



4 Ways Every Board Member Can Help With Your Capital Campaign



By **Andrea Kihlstedt**

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Chances are good that most of your board members have only a vague notion of what will be expected of them in your capital campaign. Board members who know they can't make big gifts to the campaign may be especially concerned, since they may not even know many people who could. They may even be quietly wondering if they should resign from the board.

So before you go very far down the path toward a capital campaign, make sure that every board member knows the important roles they can play, whether or not they can make big gifts.

While money is, of course, a primary focus of capital campaigns, giving and getting big gifts aren't the only way board members can help. Take the time and effort to make sure board members know what will be expected of them and how important the campaign is.

Here are four ways non-rich board members can help, even if they can't make or bring in large gifts.

1. Make a personally significant gift

The commitment it represents when every board member makes a personally significant gift is huge. When every board member gives, they each send a powerful message to other donors and the community that the people who know the organization best are committed fully.

Now, some or even many of your board members won't be able to make large gifts. But they can still make gifts that are significant for them. For some board members, that might be \$100. For others, a personally significant gift may be many thousands.

Whatever the board member's giving levels, either the board or campaign chair should ask every board member for his or her gift in person. And every board member's gift, no matter what the level, should be respected and appreciated.

2. Drum up excitement by spreading the word

Excitement is contagious, and all it takes are a few passionate people to start an epidemic. Talk with each of your board members about how he or she can help get the word out about the project and the campaign. A specific conversation about that helps people to think more clearly and strategically about what they might do.

3. Help with events

Campaigns are full of events. Small gatherings, tours, dinner parties, open houses, etc., create a steady drumbeat of opportunities to draw people in and engage them in the campaign. These events are most effective when board members actively are involved. They can help with planning, invitations, hosting, transportation and follow-up.

4. Be on top of thanking donors as gifts come in

The practice of thanking donors early in the campaign is super important. It's also a great way to involve board members. As gifts come in, board members can pen notes, write emails or call donors to thank them for their help.

If you get board members to help with this early in your campaign, your major donors feel great about their giving and they'll be likely to tell their friends about your campaign.

The bottom line: When it comes to a board member's worth, gift size isn't the only thing that matters.

Don't let the board members who can't give large gifts feel disengaged and unimportant. Spend time with them discussing the importance and meaning of making a personally significant gift and help them figure out the other ways they can help. Do this early in your campaign planning. At the very least, you should discuss board roles in the campaign at a

board meeting. A better approach, however, is a special retreat or workshop to introduce your board to the essential practices of capital campaign fundraising.

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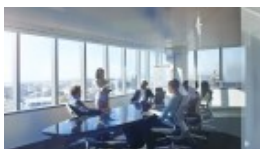


Andrea Kihlstedt

[Author's page](#)

Andrea Kihlstedt is an innovative leader and expert in capital campaign fundraising. She wrote "Capital Campaigns: Strategies That Work (4th ed)," often referred to as the "bible" of capital campaign fundraising. She founded Capital Campaign Masters and co-founded Capital Campaign Toolkit, an online capital campaign resource and platform.

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