Unleash the Power of Small Social Events to Gain New Friends, Supporters and Donors

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• Top 10 America’s Fundraising Experts
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Gail Perry Group

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Today: Small Social Events!

1. Why friendmaking events are powerful fundraising tools
2. Best format for a Small Social – and other intimate events
3. The invitation and guest list
4. The art of “working the room”
5. Board members as hosts!
6. The follow-up
Why **Small Social Events** are Powerful Fundraising Tools
Why do we love Small Socials? Because much fundraising happens in quasi-social situations.
1. Open doors to new friends and supporters

2. Nurture current donor relationships

3. Engage board members to make introductions to their associates
Board Members as Ambassadors: One of their top jobs is to open doors and spread the word!
The Small Social Motto:
Make Friends First!
Key Differences: Friendraising vs. Traditional Fundraising

Friendraising First
- Make friends first, then ask later
- Donor-centered
- Builds the donor’s trust & confidence
- Creates a long-term donor
- Kinder, gentler, more fun and MORE SUCCESSFUL

Traditional Fundraising
- Transactional – all about the money
- Organization-centered
- Rushes the donor to give give give
- Results in one-time donors
- Can be harsh and awkward
What Exactly is a Small Social?

A No-Ask Social Event with a Short Program
Deliberate networking moments to meet key, handpicked individuals who can advance our cause
Everyone should be enjoying themselves

There is joy in the fellowship of friends, supporters and "associates"

Your organization is seen as a convener of key individuals

A Social Cultivation Event Must “Feel” Like It Could be Fun
Many uses for a Small Social or Porch Party event:

1. **Share news**: Updates about a cause with neighbors, peers, friends and supporters

2. **Cultivate a Board member or leader**: Invite to them to host an upcoming Porch Party or in-home event

3. **Gratitude**: Make it a donor appreciation event
Many uses for a Porch Party or Small Social Event:

4. **Introductions**: Meet the new CEO or VIP

5. **Honor**: A supporter, community leader, trailblazer, Board Chair

6. **Social**: Create a “celebrate the symphony” night

7. **Donor events**: Gathering for donor groups (new donors, lapsed donors, long-time supporters)
The Best Small Social Format
No Porch?
No Problem!

- Fireside chat
- In-home event
- Garden party
- Poolside party
- Coffee or tea
- Cocktails on the deck
- Evening cookout
- Tour ending outdoors
- Hike ending with a talk
- Intimate dinner
The Magic of the Invitation and Guest List
Who to invite? People who already love you AND prospects who may want to know more.
“How do we get the donors to attend?”

“How many should we invite, and how many can we expect to attend?”
Attendance Depends On:

- **Who** is doing the inviting?
- **What type** of invitation?
- The type of event
- Does it seem **appealing**?
- **When and where** will it be?
- A “bump” invitation from a peer helps fill the event.
Success Tip: 
Board Members Act as Hosts

- Greet guests warmly
- Be sure there’s a hostess, host or greeter at the entry
- Name tags are essential!
- Be friendly! This is a social event.
Hosts: Overcome the Awkward Factor

- Be happy and upbeat.
- Don’t act embarrassed. Your guests will feel it.
- The attitude of the host can make or break your event.
Make the Program Short and Delightful

• The host welcomes, thanks everyone for coming.
• Program can only last 12-15 minutes!
• Keep it snappy, positive and interesting.
• Use an upbeat, short, specific, call to action.
• Ask the ED or Board Chair to close and thank, invite discussion.
The Art of Working the Room – Assign Board Members and Staff
“We had a great Porch Party at the home of a current board member.

She has great local name recognition as a former state senator so drew a good number of guests.

While no direct ask was made at the gathering, it resulted in new and increased gifts from several attendees afterwards.”
Working the Room: You Represent an Amazing Cause

- Introverts AND extroverts can mix and mingle easily—have a few friendmaking questions ready.
- Help Board and staff circulate—they are here to mix and mingle, too!

“How did you come to be here today?”
“I’d love to know more about your interest in our cause.”
• **3 days before**, review final guest list: *assign staff, CEO and board* to greet 5 specific guests

• **During the event**, find moments for a special hello, thanks or convo

• **After the event**, make your own notes, meet with CEO and call board about their event contacts

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*Work the Room! Create Strategic Opportunities!*
“We had one of our major donor couples host a small, intimate wine and cheese for 20 people – it was great!”
Do You Make an **Ask** At a Small Social Event?

YES Soft Ask!

NO Hard Ask!
Follow-up:

Call guests and thank them for attending!

“What were your impressions?”

“What resonated with you most about the program?

“Could you see yourself getting more involved?”

“We’d appreciate your ideas and your support!”
Triage the Follow-up – Next Steps
Follow-Up: A Paper Card or QR Webpage

Name: ____________________________________
Address: ___________________________________
Email: _____________________________________
Phone: _____________________________________
What most interested me was: ________________________________

I would like to:

1. ____ Join your mailing list
2. ____ Hold a small social of my own
3. ____ Make a contribution
4. ____ Volunteer
5. ____ Please call me at ____________
6. Other ________________________________
Scan Now

FOR ACCESS TO EXCLUSIVE PORCH PARTY CONTENT
Your Takeaways?

1. Why friendmaking events are powerful fundraising tools
2. Best format for a Small Social – and other intimate events
3. The invitation and guest list
4. The art of “working the room”
5. The follow-up
Who’s Ready to Plan a Small Social?

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