



Time's Up! What Do You Really Want?

What's the best way to get what you want? Here's the magic formula.

If you're like most nonprofit professionals, you're uneasy about being direct and telling people, "Here's what I want." Think about it. There's a conspiracy that encourages people to bury their most important desires. Marketing trainers use consultative selling to draw people out. Social media consultants say "Selling directly is suicide." People are afraid to ask for what they want the most. They feel vulnerable about being honest and up-front. It petrifies even the best of us.

Yet when it comes to being successful in the nonprofit business, clearly asking for what you want wins the day.

John Baker, author of *The Asking Formula – Ask For What You Want And Get It* (theaskingformula.com), says the world would be a better place if marketers were up front and said, "I'm selling windows today; are you buying?"

Baker spent years studying human interactions and documenting the tactics used by those who got exactly what they were after. His discovery was earthshattering in its simplicity:

The most successful people ask for what they want. Then they give the three best reasons why it makes sense to say yes, and they back up each of those reasons with three facts.

Here's an example: You've worked for months with a potential donor, getting to know him and telling him all about your organization and the work you do. You know you've gotten your points across. But you're not sure if the donor is ready to commit to the amount of money you're hoping he'll give.

What's the next step? Go up to your prospect, and say, "What do we need to do to get your support? Would you please let me know specifically? You've seen how everything works and that your donation's going to make a real difference. I want to know what to do to move things forward. Let's plan to meet tomorrow morning at 10 a.m."

Then, when you meet, clearly state what you want and give three reasons why it's to the prospect's advantage to do so as soon as possible. Take time to brainstorm before you decide on the three reasons. Select each reason with care, and then back it up with three facts.

This strategy is powerful in interactions not only with donors but with vendors, staff, board members, and other stakeholders. You can use it in structuring direct-mail packages, personnel reviews,

“Give the three best reasons why it makes sense to say yes.”

and e-mail messages. It makes any conversation clearer, avoids misunderstandings, and earns points for being thoughtful.

Marketing and relationship-building are vital building blocks, but they can get in the way of finalizing the deal. They allow for procrastination. They can be a way for you to avoid risk. If you're probing your prospect's needs, you don't have to face the possibility of rejection.

Yes, it's important to take time to craft meaningful relationships. But don't forget to ask for what you want. 

More on Getting What You Want

Direct, honest communication is the key to getting what you really want. It's simple – but not always easy. These articles (www.NonprofitWorld.org/members) will help:

How Do Effective Nonprofit Leaders Communicate? (Vol. 13, No. 1)

Asking for Money (Vol. 17, No. 2)

How Jargon Undermines Communication (Vol. 27, No. 2)

Face to Face (Vol. 14, No. 1)

11 Communication Keys that Will Change the Way You Lead (Vol. 14, No. 2)

Turning the Direct Ask into Gold (Vol. 30, No. 1)

Cynicism Rx: Authentic Communication (Vol. 24, No. 6)

The Real Secret: Moving Beyond the Law of Attraction (Vol. 29, No. 4)

The Five A's of Influence (Vol. 29, No. 3)

How to Fix Communication Breakdowns (Vol. 29, No. 1)