

## Identify Your Superstars

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Superstars are the leaders who possess the magic combination of influence, access, perseverance, and fortitude to make the most effective and profitable contacts on behalf of your organization. When preparing for major campaign, first ask yourself the following:

- Who are my Superstars?
- How does my staffing plan support them?

Is your Superstar a paid member of your team, like your President, CEO, or Executive Director, or a volunteer, such as your Board or Campaign Chair, or someone entirely different? The key is to think *influence* and *impact* over title.

Once you identify your Superstar(s), ask yourself what you are doing to make him/her as successful as possible. Your Superstar's success translates directly to your ultimate success. For each of your Superstars, a development team member should be assigned to:

- Check in on a weekly basis
- Discuss contact lists
- Set up appointments
- Accompany the Superstar on appointments

Your Superstars need to be well-supported in order to be highly productive. If your staffing is thin, consider assigning one development officer to be your Superstar's "Handler." Be mindful of the power dynamic, though – seasoned, executive-type volunteers should be staffed by peers at their level, not by junior development officers.

After you've identified and secure a cadre of Superstars, turn to the Campaign Steering Committee to strategically leverage your organization's assets (including your Superstars) to maximize everyone's efforts on the campaign. This committee should be set up in a way that serves the campaign and not the other way around. The traditional way of organizing a campaign can lead to a behemoth of a volunteer committee structure that takes forever to fill and staff. By employing the Superstar/Handler relationship, you should be able to sidestep a morass of committee entanglements.

Carefully plan which events your Superstar must attend. Remember, the most important campaign "event" is the one where the right solicitors are sitting across from your best prospects, asking them to consider a six or seven-figure gift.



Lastly, your Superstar Handlers also need to be managing their own donor portfolios. Why? Because if a Handler is only handling and not producing, your Superstar will wonder why he/she is doing all of the work. If the Handler is producing, and celebrating, right along with the Superstar, then the process becomes joyous and infectious.

To recap: first, figure out how to identify, manage, and support your Superstars. The gifts they will generate are the ones at the top of the pyramid – the gifts that ultimately will make or break your campaign.