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**BUILDING BETTER BOARDS FOR  
ALCOHOL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS**

**A Self-Help Guide To  
Board Development in the 1990's**

**139328**

**DEPARTMENT OF  
ALCOHOL AND DRUG  
PROGRAMS**

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ACQUISITIONS



## ***PREFACE***

This Board Development Self-Help Guide was developed by EMT Group, Inc. (Evaluation, Management, and Training) under contract to the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs (DADP). EMT has been providing volunteer management training and technical assistance to alcohol service providers throughout the state since 1981. In 1986, we introduced information on Board effectiveness in our quarterly newsletter, the *Volunteer Reporter*. The response to the two articles indicated that we could provide a valuable service to alcohol treatment programs if we developed a specialized volunteer training module which addressed Board effectiveness. EMT developed a Board training package, and staff responded to requests for Board training at the rate of one or two each month during the first year. In addition, we have begun a spinoff training which addresses the concerns and interests of the county Alcohol Advisory Board (AAB); the content for the AAB training is contained in a separate manual, also available through DADP.

This guide represents the culmination of an 18-month process during which EMT studied and learned about Boards, sought and received staff training, participated on nonprofit boards, developed a variety of training modules, and provided numerous training sessions, some in series to the same agency. The response has been positive, and this guide represents the summation of this experience with the most practical lessons and tips regarding effective Board work.



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

EMT Group, Inc., wishes to acknowledge the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs for providing the financial and moral support to produce this guide. In recognition of the value of volunteers, and particularly those who serve on the Boards of nonprofit agencies, DADP has recognized the wisdom of providing technical assistance and training to further the contribution these individuals make through community-based organizations. Specifically, we thank Michael Cunningham, who initiated this long-running supportive program, and his staff: first, Ann Sheehan; then Jackie Taylor; and now Noralee Jennings-Bradley. In addition, we owe an enormous thanks to the many individuals who have requested Board training and, in turn, set the stage for EMT to develop this special service. While you forced us to learn all we could about Boards for nonprofits, you also provided the basis for much of the learning. Your experiences have proved invaluable in terms of assuring other Board members of their value, learning that many others feel similarly unsure of their roles and responsibilities, and reminding them of what they know. This guide is for and by all of you.





# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE**

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

*"Whether on the Board of a small or large organization . . . the way Board members serve in these positions of trust determines the quality of voluntary philanthropy."*

(National Charities Information Bureau, 1984:6)

Many volunteers in this country serve as members of the Board of Directors to a nonprofit organization. The Board of Directors is a governing, policy making body which has authority over the administration of the organization. Legally, the Board of Directors has "duty of care" which means the members should act in good faith in the interest of the organization (Mancuso, 1981). Organizationally, the Board represents the constituencies of the community served and brings a public conscience to the organization. Beyond these two broadly defined responsibilities, Board roles and functions require clarification for most members, both veterans and new initiates. The volume of printed material and numerous training opportunities in Board development are reflections of the complexity of Board work.

This guide, while adding to the proliferation of publications in the field, offers a unique perspective based on practical experience. It is designed as a self-help guide for Board development, with material which is somewhat specific to alcohol and drug treatment service organizations, the audience for this guide.

This is a self-help guide for the Board of Directors to the nonprofit organization. As a policy making Board, the Board of Directors has many explicit and implicit responsibilities. This guide addresses the explicit responsibilities and provides tips for serving your organization as well as you can with a degree of certainty and confidence about your activities, individually and collectively.

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This guide also addresses both theoretical and practical issues of interest to the nonprofit Board. Chapter Two is an introduction to types of Boards, a definition of "policy", and a brief overview of Board responsibilities by policy making functions such as personnel, finance, community relations, organizational operations, and planning and evaluation. Chapter Three focuses on the practical day-to-day concerns of a nonprofit Board. It includes information about fundraising, recruitment, planning, and evaluation. Finally, Chapter Four presents information and guidance for assessing the specific training needs of your Board. The guide is organized in this manner so you may: (1) choose to read through the material sequentially, using it much like a comprehensive primer; (2) search the Table of Contents to find the particular area of interest for your Board; or (3) go directly to Chapter Four to assess your Board before identifying the section of interest. This is your guide, based on EMT's experience with you and your peers. Use it your way!

