

How to ask for a donation

Asking for a donation can be difficult for some people, but for others, it comes easily. There are many ways to ask for a donation, but before you jump in, there are a few things you can do first that will make your 'ask' as effective as it can be.

Step 1: What's your why?

Before you ask others to donate, have you thought about why you signed up for the challenge? And why others should support you?

- Do you have a connection to cancer that has brought you to Smiling for Smiddy? Is there a family member, friend or colleague that you're riding in honour of?
- Does it just sound like a great ride and a great cause? You love to ride and want to support a good cause while you do it—you're paying it forward.
- Or maybe you just want to challenge yourself and what better way than to support cancer research while you're at it!

There is no wrong answer and only you can know your reason. This first step is all about identifying it so you can communicate it to your networks. If you care about the cause, your supporters should know why it's important to you and why you are going the extra mile to support it!

This way, instead of feeling like you're just asking people for money, you make it sound like what it is: a chance for people to make a difference.

Step 2: Set yourself a goal

Yes, we set you a minimum fundraising target, but the sky is the limit! Don't be afraid to set a higher goal and if you hit your first goal, set a new one and keep going!

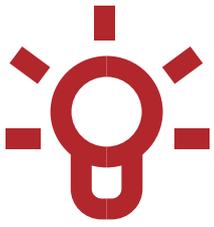
Remember to keep your supporters involved in your journey by letting them know when you are close to or hit your fundraising milestones. Who knows, they may even be motivated to donate again to get you across the line!

Step 3: Donate to yourself

Sounds obvious, right? But it's incredible how many people forget to 'walk the talk' and reach into their own pockets before asking others to donate.

Kick off your fundraising campaign with a healthy donation of your own to set the bar for the donations to follow and inspire others to get on board.

Top Tip: Let us know if you need help putting your 'why' down on paper – give us a call on 07 3163 8000 and we can help you write your story.



Step 4: Be strategic about making your ask

You might be keen to get the wheels rolling and let EVERYONE know exactly what you're doing to raise funds for cancer research at Mater, but there's no need to smash everyone with the same message for months.

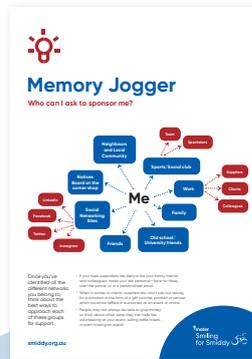
Think strategically and divide your audience up into several parts including family, friends, workmates and sporting groups.

This way, you can tailor your message to these three groups, speaking to them in the specific tone you usually speak to them in (your Nan might not respond to the same language as your mates!).

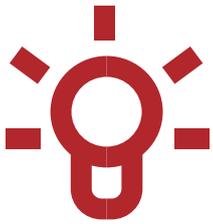
Ideally you want your best supporters to donate first—to follow your lead and match or beat your donation. This should be an individual approach (not a 'send all' email) addressed and personalised to each person.

Don't be afraid to pick up the phone and speak to them directly. You can then follow up with an email to share the link to your fundraising page.

Once your fundraising dollars are starting to roll in you can hit up your next group of supporters. This could include work colleagues or members of other social or sporting groups you are connected to. For larger groups, a more generalised email ask might suit, but where possible a personal touch is always better! Whatever you choose, remember to always include the link to your fundraising page.



Check out our Memory Jogger for help on identifying your different fundraising networks!



Step 5: Make your ask!

It's important to capture people's attention from the outset. If you're using email, your subject line is key!

Why not start with something like:

I need your help

I want to make a difference

My next crazy adventure/challenge

Help us find the "needle in a haystack"

Together, we can keep the labs running and the lights on

Your message doesn't need to be long—tell them what you're doing, why, and of course what they can do (donate!).

That's right, make sure you actually ask for the donation—many people say what they're doing but forget to actually ASK for a donation, then wonder why all they get back is an email saying what a great job they're doing.

Tell your networks how they can help. Don't name a price.

Let people know how much you put down to kick-start your campaign, but be careful of asking for a specific amount. Instead, ask for as much as they're comfortable giving.

Let people know that anything they can spare will make a difference in the fight against cancer.

Email example. (Note: your email needs to be in your words, not ours—after all, they're supporting YOU).



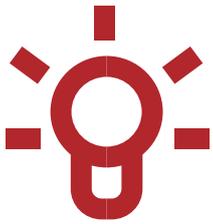
Step 6: Follow up

So you've sent out the request but not everyone has donated. Don't get yourself down, sometimes life gets in the way and people forget to do it. This is a journey; keep your supporters in the loop about how you're tracking with both your fundraising and your training.

Send out a quick email or social media post to tell them about the training you're doing. You can include a Strava file of your long ride, or the past week/fortnight/month's training logs. Tell them how you're feeling—has it been a tough week? How are you feeling on the bike? Did you break your bike? Did your bike break you?

Take them on the journey with you and show them how much work you're doing to get ready for the the challenge.

This is also a way to 'soft ask' and remind them to donate. Include a link to your fundraising page and mention how your fundraising is tracking to date. You can also provide information about any upcoming fundraising events or activities you're doing.



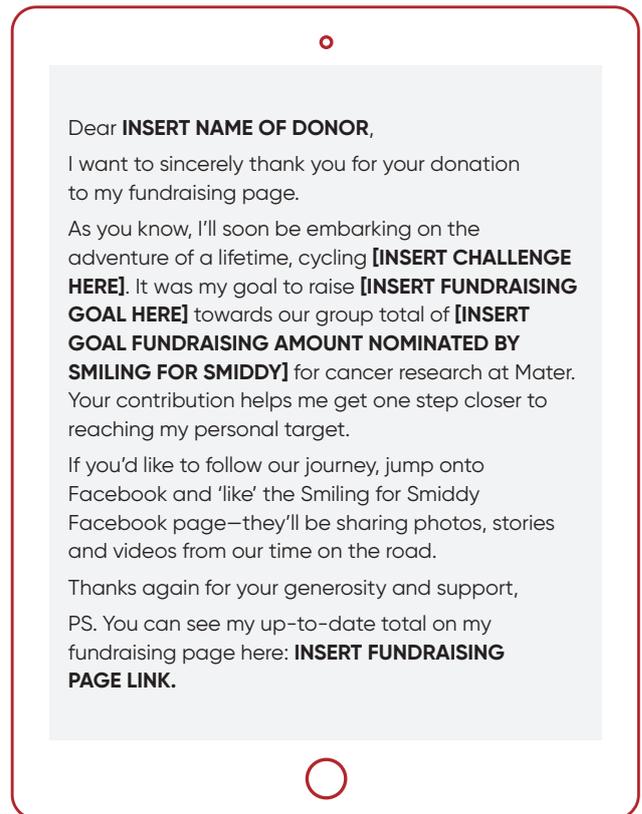
Step 7: Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Make sure you say thank you for every donation—and you can't say it enough! Pick up the phone, send them an email or even acknowledge them in a post on social media. Everyone loves a thank you. And regardless of whether they donate \$20 or \$2000, everyone deserves one!

When you finally cross the finish line, send out a snap of you celebrating the end of the trip and saying thank you again. Make sure your supporters know how much their support has meant to you and exactly how their dollars are making a difference.

Top Tip: One study on donor-centred fundraising found that 85 per cent of participants would donate again if they received a personal thanks and 86 per cent said they would even give a larger amount.

Here's an example of a simple but effective thank you email which you could send out pre-trip:



The Email Schedule

Here are some suggested key timings that might help you structure when to send your emails so you don't overload your networks, but still keep them well informed.

