

# The Role of Prospect Research in the Fundraising Cycle

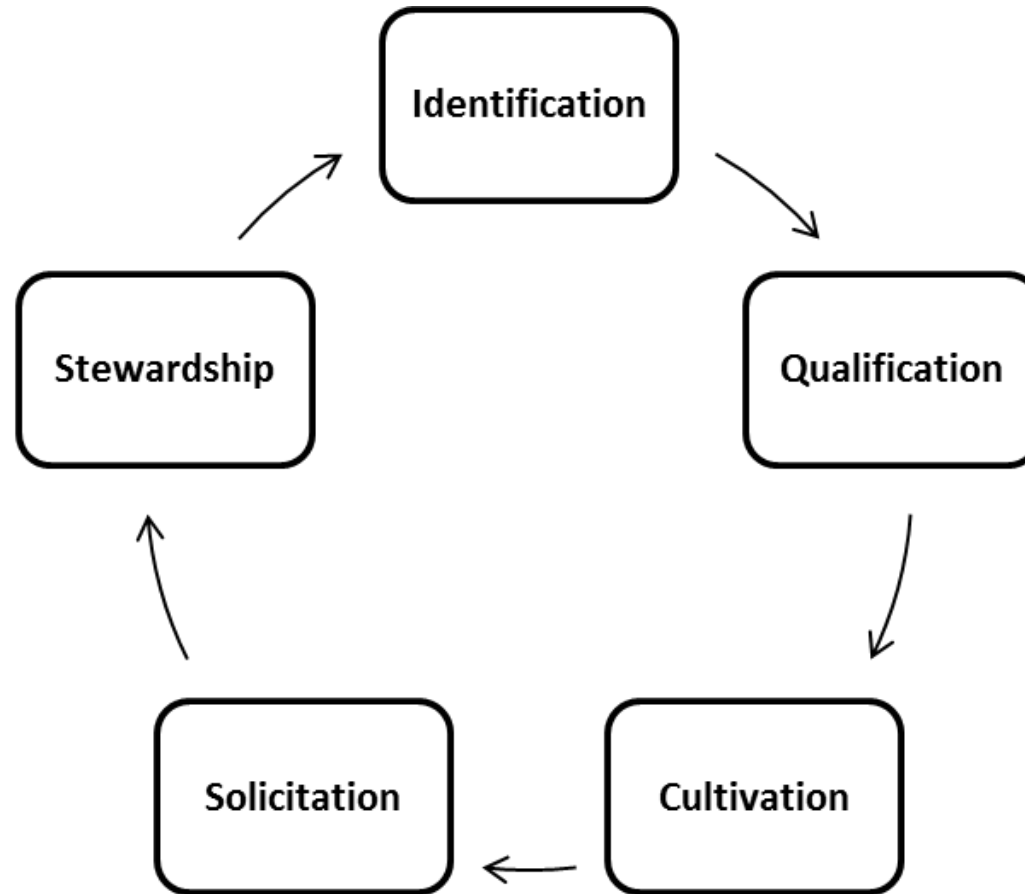


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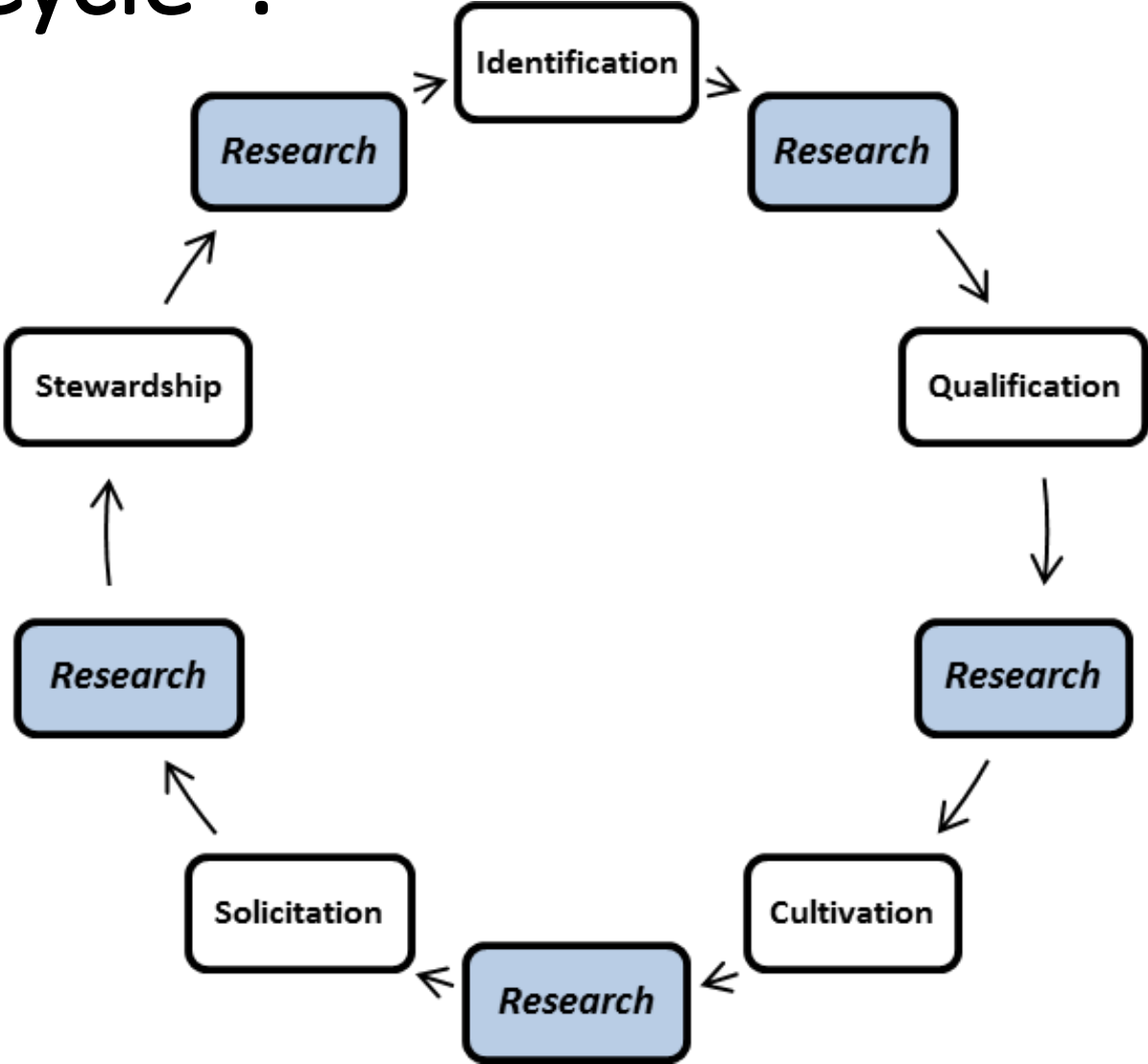
SESSION DATE: October 12, 2016

SESSION TIME: 3:15 – 4:30 pm

# The Fundraising Cycle



# The Real "Cycle"!



*Prospect Researchers Role  
is often seen as “the profile makers”  
but we’re so much more.*



# Stage 1: Identification

- Definition:
  - The act of finding out who someone is or what something is: the act of identifying someone or something



# Stage 1: Identification

## Usual Questions for a Prospect Researcher:

- We have this project...
- Who do we have as prospects for...
- Who could fund...
- Do we have any potential sponsors for...
- The CEO/ ED/ President/ Major Gift Officer is trip planning. Who do we have in ...



# Stage 1: Identification

Ever feel like you're Sherlock Holmes?



# Stage 1: Identification

## The Role of a Prospect Researcher:

- Determine new prospects
- Create Prospect Lists





# Stage 1: Identification

## Determining New Prospects:

- Database searches/ Data mining
- Brainstorming sessions with colleagues, volunteers, donors
  - Questions to ask:
    - Who do they know that might be interested
    - Would they be willing to help fund it
- Previous donors/alumni/volunteers/members



# Brainstorming Template

Prospect Name	Company	Link	Interest	Ability	Total
Joe Smith	CEO/ Acme Company	0	3	3	6
Mary Jones	Vice President/ XYZ Public Company	5	5	5	15



# Stage 1: Identification

## Tips for Identification:

- Who has given previously to like-minded projects
- Use community lists from donor walls/ magazines/ newspapers (people of interest)
- Try not to put “the usual suspects” on every list
- Oprah and Bill Gates – really?
- Capture as much information as possible during brainstorming sessions – especially anecdotal
- Confidentiality, Accuracy and Integrity are important



# Stage 2: Qualification

## Definition:

- A special skill or type of experience or knowledge that makes someone suitable to do a particular job or activity



# Stage 2: Qualification

## The Role of the Prospect Researcher:

- For researchers:
  - Determining link, interest and ability
  - Vetting the list created in the Identification stage
  - Reality check



# Stage 2: Qualification

## Link, Interest and Ability:

- Link
  - What is the prospect's connection to your organization
- Interest
  - What are the causes or projects of interest to the prospect
- Ability
  - Does the prospect have the capacity to give to your project/ cause
  - *Best prospect: Those that have all three!*



# Stage 2: Qualification

## Determining Link:

- What are the prospect's connections to your organization?
  - Capture as many connections as you can
  - The more connections a prospect has, the better
- Who does the prospect know in the organization and how?



