BOARDS: HOW TO GOVERN MORE & MICRO-MANAGE LESS

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1. Ensure Legal & Ethical Integrity
2. Build a Competent Board
3. Determine Mission & Purpose; Ensure Effective Planning; Monitor & Strengthen Programs & Services
4. Protect Assets & Provide Financial Oversight
5. Ensure Adequate Financial Resources
6. Enhance the Organization’s Public Standing
7. Select, Support & Evaluate the Chief Executive

BoardSource, https://boardsource.org/ Washington DC
How’s Your Board Service Going?

What do you enjoy most about your Board service?

What do you enjoy least?

“Volunteers do not necessarily have the TIME; they just have the HEART.”

– Elizabeth Andrew
Why do boards get stuck?

- Lack of clear nomination & orientation processes
- Tactics outweigh Strategy
- Managing instead of Leading
- Turf & Ego have collaboration in a chokehold
- Too few nonprofits pursue lasting change, so Inertia often rules

- Governing by process rather than mission & vision
Typical Board Agenda

• Personnel Committee
• Finance Committee
• Public Relations/Marketing Committee
• Fundraising Committee
• Building & Grounds Committee
UNSTICK YOUR BOARD.
SHIFT THE BOARD AGENDA...A PARADIGM SHIFT

• Instead of Board meetings with customary, routine committee reports, begin Board meetings with a consent agenda
  • Approve committee reports all at once, no questions
  • *Every Board member must read the materials in advance!* (!

• Then what???

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consent Agenda Template</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Call to Order</td>
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<tr>
<td>II. Introductions</td>
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<tr>
<td>III. Consent Agenda</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. Minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Executive Director’s Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Committee Reports (no requiring action)</td>
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| (the Chair states “Everything listed in the consent agenda was distributed in advance of the meeting. Does anyone have any requests for something to be removed from the consent agenda and discussed/voted on separately? May I have a motion to approve/accept the items listed in the consent agenda?...”)
| IV. Discussion Regarding Items Removed from the Consent Agenda |
| V. Financial Report     |
| VI. Strategic Discussions (pre-select three key areas of future challenge or opportunity for the board to discuss/brainstorm) |
| VII. Old Business       |
| VIII. New Business      |
| IX. Adjournment         |
BOARD AGENDA SHIFT… REFRAME THE QUESTIONS

REFUEL THE ENERGY

• Focus each meeting on a lively cross-committee full-Board discussion. Gather info, opinions & ideas.
  • Strategically select 1 key issue impacting your mission that could benefit from input, new thinking, possible partners to consider, strategy options
    • Ex: How has COVID impacted those we serve? Our staff? Volunteers? Donors? What are the short term impacts? Longer term?
    • Ex: How are we faring amidst the rise in distrust, anger, uncivil discourse, heightened prejudice, violence?
    • Ex: Increasing our diversity, equity & inclusion, across the organization
    • Ex: Technology/cyber-divide: impact, actions...
    • Ex: Increasing inflation/cost of living
    • Ex: social justice: what’s our nonprofit’s role?
    • Ex: global warming & climate change?
      What can we do?
Discuss the strategic issue & brainstorm resources/connections needed

• What resources are needed to deal with this issue?
• How might we obtain them?
• Who else can help us?
  • Which organizations might we partner with?
  • What types of individuals do we need to hook up with to help?

Where are they? How can we find them?
Who is best suited to help reach out?
What do we want to tell them?
What do we want these partners to do?
COMMUNICATE YOUR NONPROFIT’S STORY

AS PART OF A COORDINATED NONPROFIT STAFF & BOARD EFFORT:

• Promote your nonprofit’s mission & story
  • In talking points for board & volunteers
  • On your nonprofit’s website
  • Customize web language & graphics for selected social media platforms & emails
  • In brief videos to post on social media & website, with permission
  • In press releases & editorial/”good news” articles

• Make sure communication highlights nonprofit’s mission & impact
  • Let people know how your nonprofit is responding & adapting
  • Share testimonials of those you serve
    • in writing, with pictures & videos

• Ramp up individual communication
  • Check in with key selected constituents to see how they are doing & share your updates
  • Make courtesy calls, write notes, &/or meet in person
BOARD MEMBERS AS RESEARCHER / SLEUTHS

A research sleuth is always looking for potential partners, volunteers & committee members to help the nonprofit.

ACTIVE researchers find out, when talking with another person, if they are open to the possibility of learning more about our nonprofit.

QUIET researchers explore, through quiet sources, viable prospects.

- **Test** if someone is given to charity by recounting a personally fulfilling experience with our nonprofit. See if this leads to evoking a parallel feeling from the prospect about a nonprofit of their choice. Establish common ground about the satisfaction of participating as a volunteer.

- Ask the potential partner’s permission to add their name to our nonprofit’s mailing list. Ask if they would like to come visit our nonprofit.

- Ask people who know our nonprofit to suggest other individuals who might be interested in us.

- **Look for leads** in the press, social media, and other nonprofits’ materials. Work with nonprofit leadership to identify a link to the person. Help make sure the person is contacted.
Ambassadors naturally talk about our nonprofit wherever they go. To be a good ambassador:

- Understand and overcome your own roadblocks to talking about our nonprofit
- Observe good ambassadors in action
- Identify situations where you can share your personal feelings about our cause
- Select people to talk with about our nonprofit
- Practice! Practice! Practice!
  - Talk about our nonprofit at home
  - Talk about our nonprofit with close friends
  - Talk about our nonprofit at work
  - Talk about our nonprofit with strangers
**Tips to Recharging Boards**

- Put your energy into **activities that will produce the best results**. Don’t get distracted by details & non-essentials.
- If a meeting seems like a meaningless waste of time, say so. Figure out how to **make it meaningful** for the whole group & the nonprofit.
- Bring your network to the nonprofit.
- Develop ways to **connect** your employer & workplace colleagues to the nonprofit.
- Promote your nonprofit all the time.

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Believe in your goals, and keep pushing forward 💪🚀
Caveats: To Be Effective in This Governance Model...

• Board members need to be open to **new learnings** about the nonprofit & their roles
• **Re-frame viewpoint** to focus on external trends & impacts
• **Balance** brainstorming + research + outreach + action
• Calls for both **passion & logic**
• Encourage everyone to **think big** & be optimistic
• Dare to **challenge the status quo**
• Who can we **align with**?
  How can we work together?
• Return to the **mission & vision** continually
• What are key issues impacting our mission that could benefit from input, new thinking, possible partners to consider, strategy options?

• Who should I speak with about this, to improve our Board’s impact? What help will I need, from whom?