



It Begins with the First Conversation

Building and Keeping a Happy Board

Virginia Fund-Raising Institute

July 22, 2014

“It Begins with the First Conversation” Workshop Objectives

- **“*Getting real*”– what should be expected of the Board and Board members**
- **The process of building a strong and healthy Board (structure and program)**
- **Keeping a happy, productive Board (roles of the CEO and Board chair)**

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Arlo Schilling, President-Emeritus North Central College

“A strong Board of Trustees does not guarantee a strong institution, but every strong institution has a strong Board of Trustees. Where Boards have been strong, well organized and committed, the institutions, while they may be undergoing financial pressure, still face the future with expectations of success and continued viability. Where the Board is weak, badly organized and un-committed (often non-committed) the institution is usually in deep trouble.”

Questions

- **What constitutes a strong Board?**
- **Should all Boards be “fundraising Boards”**
- **How do we evaluate our current Board?**
- **What should we look for in a prospective Board member?**

From Rick Warren

“Long before words like *empowerment* became popular, business writer Peter Drucker was telling us that the secret of achieving results is to focus on your strengths and the strengths of those you work with, rather than focusing on weaknesses.

From Rick Warren

“The truth is all of us are a bundle of both strengths and weaknesses. No one is strong in every area. If you closely watch anyone with outstanding strengths, you’ll eventually notice that they also exhibit outstanding weaknesses.

From Rick Warren

“No one is good at everything, so we need each other and are forced to cooperate.

“Find out what God made you to do well and do more of it. Don’t worry about what you don’t do well. In fact, try to do as little as possible of what you don’t do well.

From Rick Warren

“Then find out what others do well and help them to be able to do more of it.”

Board Member Functions

- **Policy-maker**
 - **Steward**
- **Ambassador**
 - **Builder**

Trustee Role: Policy-Maker

- **Makes certain the mission statement is current, credible, compelling, and memorable**
- **Participates in setting goals that flow from and support the mission**
- **Approves plans for reaching those goals**

Trustee Role: Steward

- **Reviews and passes a budget that enables the nonprofit to reach toward fulfilling its mission**
- **Provides sound guidance and review of the budget, investment policies, and management of invested resources**

Development Role: Ambassador

- **Each Director is a symbol of the organization and should generate trust. Society expects a Director to be influential on behalf of the nonprofit. A Director:**
 - **Expects to be kept informed**
 - **Tells the story of the nonprofit at every opportunity**

Development Role: Ambassador

- **Seeks opportunities to speak or have others speak about the organization**
- **Helps correct incorrect perceptions and rumors**
- **Assists others of similar interests to become familiar with mission and work of the nonprofit**

Development Role: Builder

- **A Director should be make certain that the organization has a current strategic plan that is actively being pursued**
- **A Director should be helpful in supporting the nonprofit financially by:**
 - **Giving according to individual ability**
 - **Annually**
 - **Support for capital campaigns**
 - **Including the nonprofit in estate**

Development Role: Builder

- **Helping to involve others**
- **Introducing prospective donors to the institution and assisting in cultivating them**
- **Helping to make selective calls for contributions**
- **Providing sufficient budget to accomplish objectives**

The Process for Building and Keeping a Strong Board

- **Process can begin only if the Board leadership and the CEO are ready**
- **Foster an attitude within staff that the members of the Board are your organization's heroes**
- **Be clear about your mission and direction**
- **Involve the leadership of the Board**

The Process for Building and Keeping a Strong Board

- **Build ownership among Board members**
- **Agree on the kind of Board you want**
- **Develop a written plan of action**
- **Work with PURPOSE**
- **Re-purpose the Nominating Committee**

The Board Governance Committee *(Board Wellness Committee)*

***The Board Governance Committee
(not Nominating Committee) is the
most important Board standing
committee because it deals with the
health and vitality of the Board.***

The Board Governance Committee *(Board Wellness Committee)*

- **Analyze the current make up of the Board**
- **Review and update/rewrite Board job description**
- **Conduct an annual Board self-evaluation**
- **Create a profile of desired Board member candidates and of the Board as a whole**

The Board Governance Committee *(Board Wellness Committee)*

Managing the recruitment process

- **Prospective Board members should be accorded the same treatment as major gift prospects**
- **MOVES management offers the techniques to cultivate and engage Board candidates**

The Board Governance Committee *(Board Wellness Committee)*

- **Create and manage the process of building the Board**

- **Create a candidate pool from formal nominations**
- **Match candidates with profile**
- **Research each candidate**
- **Get information from those who know**

