

Pastors Can Help the Wealthy Achieve Goals

Working with hundreds of families address the issues of philanthropy, I have seen what works. Pastors who understand the process can help families achieve their goals through your ministry.

Begin by understanding the potential donor's goals and aspirations. Frame your thoughts from the perspective of how donors can facilitate a "greater good." Then probe if there is something they are considering but have not yet done. Open a conversation to explore possibilities.

You are a conduit. Many people with resources don't have the time or skills required to make the positive impact they desire. Your ability to connect their resources with the outcome is essential. Don't be shy in helping people see how it can be done.

Ownership is important

In order to get big commitments, projects must become the works of the donors. They must feel ownership. If it is your project, they may give, but it will usually be at a lower level. Over time, the requested level of support can be increased. The process is formulaic and the successful understand each step needs to be experienced.

Formation takes time

Both spiritual and financial formation takes time. People who know how they want to make an impact were probably exposed to that idea at a much earlier time in their life. Play the long game and have a big vision. It may take three or four years for substantial commitments to be made.

Start small

Let contributors know their support is important and *start with small specific requests*. A modest, one-time contribution for a specific purpose opens the relationship. The key is to make it small and simple. Then keep in regular contact. Remind people that their generosity is creating the impact they want to make.

Facilitating generosity

People are hard wired to conform to certain social norms. Understanding these four key elements will empower you to help your donors accomplish their goals, help society, and model stewardship for their family.

- 1. Reciprocity** — when a gesture of kindness is offered the recipient is hard wired to reciprocate.
- 2. Commitment** — asking for any type of commitment — written, verbal, or even non-binding — establishes a mental foothold that leads to future, often larger, commitments.
- 3. Authority** — if a recognized authority supports the cause, so will others.
- 4. Consensus** — People are inclined to follow others. .

Consider these steps

- 1. Form an ad-hoc group** to compile a list of needed projects. Reach out to business leaders and others who are less involved. Ask for their ideas; support follows ideas..
- 2. Write a description of each project** with the impact and funding needed. Using pictures will make it tangible and emotions that get people to attempt great projects.
- 3. Announce and get the word out.** Use all media. *Reach out beyond your immediate circle* and enlist as many volunteers as you can find.
- 4. Raise awareness and engage.** Solicit feedback and share the results. People like to hear that others agree with their positions. Consensus is a powerful motivator.
- 5. Gain commitment.** Something as simple as a sign-up sheet can be a powerful motivator for support. Create ways for people to show support before asking for money.
- 6. Publicize successes.** Invite the local press to interview the council members on the various projects.
- 7. Have patience.** Great things take time. Anticipate obstacles. Donors who say no may be open later.

Just do it

- 1. Set goals** to meet face-to-face with the top potential donors in the coming year at their home, office, or a Starbucks. Ask their advice about the church. Take notes.
- 2. Summarize and share.** Share monthly a synopsis of what you heard. You may be amazed how powerful it is to know the leader listens. Engagement will follow.
- 3. Keep asking.** Remember, you are not cutting stones, you are building a cathedral.

This is written by Christopher F. Poch (christopherpoch@gmail.com), author of Managing Your Wealth: A Must-Read for Affluent Families.

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