



Helping Board Members Understand Their Role

Today's boards face new challenges, as this book makes clear.

BY TERRENCE FERNSLER

Nonprofit Boards: Roles, Responsibilities and Performance

By Diane J. Duca. 192 pages. Hardcover. Published by John Wiley & Sons. Available through the Society for Nonprofit Organizations' Resource Center (see the Resource Center Catalog, included in this issue, or call 800-424-7367).

This book is chock-full of information to help board members understand their role. Diane Duca takes us through the fundamental knowledge needed to be an effective board member. She discusses the responsibilities of boards, how to assess leadership, and the distinctions between leaders and managers.

Duca dives right into the accountability question: Who is accountable for what and to whom? What legal obligations must boards meet? The two most troublesome issues are lobbying and

unrelated business income, which she covers very nicely, yet concisely.

She explores board composition, explaining pros and cons of different board sizes without making recommendations. Demographics will be an issue for some organizations, she notes. A diverse board is desirable so that all points of view are considered.

To meet its responsibilities, a board must be organized. It must concentrate on the organization's mission, evaluate itself regularly, and hold focused meetings. Duca provides principles for doing so. She emphasizes the board's fiscal oversight responsibility and the importance of fundraising. She also relates strategies for setting policy and making long-range plans.

A team spirit—cooperation between the board and executive and among board members—is the best way to achieve board goals. Duca points out that conflict within a diverse board will occur, but a good chairperson will be able to manage conflict for the benefit of the organization.

New challenges face today's nonprofits: greater scrutiny of the organization's image, trends toward collaborations and mergers, and increased demand for professionalism. The outside environment is changing rapidly, Duca says, and nonprofits slow to meet the changes will suffer.

Early in the book, Duca points out that she can cover only the broad picture, since each organization has unique situations and personalities. The book is a guideline to set boards on the right path. It can help board members determine how their troubles started so they can remedy them. As Duca reminds us, boards must find their own solutions to their unique difficulties; otherwise it is not their organization. ■

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A team spirit
is the best way
to achieve
board goals.



▣ *Key Nonprofit Strategies*

Be sure your strategic plan addresses these 10 basics:

1. community needs
2. your mission statement
3. your funding needs
4. your case statement
5. your constituency
6. fundraising methods
7. donor and volunteer recognition
8. professional staff and leadership
9. fundraising materials and budget
10. time line

For a free quarterly newsletter of *Key NonProfit Strategist*, from which these tips come, contact Jean Kaufman, Nonprofit Asset Services, Key Asset Management, 127 Public Square, 17th Floor, Cleveland, Ohio 44114, 1-800-609-0624, fax 1-216-689-3034, KeyNPAS@aol.com. ▣

▣ *Are You Feeling Old?*

If not, consider this:

- The people who started college this year were born in 1980.
- They don't remember the Reagan era.
- They were prepubescent when the Persian Gulf War was waged.
- The expression, "You sound like a broken record," means nothing to them.
- As far as they know, stamps have always cost around 32 cents.
- They have always had an answering machine.
- Most have never seen a rotary dial telephone.
- Their lifetime has always included AIDS.

From *New Directions in Philanthropy*, 785 Ninth Street, Lake Oswego, Oregon 97034.

▣ *Keeping Staff Members Loyal*

Despite the reported decline of employee loyalty, about 20% of today's workers are "new loyalists." That's the word according to a study by Interim Services in Fort Lauderdale.

"And they'll stay loyal as long as they get what they need to grow," says Interim's Liza Fiore. To keep them—and all employees—loyal:

- **Ask these** two questions often: "Do you feel you're treated well?" "What can I do to make your job easier?"
- **Show them** that their work matters by sharing all good news from customers. And tell them often that what they do is important to the organization.
- **Test them** with new tasks—even completely different jobs. The more challenges you present, the longer they'll stay, research shows.
- **Invest big** in training. When they're learning, they're growing. Also, employees who receive training are more likely to be with the same organization five years later, according to the Interim study.
- **Build in** a conflict-resolution system. You need to be ready to deal swiftly with discord to keep from undermining loyalty.

They'll stay loyal "as long as they get what they need to grow."

For other tips on employee motivation, see *Communication Briefings*, 1101 King Street, Suite 110, Alexandria, Virginia 22314 (phone 703-548-3899; fax 703-684-2136). ▣

WANTED

Nonprofit Success Stories

Would you like your organization featured on the cover of *NONPROFIT WORLD*? Send a color slide, photo, drawing, or other graphic which exemplifies your organization and its mission, along with a brief description of your organization and a paragraph explaining why you read *NONPROFIT WORLD*. The winner will appear on an upcoming cover. Send to: Editor, *NONPROFIT WORLD*, the Society for Nonprofit Organizations, 6314 Odana Road, Suite 1, Madison, Wisconsin 53719.

■ *Fundraising Weather Report: Mostly Sunny*

A new fundraising index rates the climate for giving at 88.8 on a 100-point scale. Most of the 251 fundraising executives who responded to the survey were optimistic about current and future giving. Those from organizations with revenues from \$250,000 to \$1 million were the least positive.

The most successful fundraising techniques, according to survey respondents, are major gifts, direct mail, and planned giving. Least successful are corporate gifts and telephone solicitation. Special events were rated unsuccessful by organizations with revenues over \$100 million but successful by organizations with \$5 to \$10 million revenues.

For more information, contact the Indiana University Center on Philanthropy, 550 W. North St., Suite 301, Indianapolis, Indiana 46202-3162 (317-236-4912). ■

■ *Cater to the No-Frills Volunteer*

To attract today's volunteers, you need to accommodate their busy schedules. Here are some pointers:

- Develop a menu of specific tasks from which volunteers can choose. Include brief job descriptions and the time estimated to complete each task.
- Eliminate any frills—socializing, waiting for others to arrive, and so on—that may keep volunteers from finishing their tasks on time.
- Keep training time brief and to the point. Send training material in advance to avoid using on-the-job time for that purpose.
- Provide volunteers with multiple choices of times in which to show up and do their jobs.
- Err on the side of protecting volunteers' time. If they can't finish a task by the time they need to leave, have someone else step in to complete it for them.

For more information, contact *The Volunteer Management Report*, Stevenson Consultants, 417 Eton Ct., Sioux City, Iowa 51104. ■

■ *A New Definition of Leadership*

Members of Generation X (18 to 30 year olds) have a very different vision of leadership from that of preceding generations. A recent poll reveals the following:

- Young adults value collaborative and interpersonal qualities rather than directive or charismatic qualities in leaders.
- They see building relationships with people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds as a critical leadership skill.
- They trust local, not national, leaders. They see leadership emanating from small groups of knowledgeable citizens, rather than traditional institutions, experts, professionals, and authority figures.
- Empowering people and seeing things from other viewpoints define effective leadership for the next century.

For more information, contact Public Allies, 1015 18th Street, N.W., Suite 200, Washington, D.C. 20036, 202-822-1180, fax 202-822-1199. ■