



How Charities Persuade Donors to Give Big

There are six common motivators that prompt large donations, said the director of Bolder Giving in a webinar sponsored by The Chronicle of Philanthropy

BY MARLENE Y. SATTER, ADVISORONE

In a time of economic uncertainty when many nonprofits are seeing donations fall, one way to conquer a potential donor's concerns about the economy is to learn whether it is personal or national discomfort that causes their reluctance. Learning the source of discomfort could lead to a donor's realization that the gift should still be made.

So said Jason Franklin, executive director of Bolder Giving, an organization that encourages philanthropy. Franklin and Anika Rahman, president and CEO of the Ms. Foundation for Women, a nonprofit that raises the majority of its \$10 million annual budget from big gifts, took questions from attendees at a live Web discussion sponsored by The Chronicle of Philanthropy on how donors can be asked or even challenged to provide major gifts to philanthropic causes.

Citing a number of donors he's talked with, Franklin said that it was important to get more information about a refusal from a donor who cites the economy as a factor.

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Franklin also suggested the possibility that fundraisers “close enough to certain donors ... suggest that they engage their financial planners to see what is possible for their giving.”

Becoming involved in the process of helping a client engage in philanthropy can be rewarding for both advisor and client, particularly since the relationship could involve one or more of the six factors Franklin cited as being common motivators “that [prompt] people to ‘give big.’”

Those six factors, Franklin said, are:

1. when donors have a life-changing experience
2. when they feel confident that they have enough in assets to donate some portion of those assets
3. when they feel a particular connection to a cause, community or identity
4. when they have inspiring role models for philanthropy
5. when they're actually invited to make a big donation

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6. when they are given ongoing support for donating.

Clients who want to do more, or advisors who would like to help them get started or boost their level of giving, could also check out donor networks that can provide peer support.

Rahman also suggested that “the best way to increase giving from an existing major donor is to focus in on what they are interested in and making the best case for why increasing their giving will help them better achieve their goals.” Emotional connectivity, she added, is the key. ■