



The Care & Nurturing of Corporate Friends

Treat corporations right, and they will support you forever.

BY CAROL E. WEISMAN

Building and maintaining relationships takes work. Developing a relationship with corporations is no exception. Put in the time and effort, and your cause will be their cause. Take them for granted, and they will go elsewhere. Here are some hints on how to nurture your relationships in the corporate world.

Include them on your team.

The meeting, greeting, and recruitment of corporate folks can take place anywhere—at a friend's house, at a wedding, in an airplane, or at a Little League game. Whenever you meet new people, tell them about your organization and its work. When they show the slightest interest, ask them if there is a time when you could discuss your organization at greater length. Then find a place for them on your team.

Don't just go after the money.

Corporations employ people with a tremendous range of talents. There are employee relations problem solvers, advertising experts, plumbers—lots of people who can help you. See if they'll join your board or be a partner with your organization in other ways.

Corporations also produce products and dispose of great stuff. A shoe company recently donated hundreds of first-quality shoes to the abused children served by a child abuse agency. Another corporation supplies all the paper goods for a nonprofit. Corporate office castoffs are frequently more elegant and usable than what you can purchase on a limited budget. Make your needs known, whether through your newsletter or board meetings, and be ready to pick up the goodies.

And never forget people's stomachs. A corporate supporter with ties to

the food industry can be the greatest gift of all. Whether you are feeding hungry dancers, hosting a ball, or providing snacks for kids with cancer, your con-



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**A contact in the food industry
can make a major difference
to your bottom line.**

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CREATIVE FUNDRAISING IDEAS

Earn Money on Conference Travelers

Planning a conference? Offer attendees a chance to arrange their travel through the Society for Nonprofit Organizations' Travel Program. They will get the lowest possible fare, plus you will make money! The Society will send you a percentage of all travel costs. For more information, call the Society at 608-274-9777, and ask about the travel-rebate program and other earned-income programs for Society members.

Target Twenty-Something Donors

Don't try traditional fundraising appeals with people in their 20s. They're more likely to give if the appeal has an innovative twist or a humorous touch. Other ideas that work: Let them know exactly where their gift will go. Engage them in one-time projects with tangible results. Give them facts rather than appealing to emotions. Keep in mind their tendency toward skepticism and their concern for accountability.

Clown-for-a-Day

Have members of your organization and other volunteers dress like clowns and hit the streets, shopping districts, and malls with donation pails. This simple idea has a history of exceptional success. For details on this and other money-makers for nonprofit organizations, see *Cash Now: A Manual of 29 Successful Fundraising Events*. To order, see the Society's Resource Center Catalog, included in this issue, or call 800-424-7367.

tact in the food industry can make a major difference to your bottom line.

Tell the world.

Whenever corporate people join your board or do something to help your organization, let the world know. Write glowing letters to their bosses. Make special presentations, and give awards. A plaque, mug, or poster not only hon-

ors the recipient but gets your name on the desk or wall of corporate offices.

Also send press releases to the local paper and the corporation's in-house publication. Be sure your press release includes information about your mission and your needs. For instance: "Tom Podgorski, vice-president of marketing for CPI, recently joined the board of the Family Resource Center, a child abuse treatment and prevention agency. He plans to use his marketing skills to launch a campaign to educate school children about sexual abuse prevention."

agency has all its paper donated by the supplier of a large accounting firm. Ask your corporate supporters to "rep" your nonprofit to their contacts.

Be a cheerleader.

Read the business pages of your newspaper. Notice when your corporate friends get a big contract, settle a strike, or make news in other ways. Recognize these milestones by sending a note or inexpensive gift. Your thoughtfulness will be remembered.

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Offer new business opportunities.

Corporate people are in business to do business. Make sure they have social opportunities to get to know the other board members, who may become their clients.

Seek secondary sources.

Encourage businesses to approach their suppliers on your behalf. One arts

Sell, sell, sell.