The Board Governance Committee

(Board Wellness Committee)

- **Select the contact team**
 - CEO and appropriate Board member
 - Development chief may be a team member
- **Contact team reviews research, sets objectives, & plan series of MOVES**
- **Set the appointment and prepare basic organizational materials**
- **Make the initial visit (*the first conversation*)**
 - Review past accomplishments & talk about vision
 - Tell the prospect why he/she was selected
 - Ask for feedback & other names
 - Commit to a follow up meeting date
 - Send a thank you from each member of team

The Board Governance Committee

(Board Wellness Committee)

- **Team meeting to evaluate first conversation**
- **Team plans the next MOVE based on what was learned**
- **Send brief call report to Governance Committee**
- **Schedule the next conversation**
- **Meeting & evaluation process continues until:**
 - **Decision is made to invite prospect to become a Board member**
 - **Determination is made that the prospect will not receive an invitation**
 - **Individual may continue to be a major donor prospect and/or volunteer**

The Board Governance Committee *(Board Wellness Committee)*

Thoughts on Recruiting New Board Members

- **Selecting and inviting an individual to be a member of your Board is both significant and serious**
- **Insist that each prospective member be nominated in writing to the Board Governance Committee**
- **Nominations can come from Board members, CEO, and the development staff, and other senior volunteers**

The Board Governance Committee *(Board Wellness Committee)*

Thoughts on Recruiting New Board Members

- **No candidate should be invited to serve until the Board has voted affirmatively on the selection.**
- **Each candidate should be given full information about the current status of the nonprofit and its vision for the future**
- **Each candidate must be told the skills and knowledge that he/she possesses that will strengthen the Board and the organization**

The CEO and the Board

- **The CEO sets the tone and the expectations for the Board (“trickle down”)**
- **The CEO must:**
 - **Keep the Board informed on a regular and special needs basis**
 - **Expect and encourage Board members to ask relevant questions**

The CEO and the Board

- **Cultivate Board members to build a trusting and productive relationship**
- **Actively help Board members to succeed**
- **Understand the role as the chief development officer and help lead the Board in telling the story and raising funds**

The CEO and the Board Chair

- **The CEO and the Board Chair should work as a team in creating a positive environment for new and seasoned Board members**
- **Each new Board member should receive a thorough orientation prior to the first Board meeting**
- **The orientation must involve the CEO, Board Chair, & Board Mentor along with other appropriate Board and staff members**

Orientation of New Board Members

Should build on information already provided to new member

- Review the mission and goals of the nonprofit business
- Review near-term goals related to the next year's operation
- Review the draft agenda for the upcoming meeting
- Discuss the reason for educational portions of the board meeting and purpose
- Review Board meeting schedules at least for the next twelve months

Orientation of New Board Members

Should build on information already provided to new member

- **Provide a list of locations of Board and Committee meetings**
- **Describe how Board members request items in the be placed on the agenda**
- **Provide an overview of Executive Sessions and their purpose**
- **Review of the committee structure and meeting schedules**
- **Discuss the system of rotating committee assignments among board members and the purpose creating a more knowledgeable Board**

Orientation of New Board Members

- **Discuss the mentoring process and introduce new Board members to their Mentors**
- **Conclude orientation with time for Mentors and “mentees” to meet and begin their relationship**

Performance Monitoring

- **Mentors and CEOs should contact each new member after each meeting to answer questions and gauge responses to board or committee actions**
- **The Mentor and the CEO should coordinate an informal educational program for the new board member**
- **The CEO and staff need to communicate about how the new member relates to other board members in committee meetings and how the individual interacts with the staff**
- **The Board Chair should have an informal meeting with a new board member after six months. The purpose of these one-on-one encounters is to build strong relationship within the board itself**
- **The Board needs to assess its own progress in achieving the goals it has set for itself. One method of self-assessment is the annual written survey**

We Leave You With . . .

- **The cultivation of Board members does not end with their election – it begins**
- **Plan one or more Board social events each year to help members build and maintain good relationships with each other (include spouses/significant others)**
- **The CEO and/or Board Chair should have at least one in-person meeting with each Board member each year between Board meetings**

We Leave You With . . .

- **Use the expertise of Board members. Contact them to get advice on policy issues and other concerns with which the organization is dealing externally**
- **Expect Board members to be active in development – telling the story, suggesting prospects, getting appointments, asking for gifts, and attending program events**
- **Make certain that Board members receive the proper explanation and training for whatever they are asked to do**

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Discussion



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