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **DEFINING THE BOARD IN TERMS OF PURPOSE AND FUNCTION**

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## CHAPTER TWO

### DEFINING THE BOARD IN TERMS OF PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

One of the things you learn when you incorporate a nonprofit organization in California, or simply enter the field of nonprofit management, is the legal requirement for a Board of Directors. While many of us might accurately guess that the Board of Directors is a governing body of interested and prominent individuals who volunteer their time for the organization, most of us would be hard-pressed to elaborate further. Even some individuals with years of experience serving on Boards, or directing nonprofit community-based organizations, welcome opportunities to expand their knowledge of Board roles and responsibilities. It is helpful to understand the different types of Boards, the primary function of boards --policy making --, and the substantive areas of Board responsibility.

#### "WHO ARE WE?" – TYPES OF BOARDS

So what is a Board of Directors, exactly? It is a formal group of individuals with policy making responsibilities. Before learning more about these, it may be useful to distinguish the nonprofit Board of Directors from other types of Boards. Basically, there are three types of Boards described as follows:

##### **Administrative Board**

An administrative Board is basically a subtype of a policy making Board. Administrative Boards set policy for an organization, but they also carry out some or all of the organization's operations. These individuals represent a "hands on" Board of Directors. They are usually found heading organizations that are either very new and have little or no paid staff to carry out the operations, or they are found heading organizations that never intend to hire paid staff (i.e., service organizations, some church Boards, some employee organizations, etc.). Some private for-profit corporations also have administrative Boards, elected by stockholders and paid to govern and oversee corporate economic well-being.

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## Advisory Board

These Boards exist to provide advice to a person or another organization on specifically designated issues or business. Advisory Boards do not have policy making ability, nor do they carry any legal liability or responsibility for an organization. Their power is basically to influence, which can be extremely effective if the people on an Advisory Board already carry with them other roles within a community or organization that make them powerful individually and collectively. Advisory Board members are appointed by some authority (i.e., the County Board of Supervisors), to whom they remain responsible.

## Policy Making Board

The policy making Board is the governing body for the typical nonprofit organization. This type of Board of Directors selects its members to serve voluntarily on a part time basis. This Board makes policy decisions for the organization, specifically focusing on the mission, goals, and objectives. This Board is an instrument of organizational accountability which means, for example, that members face liability issues which are not a direct concern of the Advisory Board. The policy making Board wields a degree of power and carries some direct responsibilities for assuring sound organizational management.

Boards serve all types of organizations and retain varying levels of responsibility, liability, and functioning. Figure 1 illustrates these distinctions.

**FIGURE 1  
TYPES OF BOARDS**

<i>Type</i>	<i>Distinguishing Characteristics</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<b>Administrative</b>	Mostly Private Corporations Paid as Management Elected by Stockholders Full-time Commitment (part time for Nonprofits) Decision Making in Policy and Operations	Bank of America General Motors Texaco Nonprofits include Churches, Civic Clubs



Type	Distinguishing Characteristics	Examples
Advisory	Mostly Nonprofits or Government Agencies Voluntary Membership Appointed by Organizational Authority (i.e., County Supervisors, Executive Officers, City Council, Legislative Committee, Executive Director, Board of Directors)	County Government Organizations Government Grant Programs
Policy Making	Nonprofits Voluntary Membership Elected by the Board of Directors Part-time Commitment Policy Decisions	Alcohol Treatment Programs Mental Health Association Domestic Violence/ Rape Crisis Service Agency

## "WHAT IS POLICY MAKING?" – POLICY DEFINED

The primary function of a Board of Directors is policy making. Okay, then what is "policy"? Organizational policy is a set of governing principles which guides organizational activities and programs. Policy establishes the tone of organizational operations, and the degree of structure, formality, and precision for procedures. "Policy" is represented at the most generic level by the organization's mission statement, goals, and objectives. The Board has the authority – indeed *is* the authority – to make policy.

