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## When do you ask for a gift?

It is time to ask for a gift when “the four rights” are in place. This means that you know enough about the donor to make the best choice about each of these four factors. You will find these things out slowly, as the donor is ready to communicate them to you. Don’t try to rush the process. Often a year or eighteen months elapses between the first awareness of a donor and the right moment to solicit a gift.

### 1. The right person

Some people are hard to say “no” to, because of charisma, sincerity, community leadership, or civic stature. The *essential* prerequisite is: the solicitor must be a donor to the project.

### 2. The right amount

It is very important to ask for a specific amount, or a range. Leaving it to the donor’s discretion will likely baffle the donor and lead to a disappointing gift. Different donors have different ways of deciding how much to give to what organizations, but thoughtful donors go through a process like this:

- a. Impact of your organization in making the world better
- b. Divided into the importance of your organization’s sector to the donor (environment vs. politics vs. church vs. education)

- c. Divided into total philanthropic dollars available minus current obligations
- d. Plus the Mystery Factor: persuasiveness and charisma of solicitor

### **3. The right project**

Some donors like to give for building campaigns or other one-time project. Some prefer ongoing program funds. Some want their money to go directly to the recipient. Others are happy to strengthen the organization.

### **4. The right time**

The donor may have quarterly or yearly income, or may prefer to give at year's end. He or she may have to pay off other pledges before undertaking new commitments. Take into account whether the donor is a leader, a follower, or a maverick.