



*Clients who adopt these ask string principles see higher average gifts.*

## How ask strings work.

### 1. Donors give in round numbers.

Donors are five times more likely to give \$25, \$50 or \$100 than amounts in-between those numbers. *Ask strings are designed to move renewing donors up to the next, round number, level.*

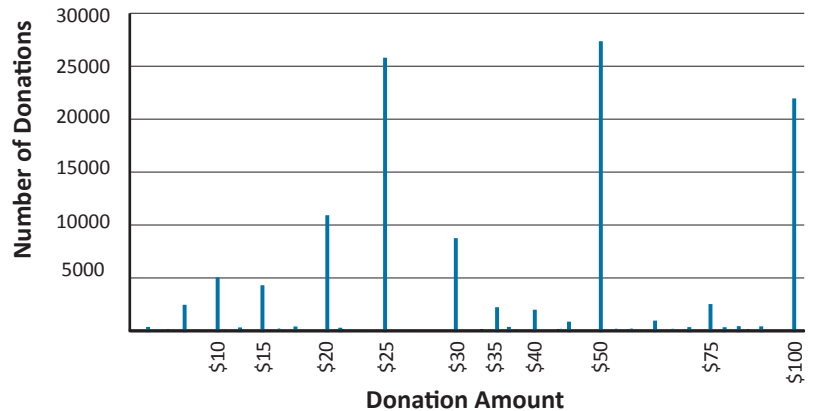
The same logic applies to higher giving levels. Donors are most likely to move up to the amounts of \$150, \$200, \$250, \$500, \$1,000, \$1,500, \$2,000, \$2,500, \$3,000, \$5,000 or \$10,000, skipping the amounts in-between.

To learn which amounts donors are most likely to give, we compiled over 160,000 annual fund gifts from 30 clients—over \$25 million in gifts.

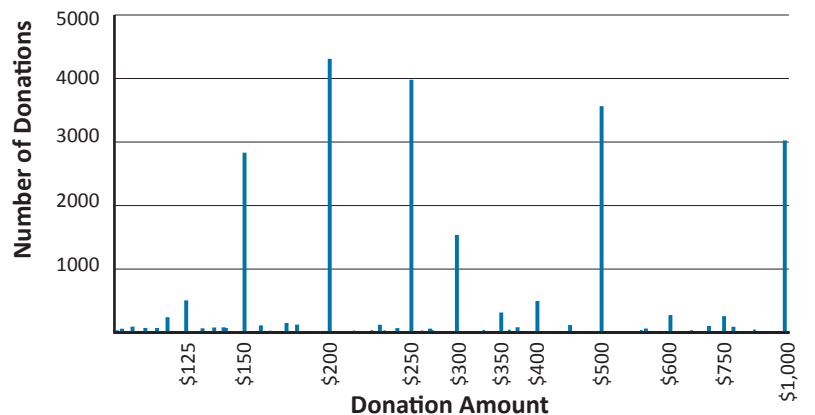
The three charts on the right show the results, broken down into three gift ranges, as shown.

*Our recommended ask string table is based on this analysis and on results from client mailings.*

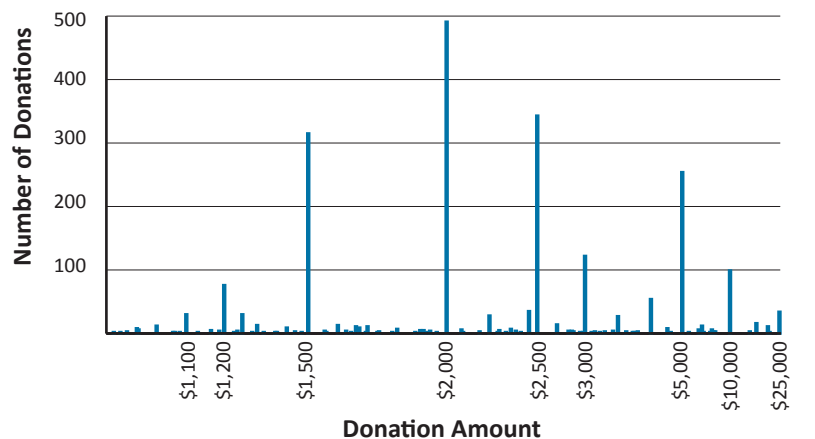
Gifts From \$0 to \$100



Gifts From \$101 to \$1,000



Gifts From \$1,001 to \$25,000



## 2. "Priming" helps.

Ask 1 of the ask string is an amount that is significantly higher than the donor's last gift. This sets a higher expectation in the mind of the donor.

