



What's the Best Way to Contact Board Members?

How can you find out what's really keeping board members away?

Q: Within our board of directors, there are several who, for whatever reason, have decided not to vote on several items within the last two weeks. Actually, we have received no response at all from 10 people. Yet we know that they received information by mail regarding a board meeting date and location, the hiring of a new business manager, and approval of a new board member.

These board members may need to be excused from their positions.

Is there protocol we could use to reprimand these board members for not participating? I am afraid they may be deliberately staying away due to "politics" or discontent among board members. Therefore, they may need to be excused from their positions on the

board. How should we proceed?

A: The best way to communicate with board members is the good old phone. Call every board member to find out what's going on.

Don't assume you know the reason they're staying away. The reason may have nothing at all to do with the organization. Or folks may be really disenchanted with the way things are going.

After you've called everyone, make appropriate adjustments. You may need to change the meeting time or format or have a very frank discussion at the next meeting about where the organization is going and what seems to be dividing the board. Just in case, be sure to read your bylaws to see if there are any provisions for dismissal based on non-attendance. ■

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How Can You Use Leftover Premiums?

Is a dated premium a good incentive for giving?

Q: One benefit of joining our lowest-level giving club is an ornament with this year's date inscribed. We have some of these dated ornaments left over from last year, and we'd like to send them to a selected group of donors who are close to that minimum level as an incentive to give more (and point out that they'll receive this year's ornament if they renew at the same level or more). Aside from "rewarding" some donors who won't respond, is there a downside to this idea?

A: The only other downside I can imagine—and I suspect it would be quite rare—is that a few

We'd like to send dated ornaments as an incentive for donors to give more.

such donors might actually live with donors who have upgraded to the premium level. However, I wouldn't be worried about that. All in all, what you propose seems to be an intelligent use of dated premiums that would otherwise go entirely to waste. ■

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