



FUNDRAISING *forum*

Asking for Money

Never fear rejection from prospective donors again. Here are steps to a smooth solicitation call.

BY JIMMIE R. ALFORD

There are a few people around who actually enjoy asking for money. However, the vast majority of volunteers are uncomfortable when cultivating and soliciting. For most of us, the fear of rejection often delays what we know we have to do.

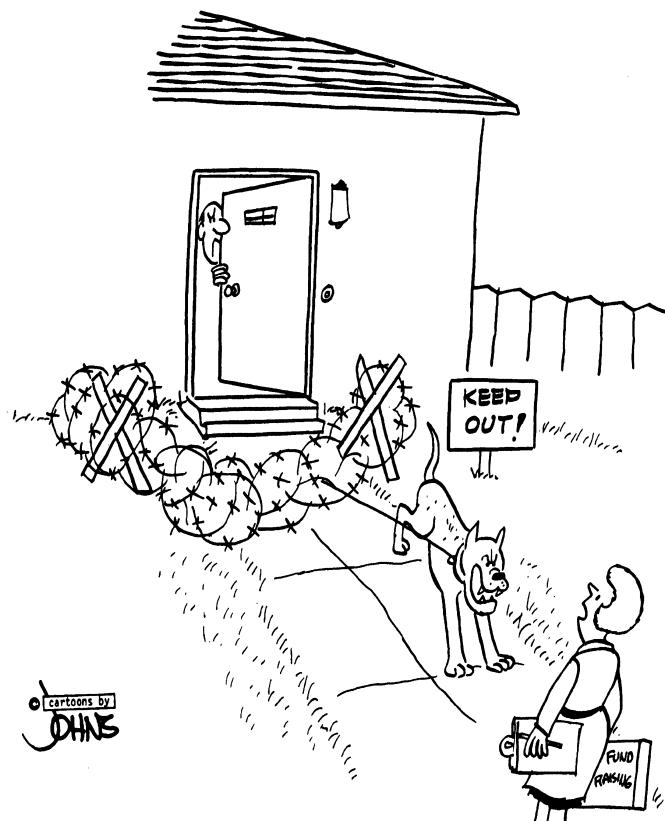
The fear of not being able to “get your foot in the door” can be daunting. But there are ways to manage prospects’ initial responses, such as these:

“Sorry, I’m too busy to meet with you.”

Provide plenty of options for dates, circumstances, and

Six Phases of a Solicitation Call

- 1 Opening:** Use your opening to involve and intrigue the prospect.
- 2 Questioning:** Ask questions to verify your prospect research, gain insights into your prospect’s motivations, and assure that you are being understood.
- 3 Listening:** Remember that listening is an active process and is the foundation of solicitation.
- 4 Presenting:** Use your presentation to involve the prospect and present the benefits of involvement.
- 5 Overcoming Objections:** Reassure the prospect. Never argue; be respectful. Find common ground, and be willing to compromise. Show the long-term value of investing in your organization, and dramatize the cost of not meeting your organization’s goal.
- 6 Closing:** Offer alternatives for giving. Ask for commitment of time as well as money. End with specific follow-up steps.



“I ASSUME, SIR, THAT YOU DON’T WISH TO CONTRIBUTE?”



Downlink Update

Jimmie Alford shares other insights in distance-education courses he teaches for the Learning Institute for Nonprofit Organizations. The Institute's Certificate of Excellence in Nonprofit Leadership and Management is based on the following curriculum, delivered to downlink sites across the United States, Canada, Mexico and South America:

- Strategic Planning: Charting Your Course**
- Resource Development: Unleashing Community Generosity**
- Board Development: Building Passion for Mission**
- Marketing Is Everyone's Business**
- Financial Empowerment: More Mission for Your Money**
- Social Entrepreneurship: Merging Mission and Money**
- Volunteer Involvement: Attracting and Keeping the Best**
- Strategic Alliances: Extending Your Reach**

The Learning Institute is a program of the Society for Nonprofit Organizations (6314 Odana Road, Suite 1, Madison, Wisconsin 53719). For more information, please call PBS Adult Learning Services at 800-257-2578.

