

Turn

RELUCTANT

Board Members

into

ENTHUSIASTIC

Fundraisers

**A SPECIAL REPORT
FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS**

Turn Reluctant Board Members into Enthusiastic Fundraisers

PBP Executive Reports are straightforward, fast-read reports designed for time-pressed upper-level executives and managers. PBP Executive Reports excel at cutting the fluff, eliminating jargon and providing just the information today's executives need to improve their organizations' performance.

This PBP Executive Report was compiled and edited by the editorial staff of *The Nonprofit Board Report*, one of the most respected newsletters serving the nonprofit industry. Not only does this report include effective techniques and strategies, it also delivers the best and latest thinking on getting board members to play key roles in fundraising.

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Executive Summary

Most board members don't wake up excited to go out and raise money.

Typically, they're passionate about "the mission" – that's not the problem. But when it comes to fundraising, they're held back by a combination of other factors: embarrassment, intimidation and/or guilt.

Board members' reluctance to get involved in your nonprofit's fund development process is probably one of the toughest challenges staff and boards run into.

What's a common solution? Staff or board leadership tell board members (sometimes repeatedly) that they've really got to get involved with fundraising. They give the board specific jobs to carry out, and the board doesn't do them.

Why? Because of a whole range of emotions, cultural expectations and other commitments.

Fortunately, there's a better way.

Encourage board members to do the things they can *already* do while empowering them to stretch and take on new tasks and responsibilities. It helps board members understand what fundraising is really all about.

How does this work? It's crucial for board members to understand that what they fear most – actually asking a person for money – is just one part of the fundraising process. Other parts of the process are just as important and – here's the kicker – *many board members are already fully engaged in doing them*. If they're not, this report will provide details about low-stress fundraising for novice fundraisers, and how to transform even the most reluctant board members into fundraising enthusiasts.

Sure, some board members won't ever leap at the prospect of fundraising, but they can and do learn to live with it. Others will do the job because of their passion for the cause – and because they recognize that these days it's a crucial part of what it means to be a board member.

Once they understand what's really involved, they'll be hooked, and your nonprofit – and its bottom line – will reap the benefits.

Included in this report:

- Are your board members engaged?
- 10 key steps to creating a fundraising board
 - Redefine fundraising

- Give board members what they want
- Reawaken the passion
- Engage board members in ongoing challenges
- Address fears of fundraising directly
- Insight into donor motivations
- Easy roles for everyone
- Put fundraising at the top of the agenda
- Recognize board expertise and contributions
- The three levels of fundraising
 - Getting started
 - Getting more active
 - Jumping in
- Q&A on board fundraising

The Executive Report

Turn Reluctant Board Members into Enthusiastic Fundraisers

Getting board members to ask for money can be tough.

That's why, for most board members, asking other people to make a donation isn't the place to start. Instead, they should start small. Once they go from doing little (or nothing) to "friendraising," they'll be well on their way to raising money for the organization.

Fundraising "baby steps" are key to showing board members how they can be effective in supporting the nonprofit's long-term financial stability.

Are your board members engaged?

Some organizations make the mistake of thinking that – overnight – they can transform board members who've never participated in fundraising into people who like going out and asking for money.

That's unlikely.

But board involvement isn't a pipe dream. To get it, start by taking a long, hard look at who is on the board *right now*.

Are your board members interested in their current commitments? Are they engaged in the nonprofit's work?

Many groups have disengaged boards. In most cases, that's because board members aren't involved enough with the organization's mission and programs. The result is they start to see board service as

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a burden, more than an honor.

And that can lead to weak attendance and a loss of excitement and interest.

This is why *social interaction, and the quality of meetings particularly, is so critical to highly effective boards*. If board members don't have a good time, they're likely to start finding reasons not to attend.

One issue is that meeting protocol, especially if it's followed slavishly, can sap the vision and passion out of the most dedicated board member instead of generating carefully structured and exciting board discussions.

What happens when disengaged board members start to talk about fundraising?

They say things like:

- "I'll do anything but ask for money!"
- "All they want me to do is solicit contributions!"
- "Isn't that a staff job?"
- "I'm giving my time – that's enough," and
- "Asking for money is dirty work."

As these comments show, many board members don't really understand fundraising.

They think fundraising means asking for money.

