

The Major Gifts Report

MONTHLY IDEAS TO UNLOCK YOUR MAJOR GIFTS POTENTIAL

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RISE TO THE OCCASION

Relationship Fundraising Unlocks Bigger Gifts

By Linda S. Garrison

Asking for a personally significant gift can make almost any fundraiser feel weak in the knees. But Mark Duncan, founder of The Fund Coach LLC, says it doesn't have to be that way. By using relationship fundraising, he promises you'll be empowered and raise more money than ever before.

"I'm the guy to come to before you go into a campaign, so you can flex and work the muscle to build relationships with high-capacity donors," Duncan says. "I bring EDs from small and mid-size organizations a big shop mentality to secure five figure-plus gifts."

Duncan has worked for large and small nonprofits since the late 1980s. In the early 1990s his first gig was at a camp and conference center. When his boss told him they were going to do a capital campaign, his question was, "What's that?" His boss explained. That was the moment Duncan realized he wanted to learn more.

"Fundraising is not about the dollars — it's what the dollars do for the people we serve. It's our job to be that conduit between the donor's capacity and the organization's need. I love working with people who are uncomfortable with raising money and help them get out of their own way. Much of that fear to ask is self-imposed," he says.

Duncan says everyone has a personal money story. It may come from how they were raised or taught to treat money. That is

that individual's issue — not the donor's.

"The donor wants to know the mission, how their dollars will be used, and wants to help," he says.

Duncan says another trick is to discern what language the donor speaks.

"People either talk from their head or their heart. Pay attention to how donors are motivated to make decisions. Do they need data? Then they're thinking with their head, their intellect," he says.

Duncan says his relationship fundraising method has six steps designed to move the relationship from transactional giving to genuine philanthropy.

"One of the first things you do is get a wealth analytics report on your entire database," he says, mentioning that he likes Windfall Data, a newer wealth screening solution. Starting with that information it's fairly easy to identify the best prospects. Duncan then coaches clients on the relationship fundraising method, including how to secure the first visit, how to do the first visit, how to finally make the ask and how to close the deal.

To get more tips, check out Duncan's free weekly video series called *Huddle Up* on his website. ♦

Source: Mark Duncan, CEO, The Fund Coach.
Email: mark@thefundcoach.com.
Website: <https://www.thefundcoach.com>