

# 3 STEPS FOR DEVELOPING AUTHENTIC DONOR RELATIONSHIPS



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Developing authentic donor relationships takes time and effort. Not only will doing so advance your organization's mission, but I believe it will also bring you a great deal of personal joy. **Here are my 3 steps to building lasting connections with donors who care about your cause.**

## STEP 1 INITIATE A RELATIONSHIP THAT IS BUILT ON A SHARED SENSE OF PURPOSE.

Your organization exists for a specific purpose, and when a donor cares about that purpose, you have the perfect foundation on which to build a relationship.

### Start by asking why.

- *Why* does the donor care about this cause?
- *Why* does he/she think your mission is important?
- *Why* does he/she think this matters to the community?

Leading with why allows for a mutual exchange and the opportunity to uncover additional commonalities that will add to the richness of your relationship as you go.

## STEP 2 DEVELOP THE RELATIONSHIP BY FINDING NATURAL WAYS TO CONNECT.

Through these touchpoints, you are showing the donor you see them as more than just deep pockets. You are demonstrating that you genuinely value their interest in your organization and are happy to connect with them as people.

### Here are a few ways to connect:

- Offer a site visit during which you can introduce the donor to the people you serve, your staff, board members, and volunteers.
- Invite the donor to attend one of your organization's events.
- Coordinate a meeting between the donor and a staff person who can share exciting new developments in your field.
- Simply meet up for a conversation over a cup of coffee.

## STEP 3 SUSTAIN THE RELATIONSHIP THROUGH CURIOSITY AND CREATIVITY.

During this phase, you want to continue learning about the donor while also showing him/her how they are helping fulfill your organization's mission.

### **Tune into their interests and thoughtfully prepare for meetings.**

Ask yourself:

- When I last saw this person, what did we do? What did we talk about?
- What might we do that is new or different?
- What aspects of the organization's mission have we not discussed yet?

### **Take a posture of curiosity.**

During a meeting ask the donor questions like these:

- What have you been recently excited or challenged about at the office?
- What are you enjoying most about your grandchildren?
- What are you looking forward to over the next six months?

### **Talk about what matters.**

Go beyond small talk to deepen your connection. Ask:

- Can you share with me why your giving matters to you?
- What do you hope your children learn from your giving?
- What does your faith background teach you about your giving?



**Lon Swartzentruber**, CEO / Senior Design Partner, Design Group International

## **INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE? LET'S CONNECT!**

Reach me at [lons@designgroupintl.com](mailto:lons@designgroupintl.com) or (616) 516-9870.

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