

## 5 Ways to Convert Board Members into Nonprofit Communicators

Connecting to the community and effectively sharing the work, needs and interest of a nonprofit can be very challenging; especially now. With budgets shrinking and resources being limited, board members can help to further the marketing plans of any nonprofit. How can they help build awareness for your nonprofit? I am glad you asked; keep reading this article.

Board members can be some of the best links to the community. The key is equipping them with a complete understanding of who you are, what you do, what you need and why the nonprofit exists for the community. Arming board members with answers to these questions will help to open the door and build on the energy and excitement already carried by most board members. Here's a short list of ideas to jumpstart the conversion from simply board member to "Board Member and the Great Communicator."

Here are some ideas you can share at your next board meeting.

**1. Prepare them to share in 60 seconds or less.** Encourage each board member to have a sixty second organization pitch. Give every member opportunity to write their own elevator message with guidance from you or the staff person(s) responsible for marketing. Help them be ready to talk about the mission, values of the organization as well as notable needs, interests and next steps for the organization. Preparing them to share can make it easy as they go back to their companies, neighborhood or even their friends and family.

**2. Get Them to Write, Invite or Inform F.A.S.K.** (Friends, Acquaintances, Strangers and Kin)– Everybody's got an F.A.S.K. Circle. How often are you asking your board members to forward an email on volunteer needs or send a note to friends to solicit financial support? F.A.S.K. circles are right at your finger tips. Get every board member to look at their personal list of friends, acquaintances and kin to reach out, invite and inform them about the good work of your organization.

**3. Equip them with marketing plan understanding.** Sometimes the reason we don't get word of mouth advertising from the board is that they simply do not know your marketing plans. Arm board members with your target audience, communication strategies and timing so that they can complement your plans. Imagine what would happen if an executive from a local company made sure all his employees hear about your campaign before it happened. What a wonderful way to strengthen visibility.

**4. Solicit Their Participation In Speaking & Writing.** Today more than ever, having real people share their personal involvement with your organization can go a long way to gaining entrée into a community. Ask board members to sign up to speak at local organizations that they have a personal connection to. For

example, can you imagine a member of the board speaking at her church to get volunteers to work at the food bank or job placement? If community newsletters or blogs are available, see if any board members would be willing to write comments that tie your nonprofit to very relevant issues in the community.

**5. Arm Them With A Key Message.** If your organization is on the eve of a fundraising campaign or in desperate need of community volunteers, why not give that message to board members to share. From a board member's perspective, it's so much easier carrying a message when you're equipped to share. Give them the tools to share. If you would like the board to talk about volunteers in the spring but fundraising in winter months, intentionally arm them with what to say. Time your message so that it ties in with all communication being planned.

***Lynette Hawkins, president of Beyond Marketing Group, Inc. facilitates leadership discussions for nonprofit groups and business leaders. She consults and writes on ways to effectively communicate and strategically reach goals to grow and reach the community. Lynette has 25+ years of marketing and communications experience. You can reach her at [info@awesomeinsight.com](mailto:info@awesomeinsight.com) or 336.854.4196.***