

# The Power of Love in Major Gifts Development

## CASE STUDIES

### Case Study #1: George Altruist

You're the regional major gifts officer for a large, national organization comprised of local affiliates that provide services (e.g. food, clothing, shelter, utility and rental assistance, life skills and job training) for people in need. Your region is comprised of 15 local affiliates – each with its own CEO, program staff, Advisory Board, annual donors and unique mix of services. However, the regional office handles all fundraising appeals and activities.

For the past two years, George Altruist has responded to your organization's direct mail campaigns with \$10,000 checks, designated to XYZ Affiliate. He asked that his gifts be treated as anonymous. From what little you've been able to learn about him, George exemplifies the kind of person who makes major gifts to your organization. He wants to save the world. George believes that no one in America should go without basic food, clothing and shelter and that with a little "hand up" most people can rise above their challenges and live productive lives.

A self-made multi-millionaire who owns a local electrical supply company, George collects old clothing from his own closet and from his family and friends to share with XYZ Affiliate clients. And, he recently donated a slightly-used company van to help transport food from local grocers to the food bank.

George hides his wealth and prefers to give anonymously. The only thing he despises more than public recognition is being lavished with special attention. The last thing he wants is for you – or anyone else from the regional office – to spend the effort and travel costs necessary to visit him. If he wants to know how things are going, he'll drop in and visit with staff and clients at the XYZ Affiliate.

- What does George want from you?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What challenges do you face in trying to show love to George?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- How can you meaningfully connect George to your organization?

## Case Study #2: Ted Investor

You're one of three Major Gifts Officers for XYZ Foundation, which supports a regional network of seven hospitals. Your assignment is to identify, cultivate, solicit and steward major donors for two large hospitals in one major metropolitan area.

Your donor, Ted Investor, owns a large, regional chain of restaurants that specialize in deep dish pizza and gourmet bacon cheeseburgers. Being a big fan of Ted's restaurant chain, you recognized his name immediately on the hospital patient list and paid him a visit. You learned that Ted was quite impressed with the quality of care he received. So, you shared with him some information about the XYZ Foundation and its network of hospitals.

As soon as he returned home, Ted visited Guidestar and Charity Navigator to check out XYZ Foundation and found high marks in all areas. More importantly, he discovered that the seven hospitals cover the same regional territory as his restaurant chain. Ted called immediately and said, "I have a terrific deal for you ..." It was the start of a long and, lately, grueling relationship.

Ted donates regularly and generously to the XYZ Health Foundation and sponsors your events. In addition to being impressed with your hospitals and the Foundation's leadership, he believes that supporting your events and hospital programs is good advertising and will bring goodwill towards his restaurants.

No longer satisfied with just having his company's logo displayed on the XYZ Foundation website and event communications, Ted has become very demanding. Now, he wants XYZ Health System to advertise his restaurants and include restaurant discount coupons on the XYZ Health System website and in its newsletters as a result of his donations.

Several of the hospitals' Chief Nursing Officers already have complained about the overly-close association between XYZ Health System and a restaurant chain known for unhealthy, high fat entrees. You know they will not accept Ted's latest demands. And, you strongly suspect that Ted will respond with anger and withdraw his support.

- What does Ted want from you?
- What challenges do you face in trying to show love to Ted?
- How can you meaningfully keep Ted connected to your organization?

### **Case Study #3: Peggy Repayer**

You're the Major Gifts Officer at XYZ University, a small, private college that has a renowned business school. Your donor, Peggy Repayer, graduated with honors 10 years ago and became a highly successful software developer. Having grown up in poverty, Peggy attended your college on a scholarship. She credits your college and, most importantly, the now Dean Emeritus of the Business School, who taught her favorite marketing course – for changing her life and preparing her for entrepreneurial success.

Peggy serves on the Business School Advisory Board, mentors business school students (preferably from low income backgrounds), and has made successively larger contributions each year to the Business School scholarship fund. Recently, Peggy made a \$5 million gift to establish an endowed business scholarship fund, named in honor of the Dean Emeritus. She wants the proceeds to fund full, four-year scholarships for academically-qualified Business School students from low income families.

Peggy eschews recognition. She complains that XYZ University spends way too much money thanking donors and recognizing their contributions. She has become increasingly frustrated that the Business School is wasting scarce university scholarship dollars on some Advisory Board members' children, grandchildren and affluent family friends who she believes lack academic qualifications or financial need. Sometimes she worries that proceeds from the endowment she created will be wasted, too.

Peggy has confided in you that she sees her \$5 million gift to establish the endowment as a final, lasting repayment of the debt she owes to XYZ University. She suggested that perhaps she should begin working with K-12 schools so that she can help more low income children achieve the academic qualifications necessary to successfully apply to colleges like XYZ University.

- What does Peggy want from you?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What challenges do you face in trying to show love to Peggy?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- How can you meaningfully keep Peggy connected to your organization?

#### **Case Study #4: Joan Dynast**

Joan's parents helped found the XYZ Art Museum back in 1925, kept it afloat during the Depression, and bequeathed a significant portion of their estate to keep it running in perpetuity. To this day, it's the only art museum within a 250-mile radius. Joan's parents cherished the arts and felt an obligation to provide people in their rural community with access to quality arts experiences. The XYZ Museum was renamed for Joan's family in 1985 after the bequest was realized.

Joan and her late-husband, as well as Joan's now-deceased brother (who never had children) continued the family tradition of giving generously to the XYZ Museum. Although they are affluent in their own right, neither of Joan's sons or their wives seem to have any interest in the XYZ Museum. They give to their own causes, primarily their alma maters and the environment.

Several years ago, Joan shared with you her concern that the XYZ Museum – for which you serve as the Major Gifts Officer – might not be able to survive without her. She shared her frustration with being unable to persuade her children to ensure that the family namesake would continue to thrive. Since then, Joan has made large pledges to XYZ Museum, none of which she has paid. When asked, she replies, "my check is in the mail," or "I told my attorney to send you a check. Haven't you received it?"

Meanwhile, Joan continues to serve on the Emeritus Committee and faithfully attends every meeting and function. She relishes her longstanding relationship with you, appreciates that you understand how important her family legacy is to her, and cherishes the time you spend filling her in on how the museum is going and driving her to museum events.

A year ago, one of Joan's sons contacted you to ask that XYZ Museum refrain from asking Joan for any additional gifts, as Joan has been diagnosed with some type of dementia. You shared that information with your new CEO, whose response was not as you had hoped. Explaining that the XYZ Museum is in serious financial stress (due partly to unpaid pledges) with a building that's in dire need of being replaced, your CEO suggested that you spend less time and money working with Joan and more time finding new donors to replace her – perhaps a new family to name a new museum.

- What does Joan want from you?
- What challenges do you face in trying to show love to Joan?
- How can you meaningfully keep Joan and her family connected to your organization?