

3

MINUTE MASTERY

STOP CHASING GIFTS.

**START CULTIVATING
RELATIONSHIPS.**

The gift is a moment.
The relationship is the strategy.

ONE IDEA. ONE ACTION. 3 MINUTES.

GROW DONORS. GROW GIVING. GROW IMPACT.

The gift is not the relationship.

Fundraising can train us to celebrate the transaction.

The campaign closes. The gift comes in. The thermometer moves. We say thank you - and then attention shifts to the next goal, the next event, or the next donor.

But the donor did not experience a transaction. They made a decision to believe in something.

The first gift should not trigger the next ask.

It should trigger the beginning of cultivation.

Cultivation is the work between the gifts: learning what matters to the donor, showing them the impact of their generosity, creating meaningful connection, listening, following through, and helping them find a deeper place in the mission.

When we chase gifts, we optimize for moments. When we cultivate relationships, we build trust that can compound for years.

Four shifts that change donor cultivation.

1. FROM ASKING TO KNOWING

Before asking what the donor can give next, ask what you actually know about them: motivation, interests, connection to the mission, preferences, and experience.

2. FROM CAMPAIGN CALENDAR TO DONOR JOURNEY

Your communication calendar tells you what the organization wants to say. A donor journey starts with what the relationship needs next.

3. FROM ACTIVITY TO INTENTION

More emails, calls, and events do not automatically create stronger relationships. Every touch should have a purpose: thank, learn, show impact, connect, engage, ask, or follow up.

4. FROM GIFT VALUE TO RELATIONSHIP VALUE

A donor's last gift is only one signal. Engagement, advocacy, referrals, volunteering, responsiveness, recurring behavior, and growing affinity can reveal much more.

Stop asking only: When can we ask again?

Start asking: What does this relationship need next?

Take 10 donors and change the next move.

Pull 10 donors your team would normally place into the next solicitation. Before you send anything, answer these questions.

QUESTION	YOUR ANSWER
1. Why did this person first choose to give?	
2. What have we done since the last gift besides ask?	
3. What have we learned about what matters to them?	
4. What relationship signal are we seeing right now?	
5. What is one meaningful next touch with no immediate ask?	

Now make that touch. Thank them again. Share a story tied to what they care about. Ask a question. Invite them to see the work. Introduce them to someone connected to the mission. Close a loop you promised to close.

**The next best action does not always produce a gift.
Sometimes it produces the trust that produces the gift.**

TAKE IT WITH YOU

Build believers, not just donors.

Nonprofits do not need donors who simply respond to more asks.

They need people who understand the mission, believe in the work, see their role in the impact, and choose to stay connected.

That happens when cultivation becomes a discipline - not something squeezed between campaigns.

Know them.

Thank them.

Listen to them.

Show them the impact.

Invite them deeper.

Then earn the right to ask.

THIS IS INTELLIGENT DONOR SUCCESS™

Donor Success helps nonprofit teams move beyond transactions with donor health scoring, recommended next actions, donor journeys, relationship intelligence, and tools designed around cultivation.

Visit donorsuccess.com to learn more.

Grow Donors. Grow Giving. Grow Impact.