



## The Prospero Group e-Newsletter

December 2009

We're pleased to present the latest edition of News From The Prospero Group. We hope you find our message valuable and we encourage you to pass our e-newsletter along to friends and colleagues. In this issue, we continue our series on effective solicitation strategies by looking at how an old adage about fundraising offers guidance for our work today.

As always, we welcome your questions, comments and suggestions. Please feel free to contact us.

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## Asking for Advice, and Gaining Far More

There's a saying in the world of philanthropy: "If you ask for money, you'll get advice. But if you ask for advice, you'll get money." It sounds clever, but what does it really mean? And how can we use its good sense in our work supporting non-profit organizations? The key is in developing meaningful relationships with donors who become invested in the mission of the organization.

Imagine the following scenarios: In the first, a solicitor visits a major donor prospect and shares with her the organization's plans for a new center for abused children (or cardiac center, or independent school—you get the idea). The solicitor then asks for a gift. In the second, the solicitor is a trustee who knows the prospect personally. The trustee shares the organization's plans, then says, "We know you care about child abuse (or cardiac health, or education) as much as we do. Having seen our plans at this early stage, what do you think the impact is likely to be? I hope you are willing to participate in a working group to help us flesh these out more fully."

Which scenario is more likely to help the prospect feel personally invested and committed to the cause? Of course, we all recognize that it's the second scenario—if the organization follows through, forms the working group, and values the ideas that come from it. Many kinds of gatherings can be used to form these connections, such as visits to the organization, meetings with key leaders, volunteer opportunities, or social events—but it's critical to think of them as relationship builders and not solicitation opportunities.

### Why is asking for advice so effective? There are several reasons:

- The prospect feels valued by the organization, instead of as just a potential source of income
- Interaction with trustees and agency staff is energizing
- Seeing the organization's work in action, and being invited to give input, helps individuals develop a personal stake in the organization's work

Any kind of development effort, such as a capital campaign, an annual fund, or even grant seeking, depends in the long run on relationship building for success. When you seek advice from donors, your investment in those relationships will pay off both financially and in other, less tangible—but equally important—forms of support.

## About The Prospero Group

The Prospero Group, LLC, provides fundraising counsel that ensures lasting growth and change for non-profit organizations. We promote effective governance models and principled leadership to empower professionals and boards as the driving forces of philanthropy.

### Services:

#### Capital Campaign Planning and Oversight

- Organizational assessments
- Feasibility studies and benchmarking
- Campaign case development
- Pre-campaign planning
- Campaign oversight

#### Solicitation Training

#### Strategic Development Program Planning

- Development program assessments
- Fundraising strategic & annual planning
- Major & planned giving program design
- Grant funding
- Annual fund management and production
- Prospect profiling and wealth screening
- Evaluating and recommending fundraising technology
- Staff mentoring

#### Board Development

- Board evaluation & assessment
- Board governance education
- Philanthropic leadership training
- Board solicitation training

Learn more at [www.prosperogroup.com](http://www.prosperogroup.com)



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