

DAY 5 – Look for a new donor

Hi, welcome back to the Focus Action Week Building better relations with your donors. And today we are at day 5 and we're going to be looking for a new donor. I'm guessing that is something that some of you have been waiting for to get to this stage. And so finally, here we are. So I'm just going to say quickly, Hi, I'm sure we must have met in a Facebook group by now. If not, please jump into the group and introduce yourself and join the discussion and the exchange there.

And I just want to refresh our memories about the context of why we're here. Why are we investing time in building better relations with your donors? Well, first of all, it's very clear, of course, because you need resources so that you can do the work that you need to do to achieve your mission, which is to make something in this world, better cleaner, safer, of better quality, et cetera, et cetera, it depends on your mission. By now I know hopefully much more about that, but when I'm recording this, I don't know yet who you all are of course. So you have a dream to make something better in this world. And in order for that dream to come true, you need to do work. And in order for you to do that work, you need resources and donors are the sources of those resources. And they are willing or even happy to give those resources to you, which are their resources let's not forget about that. They're giving us resources that belong to them, that they are fully entitled to, but they will be happy to give them to you or to share it with you, if they know that you are aligned with their dreams, so that your mission is aligned with their dreams. And if they know that, if they also like how you are working to make those dreams come true.

And if they trust that you're doing this in an accountable way, in a reliable way, and with integrity, in the way that they would also do it, if they were able to do the things that you are doing. And this Know, Like, and Trust is super important, it's the key of everything you do. Of course, also in your work with the community that you're serving, but also in a way, the donors are also a community that you're serving and this Know Like, and Trust applies also to them. And, you know, from experience, I'm sure, that it takes time to build this and to maintain it as well. It takes time, it takes attention. It takes energy. You need to be intentional about this.

And it's super important to know how to do this and to build a routine in this, because we're not talking about you maintaining good relations and building Know, Like, and Trust with one person or two or three, but it could in the end, be quite a lot of different people who might be representing different organizations or who might simply be different private individual donors.

Because if you want your organization to be stable and flexible at the same time, you're going to be needing to have different kinds of donors and to have several donors of each kind. So that means that you're looking at quite a few. Yeah, I put here many but that sounds maybe too scary. In the end, it will be many, but you need quite a few and also different people to build those relations with.

So it really requires you to be focused on that and to be intentional, to work on that. And we all know that this is important, but we also all know that the reality in a nonprofit organization makes it difficult to focus on this on a daily basis, even though we know it is important. But there are always so many things that are urgent and also important, or maybe just urgent, that are usually taking precedence during the day. Right? I know that from my work in nonprofits for more than 25 years by now, and I'm sure you know this also. So that's why I'm hosting this Focus Action Week so that we can work on this together. We can get together every day for a whole week and we can build a routine together that you have time in your day to work on this.

First of all, because you're watching this video, you're going to be doing the assignment. And we're building a routine in that we're going to be repeating some of the steps that we have been doing this week. So that you're going to build a routine in those steps. And you're going to plan for a routine for after this week. And I'm sure that if you are able to focus on this for a whole week, you will amaze yourself and your team with what you can achieve with just this one week of intentional work on donor relations. And I hope that will help you keep it up with the planning that you'll make on day 7 after this week as well. Okay. So here is what we're going to be doing. We have been doing quite a lot of this already.

We have worked on the basis. We've looked at who your donors are. We have looked at what your donors will see if they find you online on your social media profile and on your website and in your newsletter, maybe. We have developed messages. We have sent out messages. Hopefully you have been able to track and record responses. And now we are ready to look at new donors.

How can we find them? Where can we find them? And then in the next two days, we're going to be looking at engaging with donors, both older donors and new donors. And we're going to be looking at planning a future routine for this work. And by now you know how we do this. I'm not going to spend time on this.

But I just want to highlight that coming Sunday, the 4th of July is the final day. On that day, you will receive a final email from me with a final assignment. And after Wednesday, the 7th of July, I will take all the materials offline. So please make sure that you download everything that you want to download from the audio files and the transcripts and the worksheets and presentations.

Because after the 7th of July, it will be gone. And on the 7th of July, I will also archive our Facebook group so that you can still use it as a basis for searching, but you can no longer post or comment in it. There will be other ways that we can stay in touch and continue to work together. But we'll talk about that later, when this becomes more urgent for us to talk about.

Now it's time to get started looking at how can we find a new donor. That's what we're going to be doing. And because donor retention, keeping our existing donors happy is just as important as finding new donors, we're also going to spend some time on drafting another message. The same as on day 3. Well, not the same message, but the same assignment. Okay. So look for a new donor. Well, that's something as you can see, I think this is quite a familiar scheme. I won't do it. I can't do it. I want to do it. How do I do it? I'll try to do it and I can do it. And in the end, yes, I did it. Looking for a new donor is for quite a lot of us, something quite scary because on one hand, quite a lot depends on it. You really need new donors. So it's quite important. At same time, it feels difficult, scary, challenging, and something that you will fail at quite easily. And I can say that, especially if you're looking for a grant, of course you need to build in that you can handle rejection. Because I have been in several organizations where I was working the most successful fundraiser in terms of raising grant money, generating grant money. But still, that doesn't mean that each proposal that I sent was successful. So, even if you are the most successful fundraiser in an organization, then it doesn't mean that you have hundred percent success score.

