

ALASKA



FOOD COALITION

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Leadership: The art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it. *Dwight D. Eisenhower*

Motivating Your Board

Everyone likes to feel appreciated, especially if their work is being done on a volunteer basis and/or “behind the scenes”. A national survey of Cooperative Extension board members asked, “What motivated you to serve on the Extension Board?” The most common response was volunteer work benefitted others in the community (67%). Board responsibilities can be challenging. Keeping your board members happy and acknowledging their hard work is essential to the success of your mission. Your board members are the most important allies in achieving the goals and mission of your association. With the right acknowledgement, it will help you build a stronger organization.

Gail Perry’s Fired-Up Fundraising

Gail Perry, a non-profit philanthropy expert has helped organizations raise hundreds of millions in gifts and support. Her fundraising system is based on three principals:

- ✓ Activate people’s passion and energy first. Lighten up and make it fun; fan the flames of emotion.
- ✓ It’s emotion that propels action. It’s all about the psychological and motivational side of dealing with volunteers.
- ✓ Try motivating board members rather than lecturing to them. Try treating them like a sales team that needs pumping up all the time.

Reawaken your board members’ passion for the cause. Board members have to get back in touch with why they care – why they wanted to serve on the board in the first place. You need to reawaken that pull in their heart that caused them to get involved in the first place. Ask them why they care enough to serve on the board. Then ask them what legacy they want to leave from serving on the board. Get them talking about their passion.

Give them practice with their elevator speech. Board members need help learning how to talk about the cause. They need help creating their own, personal elevator speech. Make it fun and informal. Ask them to go around the room, mingling with other board members and share why they care.

Help them understand what you are raising money for. Give them facts. Where does the money go? How many people do you help? How much does all that cost? Be careful to not make this a presentation. Make it a question and answer discussion, informal so that all board members can get into the thinking process.

Rewarding Your Board

“When it comes down to motivating a board member, you might want to consider the carrot more powerful than the stick. Or in fact, the carrot might really be your only option.”

Carol Weisman: 52 Ways to Motivate Your Board Members

Board members can resign, they can be fired and they can be shamed. None of the aforementioned will motivate them to be passionate about your cause. Carol Wiesman’s Blog lists 52 ways to motivate your board members. Here are a few:

- ✓ Get a funny award, like an old bowling trophy from a pawn shop; pass it on to the board member who asks the best question.
- ✓ Give a “Life Saver Award” for someone who helped out at the last minute. The award should be packs of Life Saver candies.
- ✓ Send birthday cards to your board members. Call them and leave a message, even if they aren’t at home.
- ✓ Take photos of your volunteers and board members with their kids. Frame the photos as a thank you.
- ✓ To celebrate an achievement, send an email message with an appropriate mp3 song as an attachment i.e. “She Works Hard for The Money”, “Taking Care of Business” or “The Hallelujah Chorus.”
- ✓ Create a “President’s Award,” which is given yearly by the board president to the member of the board or a volunteer who has done exemplary work.
- ✓ Inaugurate an “ABCD” award (Above and Beyond the Call of Duty) which can be given anytime during the year.

Lastly, when you have a board member who is lagging on his or her promises, just call them up and ask them if there is any way you can help them. You’ll then have a friend as well as a board member. It takes education and empowerment with key information to help your board members become more effective.

Resources

The Alaska Food Coalition is here to help. Copies of Alaska Food Coalition White Papers are available Online: <http://www.alaskafood.org/whitepapers.shtml> for additional information, contact Vanessa Salinas, Alaska Food Coalition Manager: afc@foodbankofalaska.org

Journal of Extension: Understanding Volunteer Board Member Motivation
<http://www.joe.org/joe/2009october/rb3.php>

Motivating or Crushing Team Spirit
<http://www.fastcompany.com/blog/alice-korngold/leading-companies-good/motivating-or-crushing-team-spirit-what-we-can-learn-nonp>

Fired!Up Fundraising: How to Unleash Your Board Members’ Energy for Fundraising
<http://www.gailperry.com/2011/07/how-to-unleash-your-board-members-energy-for-fundraising/>

NEXT MONTH: Crisis Management