

Making “The Ask”

by Jason Dick on December 17, 2007 [Share This](#)

I think that making “The Ask” is most people’s number one fear in fundraising. But in my experience making “The Ask” has been one of the easiest parts of fundraising. It does not have to be a scary or frustrating thing at all.

Many nonprofits make the mistake of spending all their time planning “The Ask” and no time cultivating and stewarding their donors. The key to making a good ask is proper preparation. Your donor needs to know who you are and have a relationship with you in order to make a good ask. Make sure that you are taking time with your donors individually and as a group to talk with them about who you are and who they are. Know what specific areas they are interested in, why they give, and why they give you your organization. Know when their birthday is or when they get a promotion. Send them a card, make a short phone call, send them an email, all these things are part of proper cultivation and stewardship.

When you get to the point that you have a relationship with your donor making “The Ask” is simple. You should know specific interests of your donor, where else they give their money (and approximately how much, see [my article on prospecting](#)), and their past giving as a result of your cultivation and conversation. You are not uncomfortable in relating with them because you have a track record. So all you have to do is ask. Ask for something specific and reasonable and you know interests them. Make sure you are thanking them for their past giving, volunteer work, etc. If your ask involves a sponsorship, grant, or proposal make sure that you have all that information to give them. I have found that many times donors are waiting for “The Ask” to come and that making a good ask is more of a compliment to them. Everyone likes to be asked.