

THOUGHTS...ON FOLLOW-UP

BY TOM SUDDES

INTRODUCTION

Here is a great way to CLOSE MORE GIFTS: **FOLLOW UP!!!**

In our world, there are three parts of a great **ASK**:

PREDISPOSITION —→ PRESENTATION —→ FOLLOW-UP

In the real world, this third piece is mostly an afterthought. *“I met with them. I’ll wait for them to call back.”* UGH! This could be the worst mistake of any VISIT/ASK.

Going through the effort to Get a Visit... Share the Story... Present the Opportunity... and then NOT following up is not only wrong – it’s **disrespectful!**

Why? Because it’s not about **you**. It’s about **them!** They’ve given you their time and their attention... and it’s up to you to help them move from Success to Significance and be truly happy that they have been able to make a difference/impact.

The **secret to success** in high-end relationship-based selling is simple:

PREDISPOSE... PRESENT... then PROFESSIONALLY FOLLOW-UP.

*It’s probably impossible to misquote or butcher one of Yogi Berra’s malapropisms, but here goes:

“Half of the game is presentation. The other 90% is follow-up.”

Following are thoughts and nuggets from Tom, Nick and the For Impact/Suddes Group Coaches.

Tom
(P.G.)

THOUGHTS...ON FOLLOW-UP

AN IMPORTANT STORY ON FOLLOW-UP

I have been working with the Unreasonable Institute since their founding four years ago. Amazing people and amazing program, run out of Boulder, Colorado on University of Colorado campus. Teju and his team are world-class supporters of Social Entrepreneurism!

I do a two-day 'workshop' during their five-week course for the 25 **Fellows** from around the world selected to be part of this program.

Last summer, I had four conversations (out of 30 or more) that actually led to me strongly recommending **specific prospects for seed investments**. These were prospects I knew, and felt would be a perfect fit for these nascent Social Enterprises.

I was in my 'speed-dating' mode, with Fellows lined up to meet and get coached by the Old Guy. I told each of these four to **follow-up** with me for more info and help on these referrals.

Only one of the four followed up... two months later with an email. I did not respond right away and ultimately it got lost in email backlog.

Again, three did not **follow-up** at all. One did not **follow-up** on her follow-up.

ALL of these Social Entrepreneurs were great people... with great potential... and a great opportunity to change the world. ALL were perfectly positioned for **seed investment**. ALL said they really, really, really needed the money/investment to **scale and grow**.

Sadly, I did not make a big enough deal during our time together about the importance of **FOLLOW-UP** and **PERSEVERANCE**.

THOUGHTS...ON FOLLOW-UP

THE 3 PARTS OF THE FOLLOW-UP

1. WITH THE ORGANIZATION

Summarize your call and visit notes in a **Call Report** or **Memo For Record**. Do this immediately after the visit. Look over your notes and then expand them into a 'bullet-style' Call Report. (Examples in Addendum)

A simple outline would include:

- An Overview/Summary
- Discovery/What We Learned
- Flow of the Visit
- Specific Quotes from the Prospect
- Action Steps

Write it (for yourself).

File it (for posterity).

Share it (for support).

Note: Do your Call Report **first**... and you can use it to compose the follow-up note to the prospect. Then, you can hang it in Raiser's Edge, eTapestry, HighRise or whatever.

2. WITH THE PROSPECT

Email or letter to **summarize the visit** and create a **written 'roadmap to a gift'**.

It's a second chance to close (ask). The follow-up gives you the perfect opportunity to respond to their questions and comments. You can also present **'math'** that you didn't get to in the visit. Most importantly, you can confirm **numbers on the table, suggested ways to make this happen** and more.

(Examples in Addendum)

3. WITH YOURSELF

Do an AAR, (military jargon for After Action Report). This is great opportunity to debrief in your journal or sales log...lessons learned, what went right, what went wrong, next time(e.g., "I talked too much." "I didn't listen.")

THOUGHTS...ON FOLLOW-UP

‘PEN’ – ‘PHONE’ – ‘PERSON’

Here’s another simple 3-part alliteration to help you with the **FOLLOW-UP**:

1. ‘PEN’

Symbol for writing/typing/sending something **after the visit**.

