and Timing

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## The Major Gift Campaign A checklist – are you ready?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Do you have any major givers / volunteers?</li> <li>■ Do you have a clear mission?</li> <li>■ Know the people to ask?</li> <li>■ Know how to get an appointment</li> <li>■ What role you should play (coach)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Understand a major gifts table (use consultant if necessary)</li> <li>■ Get your lead gift first</li> <li>■ Prepare a proposal and PR materials</li> <li>■ Understand the basics of planned giving</li> <li>■ Prepare in advance of each call (might use 3<sup>rd</sup> party research)</li> </ul> |
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## The Major Gift Campaign A checklist – are you ready? (continued)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Do research on the donor! What are the hot buttons?</li> <li>■ Don't need a big budget for major gifts</li> <li>■ Do you have the right leadership opportunities, gift levels, association support</li> <li>■ Leaders lead – major gifts will define your success/failure</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Understand that the foundation CEO/Development Director are "PPP"s!</li> <li>■ Understand that the Foundation CEO/Director enables the Board to govern, manages the operations, serves a external relations person and makes sure policies are put into practice – they also think both short and long term</li> <li>■ The campaign is part of the associations strategic plan</li> </ul> |
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## [ The ASK ]



- Identification / Research / Hot Buttons
  - Prospect with personal involvement / obligations / givers / sense of community
- Pick the correct partner
- Timing is a factor
- Set the "reach" asking figure
  - Realistic but challenging
- Appointment!
- Strategies - objectives for the meeting

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## [ The Meeting ]

- Patience, Listen, Courage
- Enthusiasm – sharing the hot buttons
- Persistence
- Investment – not charity
- Keep Conversation on Track
- Put figure out fairly early



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## [ The Meeting (continued) ]

- Address giving methods/options
- Why ask me? Rationale for the gift
- Step back and assess reaction
- Be prepared to answer questions, if you don't know the answer admit it and get back to them.
- Wait them out!
- Decide on follow-up




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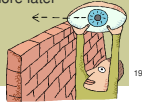
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## Overcoming Objections/ Delay Tactics

- I already give my membership and money to the PAC
- Why do we even need a Foundation anyway?
- I need to give locally – to my community as opposed to a national organization
- I'd rather give where I can designate exactly where my money goes
- I'm not happy with the CEO and incoming President of the Association
- I haven't heard much about what your group has done
- I spend all my money to expand my business. I'll worry about the foundation when I'm closer to retirement age
- Why doesn't the Association fully fund and donate all the necessary money to the foundation?
- I'll give you a token gift now and think about more later



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## Closing the Major Gift – The Do's

- Listen! Stop Talking – look and listen for clues
- Stress points of agreement
- Why is it important for YOU to give
- Involve family – the future
- Underscore emotions
- Don't sell! It's an investment
- Follow up



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## Closing the Major Gift – The Don'ts

- Don't Give Up
- Don't Be Defensive or Argumentative
- Don't Be Apologetic
- Don't make promises you can't keep
- Don't oversell
- Don't confuse with too much info
- Don't fail to suggest a closing action
- Don't be overjoyed when you get your commitment
- Try not to leave a Pledge Card
- Don't talk after you have asked for a particular amount - Remain silent
- Don't talk to much – Listen!

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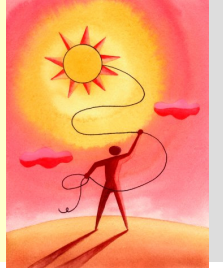
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## Best Experiences

- Closing the Gift
- After the “Campaign” is done



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## Presenter Contacts

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