

September 15, 2014  
Carol Weisman

## 12 Questions Job Seekers Should Ask—and Nonprofits Should Be Able to Answer

I have several long-term clients who are looking to change jobs. What a surprise: development staff on the move.

I also have clients who are looking for employees. Some have written job descriptions that are more thorough and complex than if they were trying to hire the CEO of General Motors.

One lists 26 areas of responsibility and pays \$35,000. They want me to find someone. I want to weigh 112 and eat 5,000 calories a day. That isn't going to happen, either.

A friend who is a job seeker asked me to help her with some questions to find out if the position is a good fit. Here's what I told her—and if you are an employer looking for a development professional, you should be able to answer these:

1. How large is your donor database?
2. What is your marketing budget to acquire new donors?
3. What kind of staff support is available?
4. What do you consider a "major gift" and how many are you getting?
5. How much is your board donating?
6. How are board members involved in fundraising?
7. If talking to the executive director: What percentage of your time is spent on fundraising?
8. Do you have a written fundraising plan?
9. How much did the person in this job raise last year?
10. What would be the goal for my first year?
11. What are your top three sources of income?
12. Do you believe any of them are threatened in the next few years?

**Final thoughts for applicants:** If the numbers are way off or if the employer has no clue as to the answers to these questions, you have several choices. If you love the mission, you can accept the challenge, but make sure you negotiate reasonable expectations. Or keep looking.

**Final thoughts for nonprofits seeking a new development professional:** Superman and Wonder Woman do exist, in the world of make believe. If you expect double- or triple-digit growth, be prepared to have a healthy budget for additional staff, expenses for travel, database improvements, training, etc., and make sure your executive director and board are committed to the process.

Happy hunting to all.

**Carol Weisman** is an international consultant who specializes in fundraising, governance, and volunteerism. She is also a trainer and public speaker and has written nine books, including *Fundraising Superheroes* and *Raising Charitable Children*. She has served on 35 boards and has been president of seven. Her consultancy is called [Board Builders](#) and her e-mail address is [carol@boardbuilders.com](mailto:carol@boardbuilders.com)