The 13 Most Common Fundraising Mistakes

- 1** Doing everything but asking.
- 2** Thinking fundraising is for fundraisers only.
- 3** Plunging in without a clear statement of purpose and support from the board.
- 4** Disregarding prospect research and recordkeeping.
- 5** Forgetting to concentrate on individual donors.
- 6** Overlooking past donors.
- 7** Putting too much faith in brochures.
- 8** Failing to guide and cultivate donors.
- 9** Promising the world by Friday at the latest.
- 10** Refusing to recognize factors beyond your control.
- 11** Ignoring sophisticated tax savings incentives.
- 12** Keeping too many secrets.
- 13** Looking upon your work as a job rather than a cause.



CREATIVE FUNDRAISING IDEAS

Cow-Chip Bingo

Arrange for a well-fed cow to be delivered to a football field, and divide the field into one-square-yard plats. Sell each plat for \$20, and include a meal in the price. Then let the full bovine out to wander around the field. Sooner or later, the cow will drop its chips. The owner of the plat on which sits the splat is the winner of the grand prize. Charge admission for non-plat holders, sell refreshments, and give away prizes.

Fur Ball

A Washington, D.C., animal welfare group held a fur ball, wherein those wearing the furs were the dogs who accompanied their well-dressed humans for a gourmet dinner, plus games like bobbing for bones. For details on these and other creative fundraising ideas, see *The Business of Special Events* (see page 23).

Cooking Demo

Arrange to have chefs make appearances at local department stores (in the housewares department) or at restaurants during hours when the establishment is normally closed. People pay a fee (\$25 or so) to see a demonstration. Your charity might also get a percentage based on the amount of merchandise sold during the show. To boost income, have cookbook authors on hand to autograph books. The charity might get a percentage of book sales, too.

Fear of rejection often delays what we have to do.

meeting environments. Ask prospects to suggest times you could work into their schedules.

"I'm afraid I have other priorities."

Respond: "I'm delighted you're involved in things that are important to you. As someone who *is* involved with other causes, perhaps you could review our project and our approach and tell me how we could be more effective. We'd like to receive your advice." Subtly imply that, perhaps over time, your organization might find a place in the prospect's priorities.

"I don't get involved with charities."

This is a very rare reaction. Nearly all prospects will be open to such involvement.

"Why are you, in particular, wanting to see me?"

Identify something that you and the prospect have in common—similar interests, common friends—which in some way

tie into your organization. Suggest that you've been sent because you're committed to supporting your organization and you want to talk to like-minded peers who can help.

"You're basically after my money, aren't you?"

Respond: "We're really after your support. That can come in the form of your goodwill and friendship, your awareness of our cause, telling your friends about us, volunteering for our effort, as well as giving money." ■

Selected References

Alford, Jimmie R., "How Can You Find More Donors?", *Nonprofit World*, March-April 1999.

Bergan, Helen, *Where the Money Is*.

Krit, Robert *The Fund-Raising Handbook*.

Muehrcke, Jill, *Are You Sitting on a Gold Mine? Fundraising Self-Assessment Guide*.

Muehrcke, Jill, ed., *Fundraising & Resource Development, Leadership Series, Volumes I, II, and III*.

Myers, Walter R., "Why People Give: Pride of Association," *Nonprofit World*, May-June 1990.

These publications are available through the Society for Nonprofit Organizations' *Resource Center Catalog*, included in this issue, or contact the Society at 6314 Odana Road, Suite 1, Madison, Wisconsin 53719 (800-424-7367).

Jimmie R. Alford, CFRE, is president and CEO of the Alford Group, Inc. (7660 Gross Point Road, Skokie, Illinois 60077, 800-291-8913), a national consulting firm serving nonprofit organizations since 1979. He has spent over 35 years in the nonprofit sector, helping over 400 clients in all aspects of nonprofit management.

Nonprofit World • Volume 17, Number 3 May/June 1999
Published by the Society for Nonprofit Organizations
6314 Odana Road, Suite 1, Madison, WI 53719 • (800) 424-7367