

CAPTURE CORPORATE SUPPORT WITH “TWO ON TWO”®

Despite growth in other areas, giving from the corporate sector saw slower growth in 2007 (and actually declined slightly when adjusted for inflation), as companies cut their outright contributions in the face of slimmer profit margins. As many business continue to face financial pressure in 2008, it's even more important that you cultivate long-term relationships and make your organization stand out to corporations.

To accomplish this, Campbell & Company Vice President [Bill Wickenkamp](#) recommends “two-on-two,” a strategy that pairs an organization's development staff leader and top executive or board chair with a corporation's foundation or corporate giving representative and president or CEO. The point of this “peer to peer times two” approach is not to make a solicitation but to explore the corporation's and organization's mutual interests. For example, a hospital may set up a visit with a local company during which the two organizations discuss rising health care costs and what the hospital is doing to ensure financial efficiency.

To implement Two-on-Two, follow these steps:

- Request a meeting with the company's giving representative and president or CEO, being sure to note that your organization's top executive or board chair will accompany a development staff leader.
- Let the company know that your organization is examining how it can improve its services and responsiveness to the community and encourage them to come with questions or concerns they may have about your sector or your organization.
- Prepare for the meeting by brainstorming possible questions and developing responses that show how your organization is proactively addressing challenges and capitalizing on opportunities.
- In addition to answering business leaders' questions during the meeting, find out from them what services or changes they would like to see from your organization or from your industry as a whole.
- After the meeting, be patient but tenacious. The visit is an initial step in a long-term relationship and doesn't mean the company will make a gift the next day. Stay in touch with the company's leaders and giving representatives, letting them know of changes and progress you've made with respect to the topics you discussed. After you have a good foundation to your relationship, you can begin to explore how the company's giving interests align with your organizational goals.

With the right approach, you can cultivate a lasting relationship with a company that will make supporting your organization a priority, even as it cuts contributions to other groups. For more information on the “two-on-two” strategy, e-mail [Bill Wickenkamp](#).