

One of the biggest mistakes I see made by both nonprofit staff and board members (and political candidates) is to underestimate their own personal list for who to ask for donations.

Invariably, when you push them, more names emerge.

So how do you “push” yourself if you’re the one needing the list.

Most importantly, don’t build your list purely by asking out loud: “who do I know?”

Instead, run through an exercise like the following:

Go through Your Rolodex: old fashioned, your email address book, your Facebook or LinkedIn connections, etc. Who among these are prospects?

Then ask a series of questions design to bring to the forefront of your mind people who might not have already been captured. Questions can include:

Do you attend any religious institution?

Do you socialize with others from the institution?

Are you involved in it beyond attending services?

Are you in any clubs or organized activities?

What is it?

Who’s in it?

Who do you hang out with socially?

Social networks

Outdoor activities

Watching/playing sports

Games

Book Clubs

What’s Your Professional background prior to your current role?

Do you have co-workers from previous jobs who believed in you?

Were you part of a professional association?

Who are your past employers?

For each, what’s your relationship like with the employer?

For each, list the 5-10 people with whom you most closely worked? What are they doing now/where are they?

Do you have any friends or colleagues from your higher education?

Social Clubs

Fraternities

Honor Societies

Extra-Curricular Activities

Odds are overwhelming that an exercise along these lines will yield a significantly more robust list from whom to fundraise!