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Sample gift pyramids (also called gift tables)

A gift table is a mathematical calculation. Typically, gift tables are used for capital campaigns. However, gift tables can also be used for annual operating support.

As in most business ventures, fundraisers estimate that approximately 80% of the money raised comes from 20% of the donors. And sometimes, 90% of the money comes from only 10% of the donors.

Gift table for a capital campaign / initiative

Conventional criteria for capital campaign gift tables typically include: Lead gift of 10- 20% of the goal; top 10 gifts should produce 40 – 60% of the goal. Generally you need 3 – 4 times as many prospects as gifts needed.

Gift table for annual operating support

A gift table / pyramid is also useful when planning fund development activities for annual or operational fund development. Usually a gift table for an annual campaign is flatter than the capital campaign version. The capital campaign model usually includes fewer but bigger gifts.

Maintaining a gift pyramid from year-to-year can document growth and can help the organization analyze prospective increases. The organization's challenge is to identify prospects that fulfill the general projections of the gift table.

Negotiating the gift table based on your prospects

A gift table is most useful to force your organization to face reality. Do you actually have qualified prospects at these gift levels? Is your goal realistic?

Compare the gift table to your list of qualified prospects. And remember, the estimated gift amount for each prospect must be based on an evaluation of the prospect's interest, readiness and capacity. Your prospect analysis may then modify the gift table and may well adjust the dollars that can be raised.

Yes, organizations successfully raise money without adhering to the traditional gift table. *However*, the gift table helps you understand that you need gifts of diverse sizes to make your goal.

The real bottom line? You do *not* set a goal based on how much money you want. You set a goal based on various criteria that affect your ability to raise the money. These criteria include both internal and external issues. You set your fundraising goal based on such criteria as:

- Economy
- Relevance of your organization as defined by those who might give, not by you!
- Credibility of your organization
- Experience with fund development
- Number of donors, gift levels, readiness to give more
- Number of solicitors including, most especially, volunteers
- Effectiveness of relationship-building program to nurture donors
- Number of qualified prospects who are being cultivated but have not yet been asked
- And more!

Sample Gift Table to Raise \$100,000 (103 + gifts – which requires an estimated 200 + prospects)

# of gifts	Gift Range	Total \$ in Range	Cumulative Gifts
1	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
2	7,500	15,000	25,000
4	5,000	20,000	45,000
6	2,500	15,000	60,000
10	1,000	12,000	72,000
20	500	10,000	82,000
30	250	7,500	89,500
30	100	3,000	92,500
All other gifts		7,500	\$100,000

Sample Gift Table to Raise \$500,000 (53 + gifts – which requires an estimated 156 - 212 prospects)

# of gifts	Gift Range	Total \$ in Range	Cumulative Gifts
1	\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000
1	50,000	50,000	125,000
2	25,000	50,000	175,000
4	15,000	60,000	235,000
10	10,000	100,000	335,000
15	5,000	75,000	410,000
20	2,500	50,000	460,000
All other gifts		40,000	\$500,000

Sample Gift Table to Raise \$1 million (64 + gifts – which requires an estimated 200 – 260 prospects)

# of gifts	Gift Range	Total \$ in Range	Cumulative Gifts
1	\$ 125,000	\$ 125,000	\$ 125,000
1	100,000	100,000	225,000
2	75,000	150,000	375,000
3	50,000	150,000	525,000
4	25,000	100,000	625,000
8	15,000	120,000	745,000
10	10,000	100,000	845,000
15	5,000	75,000	920,000
20	2,500	50,000	970,000
All other gifts		30,000	\$1,000,000

Sample Gift Table to Raise \$2 million (122 + gifts – which requires an estimated 366 – 488 prospects)

# of gifts	Gift Range	Total \$ in Range	Cumulative Gifts
1	\$ 200,000	\$ 200,000	\$ 200,000
1	150,000	150,000	350,000
2	100,000	200,000	550,000
4	75,000	300,000	850,000
6	50,000	300,000	1,150,000
8	25,000	200,000	1,350,000
10	15,000	150,000	1,500,000
20	10,000	200,000	1,700,000
30	5,000	150,000	1,850,000
40	2,500	100,000	1,950,000
All other gifts		50,000	\$2,000,000

Sample gift table to raise \$5 million (202 + gifts – which requires an estimated 306 – 408 prospects)

# of gifts	Gift Range	Total \$ in Range	Cumulative Gifts
1	\$ 750,000	\$ 750,000	\$ 750,000
1	500,000	500,000	1,250,000
4	250,000	1,000,000	2,250,000
6	100,000	600,000	2,850,000
10	50,000	500,000	3,350,000
15	25,000	375,000	3,725,000
20	15,000	300,000	4,025,000
25	10,000	250,000	4,275,000
30	7,500	225,000	4,500,000
40	5,000	200,000	4,700,000
50	2,500	125,000	4,825,000
All others		175,000	\$5,000,000