# Stage 2: Qualification

## Determining Interest:

- What has the prospect previously funded?
- What else does the prospect support in the community?
- Where does the prospect work?
- What causes does the corporation or foundation support?
- Is the prospect's family involved in other causes?





# Stage 2: Qualification

## Determining Ability (wealth indicators):

- What amount has the prospect donated in the past?
- What has the prospect donated to others?
- What assets does the prospect own?
- What does the prospect do for a living?  
Board involvement? Salary?
- Does the prospect have a stock portfolio?
- What is the prospect's family/ life situation?



# Stage 2: Qualification

## Tips for Qualification:

- Ask colleagues/ board members for membership rosters/ programs/ sponsorship lists from events
- Track as much information on your database as possible
- Quick *Google* searches are always a good place to start



# Stage 2: Qualification

## Ranking Prospects:

- Rank link, interest and ability
- Establish parameters
  - 1 to 5
  - High to low
  - Data mining results
- Be consistent



# Stage 2: Qualification

<b>Prospect Name</b>	<b>Company</b>	<b>Link</b>	<b>Interest</b>	<b>Ability</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Joe Smith</b>	<b>CEO/ Acme Company</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Mary Jones</b>	<b>Vice President/ XYZ Public Company</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>



# Stage 3: Cultivation

## Definition:

- The act or art of cultivating or tilling.  
Cultivate: To grow or raise (something) under conditions that you can control



# Stage 3: Cultivation

## Identifying Cultivation Strategies:

- Link and ability no interest
- Interest and ability no link
- Link and interest no ability
- Low link, interest and ability



# Stage 3: Cultivation

## The Role of the Prospect Researcher:

- Establish Prospect's Influencers
  - Who are they
  - How can they help
- Determine Communication and Messaging
  - What does the organization need to tell the prospect and how
- Suggest Cultivation and Engagement Activities
  - Invitation lists and event participation
  - Promotion letters/ birthday cards



# Stage 3: Cultivation

## Tips for Cultivation:

- Get to know your organization
  - Programs and services
  - Communication vehicles
- Get creative
- It's only a suggestion





# Stage 4: Solicitation

## Definition:

- The practice or act of an instance of soliciting.
- Solicit: To ask for (something, such as money or help) from people, companies etc.



# Stage 4: Solicitation

## The Role of the Prospect Researcher:

- Profile production
- Helping to determine “The Ask”
  - *The right amount, at the right time, by the right person.*



# Stage 4: Solicitation

## Determining the Right Amount:

- What do the wealth indicators indicate?
- What is the appropriate type of gift to ask for?
  - Cash/ Stock/ Planned Gift/ Property
  - Business Sponsorship or personal cheque
- What are the possible naming opportunities/ recognition?
- What is the organization's typical major gift size?
- Does the project being proposed have a minimum ask?
- Does the prospect work for a Matching Gift company?



# Stage 4: Solicitation

## Determining the Right Time:

- What is the prospect's cash flow?
  - Sale of Business
  - Stock options
- Has the prospect just gone through major life events?
  - Birth of child
  - Children in University
- What is the participation timing for the Ask?
  - Beginning or end of campaign
  - Urgency



# Stage 4: Solicitation

## Determining the Right Person:

- Should the Ask be joint or individual?
- Should the Ask be corporate or family foundation?
- Who are the prospect's influencers? Should the influencer be in part of the Ask?
- Who is the best person from your organization to be part of the Ask? Staff or volunteer? Why?
- If Staff, should the Ask come from CEO or Major Gift Officer or?



# Stage 4: Solicitation

## Tips for Solicitation:

- Note the type of recognition of previous donations to your organization and others on the profile
- Keep in mind economic and other world events
- Provide key items of information from who/ what and when to those preparing Ask proposals
- Know what projects are needing funding and respective recognition levels or naming opportunities.



# Stage 5: Stewardship

## Definition:

- (Simple) The activity or job of protecting and being responsible for something.
- (Full) The conducting, supervising or managing of something, especially the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care.



# Stage 5: Stewardship

## The Role of the Prospect Researcher:

- Celebrate!! The Prospect Researcher is an important part of the fundraising team!
- Determine who should thank the donor and how.
- Determine what would be most meaningful and why.





