An Abbreviated Masterclass in Discovery Work

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Agenda

- Initiating Memorable Conversations with Benefactors
- Mastering Key Questions to Unlock Deeper Conversations
- Structuring Natural Follow-Ups to Advance Relationships
Qualification is not necessarily the first step in the benefactor engagement process! There is pre-work to be done.
Discovery work is...

- Building a relationship from the ground up... and for the long-term
- Learning more about affinity, inclination, and wealth/capacity
- Building trust
- An opportunity to make philanthropy a different experience than simply a transaction
- Possibly the first point-of-contact between a benefactor/potential benefactor and your organization
Where we start

Discovery work efforts should be rooted in:

- Gratitude
- Authentic curiosity and inquiry
- Open-ended questions
- Natural follow-up
- Openness to uncertainty and variety of conversations
#1: Initiating Memorable Conversations with Benefactors
Find Your Voice Then Lose The Script

- Introduce yourself immediately and the reason for your call
- Center outreach around gratitude and appreciation
- Ask what inspired their gift(s)
- Gauge interest and openness to follow up questions and conversation
- It’s OK if it’s just a “thank you”
Lauren: Hi, this is Lauren calling to say thank you from the Office of Advancement at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. Is John available?

Benefactor: This is John.

Lauren: John, I was calling today to simply say thank you... I saw you recently made a gift to support the CU School of Medicine, and our office believes in the power of pausing in our day to call and say thank you!

PAUSE... FORK IN THE ROAD!
Navigating Two Types of Calls

John: *silence*.... Uh, sure it was no problem.

Lauren: If you don’t mind my asking, what inspired your generous gift?

John: You know, now isn’t a good time to talk right now. I’m in the middle of something.

Lauren: That’s no problem, thank you again for your generous support!

John: Of course! CU means a lot to me and I’m happy to give back.

Lauren: If you don’t mind my asking, what inspired your generous gift?

John: CU was the launching pad to my career as a surgeon, and I realized it was time for me to start paying it forward.

Lauren: That’s amazing – we are so grateful… (more discovery work or ask to stay connected)
Greetings from CU Anschutz and the Office of Advancement. I want to thank you, most sincerely, for your very generous giving over the years (dating back to the 80s!) to many different areas across campus. We are grateful for your investments and honored to be considered a partner in your philanthropy.

I’m reaching out to see if you’d be open to connecting via a quick call or Zoom in the coming weeks. I’d appreciate the opportunity to learn more about your reasons behind giving, to learn how/if I can be a resource to you in your philanthropy at CU and to learn how I can best keep you updated on the impact you are having.

Thank you for all that you do!

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Quick stats:
- Mailed 25 letters
- Uncovered $30,000 bequest
- Opened 3 other planned giving conversations
- Received a call about increasing IRA giving
- DQ’ed 6 people

First, I want to thank you for your very generous and loyal support of the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus over the last XX years. We recognize that as an incredible display of dedication and loyalty to our mission. The thoughtful investments that benefactors like you make at CU Anschutz are among our most vital sources of support. We cannot thank you enough. Your partnership impacts the work happening on our campus and in our communities.

Often times I find that benefactors like you, who are incredibly loyal and generous, are also interested in learning about ways to make a long-term difference through their philanthropy and leaving a legacy at CU to ensure students, faculty, researchers and patient care continue to thrive for generations to come.

There are a number of ways that benefactors choose to make this type of investment – gifts in your will, IRA rollovers, retirement account designations, gifts of appreciated stock, etc. I would welcome a conversation with you to learn more about what has inspired your giving, your philanthropic goals and how/if I can be a resource to your continued investments in CU Anschutz.

I will follow up on this note via phone in the coming weeks. In the meantime, if you need anything or would like to connect sooner, please feel free to reach out to me. My email is lauren.wise@cuanschutz.edu and my phone number is 303-724-6260.

