

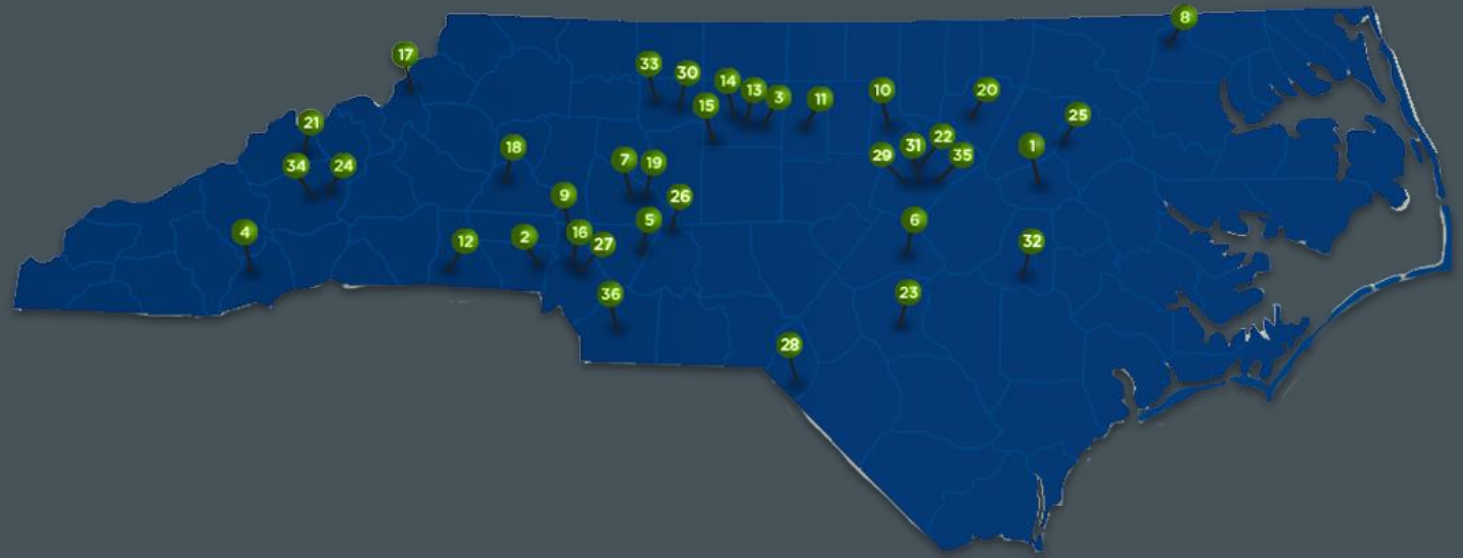
THE ART OF THE ASK

NCICU | 1.11.23



CapDev

NORTH CAROLINA
INDEPENDENT
COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES





CapDev



ABOUT CAPDEV

Serving nonprofits across the Southeast since 1984

- Philanthropy:
 - Development Planning
 - Campaigns
- Executive Search

AGENDA

- Context
- Preparation for the Ask
- Making the Ask
- Follow-up on the Ask
- Discussion



REMEMBER THE CAMPAIGN PREMISE BEFORE WE START ASKING...

Campaigns are **NOT** just about:

- Successfully raising or exceeding the goal

Campaigns **ARE** about increasing:

- Recognition and value of the institution
- The number and gift levels of donors
- The capacity and ability of staff
- Quantity, quality and commitment of volunteer leadership
- Long-term financial stability
- Improved donor stewardship practices



THE ART OF THE ASK: GETTING TO “YES”

- A successful solicitation is *not a one-step affair*.
- The decision is the culmination of careful *preparation* and commitment to support the donor to make a positive gift decision.
- Donors invest when they believe in and are inspired by the institution's leaders - *people give to people*.
- Single most important factor behind successful fundraising: *pervasive sense of optimism* and not being afraid to ask.

