

# Strategies to build relationships with individual donors

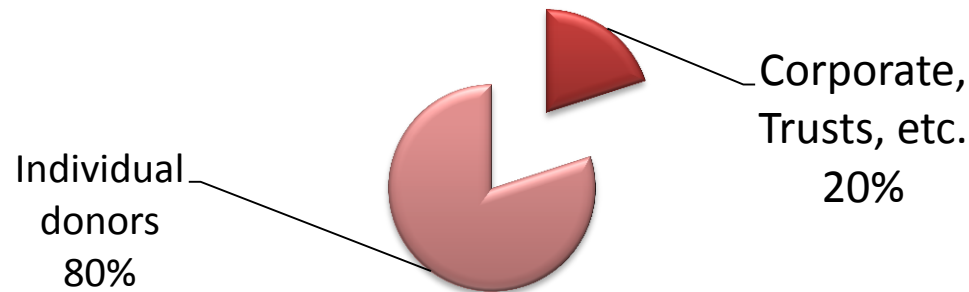


**And how to turn them into lifelong friends**

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# Why invest in individual giving?

**Individuals** provide over 80% of all funding to charities worldwide.



# Why do people give?

# Tom Ahern's 6 reasons:

- Guilt
- Duty
- Wonder
- Participation in a fight
- Values
- **Appreciation**

# Let's talk about relationships



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# Is this how you see your donors?



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# Where's it going wrong?

Transactional fundraising culture exists.

*“The less money we invest in fundraising, the ‘better’ we are?”*

Resource development typically under-resourced; lack of capacity.

Stewardship – what's that?

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# Why the need to change?

- Want to move from 'just surviving' to 'thriving'?
- There can be no 'you' without donors and funders.
- They are your bridge to building a better world - your co-creators of change.
- Cost: acquiring new donors is more expensive than retaining an existing donor.



# What it is

- **Relationships:** trust, commitment, service excellence.
- Must be part of **organisational DNA** - top-down, bottom-up.
- Donor-centric

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# What it's not

- Not a miracle cure for weak/poor leadership.
- Not one-size-fits-all.
- **Not just the fundraiser's job!**



# So, do we know them?

- Do you know who your donors are?
- What aspects of your work are they passionate about?
- How do they prefer to hear from you?  
How often? When?
- Are you responsive to them?
- Do you have a system for documenting this?



# Why donors leave

36% others more deserving  
18% poor service/communication  
13% no thank you  
9% no memory of supporting  
8% no report backs  
5% charity doesn't need me

54%: affordability

16%: death

Source: Bloomerang.co



53%

# How do we keep our donors?

- Start over, **start** now.
- Adopt a donor-centric approach.
- **Involve everyone**, be open to new ideas, get creative!
- Begin with what you **can** do – and **do it consistently** and well.

# How?

- **Don't always ask:** remember, it's about giving and receiving.
- **Involve them.** Ask for their opinions, invite their participation.
- **Encourage connections** - staff to donors. Could office staff each call at least one donor a day?

# How?



- Develop donor rules of engagement  
**Follow them - don't break them!**
- Weave in as many personal touches as you can!
- Don't spam them: keep engagement relevant, valid, authentic.

# Learn from the private sector

- Brands and corporates 'get' customer service. It's a differentiator.
- Examples? Best experience you've had; how does it make you feel?

# Learn from the private sector

- Focus on quality, service excellence, high standards.
- Mind-set shift: *'Customer is king'* vs *'Donor is so demanding!'*





# The basics: key building blocks

Say **thank you** for every gift, large and small.



Courtesy, good manners counts  
(telephone, email, social media, public-facing staff.)

# The basics: key building blocks

- **Report back** on the difference their donations are making.
- Always acknowledge past generosity before asking for the next gift.
- **Customise as much as possible:** corporates, major donors, segment individuals.  
Remember your donors who can't give any more ...



# Build relationships, involve your donors

Emotionally (heart):

- Give engagement opportunities— hands on, helping out

Intellectually (head):

- Skills transfer and donated expertise, time

Action (hands):

- Advocating for you, sharing petitions, messaging, influence, presence, networks.

# Two pillars supporting a solid relationship

Roger M Craver

## Functional Connection

- Reliability and consistency

*(Donor knows what to expect)*

## Emotional Connection

- Making the donor feel an important part of the cause

*(i.e. recognition; seeking donor's opinion; timely communications)*

# Communication: show and tell



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# Key takeaways



Show the impact – the difference you're making with their support – in donor comms.



Manage your data. Protect your donors' privacy: remember POPI.



Retention is a two-way street. One-ways are dead ends.

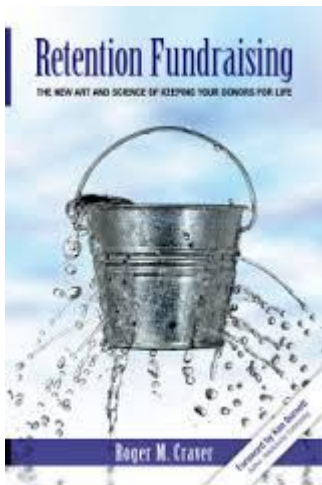
Adopt a 'YOU' focus, not 'I' and ALWAYS say thank you!

