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**PERSONAL
FUNDRAISING
POWER**

OF
17

Influencing Donors



**Bright
Spot**

The Members Club

RAPPORT

Rapport

'If you seek to influence someone, first try to understand and appreciate their model of the world.'

Anthony Robbins

When you meet a donor, beware the pitfall of doing most of the talking early in the conversation. Of course, some donors are more private and less inclined do most of the talking, and when you meet these people you may have to do more to help the conversation along. And yet, the default plan must always be to not say too much until you have tried to understand and appreciate their model of the world. The easiest way to do this is to aim to say relatively little about your charity early on, but ask them relevant questions.

The most important part in this working is for you to genuinely care and want to understand the other person. The more you do this, the more you will truly listen, and help them feel listened to.

The heart of an influencing conversation:

- Be brief early on, and ask questions
- Understand what you can about what they care about how they talk
- Match. When you talk about your charity, talk about the elements that seem most relevant to what they care about. Where possible, strive to talk about them in a style that matches theirs.

Match for content – what do they care about?

This is partly about whether one particular solution your charity offers (for example a helpline) is probably more interesting to the donor you're talking to than another.

Equally it is about the way you talk about any given service. Which element of your service / project / research will you focus on? For example any one service might have an effect on reducing someone's pain now, as well as improving scientist's ability to solve the problem in the long-run. Even if you mention both helpful effects, one of these is likely to be of more interest to the donor than the other.

How your voice can make all the difference

When talking to a colleague, deliberately tune in to quality of their voice. (For instance, their voice may differ from other people's in terms of volume, speed, rhythm, pitch, the way they do or do not emphasise words and phrases etc.)

See what happens when you deliberately make your voice a little more like theirs in one or two of these qualities than normal. Do not mimic their voice, but find a way to make your voice more complimentary / less mis-matched than it would otherwise have been. Pay attention to whether you felt a greater sense of rapport with them. Once you have experimented / practiced these ideas when the stakes are low, try in more important meetings too. Note, the key is to care about the donor so much that you manage to help them feel genuinely understood.

Pay attention to and appreciate their language

In a conversation with a colleague or friend, pay careful attention to the particular words they use. When it is your turn to respond, in explaining your view of the subject in question, use some of the words and phrases that they used.

Notice that taking the trouble to understand and appreciate someone else's language helps improve the chances of you hearing what they are really saying, and them hearing what you are really saying.

Do you care enough about the other person to find ways to build rapport?

Working to understand and appreciate their model of the world requires effort. And it must come from a place of genuinely caring about the donor, rather than as a trick. Assuming you do these things, taking the trouble to do this is more respectful of the other party, not less, and increases the chance of the two of the conversation being mutually productive.

You've been working on:

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