So it is something that you will fail at. You might send a proposal that is not awarded. You might approach a private individual for a donation, and they might say no, so that's going to happen. And that's why it sounds

for some people very scary, difficult, and it's difficult to get started with this sometimes because of the pressure around it.

So I just wanted to highlight that and just tell you really that a hundred percent success, I have never met anybody who had that in terms of finding new donors or submitting grant proposals. And I also don't think that it is really possible because you might have the perfect proposal, but it might be the wrong time. You might find the right private individual donor, but it might not be the right time for you to ask them for a donation. It might not be the right time for them to give you that donation. So there are a lot of things that are out of your control. The only thing that you can control is how you present yourself. So you can make sure that your proposal is of great quality and you can make sure that your communications with your donors are clear and that's it.

So please, the whole week we are focusing on what we can do so far. Everything has been within our control. What we have been writing, what we have been sending, what we have been finding at our communication platforms and our donor data sheet. Looking for a new donor is something where it might get tricky. And that means that it's even more important that we focus on the parts of this process that we can control, that we are in charge of.

And first of all, I want to say, and I've said it before. It is equally important to invest in retention of existing donors, to invest in keeping your current donors happy so that they will stay, as it is to look for new donors. We are not looking at donors as throw away contacts. We are trying to build a reliable and lasting pool of donors that are going to be our trustworthy supporters for years to come.

So that means that we need to invest in keeping the current donors happy. And we shouldn't spend all our time looking for new donors and forgetting about the ones that we have now, the ones that we should serve now. And that we can serve now because we know who they are and we know what they need, and we know what we need to do to give that to them. And keep in mind that happy donors can also grow and they can help us.

And by growing, I mean that if you have a donor who has been with you for a while, and maybe has been giving you a small amount every month, it might be that if you ask them, they might be able to increase their monthly contribution or their quarterly contribution, or maybe their annual contribution with a little bit. It might be from, I don't know, \$5 to \$6, or maybe from 10 to 12, whatever it is. It might not seem much. But if you have a few of them who are increasing their donations with a small amount then taken together, it amounts to a lot, right? Then it isn't really nothing. And then it becomes something that is significant and that gives you more resources to do the work that you need to do.

So happy donors may grow. And because you have been building relations with them, this is something that you might know, what is the right time to ask them to increase their donation, maybe to increase the amount or increase the frequency or something like that. And the same is also true for how they might be able to help you. They might know somebody who could also become a donor, somebody who shares the same dream and who could also feel served by you in achieving their dream and who might be willing and able to support you and to be your donor, too. All these things come out of building good relations with your current donors and making sure that your current donors who will be ambassadors for you as well. So that is why today you're going to, again, go back to day 3 and you're going to be writing a message for one of your existing donors. And again, if you don't have a donor yet, then you're going to be writing a post for your

social media platforms. Okay. Now let's talk about new donors. That's what you want to talk about. So let's talk about that. So as I said before, you can ask your current donors for inspiration and maybe even for concrete help, concrete assistance, to understand what kind of people would like to join as a donor and where to find them. And they might really even be interested in practically helping you and maybe as an ambassador of your organization, approaching people themselves directly to ask them whether they would like to become a donor to your organization as well.

And because they are a donor themselves already, they might be able to convince those other people through their own enthusiasm. Of course, and we get back to the basics, your current donors then need to be happy, of course, and they need to know that you need other donors. They need to know what kind of donors you need in terms of what is the support that you need. And they need to be able to tell those other people something about you. So you need to have been feeding them with information about what you're doing with stories, with tips and with things that they can easily share. And of course you need to have pointed them to your website or Facebook page or Instagram profile, that they can also reference when they are talking to other people. So you see that all the previous steps that you have been taking are relevant also to this stage where you might ask your donors, your volunteers, your team, your board, to help understand what kind of people could be the ideal donor for you, where to find them and how to approach them.

And then when you know more about where to find those people, make sure you go to those places, whether they are Facebook groups of people sharing a certain hobby or other chat platforms, or whether it's a physical place, a location, a cafe, or a hobby club or sports club where those potential donors are, where they like to hang out, and then make sure that you try to learn as much as you can about those people before you start talking about what you want from them. Try to make sure that you find out if they do indeed share something in common with you, if they have a shared dream. And then once you know more about that, you have found a hook so that you can link your story to something that is relevant to them. So that's means that in the beginning, you're going to be listening more than you're going to be talking. Because you need to be a detective, you need to find out everything you can about them so that you know, what is important to them. And so that you can figure out whether they are a good match to you or not. And if you see that they're a good match, then you will know better what the point of the match is exactly. And then you will know better what is the thing that you do, that you work for, that is really important to them and why it is important to them. And then it's easier for you to bring that in the conversation and to be more convincing to them. Then if you would start out by telling them a general story, that they haven't asked to hear, because they are there for their hobby, they're there to meet their friends. So make sure that you start by listening, look for the hook and then start to share a relevant story with them so that they can self identify that you are fulfilling their dreams. So that they will start asking you, Hey, what do you need.

