

Boards 2.0 – August 2007

Join us on September 14 from 8:30-10:30am at TLD for Fridays 2.0, an interactive discussion time with Dave Sternberg and other nonprofit leaders from across the community about fund raising and nonprofit boards. RSVP to Amanda@tld.org.

From the Corner Office - Healing Lip Service...

By David Sternberg, Associate Director of Public Service, The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University

In nonprofit board meetings across America there is plenty of lip service being paid to the notion of fundraising. I have personally attended well over 500 board meetings and am always struck at what board members say about fundraising.

The most common themes that bubble to the surface:

“Isn’t that a staff responsibility?”

“I was not asked to be a fundraiser when I joined the board!”

“I’ll do anything other than ask for money!”

And my personal favorite...

“Can’t we just write a grant for funding?”

Most nonprofit executives are eager to dive right in and begin to address these questions. However, that would be the wrong approach. As I have shared with many nonprofit organizations, these themes are symptoms of a larger problem...they are not the problem. Not being asked to fundraise is a legitimate response, but it cannot be dealt with simply by saying...well it is.

So, let’s take a look at what the symptoms tell us...

Symptom: Isn’t that a staff responsibility?

Response:...actually no. Fundraising is a board responsibility which is supported by the staff. In fact, an effective fundraising program is a shared enterprise between staff and board. The plan is created jointly with roles clearly defined and the staff offering whatever time is necessary in assisting the board in accomplishing its part of the plan. So, if your staff is spending all of its time administering the organization then it is a board responsibility to make fundraising a priority and re-align staff roles to see that the board can be supported.

Symptom: I was not asked to be a fundraiser when I joined the board!

Response:...likely the result of an informal recruitment process that looks something like this: Well, elections are today and we have John Doe's name in our file and he does come to the events. Let's give him a call and allow him one minute to decide to be on the board, elect him, and then meet with him to let him know what we need him to do.

Ooops...ever accepted a job without looking at the description and responsibilities? Let's not do that to our board members! Rather take the time to identify who by virtue of their skill set would make a good board member, over a period of time recruit them and then ask them to consider being nominated while sharing the expectation statement (a great moment to make clear the fundraising responsibilities). And do not forget to orient them before they start.

Symptom: I'll do anything other than ask for money!

Response:...at least this is honest. The reality is that fundraising is more than asking for money. It is cultivating and stewarding donors as well, so get going and be social! Send thank you letters, or make thank you calls. Host an event in your home or be a greeter at the gala...become a vocal advocate and let others know that this organization is important to you!!!

Symptom: Can't we just write a grant for funding?

Response:...not the best business model. It is time the board educate itself! 85% of philanthropy comes from individuals, while only 10% comes from foundations. In short, if your board was running a company in the for profit market place you would be suggesting that it seek out the smallest market to sell its products!! With board vision like this...well I will let facts speak for themselves.

Stop with the lip service!! Start with actions. Make addressing these issues a priority...your organization will be healthier for it.

Purposeful Boards Powerful Fundraising

Dave Sternberg is the instructor of an exciting new offering at the Fund Raising School. If your organization has ever asked how it can get board members to actively raise money, then this new course is for you! ***Purposeful Boards Powerful Fundraising*** is the result of a new training partnership between The Fund Raising School and BoardSource. This new course is specifically designed to address the challenges that arise when boards and fundraising meet.

This one day course taught on a weekend will teach board members how fundraising really works and educate them about their role in it.

It will also emphasize the strategies necessary to bring about a change in the culture of your nonprofit so that your board will fundraise more and manage less!

Attendees Will Learn

- What impact the fundraising landscape has on your fundraising efforts
- How to make the case
- Specific fundraising strategies
- The roles and responsibility of a nonprofit board
- How to build your board
- To create a governance model
- The principles of governance as leadership

The Fund Raising School strongly recommends that each organization send their chief staff person and chief volunteer. There are several exercises designed to engage these key individuals.

Class Schedule:

October 27 – Registration is limited to 40 attendees

<http://www.philanthropy.iupui.edu/TheFundRaisingSchool/>

Dave Sternberg has been a fundraising professional since obtaining his BA Degree from The Ohio State University. He is a member of the faculty at The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University's Fund Raising School, where he teaches *Building the Annual Fund, Marketing for Fundraising, Principles and Techniques, Major Gifts*; as well as numerous customized training programs nationally and internationally.