

# Improve Donor Conversations

Grow relationships. Pursue vision.

## Do This.

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### **Get to know the donor.**

Ask about their story. Learn about them, their work, their family, their passions, and the reasons they give. Invest in conversations beyond your cause.

### **Listen to what they say.**

Engage with them to understand, rather than just waiting for your turn to talk. Do you hear how God is moving in their life? What needs do they have to which you can minister? How can you serve them?

### **Share your why.**

Introduce people to your passion for this work. Is there a story that shaped you? What makes this work meaningful to you? Give people a sense of the problem that exists and your vision and impact to solve it. Share your track record and key statistics.

### **Tell them a story of impact.**

There is power in the story of one. Consider the key stories in your organization and highlight the impact that was achieved in a specific situation. Always relate a single story to a broader truth about your work.

## Don't Do This.

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### **Talk too much.**

It is easy to dive right into talking about what you do. Slow down, simplify, and start with the goal of listening. Connect with their heart.

### **Treat donors like ATMs.**

Instead of jumping immediately to a financial ask, invest in relationship. If you are only looking to get a donation, you will miss the valuable fruit of a genuine relationship.

### **Skip planning.**

By ignoring preparations for meetings and researching your donors, you may miss valuable insights into their current activities and passions. Show up prepared and make sure to take notes in your conversation for areas you need to follow up.

### **Hide challenges.**

Lack of transparency is one of the easiest ways to lose a major donor opportunity. Be authentic about key challenges you have faced and explain key learnings and adjustments, rather than shying away.

## The Final Step

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### **Do not avoid the ask.**

Ask for support. It might seem like an obvious step, but we tend to hesitate. Donors know you are going to ask, so do it. Make your request and give the donor a clear step of action. Equip them with the information they need to act.