Experienced fundraisers, both volunteers and staff, know that *soliciting a gift is only one piece of the fundraising puzzle*, one moment in the process of developing donor relationships. But because board members don't understand that – because they think fundraising and making the ask are one and the same – they're afraid of it.

This presents an opportunity for executive directors, development directors and veteran board members, because the organization's culture can start to change as soon as this misunderstanding gets cleared up. Once board members understand what fundraising *really* is, they start to see that they *can* tackle it.

This in turn leads them to greater passion about the cause and engagement with the mission – and a greater sense of urgency about supporting the entire range of important fundraising efforts.

10 key steps to creating a fundraising board

Helping board members get comfortable with fundraising won't happen overnight, but these steps will bring them closer to taking ownership of the fund development process.

1. Redefine fundraising

As we've seen, board members don't understand fundraising the way staff members do. What will make an immediate difference in board members' attitude? Emphasizing that it's *not* just about asking for money, it's about a vision for making the world a better place. Board members intuitively grasp the sentiment expressed by George Bernard Shaw, who said: "This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one. I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community, and as long as I live, it's is my privilege to do for it whatever I can."

Board members understand fundraising is indeed a high calling – it's about spending time and energy making the community a better place. It's vital for board members to shift the focus this way, so fundraising is about the mission, the cause and the donors' commitments – and not about the board members. And this immediately makes board members more comfortable. They start to see their conversations with donors should focus on the organization's vision and how they can contribute the resources

5 fundraising mistakes

1. Not focusing on long-term relationships. There is urgency, but shifting to long-term donor engagement rather than emergency fundraising is key.
2. Focusing on the ask, not on building and keeping friends.
3. Expecting board members to make too many calls. They should make a realistic number of calls (e.g., two thank-you calls and one invitation).
4. Making "cool calls." Board members should cultivate donors before making the ask.
5. Making the ask without enough training and support.

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necessary to support it. This typically relieves them of feeling burdened and uncomfortable.

So how does this translate into a new approach to fundraising?

Once board members re-engage with the organization's vision – and with their own passion for the cause – *they can focus their energy on making friends instead of asking for money!* After all, that's what they're best at and it's what they want to do – make friends and connections for your organization.

This takes the drama, tension and fear out of the entire fundraising process, because now the board members' roles as ambassadors is a natural outgrowth of their membership on the board.

Once fundraising is redefined in this way, the fundraising cycle looks very different. The process includes:

- identifying prospects
- cultivating and involving them
- asking for support, and
- thanking them – repeatedly.

Let's break this down:

Of these four pieces, the second step – cultivating and involving donors – takes the greatest amount of time and effort. That's because donors must be cultivated repeatedly until it's clear they're ready to be asked. (Thanking donors should take almost as much time and effort as the cultivation.)

Asking is just one little tiny point in time.

If the process is further broken down, the ask itself can be divided into three parts: *the warm-up, the ask itself and the follow-up.*

An example of the warm-up: You're playing golf with your friend and you know there's a solicitation call scheduled with this person for the following week. You say, "I'm on the board of this organization, and they're coming to see you. We could really use your support."

And the follow-up: Afterward, a board member might mention to the friend, "I know the folks from the organization I'm involved with came to

see you last week. We could really use your support.”

And that’s it! Although board members don’t necessarily need to solicit the gifts themselves, they *do* need to be involved in supporting the process. But since there are many important tasks leading up to and following the ask itself, board members can participate in a number of different ways – and find the ones that are most comfortable for them.

2. Give board members what they want

What do board members want?

For board members to succeed at fundraising, it’s critical to be realistic about their needs, interests and motivations, and what they hope to get out of the experience.

There are several reasons board members join:

1. Meaningful work and engagement. Board members want to contribute their skills to supporting the organization’s mission. That means performing meaningful tasks, not just showing up at meetings.

2. Networking and social time. Board members want to make social and professional contacts. This means they need time to get to know each other, so building in social time is critical. Board members can’t function well as a group if they don’t even know each other.

A few possibilities:

- Gathering for coffee before a meeting
- Organizing a holiday pizza party
- Planning an annual gathering for staff and board members, and
- Building ample social time into retreats.

3. A volunteer (*not* professional) role. Staff shouldn’t waste time wringing their hands and saying “My board won’t fundraise.” Board members have lots of things competing for their time and attention – paid work, family commitments and so on. If they aren’t having a good time, and if they feel the pressure of too many demands – especially unrealistic demands – they may lose interest.