I would like to join you. What can I do? How can I support you? That's important. So then the other thing we've been talking now about private individuals who are giving private donations from their own earned money, but of course, there's also donors that are grantmaking donors. Donors that give grants for project proposals. So if you're looking for a grant, the first step again is to ask around. Maybe there are people in your community, other nonprofit organizations, people in the community that you serve, who know about certain donors that are active in that location, or actively working on that topic or who have started coming out to that location or presenting themselves in that topic. So ask around, say that you're looking for a grant and ask people whether they know of a possible source for a grant.

Also, what you can do is look at annual reports or publications of other nonprofits who are working in the same location or on the same topic and see who are their donors. Their donors might be organizations that

could also be interested in giving you a grant. And so if you look at those annual reports and then you try to Google those donors online and see what their priorities are, what their strategies are, you might then find that some of them might be interested in what you do as well. Another source of information could be embassies in your country. The embassy itself might have a program to support certain things. There are a lot of embassies that are focusing on cultural activities, cultural collaboration, or maybe sports, things like that.

It depends of course, on your country and on the country of the embassy. But a lot of embassies have such small grant possibilities. And they might also know about organizations in their home country that are working with local partners in your country. So they might also have additional information for which you need to build up a connection with somebody in that embassy in order to find that out.

And then of course you can also go to good old Google and search there and set up an alert for your search. If you think it's a good search, then you can set up an alert so that you can be notified when new search results pop up, or you can use a search service like Funds for NGOs, et cetera, where you can regularly check for opportunities for your topic or your country, or both. In the worksheet I have shared a few such links so that you can use those as a starting point. In those search services there are always free options and also paid options. I'm not sure that the paid option would be valuable to you right now. I would first try out the free options that each of those services has before you decide to invest in a subscription.

Because you never know whether that's really the kind of information that you need, or that you cannot find yourself very easily. Of course, the trade off with those services is that they do the searching and they save you time. But maybe if you are working on a very specific topic or in a very specific location, it might be that those services cannot really save you too much time after all.

So I would first check out the free versions before you go to a paid subscription. So let's think about what you should do for today. That's all in the worksheet that you can download where you are watching this video. So first of all, focus on donor retention: draft one message for a current donor or draft a message for your social media posting of course, if you don't have a donor yet. Then choose what donor type to look for. Whether you want to find a private individual or a grantmaking donors. Because that then will inform the next step to take, you'll see that in the worksheet that you choose the type of donor to look for. And then for each type of donor, there are some steps listed. So if you now choose one type of donor and you download the worksheet, then you can follow the steps for the other types of donors later, after this week is done. So all the steps are there, but just for now choose one type of donor to work on today. Don't try to do all of them today.

Just know that in the worksheet there's information for all of them. Once you have chosen the type of donor, you want to look for then follow the steps above that I explained before. And also follow what is in the worksheet to try and find a donor. And then I'm looking forward to hearing about that in the Facebook group, of course, and then make sure that you set aside some time in the coming days for the next steps in the search process. So plan the next steps that you need to take, and then make time for that in your calendar. And share in the Facebook group the steps that you've taken, the plan that you have made, and maybe any questions that you have, or maybe if you have already success then please feel free to share that in the group as well. And if you have any questions at all, either about the messaging or about looking for new donors, feel free to post them in the Facebook group. And by now, you know, that it's filled with people that share the same wish as you do to make the world better, maybe on a different location, in a different

area. But nevertheless, we're all sort of colleagues in the group and there's a lot of knowledge and experience there. So please come to the group and share either your knowledge by answering questions that somebody else has posted, maybe reviewing a draft message that somebody has posted there and also feel free to share your questions and dilemmas because then others, including maybe I myself, can give you maybe a tip or feedback or just a pep-talk to cheer you on. Right? So I'm looking forward to hearing in the Facebook group, how this step has been for you. Don't forget to share your draft message in the group so that we can give feedback on that. And don't forget to set aside some time to give feedback to others, as I said before, and I think you have found that on day 3 and day 4, you can learn quite a lot from also giving feedback to others because it helps you look at your own communications and your own messages with a little bit more distance, and to understand really whether they are totally clear or maybe could do with a little bit of tweaking and become better, stronger and clearer. So for now, well done and looking forward to seeing you in the Facebook group then. And yeah, we're almost there. It's hard to believe, but we've been doing quite a lot and I'm very curious to hear from you how that has been for you and where you think you have gained the most insight until now. Okay. This may be too difficult question for now, but anyway, see you in the Facebook group. Bye.