Policy is broadly stated; procedures are the specific means of assuring policy is followed. Many organizations combine these broad and specific organizational guidelines in a formal policy and procedures manual. The manual greatly facilitates the organization's Board members and staff in adhering to established policy. The staff of the organization is responsible for policy implementation. Board developed policy provides the operational guidelines for staff to conduct the business of the organization.

As the name implies, the policy making Board makes policy for the organization; but policy is a term that has different meanings to different people. It is important that the Board and the staff are clear on what is meant by policy and what the different kinds of policies are, as well as where responsibilities lie for developing and revising different policies. There are three different levels of policy that exist in an organization.

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## **Governing Policy**

This is the most general and universal policy that overshadows all other policies and activities of an agency. It is the arena of the Board of Directors to make and approve governing policy. Examples of governing policy include the agency's mission statement, bylaws, articles of incorporation, overall goals, etc. These types of policies are changed least often, but should be reviewed every three to five years to make sure that they are (1) still relevant to the needs of the community that the agency serves and (2) representative of the current agency activities. In most organizations, committees are actively involved in formulating these policies with input from the Executive Director. In other organizations, the Board may delegate part of this policy development to the Executive Director. In all cases, the Board must approve these policies.

## **Administrative Policy**

This type of policy includes matters such as personnel policies, fiscal policies, program objectives, policies relating to the acquisition of property, etc. These policies must be consistent with the governing policies. In many organizations, staff, particularly the Executive Director, is very active in the development of these policies with the Board assuming the responsibility of review and approval. In other organizations, Board members are actively involved in this policy development; and, of course, the total Board approves the final products.

## **Operating Policy**

These policies exist at the implementation level and, in some people's minds, do not qualify for the term *policy*. However, because operating procedures should reflect the overall administrative and governing guidelines of an organization, they are discussed as policies for the sake of clarification. Examples of operating policies would include office procedures, personnel manuals, staffing patterns, program implementation plans (i.e., action plans, time lines, etc.). In most organizations, it is the Executive Director and staff that develop and implement these operating policies. Board members typically do not get involved in this level of policy development or approval.

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## **"WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO?" THE FUNCTIONAL AREAS OF POLICY MAKING**

Now that you understand a little more about what *"policy"* is, how does a group of volunteers address it? The following discussion presents yet another way to view policy, to reduce it to elements that are more specific, less abstract, and hopefully more suggestive of "what you are supposed to do".

The United Way has been supporting community-based nonprofits for years and has developed a comprehensive training series for Boards of Directors (known as the Board WALK series of United Way's Volunteer Leadership Development Program). Borrowing from this experience and the literature on nonprofit Boards, this manual presents five functional areas of Board responsibility to clarify Board activities. These areas include:

1. Human Resources
2. Finance
3. Planning
4. Organizational Operations
5. Community Relations

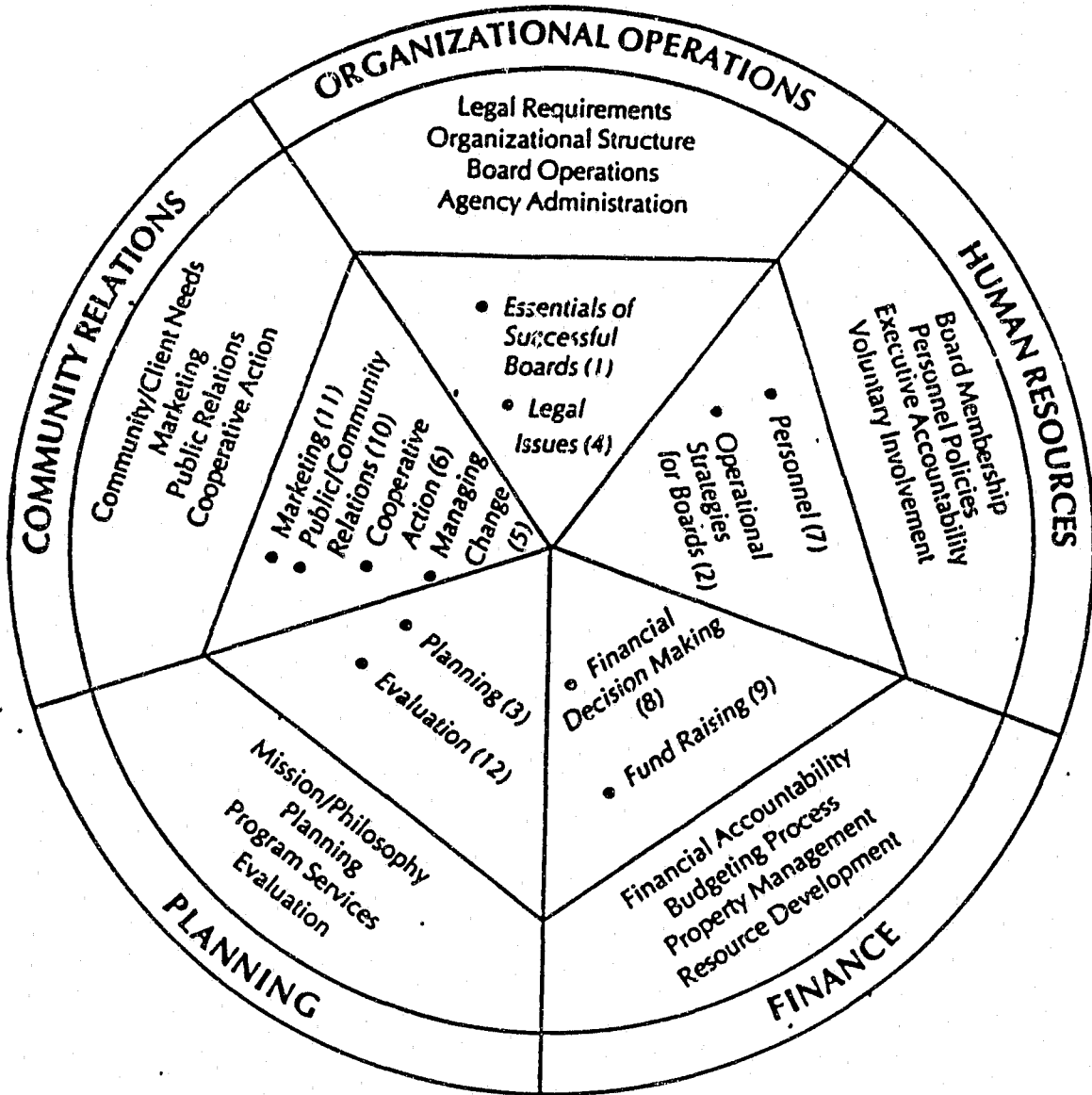
Figure 2 provides a graphic illustration of how these functional areas are interrelated parts, thanks to material generated by United Way.

The following summaries provide more detailed descriptions of the kinds of activities within each functional area of any Board's responsibility.

### **Human Resources**

The Board sets policy in this area by developing recruitment, orientation, training and evaluation strategies for its own Board members; by setting up and staffing Board committees; by establishing a policy through which other volunteers are used in the organization; by hiring, evaluating, and terminating the Executive Director; and by setting salary ranges, approving job descriptions, personnel policies and grievance procedures for staff.

**FIGURE 2  
FUNCTIONAL DIAGRAM**



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## Finance

In this area of policy making, the Board approves and monitors the budget, develops fiscal policy (e.g., the implementation of an outside audit), ensures the solvency of an organization, ensures compliance with governmental and other regulatory agencies reporting requirements, and develops a fundraising plan.

## Planning

The Board is responsible for long-range planning for the organization. In this capacity of policy making, the Board develops a philosophy and mission statement, conducts annual and long-range planning, determines what program services ought to be established, and ensures that there is a method for monitoring and evaluating those services. Some, and in many cases much, of this activity can be delegated to staff; but many Boards establish a committee which provides input and makes recommendations to the total Board regarding these matters.