# Stage 5: Stewardship

## Determining Who Should Thank and How:

- What is the organization's policy for stewardship?
  - Gift level recognition
  - Naming opportunities
  - Specific project opportunities
  - Not enough people can say thank you



# Stage 5: Stewardship

## Determining What is Meaningful and Why:

- Has the donor received recognition at other organizations for donations? What kind and how?
- Who were the donor's influencers? How can they be involved? Should they be?
- How was the gift given and who should be included in the thank you?
  - Family Foundation Board members
  - Corporation VIP's
  - Extended Family



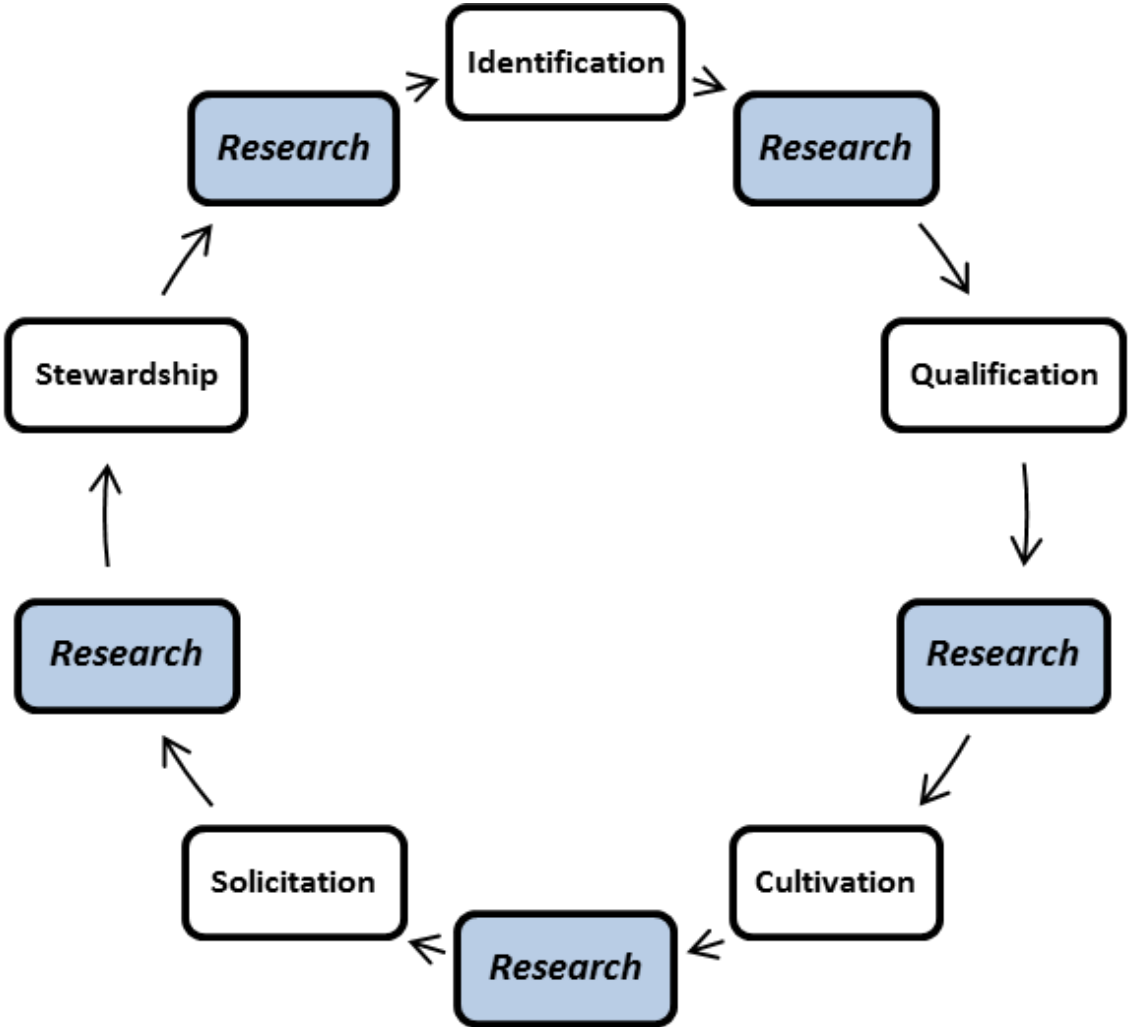
# Stage 5: Stewardship

## Tips for Stewardship:

- Know your organization's recognition policy
- Be creative but strategic
- Prospect notes during the cultivation stage can help in the stewardship stage
- Can't say thank you enough times if it's meaningful



# Fundraising Cycle Revisited



*A Prospect Researcher's Role is never done!*



# Questions?



# Thank you!!

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