

Major Gifts

One-On-One Solicitation

A one-on-one solicitation for a large gift requires a fair amount of planning. Generally, it is best to begin by sending a letter that includes the case for giving and notification of an impending phone call to schedule an appointment. The letter should also note the previous amount contributed (if applicable), and the suggested size of the gift being sought. Including the amount of the suggested gift in this proposal lets the prospect know what to expect. Just as important, it gets everything out on the table for the solicitor. Many solicitors have a hard time asking for a suggested gift amount. In fact, they can be so uncomfortable with the thought of doing so, that their discomfiture hovers, like a black cloud, over the entire meeting. Obviously, this does not create an atmosphere conducive to making a good presentation. Putting the suggested gift size in the letter eliminates this worry and distraction for the solicitor.

My general recommendation that the amount of the desired gift should be indicated in letters and proposals, while effective in most cases, is not suitable in all instances, especially when the gift sought is extremely large and the relationship with the prospect is not close. In those situations, or whenever in doubt, just use the letter or proposal to provide campaign information and to make the case, and state your intent to discuss the matter further in person. Thus, your presentation of the suggested asking amount will occur later in the solicitation process.

Sometimes the amount of the contribution sought can be discreetly pointed out without being specifically mentioned by sending a list of the organization's premium "membership" information along with a letter in which it is suggested that the prospect consider joining the _____ Society at its certain dollar level. The enclosed documentation will clearly specify the amount you desire the prospect to see and consider.