

29 WAYS FOR BOARD MEMBERS TO RAISE \$500

by Kim Klein

All good fundraising plans have one thing in common: they show a diverse number of sources for their income. The board of directors, as we have stressed repeatedly in the journal, plays a crucial role in the selection, implementation, and evaluation of fundraising strategies. One strategy is for board members to use themselves. That is, in addition to other ways that board member may participate in fundraising, they individually commit to rising and giving a certain amount of money, or commit to working by themselves on specific strategies with no financial goal attached.

If board members do fundraising on their own, it is a good idea for them to write up their plans. This “contract” allows staff to know when they might be called for help, insures that events don’t happen on the same day, or the same donors aren’t solicited by several board members, and also helps to remind them of their commitments.

In order for this method to work, the organization or the board fundraising committee should think of many specific ways they could actually raise money by themselves. The twenty nine ways suggested below are by no means an exhaustive list, nor will they all work for every group. Few board members could use all twenty nine ways but almost any board member should be able to use two or three of them.

All of these methods have been used by different volunteers on a wide variety of organizations. Some methods are much more popular than others. Some depend on access to certain resources.

Presenting board members with twenty nine ways (or more or less) that would work for your organization helps counter the excuse, “I would help but I just don’t know what to do” having each board member write out a plan with goals and a timeline. Also gives them a sense that if they do their best with this plan, they will have helped significantly, many board members express the thought “I always feel that fundraising is never ending, and that no amount of effort is enough. Whatever I do, I could have done more, and probably should have.” This feeling causes high turnover, burn out, and resentment in boards. Specific fundraising contracts can help avoid that.

In addition to the twenty nine ways board members can raise funds, we have included a suggested format for a contract, and examples of some completed contracts.

1- Give it yourself. (This is the easiest way for those who are able. Although if you are able to give this much money you should be helping raise much more than \$500.)

2- List all your friends who are interested in your organization, or similar organization. Decide how much each one should give. Write to them on your own stationary; include a brochure from the organization, and a return envelope. Phone those people who don't respond in two weeks. Some people will need 10 friends to give \$50, and some people need 50 friends to give \$10. Most people will need a combination such as: 2-3@ \$50; 8-10@\$15; 4-5@\$25; 15@\$10

3- Give part of \$500. Then ask your friends to join you in giving \$25, \$50, or whatever your gift is. This is most effective because you are not asking them to do anything you haven't done.

4- Set up a challenge campaign. Challenge gifts can be quite small. Tell people you'll give \$5 for every \$25 they give, or will match every \$10 gift up to ten gifts. For added suspense, make this challenge during a fundraising event. You or the host/ess can announce, "We know have the Dave Buckstretch challenge. For the next five minute, Dave will give\$5 for every new member that joins worthy cause."

5- If your organizations have has a diverse funding base, with several grassroots fundraising strategies in place, use them all:

Sell 100 raffle tickets	\$100
Give \$50	\$50
Bring 10 people to an event which costs \$10	\$100
Buy two gift memberships @\$15	\$30
Get 15 friends to join @ \$15	\$225

6- Help with your organization's phone a ton. Bring the names of people you think would like to join and call until you have raised \$500. Or: trade names with someone in the organization and call their friends until you have reached \$500. This is particularly effective for the people who are shy about asking their own friends for money, but not afraid to ask people they don't know.

7- Acquire mailing lists for your organization. If you be long to another group, perhaps you can effect an exchange, or perhaps you have access to a list of members of some other group. You can ask all your friends to give you the names of 10-15 people they think would like to join. You would need to recruit about 25 members at an average gift

of \$15. Depending on how “hot” your list is, you might need as few as 200 names (to do a bulk mailing) or as many as 1500-3000 (if you expect a 1-2% response.) you would have to have a greater response if you wanted the mailing to pay for itself and also generate \$500.

8- Give the organization something they need that is worth \$500, such a new typewriter, filing cabinets, couch, adding machine, component for a computer, etc.

9- Pledge \$20 a month, and get one other person to do likewise. Then sell \$20 worth of raffle tickets.

10- Teach a seminar on a topic you know:

Fundraising; Knitting; Organic Gardening; Organizing; Proposal Writing; Environmental Impact Reports; Gourmet Cooking; Dog Grooming; Starting Your Own Business.

Charge \$25-35 per person, with a goal of 25-30 people. Either you absorb the cost of promotion, or have enough participants to pay yourself back.