4. Appropriate tools and support. It's important to set up realistic expectations early in the process, when a board prospect is first being cultivated. Clarifying upfront what's expected from both board members *and* staff will make a big difference.

Involving board members with fundraising starts during the recruitment process, when the nominating committee says: "We expect board members to make a personal gift to the organization, and we expect all board members to be active in supporting our fundraising efforts."

At the same time, emphasize that board members will get the support, training and tools they need from other board members and from staff.

5. Personal interaction with senior staff. To find out whether board members enjoy their volunteer role and how they can best contribute their efforts to the organization, a senior staffer (or even the executive director) should take time to schedule a one-on-one talk.

This is also a chance to get board members talking openly about their fundraising experience and concerns, issues they might feel less comfortable discussing during a meeting.

3. Reawaken the passion

Board members often have to sit through long reports and discussions that don't relate to the mission.

And that's typically after putting in a long day at the office.

Most board members don't want to sit through that when they could be at a ball game or home with their families.

They want to focus on the mission, which is what motivated them to join the board in the first place. So meetings must be structured to reflect that focus.

What's more, for board members to feel engaged, they need to direct the discussion and the agenda rather than sitting passively while listening to reports or being told what to do and say by staff.

Best practice: Make it a point to plan for board members to spend about 70% of the meeting speaking, with just 30% devoted to staff

discussion and presentations. This gives board members the sense that their presence and participation is essential.

In addition, bringing the mission into board meetings, through client testimonials, program staff updates and other mission-related education and training, will help revitalize the board.

This new connection with their passion and vision will empower board members and nurture their capacity for fundraising.

4. Engage board members in ongoing challenges

Board members don't intuitively grasp the connection between fundraising and programs. It's essential to bring that connection to life.

So the question to ask is: "What are we trying to accomplish?"

If board members ask, "What are we raising money for?" the answer must connect back to the programs and mission: "We're raising an additional \$100,000 this year so we can feed and clothe our homeless children." Once board members grasp this connection, they stop seeing fundraising as something "dirty" and instead start to view it as essential to the organization's financial well-being.

This in turn will motivate board members to go out and raise money.

Best practice: To show the board what's at stake, organize a "fireside chat" with your director of development. Board members can interview that person about the organization's biggest challenges and its wish list.

5. Address fears of fundraising directly

Board members feel hesitant and awkward about fundraising. If they're going to succeed, they must lay these feelings out on the table.

A few possibilities:

- **Invite board members to write down one of their fundraising-related fears on an index card.** The board chair can collect the cards and choose one to read out loud. Board members can then discuss the fear and offer ways to counteract it.

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- **Discuss the role money plays in their lives.** Board members may want to write for five minutes or gather in small groups to discuss the issue. *Variation:* What did money mean in their family of origin? How does this personal history affect the role money plays in their lives now? After a few minutes, board members can come together and discuss what they've heard.
- **Pair board members** and ask them to talk frankly about how they feel about asking for money and why. Then the board chair or development director can record members' different feelings on a white board. The list can form the basis for a longer discussion.
- **Ask a veteran volunteer fundraiser to talk** about their own fundraising fears and how the process of fundraising helps combats them. Use this as a jumping-off point for a discussion about fears of fundraising.

The goal: Give everyone in the room a chance to see they aren't alone in feeling nervous. This opens the way to a conversation about their feelings.

6. Insight into donor motivations

After board members have the chance to talk about their fears, it's time to turn the exercise around and ask them to think about why donors give.

The board or development committee chair (or director of development) can generate a list with board members: *Why do people give money?*

Donors give because they:

- want to save or change lives
- feel personal satisfaction at seeing the results of their gifts
- *want* to make a donation (not because they were forced), and
- want to make a difference in the world.

They *don't* give unless they're asked.

And that's not all.

Research has shown donors have very reasonable expectations when they make a gift. *Donors wanted to be treated like people, not*

pocketbooks; they want a long-term relationship with an organization they believe in.

If their needs aren't met, donors are less likely to make a second gift. (*See related story in box at right.*)

And keeping donors is more important than ever these days, since it costs much less to retain them than it does to find new ones.

A key piece of retaining donors is thanking them. In fact, one reason they don't make repeat gifts is that they didn't get a prompt, personal thank-you.

