

Exploring the Role of the Ambassador

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS AN AMBASSADOR?

Ambassadors....

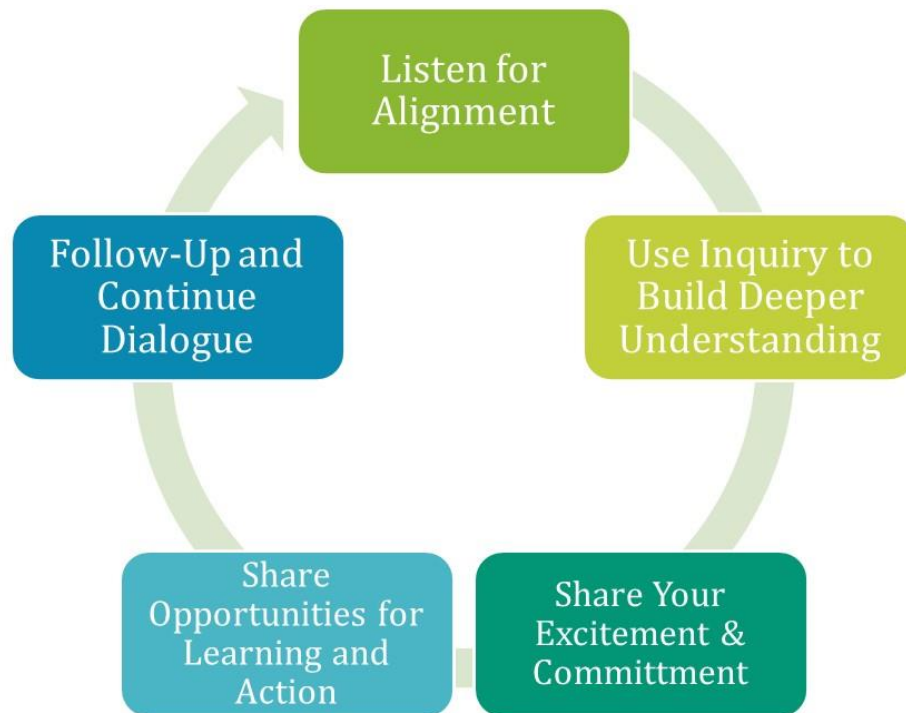
- Navigate networks and communities
- Initiate relationships on behalf of Our organization
- Listen....FIRST!
- Create conversations
- Build trust and understanding
- Create and share opportunities for action and learning
- Look for opportunities to link donor intent and the work of our organization
- Support, partner, and guide
-what else?

CYCLE OF CULTIVATION

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT CULTIVATION

- The goal of fundraising is to acquire donors of time and money who become part of an organization's community of support.
- Expanding the community of support occurs through the process of relationship building between current members of the community of support and future members.
- Building a community of support for our organization involves finding those that may have an interest; determining whether they are actually prospects right now; and converting them to donors.
- It is more important to know what the individual is seeking to accomplish by their charitable giving than to "sell" the organization. Listening is more important than telling.
- Moving a person from predisposition to donor, requires a well planned and executed series of experiences to help the prospect understand the impact of our organization.
- Giving is an emotional act, not a financial transaction.
- People give because they are asked but giving likelihood is enhanced if the right person asks. Face to face requests work best.

ENVISIONING CULTIVATION AS A CYCLE



LISTEN FOR ALIGNMENT

As you are engaging with your colleagues, networks (both personal and professional), community members, the starting point is to listen for possible alignment....

What to listen for?

- Interest in volunteering, “giving back”, contributing
- Interest in supporting the community, “wants to get involved”
- Interest in education, well-being of youth, families, and the elderly
- Interest in creating relationships with new networks
- Interest in building skills (leadership opportunities, team building, etc.)
- Interest in leaving a legacy, having impact
- Active on other Boards, civic organizations, internal company initiatives
- Other suggestions?

Listening....leads to informed action!

USE INQUIRY TO BUILD DEEPER UNDERSTANDING

Create space for conversation to more deeply understand your colleague or contact.

Set the Context for the Discussion

- May not need to be formal in nature as a starting point – really a “get-to-know-you” discussion. It is important to now that you may know the person well, but just have never engaged them in a discussions about what they deeply care about/philanthropic/volunteer interests.
- Watch the balance of dialogue and be sure your colleague or contact is doing more of the talking, and you are deeply listening.
- Ask Yourself: How do you hold your potential supporter in the **CENTER** of the discussion?

