

A photograph of a group of people at a social event. In the center, a woman with blonde hair wearing a bright red jacket is smiling and holding a drink. To her left, an older man with white hair in a dark suit is looking towards her. To her right, a woman with dark hair in a white top is also looking towards the center. In the background, another woman with glasses is visible. The setting appears to be outdoors with a lattice fence.

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

By Gail Perry MBA CFRE



Gail Perry

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- Founder Gail Perry Group, expert team of consultants
- 30+ years
- LinkedIn Top Voice in Philanthropy
- 50+ capital campaigns
- Top 10 America's Fundraising Experts
- Staged innumerable small social cultivation events



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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

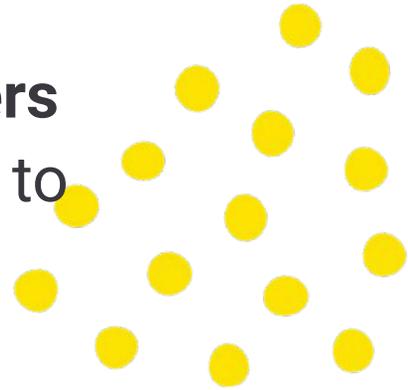


Why do we love Small Socials? Because much fundraising happens in quasi-social situations.



Many Purposes for Small Social Cultivation Events

1. Open doors to **new friends and supporters**
2. **Nurture** current donor relationships
3. **Engage board members** to make introductions to their associates



A close-up photograph of two women. The woman on the right is in the foreground, her mouth wide open as if shouting or speaking loudly. The woman on the left is slightly behind her, with her hand cupped around her mouth, appearing to be part of a chain of people spreading information. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting.

**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**





PEARL S. BUCK INTERNATIONAL

Opening Doors to the World

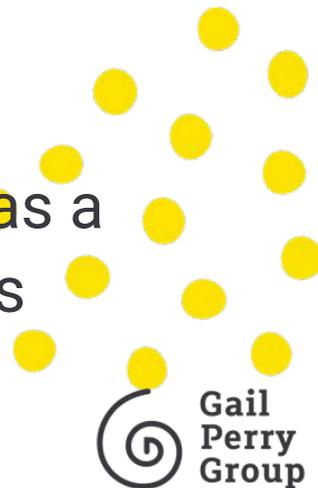


Deliberate networking moments to meet key, handpicked individuals who can advance our cause



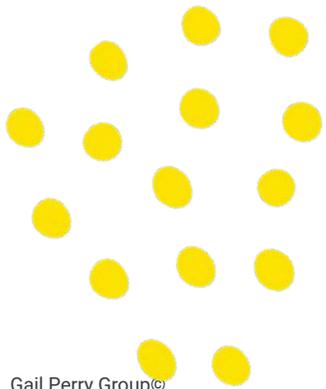
A Social Cultivation Event Must “Feel” Like It Could be Fun

- 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



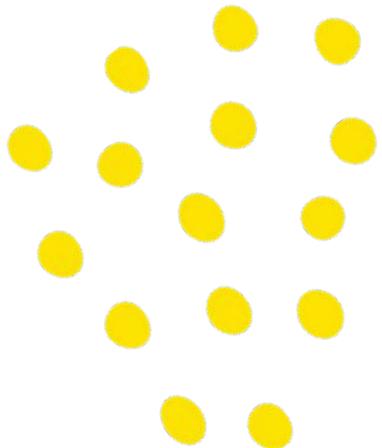
Many uses for a Small Social or Porch Party event:

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

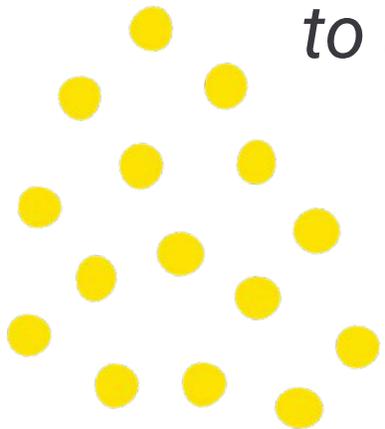


***Who to invite? People who already love you
AND prospects who may want to know more.***



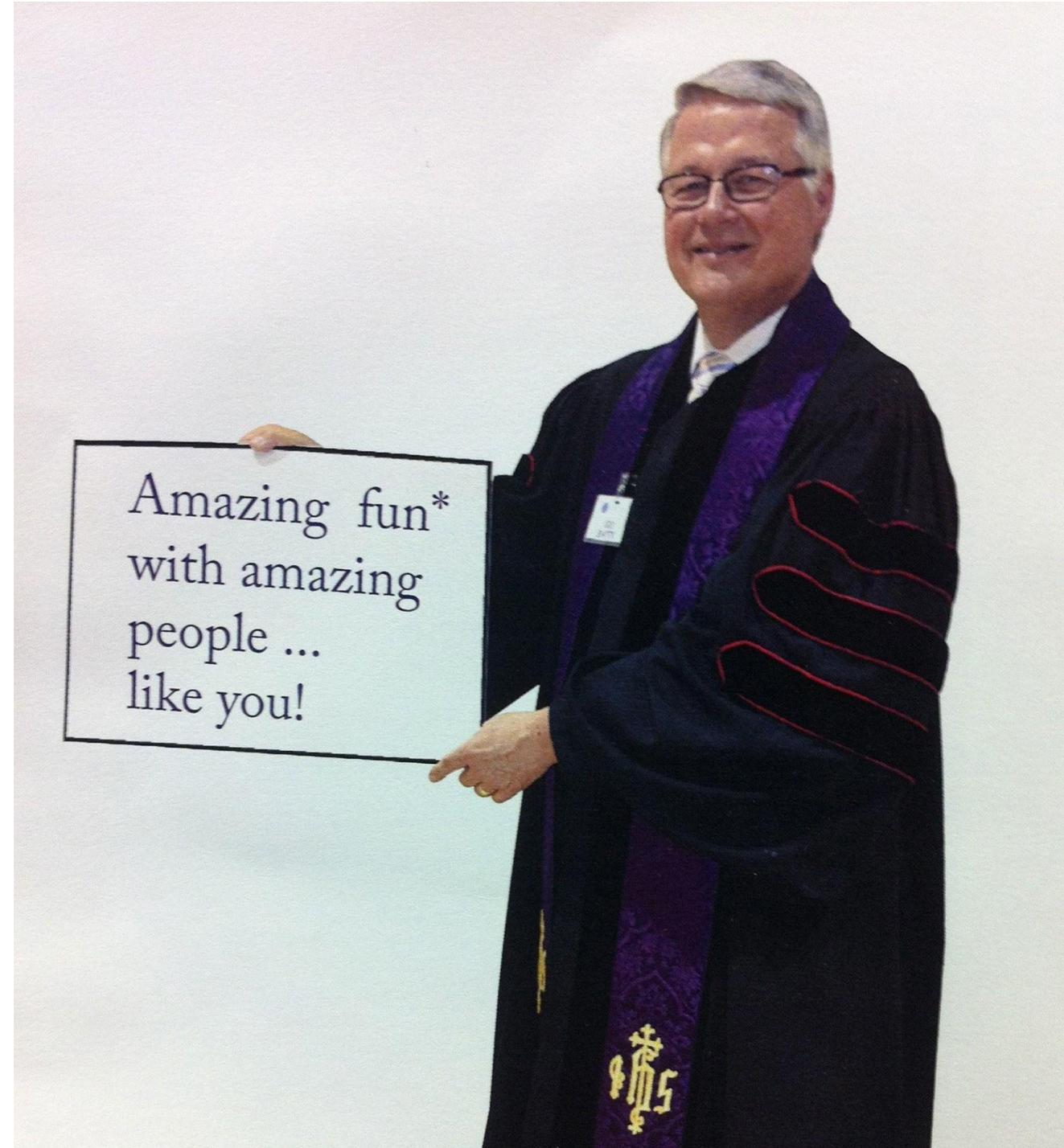
“How do we get the donors to attend?”

