

Face to face interaction – The Elevator Pitch:

Asking someone to be a blood donor is as simple as, “We are looking for a few people to help us save lives. Would you consider being a blood donor at our drive on <<date>>?”

Or

Hello <<first name of prospect>>, I have a favor to ask of you and you can say no, but I'd rather you say yes. As you know, we're hosting a blood drive with the Red Cross on <<date>>. Would you like to give blood (or volunteer your time) on that day and be a part of saving a life?

Knowing what to do with the likely three different answers is the key.

Answer one – “**Yes, of course**” -- (Smile) <<first name of prospect>> that's great. Thank you so much. Your donation could help save up to three lives.

This response leads you to scheduling them for an appointment at your drive. It also gives you the opportunity to ask the donor if they would help us find additional donors for the drive. If they don't want to recruit, you can ask them to be a resource for potential donors and answer questions about the donation process. Make a note of their willingness for each as they will likely become some of your most useful advocates for this drive and future drives.

1. Go through the preliminary eligibility screening with the donor to reduce the number of likely deferrals at the day of your drive. Go to <http://www.redcrossblood.org/donating-blood/eligibility-requirements> to find out more.
2. If they seem to be eligible to donate, schedule them as a donor at your drive.
3. If there is not a suitable time, ask the donor if they would be willing to be on a standby list.
4. If the donor does not appear to be eligible, give them the Red Cross eligibility phone number 1-866-236-3276 and ask them to confirm their eligibility status, and ask the prospective donor to get back with you. As a backup, ask the prospective donor if they would volunteer their time if it turns out that they are not eligible this time.

Answer two – “**No, I'm sorry but I cannot,**” leads you to ask some non-threatening follow-up questions that can lead to more discussion.

- Follow-up response – “Could I ask you to help us save lives by being a part of the volunteers who are supporting the drive?”

If the prospect wants to talk about why they are not interested in or nervous about donating blood they will likely bring up some version of “**I'm afraid of the idea.**” This will likely bring up a discussion of needles and potential misinformation about the effects of donating blood. Continue the dialog and be confident that with over 70 years of blood donation experience, the Red Cross staff is very skilled at providing the donor with a comfortable experience. Remember to always be considerate, do not pressure the prospective donor at all and be empathetic to their concerns. Explain to the prospect why you are passionate about blood donation. Consider asking the prospective donor (if appropriate) if they know of anyone in their family who has needed a blood product and list the likely events that would cause that need. Consider the following options in this order:

- a) “Would you like to talk with someone who has donated blood before?” If yes, set them up with one of your existing active donors. This dialog may get the prospective donor to a place where they are ready to say yes.
- b) Ask your colleague, “If you can’t donate, can I count on you to volunteer at the drive to help make it a success?” Remember that 100 percent of the organization’s staff can help you build a great drive experience. This is a great sequitur that helps you quickly build a robust support team that will help you, and your organization, be successful.
- c) Lastly, ask for their commitment to promote the drive. Enlist an army of social media advocates to use before and during the day of the drive.

Answer three – A lot of hesitation and wavering followed by some version of “**I don’t know.**” This answer is likely a more polite way of saying “No”. Just like with answer two, follow up with some version of the question, “May I ask what you are concerned about?” or “Could I ask you to help us save lives by being a part of the volunteers who are supporting the drive?” and proceed with the follow-up answer scenarios outlined in response two.

When interacting with prospective donors, always keep the following in mind:

- A. Ask appropriately. Don’t pressure anyone into donating. Understand how a potential donor feels and answer questions they may have. Give them the time they need to make the decision to give blood.
- B. Educate the prospective donor/volunteer about the importance of blood donation. Keep the focus on the patients who need blood. Every two seconds, someone in America gets a blood transfusion. Some five million patients will need blood this year.
- C. Reduce the fear of the unknown by explaining the donation process. Educate new donors about what to expect.
- D. Give prospects the option of volunteering to support the blood drive. They can either work at the drive or promote the drive through their personal social media accounts before and during the drive. This way the prospective donor can get more comfortable with the idea and actually experience the drive close hand to come to a decision that is right for them.

There are many frequently asked questions and potential objections discussed in pages 12 and 13 of the “A Coordinator’s Guide” booklet and on RedCrossBlood.org at

- <http://www.redcrossblood.org/donating-blood/donation-faqs>,
- <http://www.redcrossblood.org/donating-blood/why-donate-blood>, and
- <http://www.redcrossblood.org/donating-blood/first-time-donors/-fear-needles>.

Additional talking points to motivate others to help:

We chose the Red Cross as a community outreach partner because we wanted to be a part of the good that they do.

- Every 60 seconds, 44 people in America are assisted by the American Red Cross.
- 15,500 people every day receive lifesaving Red Cross health and safety training.
- 1,000 times a day the Red Cross provides services to military members, their families and veterans.
- 190 times a day Red Cross workers help families affected by a home fire or disaster.

From a blood supply standpoint:

- Every 2 seconds someone in America needs blood.
- The Red Cross must collect 14,000 units of blood each day.
- Blood collected by the Red Cross helps millions of patients in over 2,400 hospitals across the country.
- Each blood donation can help save up to three lives.
- It only takes about an hour to give blood.
- 80 percent of blood donations are given at blood drives hosted by organizations like ours.