

From Board Member to Fundraiser in Five Easy Steps

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Top 10 Board Member Fears about Development – and Language to Use to Combat the Fears

- 10. I don't know people who can give**
- 9. I don't like to talk about money**
- 8. I don't want to have to reciprocate**
- 7. I don't like the direction of the organization**
- 6. I just asked for another organization or candidate**
- 5. I don't give enough money to raise it from others**
- 4. I don't know enough about the work of the organization**
- 3. I feel like I'm begging**
- 2. I'm too busy**
- 1. I don't want to get rejected**

10. I don't know people who can give

We all know that language matters. Fundraising is not a great word for what we are trying to accomplish. Fundraising is one-shot. Our goal is to develop relationships with prospective and current donors so that we don't have to sell tickets in order for them to give; rather we are selling them an opportunity to realize their own vision for what their support can accomplish. You know people who care about the kind of work we do. The first step is to mention the meetings you go to and why you are involved here. We can also work with you to decide what kinds of ambassadorship activities feel most comfortable for you based on your networks.

9. I don't like to talk about money

Me neither. It's uncouth and shows signs of bad breeding, right? After all, who am I to presume that the person has enough money to give? I understand this fear. The focus, however, shouldn't be on the money – certainly not at the beginning of connecting the person with us. Rather, think about developing a relationship with someone who will get to feel great about their support for something that you have helped them realize they care about. The "ask" becomes easier once you have established a connection to us for the person.

8. I don't want to have to reciprocate

So, this is a challenging one because we have all been there and because we know that people often give based on who asks. This is actually a strength as you know who in your networks you can go to first. Most folks want you to support a cause they care about because it's an indicator that you support **them**. Still, only you can decide if you think that this is purely a "You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours" transaction. The more you can develop a philanthropic relationship with them, however, the less transactional this will become.

7. I don't like the direction of the organization

We should definitely have an in-depth conversation if this applies to you. People give to people who are passionate about a cause. If you don't connect to the cause yourself, it's difficult to expect anyone else to.

6. I just asked for another organization or candidate

The overasker – we all know folks who fall into this category. I sometimes fall into this category. So, what to do? First, be deliberate about who you go to for which causes. The person who didn't support your political request may have a far greater interest in us. And, most importantly, try to remember that you are just a conduit to enable someone to support a cause that matters to you and to them.

5. I don't give enough money to raise it from others

The key here is to work with you to understanding the perspective of a prospective donor as that will help gauge whether you are the right person to solicit them. Still, ***philanthropy is about more than just the value of the dollars; it's about the value of the work that the dollars support.*** If you give a meaningful gift – that is, one that feels good to you – then you can inspire others to do the same because you care about the work. Again, we'll work together to ensure that the folks we ask you to cultivate or solicit feel comfortable for you.

4. I don't know enough about the work of the organization

We will provide you with background materials that give you stories and data about our work. Again, however, your ability to inspire the prospective donor depends far more on understanding what is important to them, and on your enthusiasm and belief in the cause, than on your mastery of the facts and figures behind our work.

3. I feel like I'm begging

You are not begging if you connect to something your audience cares about. It means you have to ***listen*** when you have a conversation with them. Ask open-ended questions, "What do you know anything about the great work your organization does?" "What matters to you when you support a cause?" ***The most effective solicitors understand that most of the conversation should be spent listening.***

2. I'm too busy

We are not asking you to do more than you can handle. Frankly, that's not good for either you or for us. Your attitude shows. That's why we tell you a simple trick – smile before you pick up the phone to call or write an email. We promise to work with you to find specific activities that are comfortable for your schedule.

1. I don't want to get rejected

"No" is part of the process and, no sugarcoating here, no one likes to be told "no". One of the most effective solicitors I've known has a great attitude about this: "Next batter up". In other words, for every person who says "no", you have many more opportunities to get someone else to say yes. In addition to asking you to try to connect with new prospective donors, if you want, we will also give you folks who are proven donors so that you can experience success along the way – and maybe even realize the joy in providing others the opportunity to support us.