DONORS

HOW NOT TO ASK FOR A GIFT

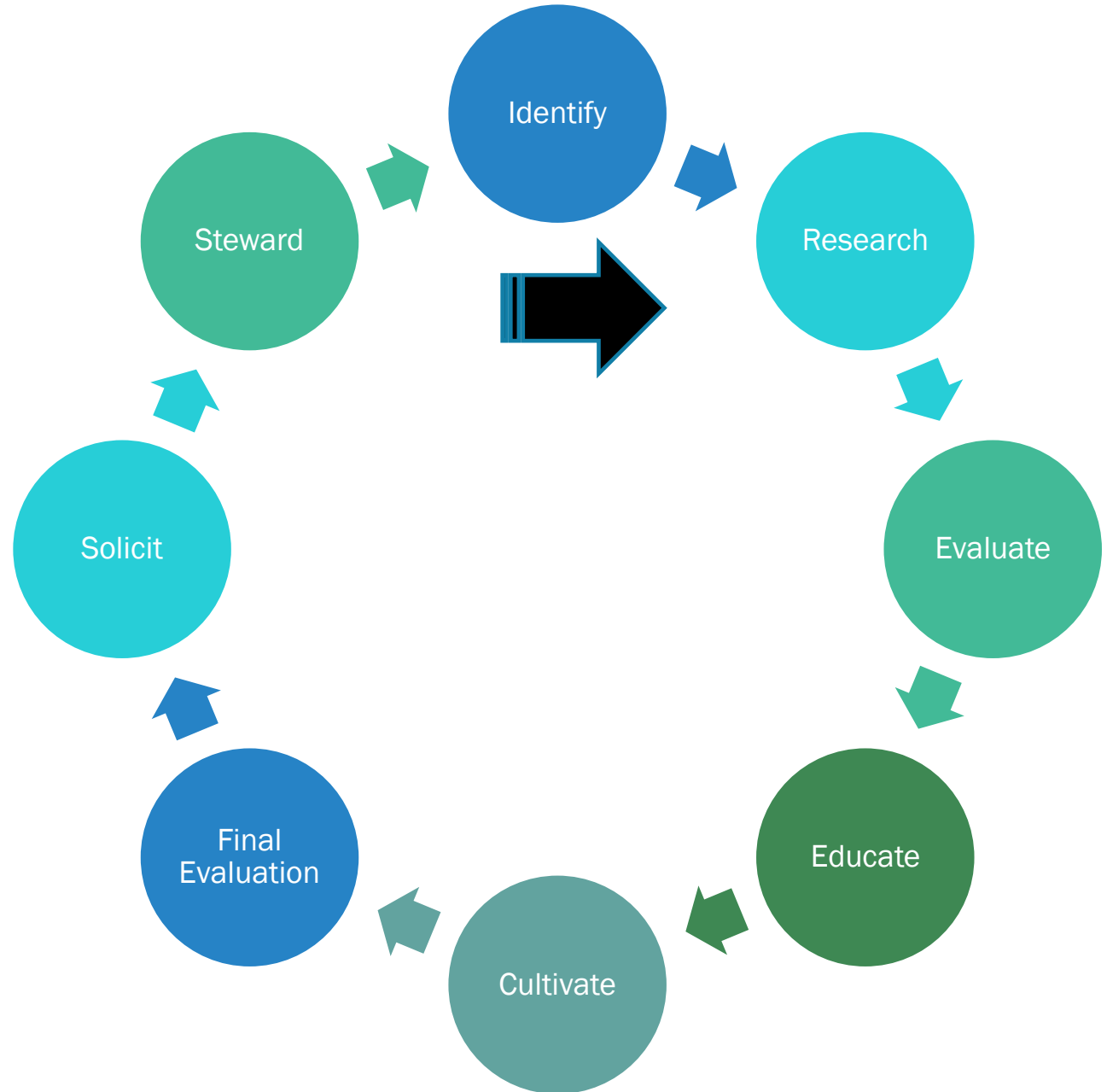
“As you know, I’m on the board of [ORGANIZATION].

We need to raise \$50,000 by the end of June or we may have to close.

I know you support many great causes. Can you give anything to help us?

I promise I will not keep bothering you with future requests.”