Who's going to write these thank-yous? Board members, of course. Thank-yous have far more impact when board members write them.

Board member thank-yous

1. *Make calls.* Ask board members to come 15 minutes early to each meeting and make a half-dozen thank-you calls.

2. *Write notes.* Board members should have a stock of note cards with the agency's logo (and mission statement). They should write a handful of cards each week, with donors' names and contact info supplied by staff. (Writing these notes at quarterly or even monthly meetings is not ideal – it lets too much time elapse between the gift and the note.)

Board members will be astonished to see how big a difference this makes! And they'll be pleased to learn that they can directly affect the bottom line without having to ask for money and, because of their efforts, donor attrition goes down and donor retention goes up.

The value of 'Thanks'

Research by Penelope Burk shows that a whopping 93% of donors said they'd give again if they got two things:

- prompt, personal thank-you, and
- meaningful info about the impact of their gift.

Not only that: 64% said they'd give a larger gift, and 74% would continue to give indefinitely.

Burk tested what happened with one association when board members made thank-you calls to donors within 48 hours of the contribution. Later, the group who didn't get a call was re-solicited, and so was the group that did get the call. The second group's gifts were 34% higher!

Plus: From 2% to 5% of those called made a \$1,000 gift within the year.

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There's something else donors expect when they make a donation: meaningful information about the results their gifts have created in the world. If they don't get it, they're less likely to make a repeat donation.

Keeping donors informed

There are many ways your nonprofit can satisfy donors' need for information – with the annual report, newsletters and email updates, for instance. But board members have their own role to play. That means they must stay well informed so they can speak knowledgeably and fluently about the organization's mission and programs.

Board members should be armed with:

1. *The elevator statement.* Board members absolutely must be able to state the mission clearly and concisely. This is worth practicing during a board meeting. (Upgrade: Make the practice session fun by holding a contest to see who can deliver the elevator statement most effectively. Give out silly prizes.)

2. *A few memorable facts.* Board members need to show they have a basic understanding about the group's history, vision and programs. (Example: "We feed 20,000 meals to homeless children each year.")

3. *Their own story.* It's also a good idea to invite board members to talk with each other about their own passion and vision – this makes them more comfortable talking in the same way to others.

Best practice: At each board meeting, one person can talk for a minute about how the organization's work affected them in the time since the last meeting, or why they got involved in the first place.

4. *Others' compelling stories and testimonials.* What motivates people to give are the stories that tug at their emotions. Board members should be armed with a couple of stories so they can speak from their heart when they're asked about the organization.

Best practice: Create a contest for board members and staff asking for mission- and program-related stories. The winner(s) get a small prize.

7. Easy roles for everyone

Board members need to be set up with wins, so it's crucial to be sure they can follow through on and successfully achieve whatever tasks they agree to tackle. A few tactics that will ensure success:

- *Create pairs or teams.* This gives board members crucial moral support and can instill a productive, energizing and fun spirit of competitiveness.
- *Focus on the long-term* and the need for building ongoing relationships with donors – there are no quick fixes.
- *Remember that it's all about the donors* – that means keeping donors top of mind when crafting thank-you scripts, writing notes and emails, sending invitations, etc. What's in it for the donor? What is their vision, and how does this gift help them accomplish it?
- *Find the right role for every board member.* This may take a little extra time and patience, but it will pay off in greater board satisfaction and productivity in the end.

And a note about staff support: Even the best, most motivated board members can't do these things in isolation, so staff must find the time to support and enable the board. That includes timely reminders, phone calls and moral support, for instance, plus the information they need to complete their fundraising responsibilities. Ongoing coaching and training is important, too.

8. Make sure everyone gives

It's become standard for all board members to make a donation. Saying "I give my time, I don't need to give my money, too" is, for the most part, no longer considered acceptable. In fact, board giving isn't just a nice idea or a mere option, it's a necessity. Here's why: The organization's credibility is on the line. Funders and donors won't see why *they* should make a contribution if the organization's own leadership doesn't. This is even more the case during tough economic times.

But in organizations where this isn't yet the norm, it can be tough to create a shift in the board culture.

One approach: Set board giving apart as its own discrete campaign. This makes board participation more official and non-negotiable, especially when it's presented as part of the recruitment package and orientation materials. ("Our board campaign takes place in the early spring, just before our annual campaign kicks off.")

