

3 Ways Non-Profit Board Members Can Tell Stories & Raise Money

[Non-Profit Storytelling Tips](#)

Having been both a fundraiser and a board member, it's been interesting to see both sides of the conversation about board fundraising. I have to say, having had a seat at the board table and now being a board chair, I have a lot more empathy for what board members are feeling when they are asked to fundraise.

I have worked on countless fundraising initiatives with board members and there is one thing that I often underestimate them needing – a ton of direction.

Really, **the more direction and support you can give board members the better.** I've found that in the times when I have been as clear as possible, board members have been able to be successful. And when they are successful, they gain a certain amount of momentum to keep going.

As you might know from your fundraising work, a good amount of fundraising is really about communications and storytelling. Telling stories are often part of the cultivation process, which does not require an ask. This is a great, introductory step that board members can take towards fundraising.

Here are 3 types of stories board members can share to support the organization's fundraising initiatives.

Their Personal Story

Every board member has a story as to why they chose to join the board. Their

personal testimonial is a powerful (and much more interesting) way to answer the question, “So what do you do?” If your board members attend community events as ambassadors, this is the story they should tell when introducing themselves and networking.

A personal story should be comprised of three elements: a calling, the solution, and the outcome.

I think the calling is most important because it tells people about the values and beliefs that were at play when a decision was made.

An Impact Story

Impact stories are all around us at non-profits, but since board members can be somewhat removed from the day-to-day operations, we have to find ways to reconnect them with the impact. This might mean that you invited a staff member to attend the board meeting and share an impact story during the first few minutes. It might also mean that every quarter, you give them new story talking points on a business card-sized piece of paper.

Make sure that you are regularly giving board members new stories to tell and if it’s available, some talking points to help them remember what to say. I suggest this because I often hear board members say, “I don’t know what to say.” This will solve that problem.

An impact story is a great thing to have up your sleeve for donor meetings.

The Founding Story

I like to suggest that board members know the founding story because sometimes when they are talking to people about the non-profit, some people will want to know how the organization got started. Every organization got its start somewhere and that is a story worth knowing.

None of these stories have to be particularly long. In fact, it’s ideal if a board

member can deliver the story in 2 minutes or less. This is a great activity that you can try at your next board meeting. Pick a story and ask 2 or 3 people to share their version of it. This a great way to provide a little feedback and give other board members inspiration for their storytelling.

I'd love to hear from you in the comments below. Do your board members tell stories? If so, what kinds of stories do they tell?