

# Development for Conservation

## Raising \$\$ from Real People

Prepared for

**New York Conservation Conference**

May 2022

**David Allen, Development for Conservation**



**DEVELOPMENT  
FOR  
CONSERVATION**



## If I Could Change Two Things ...

- Learn to see us as helping people do what they want to do, instead of the other way around
- Spend more time imagining and learning why someone might say YES



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## Revelations

Money comes from PEOPLE.



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## Revelations

*We don't need them to think like WE do.  
We need to learn to think like THEY do.*



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## Revelations

We waste too much time imagining why donors will say NO.

A better question is why they might say YES.



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## Thought Experiment

Think back on the largest cash gift you have ever personally made and the actual giving decision.

Now imagine giving twice that amount to the same organization (at some point in the future).

Why might you say yes?

**2X**



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## WHY??

LOVE

BUY

- Nature
- Mission
- Project
- Organization
- Asker



- Exposure
- Goodwill
- Nostalgia
- Dinner
- Social Equity
- Peace and Quiet



Cultivation is about DISCOVERY, not SELLING

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## Revelations

“Development” is short for  
“Donor Development.”

Actually, it’s short for “active listening.”



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## Revelations

“Major” describes the decision,  
not the person making it.



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## Definitions: Annual Gifts

- Annual expectation (renewal)
- Supports the Mission (operations)
- Mail or phone solicitation
- Quick response
- Small(er) gift size
- Measure of success = YES



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## Definitions: Major Gifts

- Supports a specific project or need
- Unique appeal
- Personal ask
- Multiple visits
- Large(r) gift size
- Measure of success = ADVANCE



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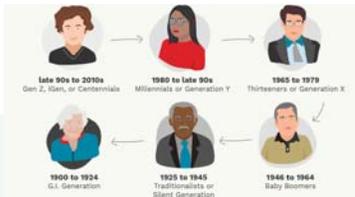
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## Revelations

Donor Development is HARD



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## Barriers

- COVID
- Time
- Language
- Intimidation
- Inertia
- Distractions
- Volume
- Assumptions



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## Here's the Group I Would Start With

- People who have made a \$1,000 gift (or more) at some point in the last 5 years
- People who gave \$250 (or more) LAST YEAR
- People who have given \$5,000 or more to other organizations
- People you know well



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## Hear Me on This Point

- \$250 is \$20 per month
- \$1,000 is \$20 per week



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## Step 2

Look at the last three years of giving decisions

Explain what you see  
(for each person)



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## Step 3

Look ahead this year and two more years

Calendar what you will ask them to give and when



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## Literally – Use a Calendar

- **March** – Ask Pablo to renew his membership for \$1,000 this year
- **April** – Go with Mary to ask Joan & Ron to make a \$15,000 pledge toward the Blue River Project
- **June** – Ask Chris if she would be willing to consider a \$100,000 gift if we close on the Hook property
- **October** – Ask LeRoy and Patrina if they would consider increasing their annual gift to \$25,000



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## Step 4

WHY will they say YES?  
(for each person)

WHO Needs to be involved?  
(for credibility)

WHAT will they see from us that supports their reasons for giving and WHEN?



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## 3 Critical Roles

### Mechanic

The person who makes sure all the stuff that doesn't require interacting with real people gets done.

- Gets the appeal and renewal mail out,
- Enters data into the computer, and
- Makes sure everyone's name is spelled correctly.

Mechanics know where everything is and how to find it.



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## 3 Critical Roles

### Strategist

Works effectively behind the scenes, putting others in positions where they can be successful.

- Chief-of-Staff, the orchestra conductor, the aide-de-camp.
- Part planner and part matchmaker.
- Anticipator, the enabler, the facilitator.

Comfortable letting others take credit.



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## 3 Critical Roles

### Star

The face of the organization in a given moment.

- First in line, the one with answers, the source.
- Also sensitive to others, alert to their needs, and gracious.

Lends credibility in the moment through his/her presence and demeanor at events.



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## The AAA Board

- Ambassador –  
Introducer, Door opener, Connection Maker
- Advocate –  
Case maker, Interpreter, Topical Expert
- Asker –  
Asker, Negotiator, Closer



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## D4C Blog Posts

[www.DevelopmentForConservation.com](http://www.DevelopmentForConservation.com)

[A Major Gift Fundraising Rant](#)

[How to Start a Major Gift Program in 2020 – The January Donor Planning Meeting](#)

[How to Make a Donor Plan](#)



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# DAVID ALLEN

I am a non-profit organizational development consultant. I work with nonprofit organization boards to help their members learn how to be better leaders and advocates.

My background includes 30 years working in membership fundraising, major gift development, communications, and marketing. I worked for about half that time for Nature Conservancy (TNC) chapters in Oregon, Texas, and Wisconsin. In addition to my duties for the individual chapters, I served TNC as an internal fundraising consultant and major gift development trainer.

In 2000, I served as the vice-president of operations for the Wisconsin-based, international conservation organization Sand County Foundation, a position I held through mid-2009.



Gathering Waters Conservancy, a land trust service agency based in Wisconsin, called me in 2004 to ask whether I would be interested in teaching a seminar for Wisconsin land trusts on major donor development. From 2004, then, through 2009, I consulted on a nights and weekends basis with just a few clients each year.

In March of 2009, I launched my consulting business full-time using the name **Development for Conservation**.

Also in 2009, I partnered with Nancy Moore to form **Conservation Consulting Group**. Together we help land trusts prepare for accreditation by providing assessment, strategic planning, and leadership coaching services.

I consider myself a strategic thinker, problem solver, facilitator, educator, and program developer who brings a particular passion for conservation and the environment.

## **Practice Competencies**

### *Fundraising*

- Development Audit
- Strategic Fund Development Planning
- Staff/Board Training and Development
- Major Gift Coaching
- Capital Campaigns: Feasibility, Planning, Management

### *Organizational Development*

- Strategy Development
- Practice & Process Assessment
- Problem Solving Facilitation
- Marketing

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