It doesn’t have to be just symbolic. Using a pen to write a thank you note for the visit will definitely grab their attention! You can close with *“I will follow-up with a more detailed summary in the next couple of days.”*

2. ‘PHONE’

End every ‘pen’/written follow-up with a specific time, opportunity to talk on the **phone!** You can discuss the visit, the follow-up, whatever. This is a **third chance** to close!

3. ‘PERSON’

And, if it makes sense, arrange a **follow-up visit** (in person) to finalize the gift/investment/commitment. Especially true of a six-figure, seven-figure transformational gift.

THOUGHTS...ON FOLLOW-UP

MORE...

- **THE 36-HOUR RULE.**

Complete all follow-up (with organization, prospect and yourself) within 36 hours of the visit! 80% well done (in 36 hours) beats 90% - 100% perfect (in 3 weeks). The more time elapsed, the less you remember... and the less they feel!

- **WEAVE IN NATURAL PARTNERS.**

The easiest way to do this is to copy the Natural Partner on the correspondence and refer to the Natural Partner in your follow-up. *“I’ve copied so and so in and hope that you will be able to talk with them regarding this request.”*

*You can also send a specific request to the Natural Partner asking them to help with the follow-up.

- **BALL IS ALWAYS IN YOUR COURT!**

A looong list of ‘pending requests’ is a slow and painful way to die.

“Man must wait loooong time with mouth open before roasted duck fly in.”

- Ancient Chinese Chef

Use the **follow-up** to maintain **control of the relationship.** “

Could I check in with you next Friday?” “Can we talk after your visit with your financial planner?” “We have a Board Meeting in two weeks and I would love to be able to share your commitment with the Board.”

THOUGHTS...ON FOLLOW-UP

MORE...

- **“CAN YOU GET ME A PROPOSAL?”**

‘Amateur’ Development Officers always respond with a vigorous *“Yes, of course.”*

Professionals respond with clarification and simplification.

- *“Would it be okay if I summarized the points from our conversation **in bullet form** and shot that back to you?”*
- *“Will you be sharing this follow-up (proposal) with others?”*
- *“What else could I add to our conversation today that would make this ‘proposal’ more compelling?”*

- **MAXIMIZE RELATIONSHIPS...AT THIS GIVEN MOMENT**

This is your **goal** on every **visit** (‘Going in’ and ‘Coming out’). You cannot **MAXIMIZE RELATIONSHIPS**...if you are not ready to **CLOSE!**

This is about an **attitude**. Your ability to **close/maximize relationships** translates into lives saved, impacted and transformed! This isn’t some movie line or business jargon. It’s real and it’s important. We either believe it or we don’t. If we do believe... then we need to close.

*The Paradox. Many times I want to say to the sales team, *“Don’t worry about the **close**... focus on the **open!** Your opening is huge when it comes to creating or enhancing your relationship with the prospect. It sets up how you **Share the Story** and how you **Present the Opportunity.**”*

Something to think about.

THOUGHTS...ON FOLLOW-UP

REFERRALS

“After I sell on purpose, people feel good about what they bought and about themselves. And so they give me invaluable REFERRALS.”

- One Minute Sales Manager

The FOLLOW UP is also another great opportunity to talk about **REFERRALS**.

Here's a tip: Simply ask:

“Do you know of other people LIKE YOU who believe in what we do... or who are interested in this Cause???”

For LEVERAGE, MOMENTUM and MEMBERSHIP (in your Leadership Societies or giving programs), you just can't beat the whole concept of REFERRALS.

Think about this. If we really are meeting with great prospects who ultimately INVEST in what we do... they really do feel good about themselves and about their 'INVESTMENT'.

ALL of them should not just be willing but excited to share names (REFERRALS) with you.

Asking for referrals is a best practice of the life insurance industry for a reason.

They are the Absolute Best (No Brainer) SOURCE of your most QUALIFIED PROSPECTS! When a CHAMPION or CURRENT INVESTOR tells you that someone is a 'GOOD PROSPECT', don't ask a lot of questions... just put them on your PROSPECT LIST!!!

Special Note: That does not mean that every one of them wants you to 'USE THEIR NAME'! Again, you can simply ask:

“Would you be willing to help with this (REFERRAL)?”

“Can I use your name?”

“Would you send a pre-disposition note to help set up the visit?”