If we don’t have the chance to connect or if this is not of interest to you, there is absolutely no pressure. I am always here as a resource. Please know how grateful we are for your dedicated and invaluable support.

With gratitude,

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#2: Mastering Key Questions to Unlock Deeper Conversations
Why Are Good Questions Important and What Purpose Do They Serve?

- Open-ended
- Ability to listen for clues and nuggets of information related to wealth, capacity, inclination, present circumstances, philanthropic nature, meaning behind gift
- Have your “qualification filters” going
- Take past contact reports and research with a grain of salt

Remember: Just like we have to earn the right to ask, we sometimes have to earn the right to ask certain questions.
Top 12 Questions
What inspired your gift to Anschutz?

What has your experience been like...?

What impact has CU Anschutz had on your life?

How did you first get connected to Anschutz?

What do you like to do for fun?

What are you passionate about?

What other organizations do you like to support with your time and money?

What has been your most meaningful gift?

How did you learn to be philanthropic?

How do you feel about your current level of involvement with CU?

What gets you up in the morning? What brings you joy?

What is one of your most proud personal or professional moments?
WHAT YOU ARE HOPING TO LEARN

● Affinity to your organization
● Wealth and capacity to give
● Philanthropic nature

HOW TO ACTUALLY SAY IT

• How did you first get connected to _____?
• What inspired your gift?
• What was most memorable about your experience with _____?

• What do you like to do for fun?
• Any trips you’ve taken recently or any coming up?

• What has been the most meaningful gift you’ve given? Why?
• What other organizations do you like to support?

“There’s no such thing as small talk.”
Fork In the Road

- Gathered lots of information over the course of time – now what?
- Decision around whether or not to continue on in your discovery work process based on what you've heard and processed
- Be open to uncertainty here
#3: Structuring Natural Follow-Ups to Advance Relationships
Always Be Thinking About Next Steps

• How can you continue the conversation and how can a next engagement deepen trust?
• When in doubt, lead with stewardship
• Natural and authentic touchpoints - find an excuse to reach out
• Remember the calls and interactions that have turned into warm conversations and acceptance of further engagement
Organizing and Managing Your Time

• **Calendaring**
  — Holds and work blocks to make calls and outreach
  — Immediately add follow up "tickler" to calendar for 3-6 months from now - "reach out to ___"

• **Frequency**
  — 3 attempts to move relationship forward and build relationship in 6-12 months
  — Monthly: Review portfolio and map out next steps
  — Quarterly: At least 1 "discovery work day" (no meetings)

• **Spreadsheets**
  — Keeping track of mapped out next steps
  — Established portfolio: Tier A = top gift conversations in 1-2 years; Tier B = working toward gift convo in 2-3 years; Tier C = have had conversations and need to learn more; Tier D = pure discovery, need to get in touch
End a call or visit on the right note

Ask permission to keep the door open

- “Would it be OK if I reached out a few times a year with some updates around what’s happening on campus?”
- “Would you be open to continuing our conversations?”
- “How do you prefer to be communicated with?”
- “If it’s OK with you, I will do some digging and get back to you.”
- “Would it be OK with you if I followed up with...”
• Thank you calls, check in calls
• Celebrate milestones: birthdays, giving milestones, anniversary of first gift/large gift
• These touchpoints can help pick up conversations where they left off
• Leaving voicemails and following up with an email
  • “I’m pressing send on an email now…”
EXAMPLE:
"I saw this and thought of you."

- The power of human connection as a development professional
- Find articles already out there that even loosely relate to their giving
- Invite them to events that bring them closer to the mission
EXAMPLE: Serve as an End-of-Year Giving Resource

- Most people make giving decisions at the end of the year – acknowledge that and be there for that
- Excuse to send your contact information
- “I’m here to be a resource.”
- Renewal call program:
  - Personal phone call to ask to renew or increase giving
  - New metric for pipeline building
Thank you!

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Open discussion:

What’s on your mind?

What questions do you have for the group?

What tools do you use that you can share with the group?