

Creating a Fundraising Board

This how-to book will help your board raise more funds.

Reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

Effective Fundraising: The Trustee's Role and Beyond. By F. Warren McFarlan. Hardcover. 187 pages. John Wiley & Sons, wiley.com.

There are many fundraising books for nonprofits but few targeted to board members. That's why *Effective Fundraising* is so welcome.

Board members are often confused about how to help raise funds. Many aren't comfortable asking for money, so McFarlan explains ways to make it easier. For example, experience improves a trustee's confidence and effectiveness as a fundraiser. As long as there is passion about the mission and willingness to improve, seeking donations will become increasingly comfortable.

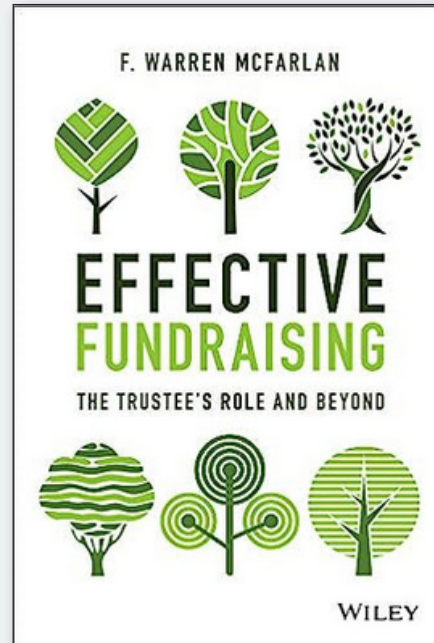
But asking for money is only one way to help. Board members also give their own money, cultivate supporters, and build relationships with each other and with staff. Selecting an executive director, recruiting and training new board members, and working with the development director contribute to the success of fundraising as well.

McFarlan explains how board members of even small, local, and grassroots organizations play a role in raising funds through four broad fundraising methods: annual campaigns, events, planned giving opportunities, and (perhaps only occasionally) capital campaigns.

McFarlan doesn't dwell on minute details about what each board member does. Rather, he provides a comprehensive picture of what good board fundraising looks like. His book is designed to create a fundraising culture among members of a governing board.

Terrence Fernsler, MNPL, PhD, has been a nonprofit professional for over 35 years. He is currently an instructor and advisor in the James Madison University Nonprofit Studies minor program, an instructor in the Nonprofit Management and Leadership for the Master of Public Administration in the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University program, and principal of Sustainable Nonprofit Leadership Strategies.

“Asking for money is only one way to help.”



Putting It into Practice

Each chapter of *Effective Fundraising* ends with a useful list of questions board members can ask themselves. A few examples:

Are demographic issues hanging over the organization's future? (Is the donor base very old? Is support too narrow?) Could I help by increasing my personal gift, soliciting current donors, or networking new people to the organization?

Who do I know who would be good at fundraising for my organization (event sponsor, creative out-of-the-box thinker, and so on)? How can I get them involved?

Have we found ways to engage friends of the organization in advisory committees to keep them close?

Can I help access foundations that could help support us?

Do I talk continuously about the organization to the point of driving people around me crazy? (Doing so is a good thing!) 