

**Engaging Board Members in Fundraising:
Expanding the Organizational Donor Base**

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Board members are people, too.

That means they're likely to have some very human attributes:

- Propensity to be paralyzed by fear
- Inability to admit they don't know something
- Tendencies to forget, to procrastinate and sometimes to be passive aggressive
- Capacity to transform passion into incredible acts of loving-kindness

Start with passion

Begin your next board meeting with a round-robin, each board member responding in turn to the same question. For example...

- "Who's the most unforgettable person you've met during your time with this organization?"
- "What's been the biggest change in the community/issue/population since we got involved?"
- "Why does our field of service particularly interest you, and how did you first get interested?"

"We need more money; the board's *got* to get more involved."



Do empathize—Do not enable

Start an honest discussion of the totally normal, almost universal, fear of asking for money.

- ✓What does our culture teach us about money?
- ✓How do those teachings affect how we deal with money in our personal and business lives?
- ✓How have we felt when we've had to ask for money?
- ✓What's our very worst nightmare about what could happen when we ask for a contribution?

Transform "Fundraising"

(Or—rather—elevate it to its proper, honorable and vital role)

Fundraising, far from being ignoble begging, is an opportunity to do at least four very important things:

- 1.Check whether your organization and its work actually have relevance to your community
- 2.Communicate personally and meaningfully with current and potential supporters (and detractors)
- 3.Enlist diverse communities and voices in your work
- 4.Get money

Knowledge is Power

The easiest way to combat fundraising-induced panic is by arming your board members with some know-how.

- The way money works in your organization
- Fund development principles
- The realities of US philanthropy
- Why they are so vital in advancing the work of your organization by both giving and getting money

**Where does our \$ come from?
Where does it go?**

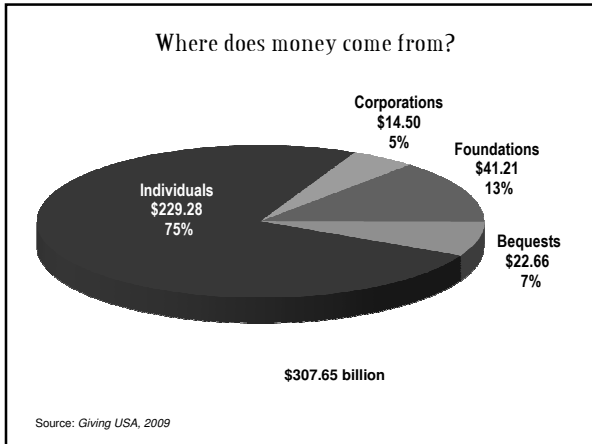
You'd be surprised what board members don't know (but should and won't ask)!

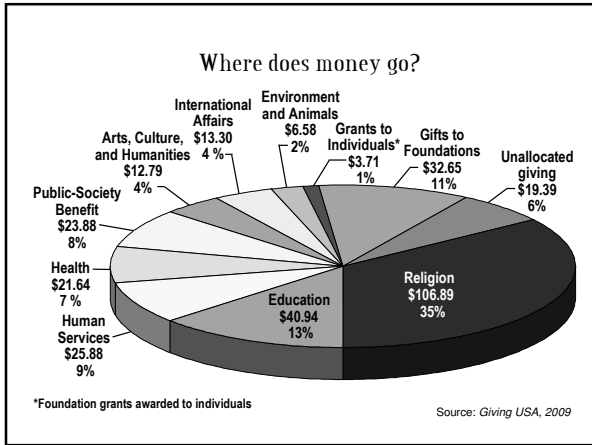
- Where your start-up dollars came from
- Who your major funders are (and have been)
- Whether there's any earned revenue
- If grants or other income lines are restricted
- What the cost of doing business is
- Whether salaries are comparable/competitive
- If there is a line of credit or other source of working capital

Fund Development *and* Fundraising

Board members will be more likely to effectively embrace fundraising when it's seen in the context of fund development.

**Diversification
Sustainability**





8·10; 10·12; 73%

Just the facts, ma'am...

- Eight out of ten people are donors
- Most donors give to a dozen organizations
- 73% of donors report they could give more
- Normal people give more than rich people do
- Most gifts come from households with modest to middling means

Why *them*?

Board members are singularly well-positioned to do the important work of fundraising.

They are the organization's recognized leaders; they have hitched their good names to its star

They are volunteers; their only motive is for the good of the mission

They best honor the donor; being asked by someone important makes others feel important and connected

There are more of them; your organization needs every possible evangelist spreading its gospel

Make it Possible

Here are some tested and proven strategies for turning the board's passion and knowledge into action:

- »Get rid of "Give or Get"—adopt "Give and Ask"
- »Provide training, and opportunities to practice
- »Create an actual or virtual library of resources
- »Draft a board fundraising "menu"*
- »Map their networks rather than seizing their rolodexes
- »Assign board buddies
- »Work from actual plans, organizational and individual
- »Celebrate successes, and share lessons learned on a regular basis

*thank you, Andy Robinson

Nonprofit neuroses? Fundraising phobias?
Other signs of organizational stress?

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