

Best Practices for Donor Development

Cast the Vision. Prayerfully seek God’s vision for your school. Then learn to clearly communicate your vision and mission. This should include why and for what you are raising support. Know where the money will go and how this will impact students’ lives.

Lead with the Story. Before making an ask, you must first learn to tell the story. Consider and practice how you will paint a picture of God’s work in transforming lives through your school. Be prepared with two or three specific examples.

Share the Impact of this Gift. Be prepared with the key reasons the school is looking to establish this endowment. Clearly share where it will go. Explain what will happen because of it. Ultimately, you want to share the difference it will make when they give.

Identify Prospective Donors. Think about the people God has placed in your community, from parents, to grandparents to regional champions of Christian education. Consider their interests, dedication and capacity to align with your vision for the school.

Create a Donor Database. Build a donor list, identifying those with whom your organization desires to build a relationship. Organize a database and assign a specific person to steward each relationship.

Nurture Relationships. Regularly communicate and invest in face-to-face relationships with your donors and prospects. Share the vision for the school. Explain the next phases of fulfilling this vision and what it will take to achieve this as a community.

Arrange the Ideal Scenario. A key to asking for the gift is planning the most effective form of communication: One-to-one. The further you remove yourself from face-to-face, personal interaction, the less likely you are to obtain the response you hope for.

Ask with Precision. Identify a specific amount to ask for based on your current phase and need. Then, ask for this specifically. Many asks have turned into the lowest common denominator rather than the gift needed, due to the failure to ask for specific amount.

Allow God to Work. After asking for a gift, our natural tendency is to get nervous and to continue talking, which creates an “out” for the donor. Employ the “pregnant pause.” Remain silent so the donor can respond.

Create a deadline. Most donors will have determined how they will respond to your appeal by the time you leave. Suggest a deadline for them to get back to you. If you haven’t heard from them by then, politely phone to ask if they have had an opportunity to consider your request and how they feel led to give.

Contact us. Once you have raised support, connect with us. We will provide you with the assistance needed in creating a plan to resource your school now and for the future.

Visit [LCMSFoundation.org/Media-Resources/](https://www.lcmsfoundation.org/media-resources/) for more tools on raising support.