

10 Power Questions That Lead to a Conversational Ask



Here's how to open up a Gift Conversation that makes your donor feel comfortable and engaged. These questions will help open their heart and prepare them to want to help.

They will feel heard and understood, so that you can bring up the idea of a gift. Your donor will not feel pitched or "presented" to, because you are asking for permission every step of the way.

1

Would you mind sharing what inspired your gift?

When you discover WHY your donor is giving, you can find out their Donor Story. Every donor has important personal reasons that they support your organization. When you discuss these, you can light the fire of their passion and enthusiasm for your cause.

2

I'd love to know your story.

Your donors probably have amazing stories to share about why they care. And they would probably love to tell you. But we rarely ask donors to share more about themselves and their interests. This question helps you find out just how interested and enthusiastic they are – or not.

3

And then what happened?

Your donors are enjoying sharing with you. And you are interested in finding out more about them. So, by all means, encourage them to continue. Remember, you honor your donors by listening to them. You are making a gift to your donors by holding the space for them to talk about themselves.

4

May I ask, what are your impressions of our organization?

Asking your donors their "impressions" helps you find out what they really think, and how they really feel about your nonprofit and your mission. When you find out what's on their minds, then you can move forward in building a trusting relationship. You'll be able to find out more about their interest in giving.

5

May I ask, what part of our work interests you most?

Never assume your donor's specific area of interest. Exactly what part of your work is your donor most passionate about? You never know until you ask. When you find out their interests, then you can help them learn more about their favorite areas. Many donors are smart people who enjoy learning. Help your donor have an enjoyable experience as you help them get more and more involved.



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6

I'd love to know how you became so generous.

This question helps you discover your donor's philanthropic priorities. You'll learn how they give and what areas they support. Where else are they involved? Who else may be influencing their giving decisions? They will tell you if you ask. Most donors are happy to share their philanthropic vision with you, and they appreciate being asked.

7

May I ask for your advice and input?

Ask donors for advice and input about fundraising strategy. You can ask: Would you mind brainstorming with me - who might be good donors to support this effort? How do you think we can fund this project for the community? Who do you think should be involved? When donors start offering advice and assistance, they start to feel like insiders. And, they become even more interested and bought in to your success.

8

Could you see yourself becoming more involved in our organization?

Never assume your donor's level of interest. This question helps you qualify your donor and find out how they might like to be engaged. Your donor will tell you what they are interested in and what they want to do - but only if you ASK them.

9

If you ever made a larger gift, have you thought about what you might like to accomplish?

When you have an engaged donor, you can ask this question outright. You are, in fact, a fundraiser. And your role is to "facilitate" your donor's interest in giving to your organization. They probably have a very clear notion of what they want to accomplish. You've been helping them learn more about their area of interest - they've probably been pondering this question all along.

10

Would you like to know more about how you could help?

This question opens the Gift Conversation. If they are ready to have this discussion, they'll let you know. Often a donor will say "yes" to this question. Share some suggestions at three different gift levels, then sit quietly as your donor considers it. Ask what else they need to know to make a decision. Soon you will have closed their gift - you'll have an enthusiastic donor and new funding for your mission!



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