



A Do-It-Yourself Board Retreat

Can't spend big bucks for a board retreat facilitator? This kit is the next best thing.

BY TERRENCE FERNSLER

The Board Development Kit

By Richard Linzer & Annie Hansen.

78 pages. Available in boxed sets.

Published by Richard Linzer & Associates, P.O. Box 374, Indianola, Washington 98342 (360-297-8331).

The Board Development Kit is a workbook designed for organizations to use on their own without the need for a high-priced consultant. It is meant for use at a board development retreat.

The authors provide an excellent board retreat plan, with each segment of the agenda well thought out. The retreat is scheduled for 1½ days, allowing time for celebration and discussion afterward.

Because an organization using the kit provides the facilitator, the kit must train that person to lead a productive workshop. It does this quite well, providing a separate manual for the facilitator (called *The Administrator's Guide*), which includes a step-by-step outline.

The authors start the workshop by grouping board members into personality types. They divide personalities along the lines of the Myers-Briggs model, a useful approach for a board's purposes.

Their process shows how many of each personality the board contains and how to recruit any missing types. They offer some excellent recruiting ideas—strategies that will appeal directly to the desired personality types.

While Linzer and Hansen clearly believe that having many personalities will provide a needed variety of viewpoints on a board, they offer no evidence that this is true. Nor is there any mention of society's great taboo subject—classism. Perhaps Linzer and Hansen assume that a diversity of personalities includes a variety of class concerns and that a range of personalities means a spectrum of opinion. If they are correct, then this is an incredibly beneficial kit for any board's development.

Even if their premise is incorrect, however, the personality exercise won't be a waste of time. It may not provide the perfectly balanced outlook the authors promise, but it will still help board members acknowledge personali-

ty differences, maximize the strengths of each personality type, and work together as a constructive team.

The Board Development Kit is designed primarily for mature organizations in which policy-making is well established but which need help diversifying or working with diversity. Any organization will find the kit useful, though, in the way it spotlights the importance of board recruitment. As the authors stress, we must hire each board member with as much care as any other employee, making sure the fit is right. That's an excellent starting point for any board. ■

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