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Traveling Board Meetings:

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A Simple, Powerful Step Towards Building an Army for Community Improvement *

Use It Today

Many organizational leaders choke when we suggest that their strongest allies may just be the very organizations they have come to see as their competition in the ongoing battle for funding. But think about it - these groups are passionate about the exact same things your organization's board and staff and volunteers are passionate about!

Begin Inside the Comfort Zone: The following strategy begins inside the comfort zone - with your existing collaborative partners, the folks you already feel comfortable with. Then, when you are ready, you can begin reaching out to your "competition."

Traveling Board Meetings: Use It Today!

Traveling Board Meetings are an easy first step towards learning and working more closely with other organizations. All it requires is that you hold your regular board meetings at the facilities of other organizations.

Start with a list of organizations with whom you already have a strong working relationship - your existing collaborative partners. You will be surprised how many of those groups will welcome your board to their facility!

For the bulk of the meeting, the board will attend to its regular business, just as if the meeting was in your own board room. Then, at the end of the meeting, the agenda will include a brief presentation by the Executive Director from your host organization, sharing information about their work, and perhaps suggesting opportunities for both groups to work together. Board members might then take a tour of the facility, adding to the opportunity to learn and share.

Once you and your board are comfortable sharing in that way, it is a simple step to engaging the organizations you view as true competitors - the ones doing similar work to yours. Having meetings at their facilities, having their ED share their programs with your board - there is so much we can learn and accomplish when we view each other as compadres rather than competitors!

The protective walls we have built around our organizations keep out the very people who care passionately about the causes we care about. By inserting the spirit of community engagement directly into your board meetings, you will begin to open your whole organization to the larger things we can all accomplish together.

* Excerpted from

**FriendRaising:
Community Engagement Strategies for Boards Who Hate Fundraising but Love Making Friends.**
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