Use Inquiry to Build Understanding

- **Get-to-Know-You Questions/Inquiries**
 - I'd love to hear about your views on helping our community?
 - Help me understand why organizations you support are important to you.
 - What was your best experience as a supporter of a cause/nonprofit organization?
 - Why draws to you to support a certain organization?
- **Seeking Advice**
 - How to we gain more visibility in our community/network?
 - What are fundraising strategies you've seen be successful with other organizations you've partnered with?
 - What do you believe are the best ways to cultivate support for our work?
 - Who else might you suggest would want to support this project/or our organization?
- **Understand Impressions of Our Organization**
 - What are your impressions of our organization?
 - [For previous/new donors donors] Help me understand why you gave to our organization [in the past].

*“You really do want your donor’s best thinking about your work. And remember, you honor your donor by **being more about the person they are, than their money.**” – Gail Perry*

In a first discussion, you may go to the next step OR just sit with what you've learned and thank them for sharing their perspectives with you. After the discussion, capture your notes and observations....and determine the next step!

SHARE YOUR EXCITEMENT AND COMMITMENT

This is YOUR story, YOUR connection to OUR ORGANIZATION, YOUR reason for supporting the organization. People want to be a part of a community of supporters who are excited, motivated, and engaged to make a difference.

If when reflecting on your discussion with your contact (or within the first discussion), you can share your reasons for supporting our organization.

It's time to share your excitement!

But.... To do so, it is critical to truly know your own WHY to share it with others!

This is not about knowing the programs and outcomes of our organization in an out – what is important is **YOUR OWN STORY and connection to our organization.**

SHARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING AND ACTION

For any contact, your approach for this stage may be different.... Consider the ladder of engagement!

Opportunities for Learning and Action

- Invitation to participate in a tour (if you can attend even better!)
- Invitation to attend events and/or purchase a sponsorship or table
- Invitation to host a dinner party or small gathering for others to learn more about our organization
- If specific interest in program, connect to opportunity to learn more (hand-off to key staff person contact)
- Opportunity to provide ongoing advice or guidance on a key organizational issue or opportunity
- **What else have you seen be successful as initial opportunities?**

FOLLOW-UP AND CONTINUE DIALOGUE

This is about building trust, engaging your contact in our community of support, and continuing the conversation.

- Monitor your contacts/introduction/integration into the work of our organization
- Reach out to your contact to check-in on their experience thus far

Follow-Up Questions

- How was your experience at our event?
- What surprised or excited you about our work?
- What aspects of our work are you most interested?
- How would you like to continue to stay engaged?

EXERCISE 1: LISTENING FOR ALIGNMENT & USING INQUIRY TO DEEPEN UNDERSTANDING

Identifying Potential Donor Contacts

A donor is someone who is personally touched, inspired, or motivated by the organization's programs and services.

Consider the criteria for alignment noted above.

Develop your own list of possible contacts to consider below:

- List name
- Capture what you may know about them today in terms of alignment
- Using the "order" column, based on their potential interest, number your prospects based upon the order you will contact them in.

<i>Name</i>	<i>What do I know about them today?</i>	<i>Order</i>

Practice: Approaches to Inquiry

In pairs, undertake two rounds of discussion, in the first, select one Board member to engage their partner using the inquiry questions noted above. And then switch!

What are your observations about the dialogue that inquiry prompted?

EXERCISE II: SHARING YOUR COMMITMENT & EXCITEMENT

This is YOUR story, YOUR connection to OUR ORGANIZATION, YOUR reason for supporting the organization.

Using the space below, capture your reasons for supporting our organization.

- Why do you believe in the work of our organization?

- What impact inspires you to continue to volunteer and support our organization?

- What are your most memorable moments as you think about your engagement with our organization?

Using your notes from above, craft your story on the following page:

- Describe why you support our organization. Share your excitement and passion! Use examples!
- Ask if your prospect has interest in learning more about the organization's work.

Developing Your Story:

- *Use bulletpoints to express key ideas that you would like to share...it does not need to be an exact script – just the main ideas you would like to get across....*

Practice: Sharing Your Story

In pairs, undertake two rounds of discussion, in the first, select one Board member to engage their partner and share their own story. And then switch!

What are your observations about the dialogue that sharing your story prompted?