

A Powerful Force Field

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If you had the ability to choose a super power, what would you choose and why?

Perhaps you don't realize that as a board member of your organization, you have a great deal of power. If you have seen the Science Fiction movie, *Fantastic Four*, you have met "The Invisible Woman", played by Jessica Alba. She has the ability to bend and manipulate light to render herself and others, invisible. She later develops the ability to generate powerful force fields, which she uses for a variety of defensive and offensive effects.

Board members have some of the same characteristics as the Invisible Woman. They are a highly valued asset by non-profit organizations managing tremendous responsibilities often with limited resources. Non-profit organizations are dependent upon committed board members using their gifts and expertise to further advance the mission of the organization.

Some of the most valued contributions a board member can make include using their influence and power to affirm, in their center of influence, the good work that the organizations are accomplishing. As an advocate, board members can be a positive presence in the community and learn what others truly think and feel about the organization.

In addition to inviting others in their network to learn more about the organization and be involved in its mission, board members can help shape how supporters and community leaders perceive the

important projects, funding priorities and institutional changes occurring. So, even though board members may not be on the payroll, they have the capacity and authority to generate good will and positive public relations that propel the organization forward.

Many board members are reluctant to get involved with an organization's fundraising activities - perhaps they are uncomfortable talking about money or fearful of asking people to give. Most board members, however, are comfortable asking people to talk about their passions, talking about how to make the community a better place to live and work, and simply thanking supporters for their contributions.

It's important to consider that you, as a board member, have the ability to help your organization change lives in ways that others cannot. Essentially, the board is responsible for the organization's mission, including providing the resources to achieve it. Board members must be the strongest advocates for the Mission and the First Givers!

A Powerful Force Field (cont'd)

Tangible ways to support your organization's fundraising efforts:

- Be proud of your involvement and speak openly about it
- Make thank you calls
- Recommend business owners or executives for board service who get planned gifts
- Review list of donors that staff are trying to meet and help make connections
- Be a connector within your sphere of influence
- Serve as a development committee member
- Make the first gift
- Talk to friends, relatives and colleagues about supporting the organization
- Assist with establishing fundraising priorities
- Accompany staff on donor visits

For Discussion

1. Why did you agree to become a board member of ABC organization? What motivated you to get involved?
2. What is one thing the board could do now to move the fundraising efforts to the next level?
3. How can you work to educate/inform the community about your organization?



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RESOURCES/SAMPLES FOR REFERENCE:

<http://www.afpnet.org/ResourceCenter/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2854>

<http://www.thirdsectoronline.com/page.cfm?pageid=14225>

<http://www.arroyofundraising.com/blog/5/4/major-gifts-board>

<http://cnmsocal.org/helping-board-members-become-more-effective-at-fundraising/>