## Organization Operations

In this capacity of policy making, the Board members track whether or not the organization is meeting its legal requirements, whether or not it has an organizational structure that is able to implement the work of the organization most effectively, and structures its own Board operations through the wise use of committees. Again, in this category, much of the monitoring responsibility may be delegated to staff; but Board members need to be able to keep track of how staff is functioning in these areas, particularly through the use of regular reports. The *legal reason* for having a Board of Directors is to comply with legal requirements for nonprofit corporations to have Directors, as delineated in Articles of Incorporation filed with the California Secretary of State. The Board of Directors can be held liable for organization malfeasance, which places the members in a position of assuring organizational accountability. In other words, because the Board members are individually accountable, they are vested in the organization operating responsibly according to its mission. The specific issues of Board member liability will be elaborated on in Chapter Three.

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## **Community Relations**

In this area of policy making, Board members act as ambassadors for the agency to the community. They should establish a mechanism by which the needs of the community are surveyed and taken into account in the planning process. They may develop a policy regarding marketing for the agency services. They may decide to establish specific ways in which Board members can function in a public relations capacity (e.g., through a speakers' bureau, or direct relations with the media, etc.). Finally, the Board needs to establish a policy for how the agency will cooperate with other organizations and services within the community.

## **Policy Making Overview**

These areas provide an overview of the governing responsibilities of Boards. You should be able to identify areas of policy decision making in which your Board currently participates. For example, as part of the "Human Relations" functional area, the Board is responsible for Board membership -- filling and nurturing it.

Secondly, you may identify areas of functional responsibility which show up in Figure 2, but are unfamiliar to you. These are areas of responsibility which are rightfully the Board's, but may be neglected, handled by the Executive Director or staff of the organization. At a minimum, check the "fit" of these areas to ascertain whether your Board should be taking on additional functional areas. Thirdly, having agreed that these five Board policy areas are appropriate and necessary undertakings for your Board, consider using them as the basis for committee structuring. Although committees are discussed in a subsequent section, remember the "five functional areas" when reviewing your committee needs and uses.

## **SUMMARY OF UNDERSTANDING THE NONPROFIT BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The all-volunteer Board of Directors is the formal policy making body for the nonprofit organization. The functional basis for having a Board of Directors is best defined in terms of the various responsibilities relegated to the members individually and collectively. Primarily, the Board of Directors is responsible for setting organizational policy, consistent with the mission or purpose of the organization. Policy consists of the rules that govern the implementation of organizational intentions. Policy guides everything the organization does, expressed through Articles of Incorporation and bylaws which provide the guidelines for the organizational implementation. These documents are the yardstick of organizational

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accountability, the basis for the Board's determination of compliance acceptability. They are documents which enable the Board of Directors to ensure that the organization is living up to its goals, consistent with the overall mission. As members of the community the organization serves, the Board of Directors is designed to act in the best interest of the community.





# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **BOARD SURVIVAL SKILLS**

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## CHAPTER THREE

### BOARD SURVIVAL SKILLS

Now that you have a solid grasp of what the Board of Directors is supposed to do, you have an understanding of its purpose (i.e., mission, intent, etc.). While it is essential to know the Board's purpose, it is only a matter of time before the Board becomes immersed in the day-to-day concerns of the organization or its own governing activities. This section presents some practical discussion and recommendations for addressing some of the critical concerns of a Board of Directors. In it you will get an introduction to fundraising, suggestions for Board member recruitment and orientation, planning and evaluation, as well as tips for improving efficiency and effectiveness in a variety of Board activities.

#### **"BUT FIRST, WE NEED MORE MONEY." (but don't we all?) AN EXAMINATION OF THE BOARD'S FISCAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Nonprofit organizations are in business to provide a service to the community, mostly at no or minimal cost to the recipients. The issue of operating capital is a persistent concern for the organization's Board of Directors and staff. Nonprofits seek and receive funding support from multiple sources, including federal, state, and county grants, private foundation grants, and corporate and individual charitable contributions. While some nonprofits provide direct services to clients on a sliding fee schedule, such as alcoholism counseling, most organizations rely heavily on a combination of support from public funding and independent fundraising. Among the more traditional sources for funds for an organization are the following:

1. *Government Grants and Contracts.* Grants tend to be time limited, given to an agency to accomplish a certain project or program with the idea that the agency will find other funding to carry on the project after the grant period is over. Contracts exist when a government entity enters into an agreement with an organization to provide a specific service; usually the implication is that the contract will be renewable if the organization does the job properly (given, of course, that government money remains available for this purpose).