Take the Pledge:

I will never, every leave a visit without asking for **referrals!**

And if I don't ask for referrals on the visit, I will do so in the **follow-up!**

THOUGHTS...ON FOLLOW-UP

PERSISTENCE

In their wonderful book **The Aladdin Factor**, Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen list the 7 Characteristics of the 'Masters of the Lamp' (great sales people). Here they are:

1. They know what they WANT.
2. They BELIEVE they are worthy of receiving it.
3. They BELIEVE they can get it.
4. They are PASSIONATE about it.
5. They take ACTION in the face of fear.
6. They LEARN from their experience.
7. They are **PERSISTENT**.

While we all need to **internalize** all of these characteristics... follow-up is all about #7.

Here's a quick story on **Persistence**.

An old partner at The Suddes Group, Mike McCarthy, was a great friend and continues to inspire me. Mike and I once had a 'Persistence Contest'. We each took our hardest 'pending' prospect and decided we were going to keep calling until they either said 'YES' or 'NO'.

I think I called about **30 times**. Then I stopped.

Mike called **57 times**. Finally, the guy got on the phone and said, *"I just wanted to see how many times you would call me. Every time I got a message and didn't return it, I figured you would stop. You are the most persistent person I've ever met in my entire career."*

"Count me in. I wanted to make this investment anyway, but your persistence was truly amazing."

"By the way, I'd love to have you come and work for my company."

57 TIMES.

HOW MANY OF US ARE HESITANT TO EVEN CALL THE PROSPECT OR POTENTIAL INVESTOR BACK EVEN **ONE TIME???**

TRANSFORMATIONAL GIFT FOLLOW-UP

EXAMPLE

Here's a specific and authentic part of a follow-up letter on a Transformational Gift request.

Dear _____,

It was great to see you at the wonderful event you hosted at your beautiful home. It was certainly an amazing experience that you provided all the attendees.

Your remarks that night were incredibly moving... as well as inspirational for all of us in attendance.

You are an entrepreneur and business leader, and there is real value in getting all of this down on paper/in writing to you, in the hopes that we could clarify the conversation and simplify the request.

I've taken a stab at this and we would love the chance to discuss in greater detail.

- At the very highest level, this is all about IMPACT and TRANSFORMATION and LEGACY.
- A **Leadership Commitment** from you and your wife **at this time** will not only allow us to put a 'shovel in the ground' early next year but **guarantee** the success of this initiative.
- You have the ability to actually **transform** this institution and our capacity to care for people who need our services. This transformation will also have a huge impact on the **staff** that you have come to know and appreciate so well.
- We spoke of a \$5M Leadership Commitment, which provides leverage and momentum for this \$90M Project; and it allows us to secure a great bond rating for financing the non-philanthropic portion of this effort.
- What does a 'commitment' mean at this moment?
 - A signed pledge now, with an agreement to provide this \$5M Leadership Gift sometime within the next **5 years**, is all we need. This commitment can be '**anonymous**' and kept **highly confidential** until such time as you wish to **announce** this gift.

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TRANSFORMATIONAL GIFT FOLLOW-UP

EXAMPLE (continued)

(page 2)

You also mentioned that you have (us) in your estate, which is obviously fantastic. We would appreciate the opportunity to talk with you about what that means... and how we might also include that as part of this **Transformational Gift**.

Without question, this will be the **most meaningful gift** in the history of our organization. It will have an impact not just on the campus but on every single staff member, patient and family member that calls us **'home'**.

In an attempt at total transparency, I want to share with you how much the President, the staff and Board need your help and commitment **now**.

We know there's never perfect 'timing' for something of this magnitude, but we would love the chance to meet up with to talk this out in greater detail

From all of us, thank you for your consideration of this most meaningful request.

Sincerely,

CALL REPORT (EXAMPLE #1)

NAME JAMES

Date _____ Who Attended James
Mary
Mike

DISCOVERY:

- College:
> James loves his alma mater... **detail.**
- Company:
> James is very proud of the fact that... **details.**
- Politics:
> Big-time _____ ... **details.** (Even though he said he votes the man not the party).

THE PRESENTATION FLOW:

'Mary' did an exceptional job of framing the visit.

