



Ways Board Members Can Support Fund Development, Without Making the Ask

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PARTNERS

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Every board member is charged with ensuring the financial integrity of their nonprofit. And with that comes a role in fundraising. But fundraising doesn't have to be scary. It can even be, dare I say, fun and enjoyable! Every board member can and should be aiding in your organization's fund development program by doing one or more of the roles below.

Thank a Donor.

Donor stewardship (saying thank you) is the most critical part of encouraging future gifts. And it's the easiest and most rewarding role available to you! According to Penelope Burk's annual donor survey, 84% of donors would give again if they were thanked in a timely way. Many donors love to get calls from board members thanking them for their financial support. This is particularly true for mid-level donors who don't usually have access to the leadership of the organizations they support. Take a list of donors, any donors, and send a hand-written note or better yet, make a call. You will greatly boost your fundraising efforts. I promise!

Share your story.

You are so passionate about this mission that you have chosen to dedicate your valuable time, talent and treasure to bettering this organization. People want to be inspired and telling why you feel compelled to serve this organization is powerful. Your story alone is likely enough to convince someone to donate. You could take a few minutes at a party, BBQ or holiday celebration to talk about the organization that is near and dear to your heart. You don't have to ask people for money, but you can simply say, "If you're interested in learning more, let me know." The staff can follow-up from there with a brochure, annual report and/or event invite.

Be an Ambassador.

As a board member, remember you are an ambassador for your organization. This means that you should consistently be on the lookout for opportunities to introduce your nonprofit to people who might be interested. This includes family, friends, colleagues, classmates, business partners, neighbors, clients, vendors, and other connections.

Provide prospect information.

How well do you know the donors to your organization? Perhaps you can help the staff identify donors with greater financial capacity, a passion for your mission or those donors with recent life changes like retirement or sale of a business that would make them more inclined to make a large gift now. When the staff or another board member make an ask, the more information they have going into it, the more successful you will be.

Raising more money for your mission, one step at a time.

Open Doors.

One of the best ways you can help your nonprofit with fundraising is by expanding their prospect universe. The more people who know about your mission, the more prospects your organization will have for future fundraising events and campaigns. You can invite the staff to make presentations or attend various networking opportunities such as chamber of commerce meetings, professional association groups, Rotary events, church events, etc.

Ask for Advice.

One of the easiest ways to build interest in your nonprofit is to get prospects to provide advice to your organization. Even if you don't act on the advice, once someone starts to invest their time and knowledge in you, they will often want to invest their money in your nonprofit as well. These are meetings with people in your current network, or with people in the community who have specific expertise that may be beneficial to the nonprofit. Your goal for these meetings is to start building a relationship that can be turned into a fundraising opportunity later down the line.

Host a non-ask event.

Everybody likes a party, right?! As its name implies, a non-ask event is an event where there are no fundraising asks, (usually including food and beverages). These events are an opportunity for people to hear about your work with this great organization. Invite your friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, etc. Host it at your home, place of work or team up with another board member to hold small events at local restaurants. Staff should be sure to collect the contact information for everyone who attends. Staff can follow up with each attendee later to continue building the relationship and see if the person would be a good prospect for fundraising further down the line.

Not quite fundraising, but very impactful on the bottom line...

Recruit an in-kind service.

If you can help the organization remove an expense line item from the budget that would directly contribute to a stronger bottom-line. For example, if you work at an ad agency, perhaps you can convince your company to provide some pro-bono marketing services? Other in-kind services that are huge assets include legal, accounting, printing, even janitorial services. But keep in mind, these in-kind donations must be of value to the nonprofit and provide an offset to a direct cost that the nonprofit would otherwise have to bear.

Negotiate a lower price from a vendor.

Do you have negotiating skills? Could you help the negotiate with insurance providers, office space rental company, or printers, for a lower price? If so, that's more money in the bank.

Advocate for government money.

Are you well connected in your city, county, state or federal government? You could open doors for the organization to access government contracts, grants, fee-for-service or other government monies.

Board Service comes with great responsibility. And great rewards. You are charged, for a period, with stewarding the future of your nonprofit. Your contributions of time, talent and treasure will have direct impact in your community. Be proud. Serve well.