DONOR RELATIONS CYCLE: THE PATHWAY TO THE ASK



BUILDING A CULTURE OF PHILANTHROPY

Before: *Transactional*

- FR is crisis driven/reactive
- FR is a cost; not an investment
- FR is done only by few
- Special events and direct mail are emphasized
- Donors are at arms-length
- If major gifts occur, they're usually unsolicited

After: *Relational*

- All understand the need to raise money
- Everyone is an ambassador
- Donor-centric; not me-centric
- Visitors are welcomed
- E.D. sees him/herself as face of the agency and is 100% committed to fundraising
- All make a gift

DEFINING “DONOR-CENTRIC”

- Most people in the institution (across positions) act as **ambassadors** and engage in **relationship-building**.
- Everyone promotes philanthropy and can **articulate a case** for giving.
- **Advancement** is viewed and valued as a mission-aligned essential part of the university.
- Organizational systems are established to **support donors**.
- The President/Chancellor is **committed** and personally involved in philanthropy.

CONTEXT: PRINCIPLES OF GIVING

People give to
people

People give to
vision and
opportunities; not
to needs

People give to
success; not to
distress

People give money
to make change for
the good

People give money
because they want
to

*People give
generously
because they ready
and they are asked!*

READY?

PREPARATION FOR THE ASK



THE 5 “RIGHTS” OF ASKING



Right Person: who is asking whom; who talks; who asks



Right Time: are they ready to be asked; cultivation – education – awareness



Right Place: make it a comfortable atmosphere for the donor



Right Amount: research and consult to determine range



Right Project: is the donor interested, knowledgeable and invested

COMPONENTS OF THE ASKING PROCESS

Asking is 90% preparation.

1. Making the appointment
2. Materials preparation & usage
3. Making plans before the appointment
4. Making the ask
5. Responding
6. Following up



"We need to strike the right tone between asking and *desperately pleading* in our alumni solicitation letters."

SETTING THE APPOINTMENT

Schedule the meeting

- Phone / virtual / in-person
- Avoid the phone solicitation

Be clear and open

Follow-up with friendly confirmation note/email

SOLICITATION PACKET MATERIALS

- Case Statement
- FAQ
- Naming Opportunities
- Contact Information
- Leadership List (Campaign Cabinet)
- Solicitation Letter/Proposal (leave behind) ☆
- Pledge Form (do not leave behind) ☆
- Brochure and Briefing Book



ASK PREPARATION: CREATING A PROFILE

Who does the talking?

Who does the asking?

Focus the conversation.

What is the follow-up?

Atmosphere: keep it light, sincere, genuine



MAKING THE ASK

WAYS OF GIVING

- Outright Gifts - Cash, Stock and Other Tangible Assets
- Real Estate Gift
- Retirement Plan Gift
- Estate/Planned Gift, Preferably Combined with Cash
- Other Negotiable Assets



LEADING UP TO THE ASK: BY NOW THEY KNOW US

- Several occasions for education, engagement and cultivation have taken place.
- Their questions, concerns, and ideas have all been answered, acknowledged and honored.
- We know where they are coming from and have developed our approach accordingly.
- Most important - they are ready for the solicitation meeting because we have thoroughly vetted the FIVE rights of an ask.





what to say
when you
don't
know
what to
say

SUGGESTED LEAD-IN COMMENTS

- Socialize/Introductions /Explain your role as a volunteer.
 - *“Thank you for seeing us today...”*
 - *“I’ve been involved with XXX for...”*
 - *“As you remember when we last met,...”*
- Transition to topic.
 - *“We’re excited to tell you about future plans for XXX...”*
- Stress Importance: Address the campaign purpose and goals upfront and discuss importance to XXXX.
 - *“This campaign is important to the XXX and our XXX because...”*
 - *“This campaign is important to me personally ...”*
- Listen and Respond.
 - *“I’m glad you asked that question...”*
 - *“Are there any questions you have at this time?”*

SUGGESTED ASK LINES

- *“Will you consider a gift of XXX...”*
- *“The reason I gave to this campaign is...”*
- *“Like you, I give to something I believe in... This is worth your investment...”*
- *“Your stretch gift will enable us to reach our vision to...”*
- *“This is a multi-year campaign, so you can stretch your pledge out over the next 3 years and take care of your annual support as well...”*
- *“We’d like you to consider a naming opportunity of...”*
- *“Would you consider a \$100,000 gift spread over five years, or \$20,000 each year...”*
- *“Please join me at the lead gift level ...”*

AFTER THE ASK: WHAT'S NEXT?

