

Getting the Board You Deserve . . .

*presented to the
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Trends: Board Policies, Practices and Performances

- Increased percentage operate with basic accountability policies
- Slight increase in self-assessment
- Struggling to find a path to inclusion and diversity
- Personal giving of board members is up, but fundraising continues to be the weakest link



Factors Related to Motivation and Satisfaction

- Recognition of efforts
- Re-energize “tired” board members
- “Fire” ineffective board members
- Continuous recruitment of prospective board members
- Provide good stewardship
- Continued relationships



Penelope Burk: Cygnus Survey

- 52% of boards with staff: giving is required
- 27% without staff: giving is required
- Only 1 in 3 respondents stated there was a requirement to participate in fundraising
- 18% evaluated board fundraising performance



Cygnus Survey, Cont.

- 62% received a board manual when they joined the board
- 40% took part in any kind of board orientation
- 39% received fundraising training
- 6% of organizations had a budget for board training, although 44% said the funds could be found if needed

The Saga of Thelma and Louise



What You Say:

Thelma
won't fund
raise!



What She Says:

Fundraising??!!
Louise never told
me it was one of
my responsibilities.



Fundraising Responsibilities and Board Members

- Can't hire your way out of it
- Mission/organization should be a top interest (top 3)
- Donors give more readily when asked by a leadership volunteer (*2010 Cygnus Donor Survey*)
- 100% participation is non-negotiable and imperative
 - Some foundations require it
 - Board members should make their own gift first, commensurate with interest and capacity

Lay the Groundwork for Proactive Board Engagement

- Matrix Analysis to Match Skills and Needs
- Candidate Application and Expectations
- Screening and Interview



Lay the Groundwork for Proactive Board Engagement

- Board Member Letter of Agreement
 - Charity of choice
 - Role
 - Participation
 - Positive Representation
 - Financial Support
 - Uphold Confidentiality and By-laws
 - Signed Commitment



What You Say:

Thelma is an ineffective board member.



What She Says:

I am not clear on my role as a board member, and I am not the only one.



Training is the Key

- Orientation
 - thorough overview of organizational structure
 - programs/services/staff/finances
- Job Descriptions
 - General board duties
 - Specific to officers, chairs, and committee members
- Nominating and Governance: a year-round strategy of identification, evaluation, and education

What You Say:

My board
doesn't show up
for meetings.



What She Says:

Most of the time at
board meetings is
spent on staff or
committee reports.



The Ballad of the Bored Board

- Meetings are a waste of time
 - “I could phone it in”
- Consent agendas
 - reports sent in advance to inform and foster meaningful discussions and decision
 - links discussions to the strategic plan
- Effective committee structure
- Committee participation

What You Say:

I communicate with my board all the time, but they are unresponsive.



What She Says:

Louise and her staff only contact me when they need a favor. I really don't know what's going on.



The Great Communicator: True or False?

- My perception is your reality
- Find your champion
- Work the lines of communication in between the spaces
- I have a day job

What You Say:

The board members are micromanagers.



What She Says:

We are passionate and dedicated to the mission.



One Size Does Not Fit All

- What is your organizational lifecycle?
 - Infancy (start-up)
 - Juvenile (growth)
 - Adolescence (growth and decline in spurts)
 - Maturity (established)
- What nonprofit leadership training is offered?
- Effective channeling of energies into mutually beneficial and meaningful projects

What You Say:

The board
does not act
strategically.



What She Says:

Do we *have* a
strategic plan??!



Powerful Tool or Gathering Dust?

- Does a strategic plan exist? (Seriously)
- Does it include both programmatic and fundraising goals?
- Does it have a board component?
- How is it translated into the work of the board? What are the touchpoints?

What You Say:

Thelma does not support our fundraising events.



What She Says:

Louise treats me like an ATM.



Successfully Tapping into Resources

- Are requests for financial support clearly stated and coordinated?
- What creative options can you offer to members so they can add to your bottom line?
- A personal and confidential discussion about capacity and interest

What You Say:

Our agency
deserves a
better board.



What She Says:

Our board is
doing a great job.



Living in a Parallel Universe *or* Reality Used to be a Friend of Mine

A total disconnect in perception demands an
assessment of:

- CEO of Board
- Board of CEO
- Board of Board
- Board of Board Chair
- “Selfie”

What You Say:

We can't attract
any decent
board members.



What She Says:

I can't wait until
my term is up!



Governance & Nominating is the Key to Your Future

- Governance is a year-round committee responsibility.
- Hold out for what you need.
- Consider a committee “trial run”
- DIVERSITY
- MILLENNIALS

Active – Not Passive – Recruitment

- Matrix of skills
- Interview checklist (a.k.a. board manual)
 - Policies & procedures; by-laws
 - Annual report; Form S990
 - Audited financials and operating budget
 - Long-range plan
 - List of members & terms
 - Job descriptions & requirements; committee descriptions
 - Organizational charts (board & staff)
 - Program descriptions and statistics
 - Marketing and development collaterals



What You Say:

Thelma thinks she knows more about fundraising than our development staff.



What She Says:

Louise and her staff shoot down every idea I have. They are so negative!



A Service-Centered Approach

- #1 reason volunteers fundraise for an organization: feel a personal or emotional connection
In what ways do you foster that connection?
- Sense of fulfillment; making a difference
Asking for advice is a double-edged sword!

So

How does your saga to
get the board you
deserve end?



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THANK YOU!

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