If a donor previously gave \$25, seeing an ask string of \$100, \$50 and \$25 makes \$50 look like a reasonable choice.

But, an ask string of \$25, \$50, \$100 makes \$25 look like the right choice.

## 3. The Middle is the Likely Choice

There is a tendency for people to **pick the middle** of three dollar numbers. Thus Ask 2 is our target number for the next gift. Finally, Ask 3 is at or near their current level. (If their last amount was an odd amount, we round it up).

These methods are not mental laws, but they are tendencies demonstrated in statistical studies by psychologists. They reflect how the subconscious mind works according to rules of thumb, or *heuristics* as a psychologist would put it.

Analysis of our clients' annual fund results have confirmed that, properly done, ask strings increase the average annual fund gift.

## Additional Advice

1. Use an affirmation sentence (see the one to the right).
2. Remind donors of their last gift amount and date. That improves renewal rates and gift amounts. Many donors think they gave more recently and gave more money than they actually did.

## Use Our Recommended Ask String Table

The table on the next page condenses all this into a series of ask strings. You can add these into your list before sending it to us—**or ask us to do it for you.**

**Yes, Donna, I want to continue my support!**

**My previous support was \$25 in April of 2012.  
Enclosed is my contribution of:**

\$100  \$50  \$25  Other \$\_\_\_\_\_

For more examples of how to ask for gifts, visit our blog at [www.fivemaples.com/blog](http://www.fivemaples.com/blog)

For examples of reply card layouts, visit [www.fivemaples.com/response-card-gallery](http://www.fivemaples.com/response-card-gallery)

**Need help writing, designing, printing or mailing your appeal letters?  
Contact us at (800) 437-7780, or email Gary at [garyh@fivemaples.com](mailto:garyh@fivemaples.com)**