- **Stop and listen** - channel nervous energy somewhere else and be quiet so that they may talk.
- **Address their possible questions**, issues, and concerns with respect and kindness.
- **Be nimble** and willing to take the conversation in new directions – they may be interested in some other program or area.
- **Remember it's all about them** and their interests, and being able to see if there is a fit with the ORGANIZATION's needs.
- **Get a commitment** or consideration of the request before you close the meeting, if possible.
- **Don't leave a pledge form** for them to mail – offer to come back.
- **Wrap up** the meeting and **thank them** for their time.

FINISH

FOLLOW-UP ON THE ASK

FOLLOW-UP PROCESS: POSITIVE RESPONSE



If gift/pledge made:

- CONFIRM amount, payment, schedule in writing.
- THANK - a personal phone call/note from leader.
- STEWARD THE DONOR – Continue to involve.
- THANK AGAIN – a personal phone call & note from appropriate staff and volunteers

If gift or pledge considered:

- THANK THEM, confirm or suggest specific follow-up actions and timetable.
- FOLLOW UP. Stay connected. Have a specific plan for next steps.

DO NOT IGNORE the donor! Communicate!

FOLLOW-UP PROCESS: KNOW THE “NOS”



No matter what, every campaign volunteer will hear the word, “no.” You need to [understand what that word means](#) in the world of campaigns.

There are A FEW types of “nos”:

- Objections to the needs – not a top philanthropic priority for the donor
- Issue with the timing of a new commitment
- Issue with personal economics or situation

[Listen to your donor, and don't take the “no” personally. **Thank them anyway.**](#)

[Have a specific plan for next steps.](#)

WHY DO WE NEED STEWARDSHIP?

According to research of Donor-Centered Fundraising:

- Costs 7x more to acquire new donors than to retain donors
- Best practice – 90% retention rate
- 65% of first-time donors don't make a second gift
- 46% of donors stop giving for reasons that are connected to “a failure to communicate”
- 94% of donors never or rarely get a call from the charity unless it is a solicitation
- 98% of donors are never visited by the charity unless it is a solicitation call

Stewardship Payback:

- 80% of donors say they would GIVE AGAIN with a prompt personal thank you AND additional communication that explains how the donation was used!

HOW IS STEWARDSHIP DONE WELL?

- **Acknowledge** – 3 touches
 - Thank-you letter
 - Personal notes from solicitor
 - Call from board member
 - Ask the donor how they would like to be thanked
- **Appreciate** – Clearly describe the value of the gift
 - Where did the money go? What did it do? What impact did it have?
- **Again...Again...Again...**
 - Thank them repeatedly and creatively!
 - Engage them throughout the year.

Stewardship is done through timely actions that invoke feelings and encourage donor involvement.



THANK
YOU SO
MUCH!

10 WAYS TO TELL DONORS THEY MADE A DIFFERENCE

1. Children's Art
2. Photo Book
3. Site Visit Video
4. Timely Mailed Gift
5. Video Testimonial
6. Handwritten Card
7. Call and/or Email
8. Face-to-Face Meeting
9. Personalized Gift
10. Memorialize the Gift

