

Five Tips and Tricks for Keeping Board Members Engaged

Provided by Manning & Napier

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Behind every successful non-profit organization is a strong board of directors. After finding and training a dedicated board, the critical next step is keeping members engaged and educated. The COVID-19 pandemic has made board engagement even more challenging since in-person contact has been halted and reinstated multiple times during different waves. Below are some tips and tricks to keep board members connected to your organization—pandemic or no pandemic.

Identify & Leverage Strengths

Take a look at your board members on an individual level. What is each member good at? What skills are they bringing to the table from previous experiences? And most importantly, what do they like to do? For example, a board member with a strong marketing background could serve as a great resource to help your organization boost its social media presence. If you task individuals with projects that align with current interests, they are much more likely to engage and make a positive impact on your organization.

Be Personal

You've taken the time to get to know the strengths and interests of your board members, now it's time to get to know them personally. Did a board member mention his son had a championship basketball game that weekend? Make note of it and follow up to ask how it went. By showing that you're interested in their lives outside of the work they are doing for you, they will feel even more valued.

Another great way to develop deeper relationships with board members is to host events that can involve the whole family. Getting to know family members will help build a stronger connection to your board members and can potentially develop multi-generational relationships with younger family members, possibly securing them as future donors, volunteers, or even board members themselves.

Keep Communication Open & Regular

COVID-19 has slowed many in-person meetings, but that does not mean that communication should waiver. In fact, it should increase. Zoom, text, email, and social media are all great avenues to stay in touch with your board. This pandemic has forced organizations to be flexible and make adaptations to day-to-day operations, events, and fundraising efforts. It is critical to utilize all methods of communication to continually stay in touch with your board, so they are engaged and aware of any organizational updates that occur.

Show Appreciation & Say ‘Thanks!’

Thanking your board members is something you’re likely already accustomed to. Think about upping the frequency of your appreciation. Don’t just thank them for helping to meet a fundraising goal or after participating in a big event for your organization. Thank them for the little things. Thank them for bringing a great idea to the table or for connecting a new donor to your organization. A handwritten card or email expressing your appreciation will mean a lot to your board members and will inspire them to keep doing great things. Social media shout outs are another great way to say thank you. Consider implementing a campaign that spotlights a new board member every week or two.

Fuel Continuous Learning & Education

Each board member will come into your organization with individual expertise from their past work and philanthropic experiences, but they likely won’t be proficient in every area their role requires. By offering continuing education on topics like fundraising training, investing and spending policies, fiduciary responsibilities, and legislation, you can help fill some of the gaps and give your board members the confidence to perform their various duties.