“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

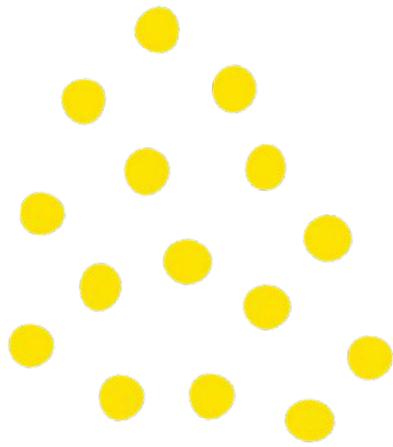
- The **host welcomes, thanks** everyone for coming.
- Program can only last 12-15 minutes!
- Keep it snappy, **positive and interesting.**
- Use an **upbeat, short, specific, call to action.**
- Ask the ED or Board Chair to **close and thank, invite discussion.**



The Art of Working the Room – Assign Board Members and Staff



PISGAH
LEGAL SERVICES



“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.”*



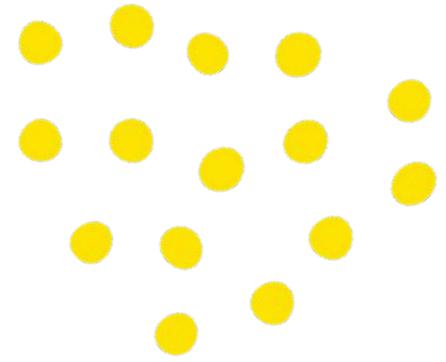
Work the Room!

Create Strategic Opportunities!

- **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

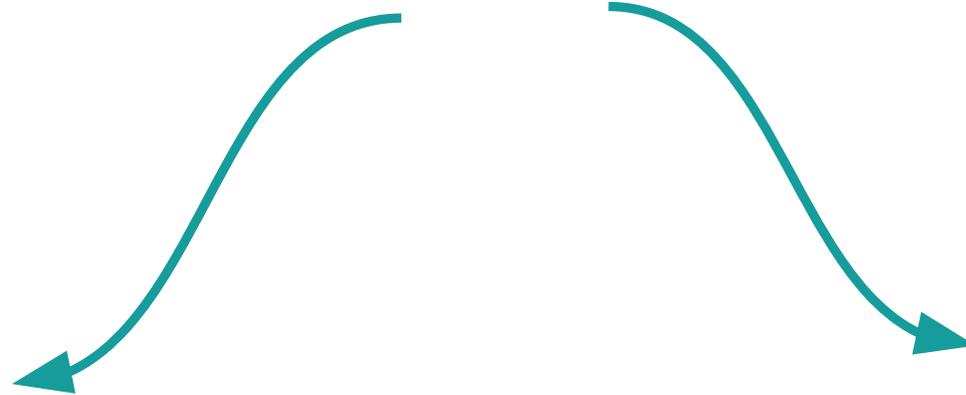


“We had one of our major donor couples host a small, intimate wine and cheese for 20 people – it was great!”

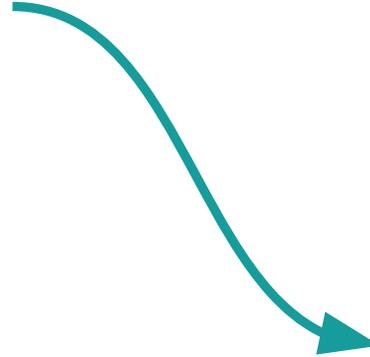


Do You Make an **Ask** At a Small Social Event?

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?”

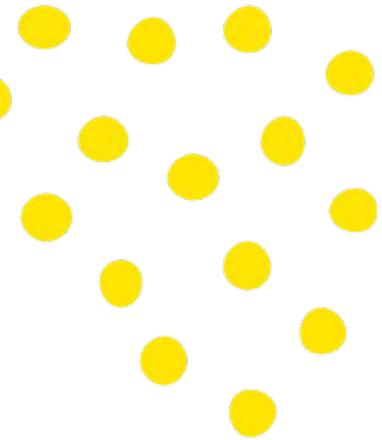
“We’d appreciate your ideas and
your support!”





Triage the Follow-up – Next Steps

Follow-Up: A Paper Card or QR Webpage



Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

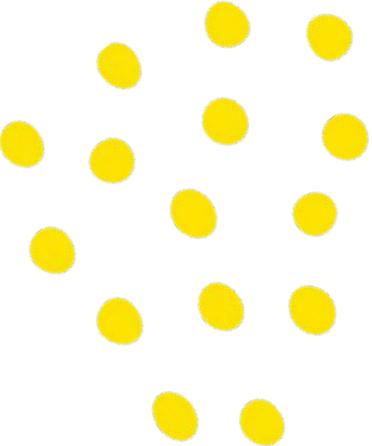
What most interested me was: _____

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



Who's Ready to Plan a Small Social?

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”
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Who's Ready to Plan a Small Social?

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Thank you