# Look, listen and learn



- Signs of caring are not always obvious:  
i.e. donors who complain, share change of address, stories about their pet/child, etc. – these are gems!
- Sincerity, authenticity, gratitude, respect.

# 7 Key drivers of Donor Commit- ment

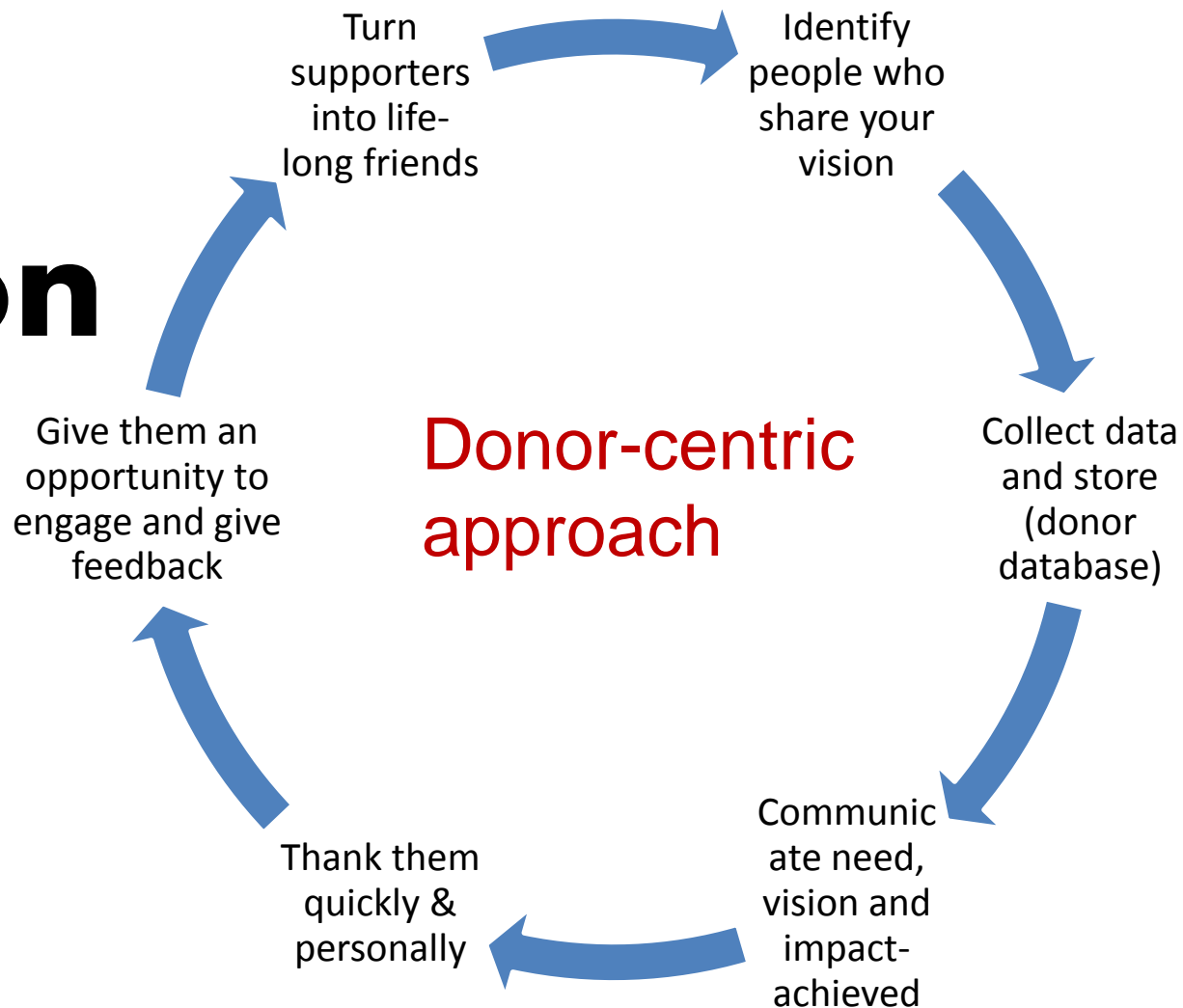


1. Donor perceives your org. to be effective in trying to achieve its mission.
2. Donor knows what to expect from your org. with each interaction.
3. Donor receives timely thank yous.
4. Donor receives opportunities to make his or her views known.
5. Donor is given the feeling that he or she is part of an important cause.
6. Donor feels his or her involvement is appreciated.
7. Donor receives info. showing who is being helped.

Source: Roger M Craver Retention Fundraising 2014



# Donor retention



# Acknowledgements

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2. Larry Johnson – The Eight Principles of Sustainable fundraising – [www.theeightprinciples.com](http://www.theeightprinciples.com)
3. Sarah Durham – Founder of Big Duck and Author of “*Brandraising: How Nonprofits Raise Visibility and Money Through Smart Communications*”
4. Tom Ahern - @thattomahern
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# THANK YOU

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