

Consultant to Nonprofits

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The Board and Fundraising – from Fantasy to Reality

In my experience working with Boards I have a fair idea of what they are looking for in the ideal board member. And I think many Boards – especially those of small/midsize organizations - would be better off if they moved from fantasy to reality when it comes to Boards and fundraising. Fundraising ability is always the top skill sought after.

There is only one problem with this as a serious goal. People who have fundraising skill **and** who are interested in fundraising usually fall into one of these categories:

- 85% On a Board of an organization that they are committed too and they are not interested in being on your Board
- 14% Not on a Board right now, don't want to be on a Board and they are completely burned out as far as fundraising goes
- 1% Are available, skilled and interested in your mission

I admit that this data is not scientific. My guess is that your experience is that this is about right. So what to do?

There is a simple answer. **Develop** fundraising capacity among your existing Board members. Fundraising is an art and a skill. Many Board members – and potential Board members – say it is the one thing they won't do. Their image may be that you want them to with little or no training or supportive resources, ask their friends for money. Very few of us are going to be comfortable with that approach.

Fundraising by board members should not be a "going to the dentist" experi-

ence. I love this quote by Doug Lawson, a fundraising consultant: "Philanthropy is the mystical mingling of the Joyful Giver, a Grateful Recipient and an Artful Asker." The goal should be for Board members to become "artful askers" of "joyful givers."

Here are some ideas for developing a '**culture of philanthropy**' on your Board. First of all Board members need to be passionate about your organization's mission. Board members who are on your Board for some other reason, such as resume building, but who are not passionate about your mission are not going to be good fundraisers. All Board members should be developing passion for your mission as they get to know you better, see your programs in action and participate in events. Recently I attended a workshop by the nationally recognized Board development consultant and author Carol Wiseman. She recommended that every board meeting begin with a "**mission moment**" so that the Board continually hears new anecdotal information about the organization. This may be the success of an individual participant/customer, an employee or program award, coverage in the media, etc. Mission based quick reports are easily remembered and repeated and remind us of what we are all about. They also subtly arm board members with conversational, engaging information they can use in fundraising.

Bits and Pieces

Just Published!

The featured article in my Fall 2006 Newsletter on Hosting a Board Recruitment Event has just been published in Charity Channel's Nonprofit Boards and Governance Review. You can see the article on my website or at:

<http://charitychannel.com/enews/v.aspx?SI=52170&E=MarionConway%40aol.com&S=2&N=2286&ID=2533&NL=9>

Visit Marion's Blog!!

I post on my blog about conferences, new products, workshops, legislative updates, etc. Add my blog to your favorite places and check in often.

<http://marionconwaynonprofitconsultant.blogspot.com>

Upcoming Conferences

Nonprofit Technology Conf.
Washington, DC
April 4-6, 2007
www.nten.org

AFP-NJ Chapter
Luncheon and Speaker
Organizational Branding/
A Culture of Philanthropy
March 8, 2007
Edison, NJ
2nd Thurs - Every Month
www.afp-nj.org

Every Board member should make a **personal financial commitment** to the organization. There does not have to be a specific amount, but everyone should understand that it is their responsibility to make a financial contribution. It is well documented that people who give personally will be better fundraisers. Many foundations ask on their applications what percentage of Board members make a personal contribution. The correct answer is 100%.

Every Board meeting should have a **development report**. It should be more than a listing of grants. A good development report has information that a Board member may connect with or repeat to someone else when talking about your organization. What new program or expansion of programs will be enabled by a new grant. Has annual giving increased substantially? Do you know what caused it? Have you participated in a cultivation exchange that looks promising? Has a Board member been involved in development?

Every Board should have a joint **Board/Staff development committee** and the committee should develop a **development plan**. What are your priorities? Strengthening the annual giving campaign? Adding more than one individual campaign? Planned giving? Cultivation of major donors? Increased foundation support? What will be the staff role and how can the Board participate. You can't do everything at once especially if, as many who are on this list, have a one person development staff. The plan will allow you to establish and focus on priorities for fundraising. **Set specific goals, set timeframes and measure** how well you do.

Most Board members do not know where to begin with personal involvement in fundraising so it is important to provide **Board training**. A good place to start is with development of a case statement. The case statement should be a brief statement of your mission, types of services you offer and goals you are trying to reach. It should be your elevator speech and every Board member should have a copy of it so that if asked "What have you been up to?" at a party they can talk about your organization in a few sentences. This is the beginning of developing cultivation skills.

These are just a few getting started ideas for developing a culture of philanthropy and fundraising know-how on your Board. Once you get started you can really get on a roll!

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Recommended Websites

Boardsource.org

CharityChannel.com

-Nonprofit Boards and Governance Review

Afpnet.org

-Association of Fundraising Professionals

This site has excellent board training materials

Afp-nj.org

-Association of Fundraising Professionals - NJ Chapter

Workshops Offered by Marion Conway

Upcoming workshops include:

- Technology Planning, Using the Internet and Funding February 28
- Strategic Planning for Nonprofits March 14
- Planning a Board Retreat April 11
- Technology Planning, Using the Internet and Funding May 23

Workshops or consulting on these subjects is also available.

- The Nonprofit Board - Responsibilities, Leadership and Emerging Trends for the 21st Century
- Nonprofit Lifecycles
- Board Recruitment
- Visionary Leadership
- The Search for an Executive Director
- Benchmarking for Nonprofits

See my website for registration, location and cost details