



MEANINGFUL BOARD ENGAGEMENT IN WAVE CAMPAIGNS

Board involvement in campaigns is always critical, and especially so in wave campaigning. [Wave campaigning](#) works to align the philanthropy program with the organization's needs. How can you maximize your board members' impact? How do you identify their passions and their affinity to give in furthering your mission?

How can you uniquely incorporate your volunteer board members into your vital campaigning?

Tasks for successful campaigns can easily be charted and practiced; however, it's important to build campaigns that align the priorities with the board activities. Use your next campaign as an opportunity to consider more than just case. Contemplate how, when and with whom the case can best be advanced. Campaign planning should include board invitations to participate, role rightsizing and affinity support.

Board giving is often measured in hours or in dollars, with a score card that charts these activities. The number of meetings they attend, number of potential donors or volunteers they nominate or how many events they host can also be tracked and charted. Let's not stop there.



Group and individual conversations can reveal how members see themselves participating while bringing them joy in philanthropy.

Leaders often practice a cardinal rule in philanthropy of never saying "no" to donors. How can you apply the same to your volunteer board members, never saying "no" to their particular interests, engaging them as true partners to build something together that goes beyond board score cards?

Campaigns provide the opportunity to approach your board engagement differently. Taking stock of where your organization is and what can be improved is an essential first step. After

determining goals, engage your board through the following strategies for greatest impact:

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

When seeking partnership and approval, leaders must factor in time for feedback that builds consensus. Instead of your board reviewing final campaign plans, select several members with case-matching interests and invite them to help develop, edit and even co-present the plan. While leaders know the program, the executive leadership and the impact of health care changes, your board members will provide a valuable voice. Any vulnerability leaders may feel by initially showing something less than perfect will be erased by the opportunity to build something more meaningful together.

RIGHT-FIT ROLES

Once the final plans are approved by the board, the transition for “What next?” can often be a painful one. Alleviate this by ensuring right-fit roles for each board member. Group and individual conversations can reveal how members see themselves participating while bringing them joy in philanthropy.

A great way to discover right-fit roles is through Accordant’s unique and simple [CoreCentric™](#) exercise that allows you to create custom engagement plans for each board member. Are they Connectors, joyfully reviewing list after list to open doors? Are they Caretakers, happily writing thank you notes and making calls? CoreCentric™, or any similarly focused exercise, determines how board members can most authentically contribute. Creating subgroups based on results allows

“...after being on this board for years, this is the first time I don’t feel like an ATM. I’m being valued for my skills and the contributions I can make to the organization.”

you to plan specific, right-fit tasks to further your campaign efforts.

Rightsizing roles by interest not only increases board involvement in your campaigns but also furthers personal, meaningful engagement for each member. In one recent exercise of rightsizing, a long-standing board member confidentially shared, “...after being on this board for years, this is the first time I don’t feel like an ATM. I’m being valued for my skills and the contributions I can make to the organization.”

AFFINITY

Your board increases engagement through campaign committees that keep the focus and momentum moving forward. Connect each committee with the area they will make the most significant impact for your organization while bringing them accomplishment and joy. Consider their affinity, not their occupation. Don’t put members on the finance committee based strictly on their finance profession. Staff your committees based on board member’s affinity for what the campaign is advancing. For example, in a cancer center campaign, create a Cancer Affinity Council with like-minded individuals of differing skill sets to advance this particular case. If they are inspired by the case, their volunteer experience will be more comprehensive and personally rewarding.

While campaigns are highly coordinated and managed events, they shouldn’t be strictly duty driven and contrived. When applying as much relationship management expertise and commitment to engaging board volunteers as you do with donors, measurable goals will not only be reached, but the journey will also be more joyful. Building campaigns together by meaningfully engaging your board will result in more than just additional dollars raised. It results in communities built.

About the Author: [Heather Wiley Starankovic, CAP, CFRE](#), is a Principal Consultant with Accordant. You can reach her at Heather@AccordantHealth.com.