



## Five Things One Board Member Can Do to Raise \$100 to \$5,000

By Jan Masaoka

An article from CompassPoint's *Board Café*, a free newsletter for members of nonprofit boards. Subscribe at [www.boardcafe.org](http://www.boardcafe.org).

.....

Most board members feel that they "ought" to be raising money, or more money. It's frustrating to be one board member who wants the board to do more to raise money, when others on the board are reluctant or even antagonistic about the idea. The board as a whole needs to ensure that there is an overall plan for raising or earning the money the organization needs to do its work. This "Main Course at the Board Cafe" looks NOT at what the board should or can do (that's for another issue), but suggests what each of us, as just ONE board member, can do as an individual.

1. Make a personal contribution. Hand write a short note to the board president explaining why you are making the contribution, and give the check and note to him or her as you leave the board meeting.
2. Host a dessert party in your home or business and invite twenty friends and relatives. On the invitation say that they will learn about the organization, be asked but not pressured to make a contribution, and enjoy a great dessert. Hold the party on a weeknight around 7 pm. The day before the party, call *everyone* again and urge them to attend. Invite three or four other board members so they can learn how to do this themselves. Make or buy finger desserts, such as cookies or eclairs (cakes don't lend themselves to parties). Bake some cupcakes but do not serve them. At the party, have one client speak for three minutes about what the organization has meant to him or her. Next, have one staff person speak for another two minutes. Then YOU explain to the group why you serve on the board and think the organization is important. Ask the group if there are any questions, and encourage your guests to make a contribution, if they feel the cause is worthwhile, before leaving the party. As a bonus, offer them two cupcakes to take home if they make a contribution before leaving: this gives them a "reason" to write the check tonight.
3. Write a letter and send it to ten friends and relatives. In the letter, explain why you volunteer your time at the agency. Ask them to consider making a contribution to the organization, and let them know they can send the check to you or directly to the organization. (If you send out a holiday letter, you can include this in your letter.) Give your list of names to the staff and ask them to notify you immediately if they receive any contributions.
4. Volunteer to match the contributions from other board members. Tell the board that you will match, dollar-for-dollar, every contribution from a board member before December 31, up to a specified total. The catch: You will only do it if each and every board member makes a contribution. Alternatively, have a staff member tell the board that an anonymous board member has made this offer.
5. Together with two or three other board members, pledge significant gifts. Then write a letter to the rest of the board showing your collective commitment: "We—Felicia, Pat, Laura, and Edgar—have

pledged to give a combined total of \$4,200 to our organization this year. We're doing this because we believe in the work we're doing and we want to make sure we can do as much as we can. Won't you join us in building the important work of our organization?" -Nonprofit Board.

<b>CompassPoint Nonprofit Services</b>	
<i>San Francisco</i> 706 Mission Street, 5 <sup>th</sup> Floor San Francisco, CA 94103 415.541.9000	<i>Silicon Valley</i> 1922 The Alameda, Suite 212 San José, CA 95126 408.248.9505
info@compasspoint.org <b>www.compasspoint.org</b>	