Mastering Major Gift Solicitation
Barry Rosenberg, Professor of Practice
I Love Fundraising

• 37 Years executive experience
• Solicited gifts from $5.00 - $10 million
• Raised hundreds of millions
• Conducted over 150 individual asks each year
Fundraising… Ick!

- Dirty, unsavory, coercive
- Discomfort with money
- Stereotypes of wealthy
- Attitudes hurt fundraising results
A New Mental Model

- Fundraising meets needs
- Advances social justice
- Builds community
- Strengthens democracy & volunteerism
- Empowers the donor
- Promotes physical & mental well-being

“He who causes others to do good, is greater than the doer.”
What is a Major Gift?

- 80 – 90% of philanthropy from individuals
- Foundation of development strategy
- 80-20 rule
- Distinguish from annual appeal donors
Giving over the life course
Fundraising Cycle

Prospect Identification

Prospect Research

Strategy Development

Cultivation

Solicitation

Negotiation/ Close

Ongoing Stewardship

Ongoing Research/ Update

Performed by Prospect Research Function (Best Prospects Consulting Expertise)

Performed by Major Gifts Function
Identifying & Qualifying Prospects

• Development is a marketing function
  – Matching donor needs & interests with organizational ability
• LAI – Linkage, Ability, Interest
• Start where the prospect is!
Research & Strategy

• Staff functions
• Strategy – Who, what, when, where, how much?
• Understand the prospect
  – Style of giving
  – Specific interests in your organization
  – Individual, couple, family, business, foundation, matching etc.

• DO YOUR HOMEWORK!
Donor Cultivation & Stewardship

• Cultivation
  – Build relationship of trust
  – Deepen understanding of the prospect
  – Identify hot buttons, turn offs

• Stewardship
  – Continue cultivation & relationship building
  – Deepen commitment & broaden participation
  – Thank you, recognition, ongoing outreach, involvement

• People give to people!
Mr. & Mrs. C

- Retired, early 70’s
- Second generation of family business
- Jewishly identified, politically liberal, social justice causes
- Major donors - flat
- Not active at Federation

- Prognosis: continued giving with gradual reduction
Mr. & Mrs. C - Cultivation & Stewardship

• Socialized at mutual friend’s home
• Took over solicitation
• Insisted on annual appointment
• Gradual increase of 30%
• Arranged private tour to Israel
• Introduced ask for planned gift / endowment
• No “wow” yet
• New project relates to their former business
Wow!

$250,000
Cultivation & Stewardship

- Education, advocacy roles
- Build relationship & trust
- Active listening
- Patience & gentle movement
- Meet their needs
- Broker role: match organization & donor needs
- Keep the door open
- Leave them smiling
- Long-term process
The Essential Social Work Skills

“The social work side of fund raising is where all the skill is. Listening between the words, reading between the lines, recognizing patterns in conversation, sensing the moment to ask a provocative question, asking permission to broaden the range of a relationship — these are the social work skills that are essential to fund raising success.”

- Paul Jolly, President of JumpStart Growth
A Culture of Philanthropy

“Most people in the organization (across positions) act as ambassadors and engage in relationship building. Everyone promotes philanthropy and can articulate a case for giving. Fund development is viewed and valued as a mission-aligned program of the organization. Organizational systems are established to support donors. The executive director is committed and personally involved in fundraising.”

– Kay Sprinkel Grace
Applications to Current Crisis

• Lean-in to development
  – Many can & want to give
  – Be sensitive to major donors’ situation
  – What can you do for them?

• Maintain contact – continue cultivation & stewardship
  – Potential to lose loyal donors
  – Prepare for post crisis recovery

• Emergency / Special Gifts
  – Opportunities to find new donors
  – Opportunities with prospects that previously declined