Your Board: What’s its role and how do you support success?

Jacqueline Romer-Sensky
614-794-1181
jacqui@thejrgroupltd.com
We’re exploring governance of COS
- Authority to deliver a scope of services
- Accountability for delivery and results

A Board of Directors or Trustees oversees an organization’s:
- General Operations
- Fiscal & Legal Health
- Community Standing
- Future Sustainability
Board Roles & Responsibilities

Legal authority & responsibility for organization’s mission, performance and ongoing viability. Stewardship. Includes:

1. Employ Executive Director / monitor performance
2. Provide public voice / consumer voice/ community voice
3. Adopting Board By-Laws and organization’s operating policies & procedures; monitor that they are followed
4. Establish organization strategic plan: mission, vision, goals, performance measures; monitor implementation
5. Approve financials: approve budget, monitor revenue & expenditures, comply with audits
6. Advocate / spokesperson for Board & organization; mobilize networks to help
7. Deal with critical human resource/legal/financial issues, serious disputes/grievances
A Board is NOT about..

- Pursuing personal agendas
- Making “deals” on your own
- Micro-managing the Director...that’s why you hired that person
- Making excuses for repeatedly missing meetings or not taking the initiative to be prepared and responsible
Who makes a good Board member?

Short answer: anyone who meets your criteria and cares about the mission. Look for people who

- Want to contribute and be a part of the work
- Have the time and availability to contribute
- Bring knowledge or perspective that stretches your conversations and ideas
  - i.e. consumers, financials, accounting, law, public relations, business management, human resources, fund-raising
- Are willing to use their networks and friendships to help the organization
- Are trustworthy
- Do not have apparent conflicts-of-interest
Common Issues (1)

1. Membership pressure – 51% consumer is fine; don’t need a huge Board-just an odd number
2. Board member training – Onboarding, assign a mentor, continuous training
3. Try to hold too many meetings; Quarterly or every other month okay –committees can meet during off-months
4. Board tries to do all the work
   - Rely on staff
   - Rely on ad-hoc work groups
     ▪ Ask colleagues to come together for an hour or so and wrestle with the issue and make recommendations
Common Issues (2)

5. Financial reports are confusing
   - Ask if the budget is “on track” and “what is the primary concern or opportunity we should be discussing?"
   - Ask for pie charts and graphic displays
Common Issues (3)

6. Ignoring the “strategic plan.” Must regularly track for progress or to change course

7. Assuming “others” will represent the agency
   - Recruitment (Board members & clients)
   - Public Awareness & Advocacy
   - Fund-Raising

8. Allowing everyone to get “Stuck in a Rut”
   - Seek new programming, refresh what you do
   - Watch out for “Founders Syndrome”
Common Issues…

9. Failing to expect more...you’re a business!
   - Everyone involved deserves to be treated with respect and professionalism
   - Set the tone & model behaviors
   - Speak up for what should or could be happening

10. Forgetting to celebrate!
    - Tremendous power in feedback and praise
    - Marking milestones creates energy
Staff Role

- Respect the Board as the people responsible for the organization
  - Bring them all relevant information...good or bad
  - No surprises should be the rule
- Bring forward information in a timely manner
- Bring forward information in an understandable format
- Take responsibility for developing proposals or recommendations unless the Board specifically is developing something through a group process
- Assist with developing, executing and monitoring the By-Laws, Policies & Procedures, Strategic Plan
- Purchase Directors & Officers (D&O) Liability Insurance
Staff support for Board meetings

- Work with Board Chair
  - Set meeting schedule – far in advance/send Outlook appointments
  - Develop agenda
  - Develop “Chair” agenda – add outline of what Chair needs to say or do...okay to draft proposed amendments ahead of time
  - Assist with securing speakers

- Send out all meeting materials + post to website

- Set up meeting room
  - Table Tents, sign-in sheets, meeting folders & notepads/pencils
  - Prepare for guests
  - Provide water. Refreshments optional
Staff support for Board meetings

- Know the material – help present/answer questions
- Assist with Roberts Rules of Order protocols
- Take Notes – assist with final ”Minutes”
- Distribute materials after the meeting
- Follow up on meeting action items

Same check list for supporting Sub-Committee meetings or work groups
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“Resources” tab