



10 Ways to Engage Your Board...

Beyond “Introduce Us to Your Network”



When most nonprofits think about engaging their Board around fundraising, the conversation tends to start and end in the same place: “Can you introduce us to your friends?” It’s a fair ask, but it’s also the easiest one to make and often the one that gets the least traction. Board members want to be useful in ways that feel authentic to who they are, not just as a rolodex to be tapped.

This list is about the intentional activities in between the Board meeting, the event, the finished strategic plan, the stuck feeling over your case statement, where a small ask can build ownership. Each one gives your Board members a way to deepen their connection to the mission.

At your next Board meeting

- **What to do:** Start the meeting by asking each Board member to share a memorable moment they’ve had with the organization.
- **Why it’s important:** You’ll learn what matters most to them and can look for ways to create more of those moments going forward.

During an upcoming event

- **What to do:** Ask Board members to strike up two curiosity-based conversations with attendees throughout the night and have them report back on what they learned.
- **Why it’s important:** It creates a high-touch moment for guests, surfaces useful feedback, and can open the door to a potential major donor you didn’t know was in the room.

When you’ve just finished your strategic plan

- **What to do:** Ask Board members what they’re most excited about in the plan. Then ask if they know anyone, from a professional standpoint, who could help fill a gap the plan surfaces.
- **Why it’s important:** It helps you understand each Board member through the lens of what energizes them, and connects that enthusiasm to real work the organization needs done.

When you’re in need of expanding your prospective donor pool



- **What to do:** Ask each Board member to bring up something happening at the org, like a matching challenge grant, a recent win, with one person in their network. Something as simple as “have you heard about this?” is enough to start. Have them report back how the conversation went.
- **Why it’s important:** It opens the door to a natural conversation, deepens the Board member’s own connection to the work, and can introduce you to new people without asking for a formal introduction.

When you’re in need of support making the actual asks of prospective donors

- **What to do:** Invite a Board member to join you for the ask. Let them speak to their own passion for the organization while the you handle the specifics of the request.
- **Why it’s important:** It shows Board members what actually goes into an ask, builds their buy-in to the process, and opens the door for them to take on that role more often in the future.

When a Board term is ending or a member is rotating off

- **What to do:** Ask them to write a short reflection or “why I gave my time” story you can use in donor communications or as a testimonial.
- **Why it’s important:** It turns their departure into an asset instead of a loss, and gives you authentic content from someone who’s seen the organization from the inside.

When you’re feeling stuck regarding your written materials

- **What to do:** Ask a Board member to read one communication piece and give honest feedback, which can be especially valuable if they have a marketing background.
- **Why it’s important:** Even Board members close to the mission can spot gaps a donor or newcomer would notice. Their read helps you close those gaps, or at least narrow them, before the materials go out the door.



When you land a major gift or hit a campaign milestone

- **What to do:** Have Board members personally call or write to the donors who got you there, even if they didn't source the gift.
- **Why it's important:** It builds the Board's muscle for donor stewardship (not just solicitation) and deepens the donor's sense of being known by the whole organization, not just staff.

When you're prepping for an annual report or year-end appeal

- **What to do:** Ask two to three Board members to record a 60-second video or write a paragraph on what the mission means to them personally.
- **Why it's important:** Board voices carry different credibility than staff-written communications, and it gives members a low-lift way to feel like content contributors rather than just approvers.

When a new staff member joins

- **What to do:** Have a Board member or two personally welcome them, maybe over coffee, and share institutional history or context.
- **Why it's important:** It signals the Board sees itself as invested in the organization's people, not just its outcomes, and builds internal relationships that pay off later when staff need Board support.