Never sell just *one* ticket to an event. Always sell a table! When you do, make sure you follow up with a thank-you and pictures of the event for the attendees. Send pictures to the company's newsletter and the local paper. If there's a clever photo that can be taken before the event, call the paper and suggest a photo opportunity. Pre-publicity makes corporations feel good about their participation.



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Timing is everything.

Know the funding and budget cycles of your corporate friends. Some groups allocate philanthropic dollars at the beginning of their fiscal year, some at the end. Know when to get in the door. Your contact should be the one to keep you informed and guide your application through the process.

Know what to request.

Ask your board member or other corporate contact to find out the company's average gift. Don't request \$5,000 if \$50,000 is the norm, or vice versa. Also, find out the company's giving philosophy. Some companies

like to give money to start new programs, while others prefer to donate to capital campaigns or educational programs. Know what to ask for and how much.

Support your supporters.

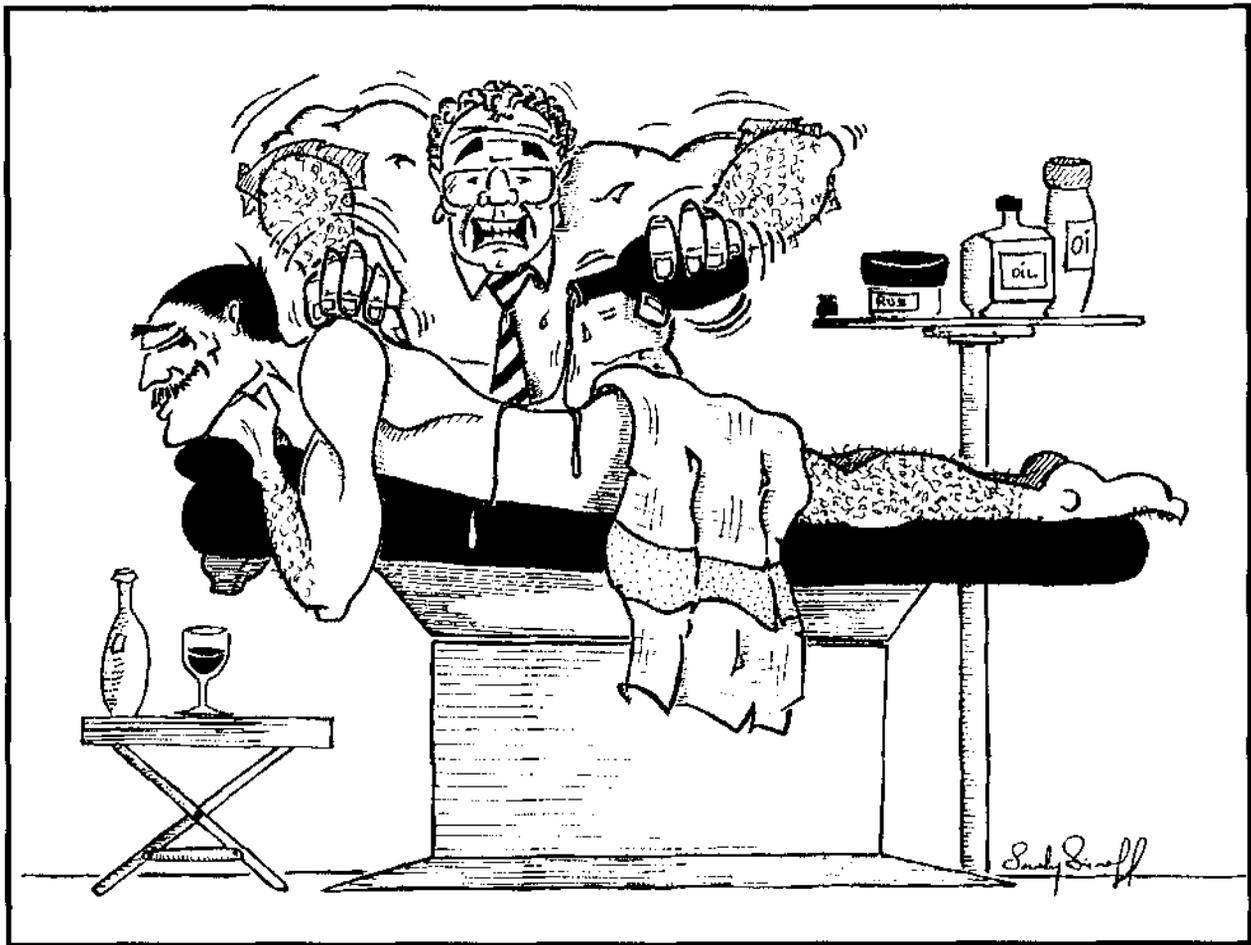
Corporations can fall on hard times. When a very generous corporation went into Chapter 11 bankruptcy, one non-profit organization sent its corporate pals five pounds of nuts with a card that read, "Nuts to your creditors. We still love you." When they came out of Chapter 11, they wrote their first charitable check to that organization.

