



Developing Board Members as Fundraisers

Help board members build passion and support for your mission.

Every board member has a role to play in making your organization's fundraising efforts successful. Board members guide the future of your organization and its sustained ability to carry out the mission. Strong board members are also vital to helping your organization navigate opportunities and challenges that arise.

Engage board members and structure board activities with these key strategies in mind:

➤ **Donate:** Giving by board members serves as a signal to others who are considering support of your organization.

- Steady, committed board member giving is critical to major gift and campaign fundraising.
- The board should set a fundraising dollar and participation goal for itself, including annual support and goals for special projects, including campaigns.
- Board member support is a key indicator in predicting capacity to reach a campaign goal and can factor into discussions with other major donors. Board members who give are uniquely positioned to ask key due diligence questions when a campaign is proposed.

➤ **Fundraise:** Board members who are willing and able to build donor relationships play a crucial role in helping share your organization's overarching messages, mission, and impact. Asking for gifts to carry out the mission of your organization is a privilege, not something to avoid.

- While every board member will not be effective at soliciting gifts, all can help identify, introduce, cultivate, and steward current and potential donors.

Survey results confirm the importance of board members in fundraising:

Donors reported that being asked to give by a leadership volunteer influenced them above all to give, and to give generously.

Source: Cygnus North American Survey of Donors, 2011



- Board members may leverage their business and personal relationships to open doors and make introductions to prospective donors.
- The board should also have a development committee with a chair who takes responsibility for soliciting and holding accountable peer board members.

▶ **Educate:** Board members will be much more successful when they are educated about and trained in their fundraising role. Provide members orientation and ongoing opportunities that include:

- creating an environment and culture that supports the open discussion of fundraising—providing deeper understanding and ideas about philanthropy’s role in your organization’s success;
- sharing fundraising resources, such as brief articles and presentations;
- creating opportunities for board members to assist with identifying donors and making cultivation visits; and
- asking board members to discuss the organization with at least two friends or prospects between every board meeting.

▶ **Involve:** Board members can be the most successful stewards of your organization when they are deeply involved. Your leadership should learn what motivates each member and involve them accordingly.

Board recruitment is critical to board involvement. Recruiting and retaining board members with diverse backgrounds and perspectives bring multiple views to the discussion, as supported by *The Impact of Diversity: Understanding How Nonprofit Board Diversity Affects Philanthropy, Leadership, and Board Engagement* – research conducted by Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at IUPUI; Johnson, Grossnickle and Associates; and BoardSource.

▶ **Inspire:** Share stories of generosity and how gifts have been transformational to make philanthropy come alive. Through these stories, board members can see how their work in fundraising becomes an important legacy for your organization. When they see themselves as part of something that transcends the immediate, then everyone will become a part of your organization’s success.

DISCOVER FOR YOURSELF.

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