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2. **Foundations.** Foundations are private organizations which give money to nonprofit organizations, usually for one-time projects or programs. Like government grants, foundation money is "soft money", meaning that the organization is expected to come up with other sources of funds for the activities that the foundation money has been supporting after the period of the grant. There are many foundations in the United States. They represent a very small percentage of the amount of money that make up the operating budget of nonprofit organizations. You will have your best luck with foundations that are local or regional. Larger, national foundations tend to fund programs that have innovative features that can be replicated in other settings.
  
  3. **Corporations.** Many medium and large-sized corporations give to charities. They usually focus on giving to agencies and communities where significant numbers of their own employees or customers live. It is worthwhile to learn which businesses have corporate giving policies in your community (i.e., banks, manufacturers, large retail businesses, restaurants, hotels, etc.). Sometimes their charitable giving is in the form of actual cash grants from the corporation's own resources, or in-kind contributions of expertise or materials. Other times the employees of corporations and businesses are allowed to conduct fundraising campaigns at the work place to benefit local charities. However, if the business or corporation participates in the United Way fundraising campaign, they may not give outside the United Way process.
  
  4. **United Way.** The United Way conducts a community-wide fundraising campaign for a period of about three months every year. The proceeds of that campaign are distributed primarily to organizations that have become members of United Way. Organizations can become members of United Way by going through a screening process that varies from community to community. However, it is a little-known fact that any donor who is giving money to the United Way can designate any nonprofit organization as the recipient of his or her donation whether or not the agency is a member of United Way. When a donor donates to the United Way, he or she fills out a donation pledge card. There is a space on that card for the donor to designate any organization he or she wants to as the direct recipient of the contribution. Most of the time, donors think that they are restricted to United Way member agencies. That is not the case. Thus, if your organization is not a member of United Way when the United Way campaign occurs, you may publicize through your newsletter or any other form of communication and urge your members to designate your agency as the recipient of their

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donation. You will receive those funds, minus a certain portion for administrative overhead, during the next year. However, it might be worth it to the organization to look into what it takes to become a member of the United Way in your area because as a member you are usually guaranteed a specific amount of funding each year.

5. *Individual Donations.* For many organizations, individual donations represent the largest source of fundraising dollars. There are many ways that individuals can donate to your organization:
  - a. Through memberships;
  - b. Through small occasional donations, either from community members at large, or possibly from clients; and
  - c. By becoming a major donor. Major donors are people who give \$100 or more annually to an organization.
6. *Proceeds from Fundraising Events.* Fundraising events are the most commonly used method of raising money for an organization; but in terms of their efficiency and effectiveness, they tend to produce the least return for the most amount of work. However, this is not always the case. Many times fundraisers can catch on in a community and raise tens of thousands of dollars for an organization each year. Another reason why fundraising events are important is that they raise the visibility of the organization within the community, and they provide a way for the people to get acquainted with the organization's volunteers and services.
7. *Fees for Service.* There may be a way for your organization to collect a fee for whatever service you provide, whether that is an educational service or a direct client service.
8. *Auxiliary Business.* Some organizations run fundraising businesses (i.e., thrift shops, restaurants, janitorial services, etc.) whose profits are then put back into the agency.

The Board of Directors has an oversight role in the fiscal affairs of the organization, and a more direct leadership role in fundraising. Board members should be prepared to donate funds of their own to the organization. They should also be prepared to participate in

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fundraising activities, whether that includes organized events, solicitations of donations and memberships, or other kinds of visible public activities that will help generate revenue for the agency. After all, among all of the organization's personnel, it is the Board of Directors that has the most direct access to community resources. Some literature on Board development presumes powerful and direct Board funding support, or at least Board member activity related to raising money. According to one source:

*Personal wealth and prestigious names traditionally have been among the most important criteria nonprofit organizations have used in selecting volunteer Board members . . . . In addition, it has long been an expected part of a Board member's role that he or she make a significant contribution to the organization he or she is serving. The theory behind this principle is that a generous contribution by a Board member indicates a true interest and belief in the organization's purpose. Board members may also be asked to raise funds . . . .*

While helpful with fundraising efforts, wealthy and "connected" individuals do not have a corner on the market. Indeed, most nonprofit organizations rely heavily on Board membership from individuals with a wealth of energy and commitment, first and foremost. In reality, good candidates for Board membership represent the entire economic spectrum.

