


# The Top Ten Most Important Aspects of the Major Gifts Ask

## Resource 3.15



1. **Do not ask too early:** By the time you ask for the major gift, the donor should be anxious in the hopes they will be asked for the gift. They will be tired of all the meetings and all the reviews of the project and its plans. They will be ready to act! They should be excited about making happen what the gift will make possible. The average major gift requires 5-8 physical encounters between the case-representatives and the donor prior to the ask. Be sure that the donor is passionate about the case and wants to see it realized.
2. **Begin with the top donor prospects** and move downward in the “ask” ratings list so that peer-donors are asking peer or near-peer-donor prospects for gifts. Rarely is a person ever asked for a gift by a person whose own capacity makes them not able to give that-sized gift.
3. **Be sure that a suspect has been re-identified and re-classified as a prospect.** This means that the above-mentioned cultivation (see #1) has occurred, and a decision by the leadership team has assured that the right cultivation has occurred to move the donor’s status from suspect to prospect status.
4. If the donor is in any way infirm of body or mind, **be sure that the family is cultivated** and is as excited as you need the donor to be about the project and ask only in the physical presence of the family. The gift from an infirm donor must be a family decision.
5. **Be sure that the request is worthy of the donor’s passion** and the amount being asked. Be sure that you deserve the money being asked for by being sure that what is being made possible by this gift is essential to the planet and the Kingdom of God on it.
6. **Do the math to determine how many prospects (not suspects) you have.** Add up how many visits need to be made, how long is needed for the travel, visit, rating and follow-up. And then calculate how many prospects you need to realize the gifts, aware that some “no” answers will move prospects down the rating pyramid..
7. Make sure that the cultivation process has **matched the donor with the right request:** donors motivate what they give to based on their interests. No longer does the church tell people what to give and to what they should give it. Today, donors decide and the church responds.
8. **Do not worry about asking for too much.** If you have built the relationship, then you will have built the friendship of the donor and you will have been able to size up the amount appropriate to the donor’s capacity.

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9. **Make sure that the people who have been a part of the cultivation all along are involved in asking for the gift.** New, late additions may include top vision-makers. It is all about relationship.
  10. **If the request is being made by a diocese or Bishop of a parishioner,** be sure that the parish' clergy and leadership are aware of the cultivation process and have approved the request. In this situation the whole parish and diocese must be well and carefully cultivated. Go back to number one (above) – do not ask too early. Everyone must understand and be passionate about the worthiness of the mission before an ask can be made.



FEARLESS TIP: For other material on capital campaign management, see *Fearless Church Fundraising*, Pages 183-187.