

Making the Ask Count

ASKING

Now that you've set your goals, you need to decide how to meet them. The best ways to ask for contributions are by using either a group or individual ask.

Group Ask is a fundraising technique that allows employees to be informed, motivated and asked to give by a leadership team. The entire process takes about 15 – 30 minutes.

A really effective way to foster enthusiasm for a fundraising campaign is to have the CEO/president/manager send a letter to employees notifying them of a meeting date and time, and telling them they will be asked for a United Way contribution at the meeting (which we call a rally). Full employee attendance is critical to the success of a group ask, as rallies usually include a presentation by the United Way Campaign Associate or staff. Promotion of United Way should be undertaken in advance to create a positive atmosphere and increase employees' awareness of United Way programs and services in the community.

Management likes group asks because:

- ...it requires fewer employees to be recruited and trained to make asks.
- ...it provides the most economical use of employee time.
- ...it is the most efficient way to ask employees.
- ...it produces dramatically improved results.
- ...it provides consistent information and less pressure.

Employees like group asks because:

- ...they receive quality information on which to base their decision.
- ...it allows them to make a decision in a pressure-free environment.

And the results show:

- ...employees give more, but even more importantly,
- ...they feel good about their gifts and themselves.

Individual Asks can also be very effective. In most situations, the CEO calls an employee campaign kick-off meeting to hear the CEO's endorsement and the case for increased giving. Shortly after the meeting, employees are asked to give on a one-to-one basis by fellow workers or others. Successful individual asks require well-trained campaign committee members who have toured agencies, who are comfortable with the task, and who are skilled at fielding questions and asking for pledges.

The advantages of individual asks include:

- Greater education for a contributor about United Way.
- Private help for co-workers since the asker can refer them to a community organization for assistance with a problem.
- An opportunity for the asker to request an increased contribution over a previous year.
- A personal opportunity for the asker to convince non-participating employees to contribute.