Groups with holdouts can even send a letter that says, "If you choose not to make a donation by March 1, it will be understood that you intend to step down from the board."

The board campaign should get broken out as a line item in the nonprofit's budget.

Note: The board president must chair this campaign, making a contribution first and then soliciting the rest of the board.

Board members should also be expected to contribute resources from their own businesses whenever possible and appropriate.

9. Put fundraising at the top of the agenda

Discussing fund development during board meetings may seem obvious, but not all boards do it.

It's easy to let this kind of fundraising update get put on the back-burner in favor of a program report, but it's important not to let that happen. Set in context and delivered with urgency, the board-giving update – for instance, "We've gotten 80% of board gifts out of our goal of 100%" – sends the message that every board member's gift is important to the long-term health of the organization.

Staff may be tempted to shield board members from the realities of revenue, but that's a mistake. Ultimately, board members are responsible for the group's financial stability. So board members should also get regular updates about the nonprofit's overall fundraising to date. This helps set the context for their own giving.

There are other ways to keep board giving and other fundraising responsibilities at the top of the agenda:

1. *Put a jar on the table.* At meetings, put a jar in the middle of the

table: The board chair can ask trustees to contribute spare change or a few dollars before every meeting. This helps defray the cost of any board meeting refreshments that might be served, for starters, but it also puts fundraising where it belongs: in the middle of the board meeting.

2. *Assign manageable fundraising tasks for each meeting.* Board members can:

- take charge of setting up pre-meeting sessions for writing thank-you notes or making calls,
- report on the gifts they've closed since the last meeting, and
- present updates on gifts they're currently cultivating.

10. Recognize board expertise and contributions

Board members set the tone for the entire organization, and their donations are critical.

In the same way, the nonprofit's treatment of its board members sets an example in the eyes of donors, funders, volunteers, vendors and other stakeholders of how an organization treats its donors. So if your organization wants to show that it treats donors like people, not pocketbooks, start by recognizing board members. At a minimum, that means acknowledging their achievements by thanking them. Clients and staff can send thank-yous. And the board chair can thank board members during meetings and send thank-you notes for special contributions of time or treasure.

As with other donors, it helps to show the impact of their donations. And because board members are usually well known by staff and other board members, it's a good idea to look for ways to recognize their gifts that dovetail with their interests and values.

None of these steps is easy. Even nonprofit professionals who talk about their "fantastic" boards admit it can take months or even longer to transform a group of loyal supporters into a powerhouse fundraising board. But it can be done – and following some or all of these steps will help get you there.

The 3 levels of fundraising

Finally, before tackling these 10 steps, it may be a good idea to divide board members into three groups according to their fundraising engagement and ability.

1. Getting started

This category includes tasks board members should be willing to do from the moment they join the board:

- Give an annual contribution
- Help ensure that other board members give each year
- Say “thank you” to donors in writing or by phone
- Help identify prospects and collaborate on developing appropriate cultivation strategies
- Add social contacts to organization mailing lists, and
- Bring friends to events.

Board members should be presented with these obligations during the recruitment stage; it’s crucial they know *before* they join the board that this is the minimum required of them.

And if they can’t bring their friends to the organization’s events, they just may not be ready to commit to being a leader in the organization, because this is a very basic level of commitment.

2. Getting more active

At some point, board members who are actively involved in connecting friends and contacts will want to step up their leadership. That can include:

- hosting events, like a coffeehouse or salon in their house
- making introductions for staff
- hosting tours
- taking responsibility for cultivating particular prospects

- setting up appointments for staff and other board members, and
- making thank-you visits, not just to individual donors but also to foundation and corporate donors.

These activities prepare board members to become solicitors. And board members' involvement as solicitors is a natural next step once they're introduced to the sense of satisfaction they'll get being in front of donors and prospects with a message of passion about the mission.

3. Jumping in

After board members have gotten comfortable with these "friendraising" tasks, they may be ready to help solicit gifts.

Of course, they can take the lead in making solicitation calls. But if they're still not comfortable with that, they can make an enormous contribution without even making the ask by themselves and instead:

- Sign solicitation letters
- Accompany staff on ask visits
- Bring new prospects into the fold, and
- Look for other ways to support staff fundraising efforts.

