

# Why the Secret Circle Training System Doesn't Work

By Bill Young from [BillYoungInspires.com](http://BillYoungInspires.com)

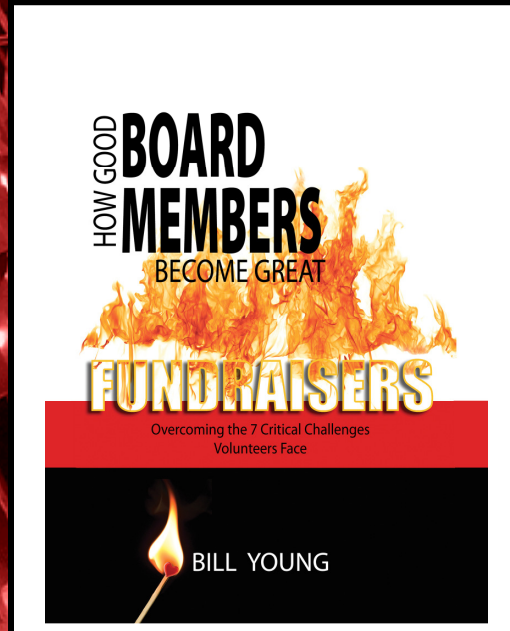
2010

Information becomes distorted in translation

→ You don't have time to provide processes/tools

You need a new system

→ Plug your board into webinars, tools, innovation



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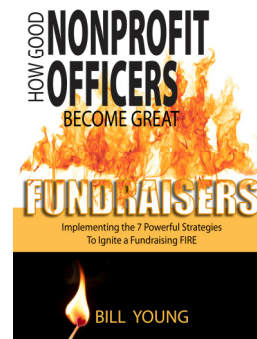
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## Other Books, Webinars, and Tools

How Good Board Members Become Great Fundraisers,  
Overcoming the 7 Critical Challenges that Volunteers Face

How Good Nonprofit Officers Become Great Fundraisers,  
Implementing the 7 Power Strategies to Igniting A Blazing  
Fundraising Fire

Visit [howgoodbecomegreat.com](http://howgoodbecomegreat.com) for more information on webinars, trainings, and Our Fundraising Fire Academy: 8 Week, Hands-on course for Nonprofit executives, development officers, and internal staff



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## Why Secret Circle Training Doesn't Work



[www.billyounginspires.c](http://www.billyounginspires.c)

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Both internal staff and Board leadership have a few options for overcoming these challenges including increasing the size of their board, using abrasive fear tactics, or connecting their Directors, staff, and volunteers to a third party tool/expert. We've all been involved with the first option which includes adding members and increasing board size to 30, 40, 50 people with the end result of adding more dead weight to the process. Option two tends to lead to disgruntled and de-motivated members because of the abrasive, boiler room culture that is created. Therefore, the best solution is option three, using a

third party system, which frees the NPO Executive Officers and Board Chair to focus on other challenges and reduce their workload and stress. This process improves the skills and attitudes of their boards by connecting each Director directly to individualized training. It's time to ignite a blazing fundraising fire and use a third party motivator or "bad cop" (as such), who can deliver consistent tools, motivation, and innovative ideas via webinars, teleseminars, and materials (Books, CDs, Videos, Innovative Tools, etc.).

The reality is you show up to board meetings or receive e-mails with the dialog or content pushing you to fundraise. You ask yourself, "Where do I start?" Indeed, you'll receive brochures and flyers along with heart pulling stories and lively case studies. Now, the pressure is on you to go out and make it happen. The key analysis here is for you to understand why the results do not match the intent. There are only three reasons you do not raise money, either you don't want to, you're not told up front of this expectation, or there resonates a lack of process to follow. If the reason is you do not want to do it or you're too busy, you have to evaluate why you're on the board. If you're willing and the results are not coming from your actions, then you need a proven system to follow. The main challenge with each board's process is that ends up looking like the common training approach called "passing it along" process or "the secret circle".

*The secret circle* is the situation where key information is transferred from one person to the next. One person attempts to train or teach a system to the next person, similar to telling a secret, and that person passes the secret on to the next person and on and on (1 to 2 to 3, etc. in diagrams below). In the diagram titled Typical Information Distortion, the secret is nothing like the original by the time it gets around to the person who started the circle. This is similar to the fundraising skills and goals of most NPOs. The recipient takes in the information taught to them by a fellow board member, attempts to translate it (see change in shape with each person) and then passes it along to the next person. Each person in the circle gives it their best effort to listen, interpret, and then teach. The problem is that with each transfer information is lost and distorted. At this point, you have one hand tied behind your back before you even go out to raise the first dollar.

This circle with distorted shapes shows how information gets changed and a new version is created with each person. The end result is that members have the passion and drive to help, but lack a sound, tested, and consistent system taught by one person or information coming from one source as reflected in the Success with a System diagram. The NPO ends up underutilizing abilities and missing key goals. In

fact, many members become confused, frustrated, and de-motivated. *The Success with a System* diagram demonstrates how everyone learns the same process and information. The training is consistent, credible, and cutting edge, enabling board members to focus on fundraising activities rather than wasting time trying to teach and train others.

*The world of fundraising* has changed similar to every other industry – there are better ways to receive donations, sponsorships, and in-kind contributions. Similar to improvements in technology, materials, and teaching, fundraising systems have evolved. Today it is more important than ever to follow steps that lead to long term success. Besides, you are offering something less tangible than a house, car, technology, etc. You are a volunteer and only have a few hours each week to provide value so if you're stumbling through without a process, attempting to learn from ill prepared fellow volunteers, then you're wasting what little time you have to help. You don't need, nor do you have the time, to learn a complex way to bring in funds. Therefore, your team must use simple tools like the SPARK Drill™ (Strategy 7 in the book) to clearly define the organization's fundraising expectations, to create a fantastic 59 second commercial, to offer consistent reinforcement, and to improve each person's level of contribution.

**Other Key Tools:**  
**CQ+P<sup>3</sup> = Funds**  
**Quarterly Webinars**  
**Quarterly Q&A Sessions**

## **About the Author**

Bill has made his mark as an entrepreneur and civic leader. As an entrepreneur, he has raised millions of dollars for companies in his capacity as Board member and owner. As a civic leader, he has raised millions of dollars for children's organizations throughout the Denver area. The Denver Business Journal named Bill to its prestigious Forty Under 40 list and recognized one of his company's (XploreNet) as the sixth Fastest Growing Privately Held Company in Colorado.

### **"An entrepreneur seeks out great ideas ... and may be a bit crazy"**

An entrepreneur, says Bill, must believe so completely in an idea that you'll work around the clock to bring it to fruition. An entrepreneur looks for great ideas or people with great talent, then finds ways to provide the vision, processes, and money to achieve success.

Bill believes such great ideas can positively impact our lives, and that's why he works so hard to bring them to market. Although he readily admits some might call this crazy, he calls it satisfying.

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## **More Information**

For the latest information about our product and services, please see the following resources:

### **Reference websites**

<http://www.BillYoungInspires.com>

<http://www.HowGoodBecomeGreat.com>

### **Articles**

"In the Board Room," *Denver Business Journal* 03/05/10