11- Give some or a lot of things to your organization’s garage sale, making sure it is worth \$500, and then help to sell it all.

12- With 4 or 5 friends, have a spaghetti dinner at a church or union hall, or other big room with a large kitchen. Charge \$5 per person, and feed more than 100 people. You can charge extra for wine or garlic bread, or for dessert.

13- Have a fancy dinner at your home or a regular dinner at someone’s fancy home. Serve usual food or gourmet food, or have special entertainment. Charge \$25 or more per person, and have 20 or more guests.

14- Get three friends to help you have a progressive dinner. Start at one person’s home for cocktails and hors d’oeuvres, progress to the next person’s house for soup or salad, the next person’s for the main course, and the last person for dessert. Either charge by the course, or for the whole package. To make it extra special (and much more expensive) get a limousine for the evening, and chaperone from house to house.

15- Host a wine and cheese party. Do not charge admission, and invite as many people as you can. During the party, give a short talk about your organization, and ask everyone to consider a gift of \$25,

\$50, \$100 or more (depending on the crowd). Either pass out envelopes and ask people to give now, or after the party contact everyone individually who came to ask for a major gift. Indicate that you have given, and if appropriate, how much you have given.

16- Get your gambling friends together. Charge \$3 to get in, and have a poker evening, asking that every "pot" be split with the organization. Individuals win, and so does the organization. You can charge extra for refreshments, or include one or two glasses of something with the price of admission. Also watch the laws in your community on this one. (In some communities it is illegal to gamble, even in your own home.)

17- Do one fundraising event every other month that nets at least \$75. This might look like:

- Poker Party	\$100
- Fancy dinner (8people x\$25)	\$200
- Sell 50 raffle tickets	\$50
- Booksale	\$50
- Recycle newspapers	\$100

18- Solicit small business, churches, or service clubs for \$500. if you are active in a church, or own your own business and are involved in business organizations or service clubs, this can be very effective. You can often raise \$200-\$500 with a simple proposal and oral presentation.

19- Take a part time job in addition to your present work and give everything you earn up to \$500.

20- Ask 5-10 people to save all their change for 3-5 months. You save yours. Count it at the end of the prescribed time, and use one of the other methods to raise the rest. (you may not need to.)

21- Ask 2-5 friends to help with a bakesale, booksale, or garage sale. You and your friends bake the goodies, or get the books, or the other stuff required for the sale, staff it, and help clean up afterwards. This is an excellent way to get people involved in fundraising without ever actually asking them for money.

22- For the fairly rich: give your organization \$5000 as an interest free loan for a year. They invest it; earn 8-10% (compounded daily). And at the end of the year, they give you your \$5000 back.

- 23-** Sell your organization materials, buttons, t-shirts, bumper stickers, or whatever else they have for sale. Also, help distribute these to bookstores or novelty shops.
- 24-** The farming out method; Entice 5 friends to sell 100 raffle tickets each, or to raise \$100 however they like. Share this list of suggestions with them. Give them a nice dinner at the successful end of their efforts (or a bottle of good liquor, or a weekend away).
- 25-** Get a famous or popular person to do a special event. Watch the costs on this, or you may lose money.
- 26-** Invite people to your birthday party, and ask that in lieu of gifts, they give money to your organization.
- 27-** Conduct a volunteer canvas. For one evening, you and a bunch of friends take literature to all the neighborhoods around you and ask for money at the door. Be sure to comply with city and country ordinances.
- 28-** Lead or get someone to lead a nature walk, an architectural tour, a historical tour, a sailing rip, a rafting trip, or a horseback ride. Charge \$10-15 per person, or charge \$25 and bring lunch. Advertise this in the paper and draw in people outside your organization.
- 29-** Start a pyramid dinner, or a chain dinner. Invite 12 people, and charge \$12 each. Get two people of the twelve you invited to invite 12 people each at \$12, and two people from each of those two dinners to have 12 people at \$12, and so on. Here's the income.
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|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Your dinner | $\$12 \times 12 = \144 |
| From your dinner | $\$12 \times (12+12) = \288 |
| From those dinners | $\$12 \times (12+12+12+12) = \576 |

Twelve is used in this example because it worked very well for the Nuclear freeze Campaign in California, which was proposition 12. In many communities, most of the income for the campaign was generated by 12x12 dinners.