

Getting Around a Non-Participating Board

Sometimes, boards simply will not get involved. This may mean changing boards, but this can be a time-consuming process. In the meantime, here are some techniques for making certain that the board's reluctance does not halt major gift fundraising before it begins:

- Establish a board development committee led by a board member, most of whose members are non-board leadership volunteers.
- Form an organization out of the existing major donor club with its own leadership. To avoid conflicts with the board, ask the board to amend its by-laws so that the chair of the volunteer committee becomes an *ex officio* board member. (This was the course that WGBH took in the 1980's when its board was composed entirely of university presidents.)
- In the absence of an existing major donor organization, establish a committee of major donor prospects that operates with the acknowledgement and approval of the board.

If at all possible, establish a *formal link* between the leadership volunteers and the governing board. This can help to avoid unhealthy competition between the two, which can also impede major giving progress by draining time and energy from both groups.