Listening the Gift & Asking Strategic Questions

Clark Vandeventer - MajorGiftsFundraiser.com
Listening the Gift

Rule 75-25
But what is this?

Rule 85-15
What happens when your donors talk?

They like you.

People like people who let them talk! We all like being listened to.
What happens when your donors talk?

They consider you.

Most of the people we’re calling on won’t really hear us out, they won’t really take a serious look at our organization and our case until they feel like they have been heard; until they are convinced that we have listened to them.
What happens when your donors talk?

Rapport is built.

You build trust. This rapport and this trust will come in handy later as it will alleviate some of the tension when the time comes to ask for a gift.
It’s all about the relationship

Donors can’t really know if what you are saying is true, so they will make their judgement based on the relationship.
“When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen.”

-Ernest Hemingway
What happens when we don’t listen?

- You don’t allow the prospect to gain ownership.
- You dominate the conversation instead of guiding it.
What happens when we don’t listen?

- You don’t give yourself opportunity to think ahead.
- You don’t learn anything.
- You’re not uncovering giving clues.
What happens when we don’t listen?

- You provide more opportunity for you to say something the donor disagrees with!
- You put the spotlight on yourself instead of your donor.
What happens when we don’t listen?

You miss out on the reality that your donor is more likely to “buy” when they’re talking than when you’re talking.
Your pitch doesn’t matter.

A less beautifully articulated mission, articulated by your donor, is more powerful and has a more lasting impact than a magnificently beautifully articulated pitch by you.
2 Types of Questions to get them talking

1. Questions that get them articulating your mission in their words.

2. Questions that get them talking about their goals, values, other philanthropic interests. Questions that reveal their heart.
While they talk, you listen.
Crafting Message based on Listener Type

People Oriented

Action Oriented

Content Oriented

Time Oriented
Listener Type Clues

**People Oriented**
- Personal pictures
- Personal objects
- Some clutter
- Holds eye contact
- Varies vocal inflection
- Smiles and nods

**Action Oriented**
- Desk Organizers
- Certificates on wall
- Organized bookshelves
- Clean Desk
- Brisk Handshake
- Speaks at more rapid pace
- Fingertapping, etc.

**Content Oriented**
- Neat stacks on desk
- Research and reference books
- Multiple computer monitors
- Serious facial expressions
- Challenging or combative vocal tone
- Looks up frequently

**Time Oriented**
- Visible Clocks
- Looks at watch frequently
- Has assistant give time warnings
- Alerts and reminders dinging
- Impatient facial expressions
Listen Up

1. Read *Listen Up* by Larry Barker & Kittie Watson
2. Take the Listener Preference Profile Test, available for download with this course.
Speak in the same language as your donors

“I am a numbers guy...”
Asking Strategic Questions

Leveling-up as a fundraiser.
What happens when you ask professional fundraising questions?

No ambiguity
Your donors understand what your job is.

Subtle Cue
Sophisticated givers have heard these questions before.
Questions about mission.

1. Of all the organizations you could support, why do you support us?
2. Why is our organization so important to you?
3. When you tell other people about our organization, what do you say?
4. What do you think we stand for? How would you put it?
5. What are the values you’d say our organization exemplifies?
Questions about giving

1. I’m sure your mailbox is full of solicitations. How do you sort through them all?
2. What other organizations do you support?
3. Has anyone from “XYZ Non-Profit” ever been to visit you?
4. Of all the organizations you support, where would you say we rank?
5. Did your parents talk with you about organizations they supported? Do you talk with your kids about your giving?
Questions that reveal the heart.

1. Of all the gifts you’ve ever given, which one has given you the most joy?
2. If you were to consider a gift above and beyond anything you’ve given before, what would you want to accomplish?
3. How does our mission dovetail with your own personal mission?
4. Do you have any guiding principles that govern your philanthropic decisions?
5. What would it take for you to view our organization in the same light that you view [Insert Organization Donor is giving to at a much higher level]?
Asking Strategic Questions

1. Begin asking them immediately.

2. Get my list with all of my favorite Strategic Questions.
Getting the most out of every meeting.

1. You have an important mission and take your job seriously. Your donor should sense this. Make sure your meetings have a purpose.

2. Script your meetings. Think about what questions you want to ask and the logical order to your questions.

3. Before each meeting, determine your Best Possible and Minimum Acceptable Outcomes.
I guarantee your success.

Hold me accountable on this guarantee.

Email me at clark@majorgiftsfundraiser.com