



THE SECRET SAUCE: Making the Artful Ask

Asking someone to support the YMCA can be scary! We know. Mary Heim, Fundraising Speaker, has taken the scary part out of the ask and reduced it down to three thoughtful sentences. Take a moment to review and practice. Then look at the scripts below as a helpful guide.

Write (and speak) the ask. Use these three sentences as a guide.

1. **YOU HAVE** (compliment on connection, service, past giving, status in the community).
2. **YOU UNDERSTAND** (special connection to/appreciation of the impact of the gift you are asking for)
3. **WOULD YOU** consider a gift of \$_____ for (specific use/impact) in the Annual Giving Campaign.

Example -

YOU HAVE been a member of the Y for as long as I can remember and never miss an opportunity to get in the pool! **YOU UNDERSTAND** the importance of learning to swim, especially with the Catawba River in our backyard. **WOULD YOU** consider a gift of \$100 for the Safety Around Water program that teaches children how to safely get out of the water should they fall in?

YOU HAVE been a coach for your daughters soccer team the last several seasons and I know you learned to play at the Y when you were younger too. **YOU UNDERSTAND** that youth sports is about more than playing soccer but also about being part of a team and pouring into the lives of kids. **WOULD YOU** consider sponsoring your team this year for \$350 to ensure all kids get the opportunity to play?

Practice this simple formula and use it when you are comfortable in both written and verbal asks to possible donors.

Adapted from Marcy Heim's Making the Artful Ask.

IN-PERSON MEETING GUIDE

In-person meetings are the most ideal setting though more difficult in the current climate. We appreciate the prospect's time, and hope to share with them the importance of the Y in our community and ask that they join us in making a charitable contribution to the Y.

If an in person meeting is not possible consider a virtual meeting via ZOOM or FaceTime.

Speaking Points:

- Thank the prospect for taking time to meet with you about supporting the Y.
- Share why supporting the Y is important to you, and ask if the prospect has his or her own Y story.
- After the prospect has shared his or her story, let them know that you hope they might consider joining you in supporting the Y's Annual Giving Campaign. You may wish to share that you have already made your commitment to the Y this year, and ask that they do the same.
- Ask if they might be willing to renew or pledge new support for the Y. **Remember the special sauce from above!** (For renewals, ask for more if you feel it is appropriate!)

Once you ask – WAIT for an answer. Do not be the first to speak. Give them time to process what you have said and asked of them. Give them silence to process and respond.

- If the prospect declines your request, thank them for their time and consideration. Let them know that they can give at any time to the Y throughout the year, and that there are many other ways to show support for the Y, including volunteering.
- If the prospect agrees to make a commitment to the Y, thank them for their much needed support. Let them know that it is only with the support of community leaders like them that the Y is able to deliver positive and lasting change in our community. Present them with a pledge form to confirm their commitment, and let them know that they can make an outright gift, arrange a recurring gift, or pledge a gift that can be paid any time throughout the year. The Y will send reminders for their pledge.
- Please reiterate your appreciation and thanks for their support of the Y.

TIP: LISTEN more than you speak. If you find you are speaking more than the prospect, ask them some open ended questions and LISTEN.

After the Meeting: Jot down any notes from your time with the donor. Give those notes and pledge form to your staff leader for input into our system.

ASK EXAMPLES

Based on the information you get from your opening conversation with a prospective donor, craft your ask specific for them.

The "Join Me" Ask:

You mentioned that your kids learned to swim at the Y. Mine did too. Learning safety around the water is so important for kids. I made my gift to make swim lessons more available to all kids. Would you be willing to join me and help another child learn to swim? A \$60 gift could do just that.

The "Cause" Ask:

The Y offers programs to children and teens to assist issues like the academic achievement gap. Our Y Enrichment Program helps elementary and middle school aged kids a place to learn on distance learning days or after school. For a \$100 contribution, you could help give students a safe place to be during the school day?

The "Renewal" Ask:

You were generous last year with a gift of \$500 to send a kid to camp. Each summer kids go to Y camp with help from people just like you. We want to serve all the camp families that request assistance. This year, would you consider increasing your gift to \$750. You could even spread that out with \$250 over each of the next three quarters.

The "Considerate" Ask:

"Our kids have played soccer together at the Y. Did you know that several of the kids playing on our teams, do so with the help of the Annual Giving Campaign. I'm hoping you will consider a contribution of \$200 this year, or \$ 20 per month for 10 months. Would you consider that?"

Remember to ask for a gift in terms of a benefit it provides.

PHONE CALL GUIDE

Call to prospects should be informative and impactful. Like an in-person meeting, we hope to share with them the importance of the Y in our community and ask that they join us in making a charitable contribution to the Y.

Speaking Points:

- Identify yourself and let the prospect know you are calling on behalf of the Y.
- Thank the prospect for speaking with you. If they have donated in the past, thank them for their support.
- Let them know that you're calling to discuss support for the Y.
- Share why supporting the Y is important to you, and ask if the prospect has his or her own Y story.
- After the prospect has shared his or her story, let them know that you hope they might consider joining you in supporting the Y's Annual Giving Campaign. You may wish to share that you have already made your commitment to the Y this year, and ask that they do the same.
- If appropriate, ask if they might be willing to also renew or pledge new support for a local Y event.
- If the prospect declines your request, thank them for their time and consideration. Let them know that they can give at any time to the Y throughout the year, and that there are many other ways to show support for the Y, including volunteering.
- If the prospect agrees to make a commitment to the Y, thank them for their much needed support. Let them know that it is only with the support of community leaders like them that the Y is able to deliver positive and lasting change in our community. Inform them that that they can make an outright gift, arrange a recurring gift, or pledge a gift that can be paid any time throughout the year. The Y will send reminders for their pledge.
- Please reiterate your appreciation and thanks for their support of the Y.