To reiterate, a policy making Board's basic financial responsibility is to ensure that there is adequate financial support to carry out the organization's activities. Boards often delegate at least a part of this responsibility to staff. For example, staff is directed to enter into contracts, to write grant proposals, to engage in community relations' activities, all with an eye toward increasing the financial support base of the organization. But the ultimate responsibility for fiscal soundness lies with the Board of Directors.

It is the business of the Board of Directors to be aware of the organization's financial status on a regular basis. Because the Board is accountable for organizational management, it is imperative that they have an active role in the financial administration of the program. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Board to assure program financial accountability. For example, the Board should assure that the organization contract with a certified public accountant (CPA) for required audits. The Board should actively participate in reviewing the budget annually. Most Boards require and receive at least a quarterly financial statement from the organization. Use these reports to assess the financial health and integrity of the organization.

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In the functional area of organization finances, the Board's policy making responsibilities focus on three endeavors:

- To ensure financial accountability
- To oversee budgeting process
- To raise funds or otherwise ensure there is adequate funding to support the budget.

These three areas are discussed below, with particular emphasis on fundraising. Also, you will note the distinctions between Board and staff responsibilities in these areas.

### **Financial Accountability**

Financial accountability is a function of sound planning and good management. The Board and the Executive Director share responsibilities in each of these areas. Planning requires a solid understanding of the organization's mission, development of goals and objectives, priority-setting to identify short and long-term goals and objectives, assessment of current activities/services, and determination of financial requirements which will support immediate and long-range operations. Having completed the budgeting process and obtained Board approval, it is the responsibility of the Executive Director to hold to the bottom line. The budget is a tool for controlling expenses, targeting financial needs, and then generating revenue to support programs. Record keeping and financial statements will support the Executive Director to manage the organization's resources effectively. Insofar as the Executive Director is accountable to the Board, the latter enjoys ultimate financial accountability for the organization. Remember – the Board is legally liable for the organization; sound practices to ensure there is good accountability will shore up the integrity of the organization.

### **Budget Oversight**

The responsibility for drafting the organization's budget belongs to the Executive Director, even if the input is mostly from other staff. Budgets are prepared annually and reflect past and future priorities for service delivery. Most nonprofits continue to seek program and service expansion, often a function of budgeting.

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In order to fulfill a requirement for fiscal accountability, the Board should be aware of the organization's financial health. At a minimum, this will require the members to be engaged in a budget review process. The review may occur as a full Board exercise, or a subcommittee activity. The primary objective of the review is to see if the budget is reasonable, given assurances of revenue for the budget period. The budget should relate directly to known funding. There should be line items for personnel (wages and fringe benefits), rent and utilities, materials, supplies, and photocopying or printing, telephone, consultant or subcontractor fees, transportation, and other items which are required for the organization to operate. While there may be a targeted figure cited for fundraising, it should not be committed to a required expense such as salaries or rent. Rather, additional fundraising may be linked to securing a required "match" for a grant, or focusing on a need for a specific luxury item such as a photocopier, personal computer, new furniture, or other improvements.

The Executive Director actually develops the detailed budget, submitting it for Board review and approval. In addition, he/she is responsible for adhering to the proposed budget, directing all day-to-day financial operations. The Board provides budget oversight by reviewing the annual budget and holding the Executive Director accountable for operating the organization within budget. Exceptions or unusual and unexpected expenses should be brought to the Board's attention for re-evaluation and adjustment if necessary. Sometimes loss by theft or fire incurs such unexpected expenses, which require special attention relative to "adhering to the proposed budget".