Mary talked about the **Board Training**... rolled that into CHAMPION – INVITE – INVEST... showed James the Roadmap... talked about Master Prospect List and Top 33, etc.

Special Note: The **Opening** actually ended up taking over 25 minutes of our 60-minute scheduled visit, including brief tour of the office, alma mater shrine, and James sharing and talking. However, led to a very, very comfortable transition into org and his investment.

'Mary' made great judgment call in not reviewing the list of names because of our time. We can do that later.

He gave us one big **referral... details.**

Engagement Tool. 'Mary' then shared with James the revised Engagement Tool and we went through that with him. Very high-level, non-detail oriented guy. We had him at 'hello'. He really liked the idea of the *Vision 2015*.

VISIT WITH JAMES

continued

Had the following responses:

- *"I struggle with the relationship between the _____ and the _____."*
- *"What and why around the org?"*
- *"How do we make a difference..."*
- *"How do we engage people in this..."*

*We did a decent job of addressing some of this with him, primarily going back to the Engagement Tool.

PTO. We moved to INVEST... and talked with him about a TRANSFORMATIONAL GIFT and COMMITMENT.

Laid out that this would be a leadership commitment (for all the right reasons).

Shared with him the IMPACT that this would have on three concentric circles:
Org, Community and Nation.

Talked about how this kind of Transformational Gift from him could be **leveraged** and provide huge **momentum**.

His response: *"Wow. That's a lot of money."* However, then proceeded to say:

- *"If I'm hesitant... it's just because my financial future is somewhat out of my control. It's tied very directly to..."*
- *"I won't say no. I can't say no."*
- *"I'm not 'scared' of that amount of money."*
- *"It's certainly possible. I have to think about how I would do it."*
- *"(We) will be there in a meaningful way."*

*We asked him if there was anything else we needed to do or provide to help him make the decision. He said, *"No, you've done a good job of laying this out."*

Action:

Mary to get short note back to James re: *"Thanks for the visit and more to follow."*

'Mary' to get a great follow-up letter back to him summarizing the visit and encouraging him to make this Transformational Gift.

ABOUT TOM SUDDES

Tom Suddes has made a name for himself as a thought **leader**, a motivating **coach**, a master **facilitator & trainer**, an engaging **speaker** and a prolific **writer**. Tom has almost 40 years of experience in Strategic Visioning, Fund Development, Business and Entrepreneurship.

He began his career in the Development Office at the University of Notre Dame in 1973. In 1983, he founded The Suddes Group, which has managed over 400 Campaigns, raised over **\$1 Billion** and helped generate 3 million new jobs in their work with 125 Economic Development Organizations around the country.

And, in the last 10 years, the For Impact Partners and Coaches have helped organizations raise **another \$1 Billion** to scale and grow their Impact.

Tom has made more than 6,000 one-on-one 'sales' presentations... and has trained thousands of 3rd Sector and Business Leaders in the art and science of becoming a For Impact Organization. He is the author of ***Take A Quantum Leap***, a number of ***For Impact Guides*** and co-author with Nick Fellers of the content at **ForImpact.org**.

A **serial entrepreneur** since age 16, Tom has founded 19 businesses; and now dedicates one-third of his 'work' schedule to helping social entrepreneurs change the world. He also spends significant time in Ireland helping to transform the country's philanthropic model.

In 1997, Tom **won a Trip Around the World** (the only contest he has ever entered) where Success Magazine and Opportunity International awarded him a chance to share his entrepreneurial experiences with Third-World Micro Entrepreneurs in Russia, Poland, India, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Australia.

Tom served in the U.S. Army as an Infantry Officer, Airborne and Pathfinder. He was a two-time welterweight boxing champion at Notre Dame, and has been the **boxing coach** there for almost 40 years. He returns every year for a six-week 'mini-sabbatical' to coach and referee the Bengal Bouts. He is the **Executive Producer** of ***STRONG BODIES FIGHT***, a documentary film about Notre Dame Boxing and its impact upon the Missions in Bangladesh.

Tom recently competed in the Masters Division of the Ringside Boxing World Championship and **won the title** in his age/weight class.

Throughout his crazy, eclectic, eccentric life, Tom has been anchored by his family. Now, his seven grandchildren are the centerpiece of life on his 50-acre farm/training center, Eagle Creek, outside of Columbus, Ohio.