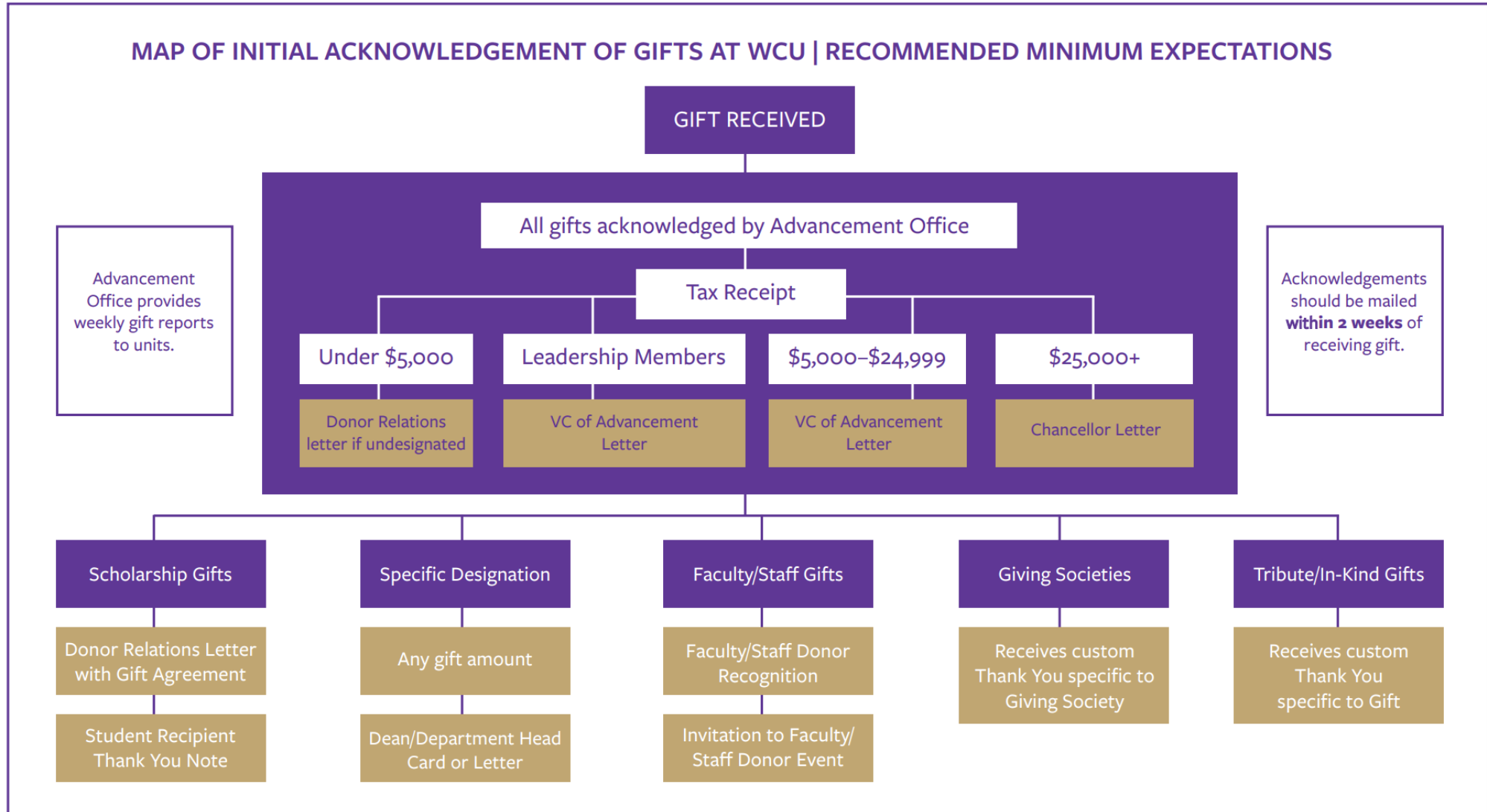


MORE CREATIVE WAYS TO SAY...



1. Write a personal note; not a form thank you
2. Share recent progress, however small or big
3. Invite to a stewardship event that does not require a donation or make an overt ask
4. Visit a donor just to say thank you
5. Flowers, plant, book, chocolate...
6. Board member thank you calls
7. Send photos from events
8. Give something made by the organization

CLIENT EXAMPLE - WCU: HOW WE THANK



DOES OUR CULTURE MOTIVATE GIVING?



94% of donors don't get "keep in touch" calls from the charities they support.



98% say charities never or hardly ever pay them a visit without asking for money.



93% of donors say that personal contact influences future giving.

IT'S A PROCESS...



