

Go! Break the Fundraising Stalemate



Go forward.

ONLY 37% of board members agree fundraising is a key board duty.

Raise funds by raising the level of discourse.

There are multiple viewpoints on the role of boards in fundraising. Regardless of the view taken, board fundraising can be a confusing issue for nonprofit organizations. Within many nonprofits, conversations often go something like this:

Executive – I need you to fundraise.

Board Member – I don't know anyone with money.

Stalemate

OR

We give you ideas, but they never go anywhere.
– **Board**

All you do is give me ideas, but you never help.
– **Executive**

Again a stalemate.

These conversations are often a sign of:

- Differing views about member roles, jobs, and expectations;
- Lack of specificity in the assignment; or
- General lack of know-how.

How to Use a Go! Guide

1. Read the guide text for practical advice.
2. Use numbered "Endnote" links that match with Superscript numbers (like this one¹) after key text points. You'll link to materials that expand on the key points.
3. Use other Web sites in the "General Resources" for more access to practical information.
4. Not getting the answers you need? Call for help from the Allen County Public Library Nonprofit Resource Center at (260) 421-1238.

Here is a practical approach for rethinking the relationship to Go! past the stalemate.

First, eliminate the surprise.

Executives often assume that prospective board members understand that fundraising will be part of their job, so they don't take time to discuss this expectation until everyone is frustrated. Three simple actions can sidestep this tension.

- Work with your current board to develop a "job description" or agreement for members that includes fundraising as a required support role, in addition to governance responsibilities.^{2 & 3}
- Discuss the expectation during cultivation meetings with prospective board members as well as at orientation.
- Make goals and funding progress a standing agenda item for board meetings.

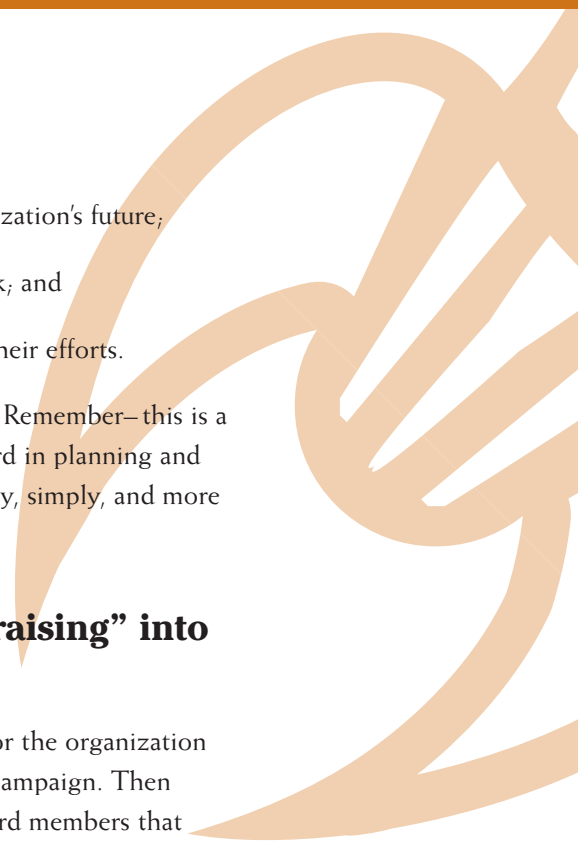
Second, build a personal relationship with each board member.

- Clearly identify and understand each member's interests, personal capacity to give, networks, and skills.
- Develop realistic goals for each member using this newly gained information.
- Develop trust in each other that will open communication, and will develop candor, creative thinking, and individual accountability.

Third, engage each member's heart and mind.

For board members to become willing and effective fundraisers for your organization, they must:

- Understand the organization well enough to discuss it comfortably and compellingly;

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- Believe in the viability of the organization's future;
 - Support the mission driving its work; and
 - Feel rewarded and appreciated for their efforts.

How can you ensure each is in place? Remember—this is a shared responsibility. Engage the board in planning and goal setting, and communicate—clearly, simply, and more often than you have before.⁴

Fourth, break down “fundraising” into clear and doable tasks.

Develop a detailed fundraising plan for the organization with specific goals for each event or campaign. Then develop a realistic action plan for board members that reflects their abilities. Ask them to:

- Personally give money and resources;
- Connect you to others with money and resources;
- Serve as an advocate for the organization;
- Oversee specific events or campaigns; and
- Act as a volunteer on detailed tasks (e.g. selling tickets).

Individual action plans give members responsibility for specific and discrete projects or tasks and avoid the vague assignment of “fundraising.”

Fifth, train and support your board members (and yourself).

Just as you can't assume that all know they are expected to raise funds, you can't assume that board members know how to do it. The solution to this problem is clear:

- Teach your board basic fundraising techniques;⁵ and
- Provide support as they complete their tasks.

In conclusion, consider two final issues.

- 1) Leadership in personal giving sets an important tone for the board and for the organization. The board chair should be the first to give and encourage 100% board participation in personal giving and "getting."
- 2) While each board member needs to help with the giving and the getting, you've got to be realistic about how much your board can do. If your board just doesn't have access to significant financial resources, build an advisory board to help.⁶

37% Can it be that only 37% of board members agree fundraising is a key board duty?¹

What if we said even fewer agree personal giving is necessary?⁷

Go! Endnotes and General Resources

For your convenience, all materials listed below are also located under "Go! Guides" in the **Nonprofit Resource Center** section of the Allen County Public Library Web site: www.acpl.lib.in.us/nrc/index.html

Hard copies may also be picked up at the Library's **Nonprofit Resource Center** located at the Main Branch, 200 E. Berry St.

The original links below will connect you to helpful Web sites and provide additional related information.

Endnotes

¹ See a discussion of this survey at: www.amova.org/articles/governance_challenges.html

² See sample job descriptions/agreements at: www.boardcafe.org/bc2001_03.html and www.grassrootsfundraising.org/titles/statement.html

³ For a discussion of support versus governance see "The CompassPoint Board Model for Governance and Support" at: www.boardcafe.org/bc2003_07.htm

⁴ Looking for thoughts on board communication? See "How do we keep boards informed?" at: www.boardsource.org/FullAnswer.asp?ID=99

⁵ For more detailed resources for fundraising techniques see: www.managementhelp.org/fndrsng/np_raise/np_raise.htm and www.nonprofits.org/npofaq/keywords/5j.html

⁶ For help thinking about advisory boards see "What Is an Advisory Board and Should We Have One?" at: www.boardcafe.org/bc2002_10.html

⁷ See one viewpoint discussion in "The Board Should Raise Money: True or False?" by Jan Masaoka at: www.boardcafe.org/bc2002_03.html

General Resources

- Alliance for Nonprofit Governance: www.angonline.org/index.asp
- Association of Fundraising Professionals Resource Center: www.afpnet.org/resource_center
- Board Café: www.boardcafe.org
- Board Source: www.ncnb.org



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