

SWAIM STRATEGIES

SPECIAL APPEAL STRATEGY

Pre-Committed Gifts

The key to being able to leverage giving and being strategic with your special appeal is knowing in advance what your donors are bringing to the table. This takes time to cultivate and build relationships with your major donors.

Identify any grants, matching gifts, foundation gifts or board gifts that can also be used during the special appeal.

Prospect new committed donors by talking to the board and by looking at your major donor lists to see if there is someone who would give during the event who may not have given otherwise. If a major donor is unable to attend you can still use their gift.

Create a list of those with pre-commitments, so that we can look two weeks out and get strategic about scripting the challenges with the auctioneer. Two weeks out from the event, we will look at the pre-committed gifts to develop a strategy for where to leverage each gift.

Challenges

During a special appeal, a challenge can be a great way to engage new donors or increase their level of giving. For example, if their funds can be matched at a specific level or if a donor throws a challenge to the room to join them, this can be a very compelling ask.

Make it compelling. Sometimes if you don't have a matching gift to leverage you can leverage another opportunity such as "every donor at this level will receive tickets to a private concert." Incentives can be just as effective as a matching gift.

The Appeal

Video can be a great way to focus your audience and tell a concise story. Use the video as your tool to tell the story and then use the individual to do 'the ask' with one or two very simple sentences. The video should say it all and the live speaker just brings it back down into the room. Make sure your speaker 'asks' for donations. You want a call to action that is engaging and not passive.