

Case Study: Teach for America

How one ECHO Profile made a \$10,000 difference



Teach for America

Industry: Education
Location: New York, NY
Size: \$321 Million

Company Bio

Teach for America (TFA) is a nonprofit organization whose stated mission is to "enlist, develop, and mobilize as many as possible of our nation's most promising future leaders to grow and strengthen the movement for educational equity and excellence."

Overview

One of Teach for America's regional Executive Directors was having trouble convincing a past donor to offer support again this year. As the ED put it, she just wasn't "clicking" with him in their meetings. After taking the ECHO Listening Profile, she realized she was highly Connective in her listening, while this donor, she guessed, was highly Analytical and Reflective. With some brief coaching from an ECHO Certified Practitioner, the Executive Director changed her entire approach to speak into the donor's listening preferences, and it paid off; the meeting flowed smoothly and he offered *double* what he had previously given. Personally convinced of ECHO's transformative potential, this Executive Director is now bringing the ECHO Listening Profile to the full TFA regional leadership team.

"The ECHO Listening Profile is transforming the way we approach potential donors."

-Executive Director
TFA Regional Division

The Challenge

The Executive Director of a TFA regional center (we'll call her "Leah") was having trouble convincing a past donor to renew his pledge of support in the current fiscal year. The donor, (we'll call him "David"), was the CEO of a successful local company. He had given \$5,000 in 2015 after a meeting with Leah's predecessor. In 2016 Leah met with David, who probed her with a litany of hard questions about how the organization would use his money. She became very uncomfortable, and felt slightly defensive, almost as if these questions were personal attacks on her leadership. By the meeting's end, David suggested he might donate something, but then never followed up. Now, a year later, it was time to reach out to David again, but Leah feared it would be another meeting that would result only in discomfort without a donation.

The Approach

Leah attended a sales training for TFA's regional executive directors and development leaders that incorporated the ECHO listening profile at its core. She found out she was highly Connective in her listening, and tended to connect easily with people on an emotional level. David, on the other hand, was highly Analytical and Reflective in his listening, and wanted to hear facts and data that would be relevant to him and his purposes. Leah realized that when meeting with David, while she was trying to establish a personal connection (and feeling like she was flailing), he was just waiting for the facts. With the help of the Certified ECHO Practitioner, Leah practiced role-playing for her next meeting with David.

The Solution

"Don't try to make too much small talk with David" the ECHO practitioner said, "Welcome his questions as signs of curiosity rather than interrogations. Find out what he needs to know, then give him the answers, and no more." Dropping her conversational approach felt counterintuitive to Leah. But she practiced this new approach and it paid off. When she met with David, he showed up the exact same way, but because Leah changed her whole approach with him, the conversation flowed extremely well. Leah even began to see David more as a partner in the work posing very insightful questions.

"Once Leah learned to identify the listening styles of potential donors, she became much more confident at speaking into their needs and subsequently gaining their interest."

-ECHO Certified Practitioner



The Results

At the close of the meeting, he pledged \$10,000, which was double what he had pledged in the past. Leah achieved these results by shifting how she listened to David's questions, and sticking to facts. By speaking into David's listening, she kept David much more engaged. He began asking more questions, which Leah addressed succinctly, and by the end of the meeting he pledged more than double what he had pledged in any previous year. Leah was so impressed her quickly-implementable insights of the ECHO Listening Profile that she is bringing it to the full Teach for America regional leadership team.