Cultivation

Strategic (not “events for the sake of events”)

Horizontal and vertical

More than “random acts of kindness”

Personal and communications outreach



Solicitation (The Art of the Ask)

Based on donor’s interests and needs

Focus on relationships and values, not just \$

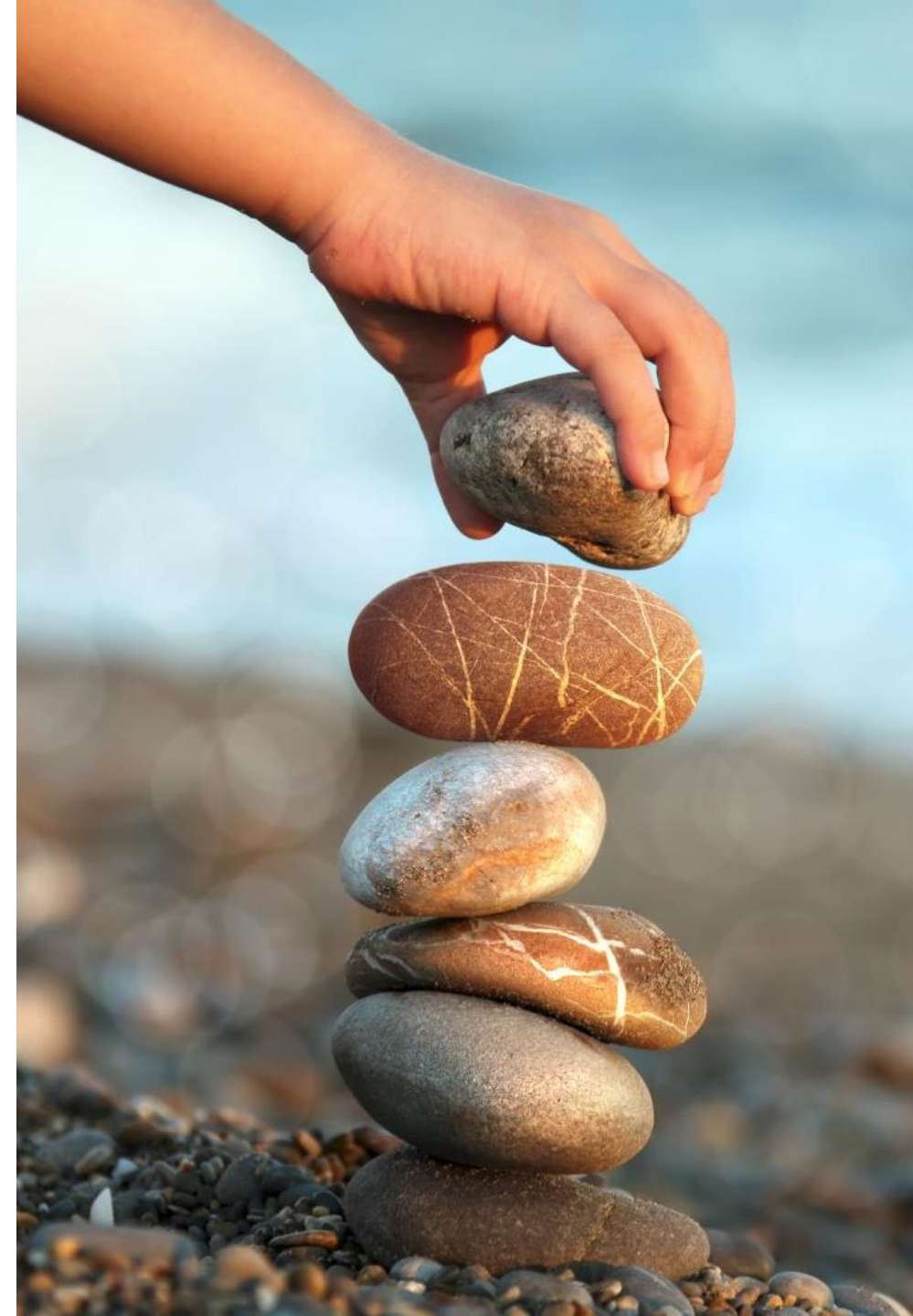


Stewardship

What the donor wants in a continuing relationship

THE ASK “BE-ATTITUDES”

- **Be Patient** *Several visits may be necessary*
- **Be Ready** *Best fit/most willing to make call*
- **Be Persistent** *Take time to educate*
- **Be Courageous** *Ask and ask for enough*
- **Be Confident** *You hold the knowledge*
- **Be Proud** *of the institution and your role*
- **Be Cool** *Listen; never take ‘no’ personally*





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