



Increasing Involvement of Major Donors

A study of affluent donors gives clues about raising funds.

BY TERRENCE FERNSLER

The Seven Faces of Philanthropy

By Russ Alan Prince and Karen Maru File.

Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, California. 219 pages. Hardcover.

The authors of *The Seven Faces of Philanthropy* interviewed 218 major donors. Each of those donors maintains \$1,000,000 or more in a discretionary investment advisory account and contributed \$50,000 or more to a single nonprofit within the two years before the study. The authors admit the people interviewed are significantly more affluent than those usually considered major donors.

Many organizations spend too much time and resources chasing wealthy people for major gifts and not enough time cultivating them. However, the findings in this book could easily apply to smaller donors, too, and certainly to cultivating them.

Prince and File start by explaining how they came to seven categories and the reason for segmenting donors. Their theory suggests segmenting donors by seven categories of psychographic information (motivations for giving) rather than by demographic information (statistics about people's behavior).

With one chapter devoted to each of the seven groups, they outline the survey results, using quotes to illustrate their findings. They show the differences in motivation and giving habits of each set of people. Then they show how each type of donor requires a different strategy when approached for gifts.

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To find out which segment your major donors are in, the authors suggest using conversations to find out their motivations for giving. There are four relevant life domains: family history, financial orientation, fundamental beliefs, and friends and associates. In conversing about family history, for example, you should be alert for two factors. If there is a strong tradition of giving in the family, and this is the most strongly noted issue, the donor is a "dynast." If a significant situational change is the most noted factor, the donor is a "repayer." The key here is asking about the prospect's interests, which is what a good development officer does anyway.

The most valuable information Prince and File give is that people will be more accepting of testimonials from others if the motivations for giving are the same. This fact makes it very important to learn the prospect's—and the solicitor's—motivations. You must still have somebody cultivate and ask prospective major donors for contributions, and it helps if the two people can communicate clearly.

The authors try to establish a system for the intuitiveness needed by an effective development officer. This method may improve some development efforts, but one gets the feeling that it won't work for all organizations. Even the authors make some qualifiers, noting that their segments do not work for 100% of major donors or for any one donor all of the time. So, development officers, you needn't fear that the seven-faces theory will make your talents obsolete. Your intuition and conversational adeptness are still essential parts of the job. ■

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