## Recommended Ask String Table

Last Gift Amount		Ask String		
From	To	Ask1	Ask2	Ask3
\$0.00	— \$0.99	\$100	\$50	\$25
\$1.00	— \$10.00	\$50	\$25	\$10
\$10.01	— \$15.00	\$50	\$25	\$15
\$15.01	— \$20.00	\$50	\$25	\$20
\$20.01	— \$25.00	\$100	\$50	\$25
\$25.01	— \$30.00	\$100	\$50	\$30
\$30.01	— \$35.00	\$100	\$50	\$35
\$35.01	— \$40.00	\$100	\$50	\$40
\$40.01	— \$50.00	\$150	\$100	\$50
\$50.01	— \$60.00	\$150	\$100	\$60
\$60.01	— \$75.00	\$150	\$100	\$75
\$75.01	— \$100.00	\$150	\$125	\$100
\$100.01	— \$125.00	\$200	\$150	\$125
\$125.01	— \$150.00	\$250	\$200	\$150
\$150.01	— \$175.00	\$250	\$200	\$175
\$175.01	— \$200.00	\$500	\$250	\$200
\$200.01	— \$250.00	\$500	\$300	\$250
\$250.01	— \$300.00	\$500	\$400	\$300
\$300.01	— \$350.00	\$500	\$400	\$350
\$350.01	— \$400.00	\$750	\$500	\$400
\$400.01	— \$500.00	\$1,000	\$750	\$500
\$500.01	— \$600.00	\$1,000	\$750	\$600
\$600.01	— \$700.00	\$1,250	\$1,000	\$700
\$700.01	— \$750.00	\$1,250	\$1,000	\$750
\$750.01	— \$800.00	\$1,250	\$1,000	\$800
\$800.01	— \$900.00	\$1,250	\$1,000	\$900
\$900.01	— \$1,000.00	\$2,000	\$1,500	\$1,000
\$1,000.01	— \$1,100.00	\$2,000	\$1,500	\$1,100
\$1,100.01	— \$1,200.00	\$2,000	\$1,500	\$1,200
\$1,200.01	— \$1,250.00	\$2,000	\$1,500	\$1,250
\$1,250.01	— \$1,500.00	\$2,500	\$2,000	\$1,500
\$1,500.01	— \$1,600.00	\$2,500	\$2,000	\$1,600
\$1,600.01	— \$1,700.00	\$2,500	\$2,000	\$1,700
\$1,700.01	— \$1,800.00	\$2,500	\$2,000	\$1,800
\$1,800.01	— \$1,900.00	\$2,500	\$2,000	\$1,900
\$1,900.01	— \$2,000.00	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$2,000
\$2,000.01	— \$2,500.00	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$2,500
\$2,500.01	— \$3,000.00	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$3,000
\$3,000.01	— \$3,500.00	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$3,500
\$3,500.01	— \$4,000.00	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$4,000
\$4,000.01	— \$5,000.00	\$10,000	\$7,500	\$5,000
\$5,000.01	— \$6,000.00	\$10,000	\$7,500	\$6,000
\$6,000.01	— \$7,000.00	\$15,000	\$10,000	\$7,000
\$7,000.01	— \$8,000.00	\$15,000	\$10,000	\$8,000
\$8,000.01	— \$9,000.00	\$15,000	\$10,000	\$9,000
\$9,000.01	— \$9,999.99	\$15,000	\$12,500	\$10,000
\$10,000.00		\$20,000	\$15,000	\$10,000



## Monthly Giving

It is well known that when donors switch to monthly giving, they have higher rates of renewal and can give higher overall amounts. Adding variable monthly giving ask amounts on the reply card is an effective way to encourage this. Following is our recommended table for monthly giving ask amounts.

**Recommended Monthly Giving Ask String Table**

Last Gift Amount		Or Previous Monthly Gift Amount		Monthly Giving Ask String		
From	To	From	To	AskA	AskB	AskC
\$0.00	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$5.00	\$25	\$10	\$5
\$50.01	\$125.00	\$5.01	\$10.00	\$25	\$15	\$10
\$125.01	\$175.00	\$10.01	\$15.00	\$25	\$20	\$15
\$175.01	\$200.00	\$15.01	\$20.00	\$30	\$25	\$20
\$200.01	\$300.00	\$20.01	\$25.00	\$50	\$30	\$25
\$300.01	\$400.00	\$25.01	\$35.00	\$50	\$40	\$35
\$400.01	\$600.00	\$35.01	\$50.00	\$125	\$100	\$50
\$600.01	\$900.00	\$50.01	\$75.00	\$125	\$100	\$75
\$900.01	\$1,100.00	\$75.01	\$100.00	\$150	\$125	\$100
\$1,100.01	\$1,500.00	\$100.01	\$125.00	\$200	\$150	\$125
\$1,500.01	\$1,800.00	\$125.01	\$150.00	\$250	\$200	\$150
\$1,800.01	\$2,000.00	\$150.01	\$200.00	\$300	\$250	\$200
\$2,000.01	\$3,000.00	\$200.01	\$250.00	\$500	\$300	\$250
\$3,000.01	\$3,500.00	\$250.01	\$300.00	\$750	\$500	\$300
\$3,500.01	\$6,000.00	\$300.01	\$500.00	\$1,000	\$750	\$500
\$6,000.01	\$7,000.00	\$500.01	\$600.00	\$1,000	\$750	\$600
\$7,000.01	\$8,000.00	\$600.01	\$700.00	\$1,000	\$750	\$700
\$8,000.01	\$9,000.00	\$700.01	\$800.00	\$1,250	\$1,000	\$800
\$9,000.01	\$10,000.00	\$800.01	\$1,000.00	\$1,500	\$1,250	\$1,000