Getting the Board You Deserve . . .

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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

![The Saga of Thelma and Louise poster](image)
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.

I can’t wait until my term is up!

What She Says:
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 990
  - 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!*

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So . . . .

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

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