

## 9 Ways to Do Planned Giving When That's Not All You Do

Planned giving seems to be one of those things most development professionals know they need to do, but don't quite get around to doing. That's understandable. Current cash and pledges may be the organization's focus. It does take some special expertise to close planned gifts. There may be many, many things that take priority.

Consider this: the more planned gifts you close, the better for your organization and the people it serves. Even if you have other things you're responsible for, planned giving can work for you. Here are nine ideas on how to get it done.

### 1. Understand the opportunity of planned gifts.

While most people will never consider a planned gift, those who do can have a huge impact on your organization. Through a bequest, gift annuity, or other arrangement, donors can magnify their giving beyond writing a check. The main reason planned gifts don't happen? They're not raised. It takes active encouragement of planned gifts over time to see them happen.

### 2. Understand where 90 % of planned gifts come from.

As much as 80 percent of planned gifts come through a bequest. Roughly 10 percent come through gift annuities. The remainder is made up of trusts, pooled income funds, bargain sales, insurance gifts, and other giving vehicles. Focus on where the money is to maximize your time. That would be bequests and gift annuities.

### 3. Get ongoing training.

There is no good excuse to avoid training for planned gifts. Even if this isn't your favorite area of fundraising, you owe it to your organization to have a working knowledge of planned gifts.

### 4. Network with others in your situation.

Development professionals are collegial and willing to help their peers. Use your personal network to get to know people who have more expertise on planned gifts than you do—planned giving directors, consultants, directors of development. Pick their brain when you need to.

### 5. Focus on bequests.

Not only do most planned gifts come through bequests, they are also the simplest gift for you to assist. It takes two or three sentences in someone's will to name you as a recipient of part of the estate. Keep that language handy.

## 6. Seek major gift/planned gift combinations.

Someone who can give to a capital campaign can often make an even larger gift by including a planned gift arrangement. For example, a 65 year old donor may give \$500,000 to a campaign from their cash income and reserves. By using an asset, such as real estate or personal property, they might be able to increase that gift to \$1,000,000.

## 7. Promote planned gifts regularly.

A vital key to receiving planned gifts is regular promotion of your desire to receive them. Use various marketing methods to get the word out and get creative, but remember *the most important thing is a regular flow of information*. You never know when a donor is ready to listen to what you're promoting.

## 8. Schedule planned gift time.

Go through your calendar and mark off specific times in your week and month when you can work on planned gifts. A simple "PG" in your planner can keep planned gifts top of mind. Discipline yourself to make planned gift contacts on a steady basis.

## 9. Set planned gift goals.

Planned gifts are difficult to predict, especially when there is no "program" for them. Just the same, it's important to set goals for planned gifts. How do you measure activity? Start with dollars received, dollars committed, number of personal visits made, and types of arrangements secured.

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