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**PERSONAL
FUNDRAISING
POWER**

OF
17

Influencing Donors



**Bright
Spot**

The Members Club

COMMITMENT AND CONSISTENCY

Commitment and Consistency

A key problem for health services is the money that is wasted when people fail to turn up for their doctor's appointments. In the UK this costs over £800 million per year.

In the small BIG, psychologists Martin, Goldstein and Cialdini describe research into how to reduce the number of 'no-shows'. The decision-making principle they used was Commitment and Consistency. This principle describes a deep motivation that most of us have to behave consistently with the previous commitments we have willingly made.

They found that when patients initially called up to make their appointment, simply asking them to read back the date and time of the appointment led to a small but significant reduction in 'no-shows'. And they found the effect was even stronger when the receptionist asked patients to write down the date and time of the appointment on a card themselves. In this study, this simple change - which takes a few seconds - led to an 18% reduction in appointments being missed which would equate to a saving of around £144 million.

Cialdini has described other research in which asking someone to wear a pin badge supporting the fight against cancer increased the chances that one week later they would decide to make a donation to this cause.

1 The Confirm Question. A challenge for many fundraisers is how to ask someone whether they would like to meet you / your Chief Executive / come to an event / make a donation. Many fundraisers feel they do pretty well at caring about and listening to donors and talking sensibly about the how great the charity is at solving problems the donor cares about. Their challenge is how to move from this conversation on to either a next step or action or indeed a donation.

Just how do we move from the one stage of the conversation to the next? The thing that has most helped me is what I call a confirm question, in which you check in to find out whether the donor likes the ideas about your charity that you've been explaining to them.

This is not an open question (like 'what do you think?'), but a closed question (ie to which the answer is likely to 'yes' or 'no'). Essentially you're asking the donor whether they like your charity's strategy or way of solving a particular problem. If they say 'yes' then, in line with Cialdini's research, I find it is entirely reasonable to then ask them if they'd consider making a gift towards funding that work. If they say 'no', thank goodness you were considerate enough to check in with them and find out what they think.

You can then find out more about how they feel about this particular strategy or particular part of the problem your charity solves. Perhaps you can then explain some element differently, or perhaps this person would never want to fund this kind of work. Either way, using the confirm question before you moved on to an invitation or request for a gift was a sensible and respectful step in the conversation, saving you from charging blindly on to the request.

Commitment and Consistency

Think of an upcoming meeting you have with a donor or potential donor / partner.

Imagine yourself pausing after each stage in the conversation, to check in with the supporter to find out whether they like the strategy / service / proposed partnership that you have just described.

The Fundraisers Meeting Checklist

Note the confirm question is one step within the Fundraiser's Meeting Checklist, which guides you through useful a useful structure to bear in mind. You can download this tool from section 10 of Personal Fundraising Power Part 1.

Each step builds commitment - Three more ideas to help you build momentum.

2 To build relationships, ask for / propose the next step. It is all too easy to leave a meeting that has gone positively without firming up when the next meeting or phone call will be. Asking for this in the current meeting, and explaining why keeping this momentum going is important, can only increase the chances that each next step will happen. There is more on this idea in section 6 of Personal Fundraising Power - Part 2.

3 Confirm next steps in meetings and projects. It is all too easy for fundraising projects to lose momentum because people had different understandings of who was going to do what. Before leaving the meeting, checking in to find out what your colleagues are going to do is a surprisingly helpful nudge if you want those next actions to happen.

4 Find out how supporters would like you to communicate with them. Often donors are unaware how difficult it can be for us to contact them via the receptionist or their PA or busy email in-box. When a meeting has gone well, let them know you'd like to be able to set up further meetings or communication as effectively as possible, and ask them how they'd like you to do this. Often they will offer a better way (eg different phone number), or at the very least say they'll tell their PA they definitely want you to be put through when you call.

You've been working on:

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