Make the most out of change.

People change jobs. Make sure you keep your board members when they move to other corporations. Also, ask for help finding other board members from the company they're leaving.

Get to know the secretary.

Secretaries run the show. Be sure to remember secretaries on their birthdays and special holidays. Secretaries make your life easier as they track down their bosses, arrange for meeting rooms, and perform hundreds of services for



ALTHOUGH THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO NURTURE CORPORATE FRIENDS, BERT ALWAYS WENT A LITTLE TOO FAR...



Remember the kids. They grow up to be donors.

you each year. They are also the ones who deliver your phone messages.

Corporate spouses count.

Always issue invitations to spouses, friends, or significant others. Don't forget, they are the folks who eat dinner alone or take care of the kids while their partners are devoting time to your group. Have at least one event a year to support, educate, or recognize spouses. Not only will they appreciate your thoughtfulness, but you might discover another talented person to offer assistance.

Don't forget the kids.

Whenever possible, include board members' children. They can often lend a hand as volunteers. Also consider inviting children to seasonal parties. Remember, they grow up to be donors!

Learn how they do things.

Learn what corporations' needs are and how they do business. Support them when their business is going through rough times, and be creative in the ways you say thank-you. You'll have a friend for life for your nonprofit organization. ■

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*Starred publications are available through the Society For Nonprofit Organizations' Resource Center. For ordering information, see the Society's *Resource Center Catalog*, included in this issue, or contact the Society at 6314 Odana Road, Suite 1, Madison, Wisconsin 53719 (800-424-7367).

Fundraising Software Resources

Chronicle Guide to Grants, 1255 23rd Street, N.W., Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20037 (202-466-1000).

Donor Perfect fundraising software, SoftWare, 540 Pennsylvania Avenue, 2nd Floor, Fort Washington, Pennsylvania 19117 (800-220-8111).

Fund-Master 7.0 fundraising software, Master Software Corporation, 5975 Castle Creek Parkway N. Drive, Suite 300, Indianapolis, Indiana 46250 (800-950-2999; fax 317-849-5280).

ParaGon planned giving software, Blackbaud, 4401 Belle Oaks Drive, Charleston, South Carolina 29405-8530 (phone 800-443-9441, Ext. 307 or 803-740-5400; fax 803-740-5410).

Planned Giving Manager (PGM) software, PG Calc Incorporated, 129 Mount Auburn Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138 (phone 617-497-4970; fax 617-497-4974).

Pledgemaker software, SoftTrek, 3729 Union Road, Buffalo, New York 14225 (phone 800-442-9211 or 716-685-0823; fax 716-681-7669).

The Raiser's Edge fundraising software, Blackbaud, 4401 Belle Oaks Drive, Charleston, South Carolina 29405-8530 (phone 800-443-9441, Ext. 307 or 803-740-5400; fax 803-740-5410).

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