

Don't Make Deals!

How far should you go to recruit the board member of your dreams?

BY CAROL WEISMAN

You've got an interview with someone you're dying to recruit for your board. He's a major player in your community, and all the boards in town want him as a member.

You're desperate to recruit someone like this to take your board to the next level. This person has access to power, can write large checks, is bright, influential, and an all-around decent human being. He's the board member of your dreams.

But when you ask this person to commit to your board's requirements, he waffles on everything you ask. He's not sure he can show up at all the board meetings or meet your other basic conditions for board membership. What are you going to do?

You're doing to rescind the offer for board membership, and here's why:

- If this person doesn't show, you'll have problems with a quorum.
- It's a bad example to other board members.
- It shows lack of commitment to your mission.
- It's unfair to the prospective board member. If he joins your board, he'll be legally and morally responsible for your

mission. Even if he doesn't show up, he is still responsible for what goes on at meetings.

- If your board members don't get fully involved, they can't be solid ambassadors in the community.

O.K., so this person is really, really fabulous. You can't bear to lose him. That's fine. You can put his talents to use in other ways. Instead of inviting him to join your board, invite him to:

- Be the honorary chair of your next fundraising event.
- Be your television and campaign chair.
- Chair your capital campaign.
- Serve on a committee.
- Work as a front-line volunteer.
- Serve as an advisory board member.

Remember, board service is an honor, responsibility, and privilege. Don't demean it by making deals. Also remember that, while there's not a place on your board for everyone, there *is* a place in your organization for everyone! ■

Board Resources

Board Leadership & Governance, Leadership Series
(www.snpo.org)

Transformational Boards
(www.josseybass.com)

Board Governance Videotape
(www.snpo.org)

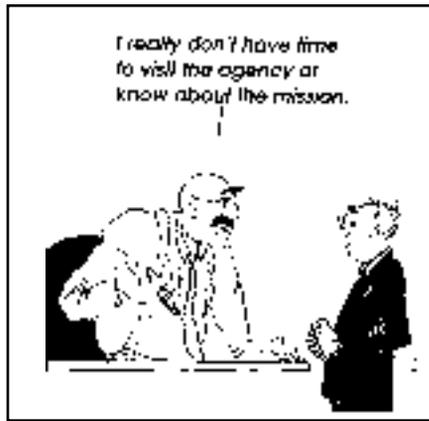
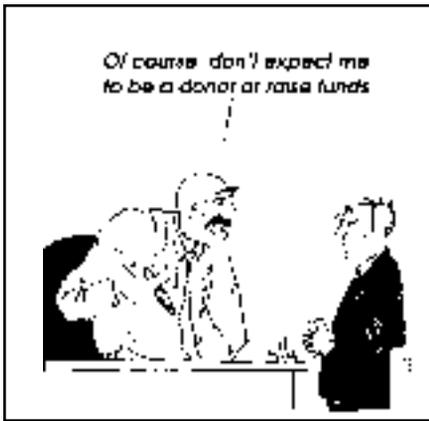
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Nonprofit World • Volume 20, Number 3 May/June 2002
Published by the Society for Nonprofit Organizations
5820 Canton Center Road, Suite 165, Canton, Michigan 48187
800-424-7367 • www.snpo.org



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