

20 REASONS

Why Board Members Don't Want to Ask for Donations (and How to Respond)



As leaders of your institutions, you know firsthand the crucial role philanthropy plays in fulfilling your mission. Yet, persuading board members to embrace fundraising often feels like an uphill battle.

Here's a refined look at 20 common objections your board members might have about soliciting donations—and how to effectively address them.

1 "I wasn't recruited to the board to raise money."

Response: Fundraising is a key responsibility. Your influence can open doors and secure the support we need.

2 "My gift is my time at board meetings—that's more precious than money."

Response: Your time is invaluable, but financial contributions from board members set a powerful example for others.

3 "I'm simply too busy."

Response: Your involvement, even in small ways, significantly impacts fundraising efforts.

4 "I'm shy and not a good salesperson."

Response: A calm demeanor can be very persuasive. Plus, you'll receive coaching and support to succeed.

5 "I'm unsure of my commitment to the organization."

Response: Deepen your understanding of our mission. If it doesn't resonate with you, reassessing your fit may be necessary.

6

"I can't give at the expected level, so how can I ask others to give?"

Response:

There's no fixed amount expected. Genuine commitment, regardless of the amount, inspires others to give.

7 "We should be coordinating big events to fundraise."

Response: Events are enjoyable but costly. Direct asks are more efficient and foster stronger donor relationships.

8 "I'll call or send an email, but I won't meet in person."

Response: Calls and emails are great for initial contact, but face-to-face meetings are crucial for closing gifts.

9 “I’ll have to reciprocate with a gift to their organization.”
Response: It’s okay to decline reciprocation. Focus on your genuine interest and capacity to give.

10

“It may negatively impact my friendships.”

Response:
Approach the conversation with respect and transparency. True friends will appreciate your dedication.

11 “I don’t know enough about the organization.”
Response: We will ensure you’re well-informed and trained before any solicitation efforts.

12 “I don’t like being asked to give.”
Response: As a board member, you understand our funding needs. Approach others with the same respect you expect.

13 “Staff should handle the soliciting.”
Response: Staff provides strategy, but board members’ personal touch is irreplaceable in fundraising.

14 “No one will give to ‘keep the lights on.’”
Response: It’s about supporting the people we serve, not just operational costs. Highlight the impact of their donation.

15 “I’m not convinced we need all this money.”
Response: Get acquainted with our budget and needs. Ongoing philanthropy is essential for sustainability and growth.

16 “I’ve never raised money before.”
Response: New fundraisers bring fresh perspectives. We’ll provide thorough training and support.

17 “We can’t keep asking the same people.”
Response: Donors who give once are more likely to give again. Strengthen those relationships over time.

18 “I’m uncomfortable with rejection.”
Response: Rejection isn’t personal. It’s about finding the right fit for support. Keep trying.

19 “Why don’t we just borrow the money?”
Response: Borrowing incurs debt. Donations build connections and long-term commitment.

20 “I serve on too many boards already.”
Response: Focus your efforts on the organization where you can make the most significant impact.

LET BOARD MEMBERS KNOW THEY ARE THE CORNERSTONE OF SUCCESS

Leadership is instrumental in guiding your board members. Their active participation in fundraising is a crucial component of their position.

It’s a leader’s responsibility to equip board members with the tools and confidence they need to become effective fundraisers.

With dedication and strategic guidance, we can inspire our boards to support our mission fully and ensure our institutions continue to thrive. Together, we can make a profound impact on our communities, one donation at a time.