If board members can tackle each of the 10 steps and try to make the most out of the fundraising they're currently comfortable with, that will go a long way to improving the fundraising culture at your organization. Even if it doesn't happen overnight, the result will be a more effective board, one that takes ownership of its fundraising role and the organization's bottom line.

Q&A on board fundraising

What's the best way to talk about board members' responsibility to give? Is it necessary to spell out board roles in the bylaws or in board orientation?

This material shouldn't be included in the bylaws. The bylaws are a legal document, and they shouldn't contain this kind of detail. But fundraising responsibilities *should* be clearly spelled out in orientation materials and in the job description.

It's a good idea to give board members something to sign that says they agree to certain responsibilities. The specific fundraising duties vary by organization according to how established it is, what it needs from its board members and what the fund development plan is.

Whatever the duties, spell them out so board members know what's expected of them.

What's the best way to deal with board members who serve on multiple boards and have divided allegiances?

This is not an ideal situation.

With many types of fundraising, asking board members to get involved in identifying and thanking donors can work. What doesn't work is for board members to say, "My number-one allegiance is to XYZ organization; I'll help you a little bit, but I can't help you a lot." A person with divided loyalties clearly isn't an ideal board member.

On the other hand, if the person is very important in the area, and if the person's name and credibility is a real boon to the organization, the best approach is to hone in on those things the person *can* do, like open a few doors.

But the real question to both these types of potential board members should be: "What will it take for us to be at the top of your

list?” That conversation is potentially very revealing. (It can be a very revealing conversation to have with donors, too.)

What’s the best approach to take with a board that’s never been asked or expected to make a contribution?

It’s tough to change an organization’s culture, so it’s a real challenge if board members have gotten used to a certain approach.

It may be necessary to plan a retreat or special meeting, perhaps with a facilitator, to discuss fundraising with them. But, and this is important, the motivation has to come from them.

One approach: Find a couple of allies on the board and work with them to establish the message. *This must be a peer-led effort; it can’t be led by staff.*

Some boards may resist at first, saying the staff has done a bait-and-switch on them. In those cases, slow, incremental change works best. That may mean encouraging board members to discuss the issue among themselves, starting with how they feel about fundraising and the board’s role. The answers may be surprising!

What’s the best way to ensure every board member makes a gift?

The challenge is to get all board members to recognize that their giving is important, and why. What’s crucial is the sense of being a team and sharing ownership of the organization. Ideally, everyone says: “We’re all going to give, and we’re going to make sure all our friends on the board also give.”

With a few isolated holdouts, the board chair and either the development committee chair or someone close to those board members needs to sit down and talk frankly with them.

Questions to ask:

- How are you feeling about the organization?
- Are you finding satisfaction in serving on the board?

- We see you haven't yet made a gift this year – what factors are playing into this decision?

If a board member still resists giving, one of the aforementioned people should suggest that the person step down. At a time when nonprofits are strenuously competing for donors' attention and contributions, no group can afford board members who don't give.

Upgrade: Some groups find it helpful to set up an advisory council or emeritus group for departing board members. That keeps them connected and involved.

What's the best way to cultivate people who have supported the organization in the past, but who are known to have the capacity to give more?

The key is to find out what interests them about the organization. What passion makes them want to give?

And then “listen your way to the gift.” That means engaging the donor with the organization's mission as much as possible and exploring the power of that conversation. Their answers will reveal clues about how to draw them closer to the organization and cultivate a larger gift. It can help to show the program's impact by, for example, taking them on a tour or sharing a client testimonial. It can also help to ask the person to do something small for the organization, like introduce a staff member to a particular prospect.

Getting the prospect to take action helps bring them closer – they start to feel like part of a team. Plus: It gives you a reason to go back to them.

After that conversation, it's a good idea to develop a cultivation plan for this person. It's even possible to ask: “I'd love to have you become a larger supporter of our organization. What would it take?” That can be a tough question to ask, but it can also be enlightening.

What's the best way to coordinate the board's involvement in the various levels of cultivation and solicitation?

Board members often need to have their hands held. So it's best to limit their involvement to two or three different things. Maybe thanking donors, "owning" the gala or the \$1,000 gift club, and bringing their friends to events. That's three very distinct projects board members can lead. Limiting their involvement this way makes it more manageable for staff.

Probably the most important thing board members can do is to open doors for the organization. Even that, though, takes careful coordination with staff and very deliberate planning to target the particular relationships that warrant attention.

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