## **Fundraising**

Fundraising is an area of concern to the Board of Directors because it is a logical extension of the financial accountability role of the Board. Boards vary considerably in terms of their level of activity in fundraising. Some resist the role and satisfy the call for their involvement by issuing a personal check for an annual contributions. Others participate actively in fundraising efforts through the year, selling tickets, soliciting contributions, and generating fundraising ideas. Others do not accept any responsibility for fundraising, relying instead on staff to do the work. Ideally, fundraising should be an important Board priority, and members should demonstrate their support by actively participating in all events. Successful fundraising depends on three key components: (1) involve everyone, (2) develop a plan, and (3) target your efforts to sources where you know you have support.

1. *Full participation from the Board, staff, and volunteers.* Fundraising is more than asking for money; it is also developing the climate in which people will want to give to your organization. People give to an organization they



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perceive as providing a necessary service and being competently managed. Everyone--Board, staff and volunteers--can help to develop this climate by doing their job well and by communicating their belief in the organization's mission. Everyone has an obligation to help the organization put its best foot forward, to build its image, to improve its services, and to enhance quality.

As the most visible and powerful volunteer group, the organization's Board of Directors can be the first to demonstrate commitment to and involvement in fundraising activities. By definition, the Board of Directors is actively involved in determining the budget, deciding upon allocations, and identifying funding sources. The Board of Directors can also be a major organizing force in fundraising campaigns. However, all too frequently, unless members of the Board of Directors were recruited for the primary purpose of bringing funds into the organization, individually they are reluctant to accept this active role in fundraising. This reluctance is understandable. Fundraising is a new and difficult activity for most Board members.

Frequently, there is confusion within nonprofit organizations over the precise and respective fundraising roles for the Board of Directors and the Executive Director. In fact, much of the literature on nonprofit Boards addresses fundraising as a "negotiated" area of responsibility for the Executive Director and the Board of Directors to define and usually share. Whether through deliberate negotiation or by default, the fundraising role of the Board of Directors can become one of either active participation in the fundraising process or a less involved role consisting of review and approval of fundraising activities.

The most effective fundraising usually occurs when fundraising is regarded as a responsibility shared by the Board of Directors and the Executive Director. The Board is involved in the early states of the fundraising effort, reviewing the idea for approval, and developing an action plan in conjunction with the Executive Director. Staff and volunteers support fundraising efforts by providing personnel resources and clerical backup.

2. *Develop a fundraising plan.* When developing a fundraising plan, keep in mind that your best source of funds is from individuals. The 1982 figures on philanthropy indicate that 80 percent of all charitable contributions came from individuals. In 1985, total giving reached \$66 billion and almost 90 percent came from individuals.

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In developing your fundraising plan, you will do well to consider the following simple steps:

- **Assess your needs.** Review how funds are obtained and specific amounts from current and previous years. This will provide an overview of your organization's fundraising success.
  - Decide which fundraising approaches have been most successful.
  - Consider current fundraising approaches that could be enhanced or new fundraising sources which appear favorable for your organization.
  - Determine the sources you want to target for your approach.

You may decide for the first year that you want to concentrate on fundraising events and a membership drive, rather than going after major donors because you feel a need to raise the profile of your organization in the community.

- **Set your goals.** Without considering your total budget, set income goals for each of your funding sources. If you have never used the particular source before, do not rely too heavily on it at first. If you have an idea of income to expect, identify a "worst" outcome (i.e., same as last year), a "best" outcome, and then come to a middle "likely" income goal.

Make sure that it is doable. Do not set your goals so high that your Board gets very discouraged when it cannot meet the goal. On the other hand, if you set it too low, you may not be able to motivate the Board; and you may waste their time.

- **Plan your strategy.** There is considerable preparation needed to accomplish any fundraising strategy. First, look around and see what type of fundraiser tends to be successful and what does not. Do not add another jog-a-thon if there is already at least one a month to support every other charity in town. On the other hand, if you talk to other organizations and find out that six out of seven have tried to put on an art auction and have had no success, consider that there may not be a market for that type of fundraiser and propose some other type of event. To be sure every task is achieved, identify all steps needed

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to carry out your full fundraising strategy. Part of the plan is to determine who is responsible for completing each step or task. Furthermore, training is an especially important task for staff and volunteers who may be soliciting funds. Everyone will need to be knowledgeable about the organization.

People who are not used to asking other people for money often find it very difficult and uncomfortable to solicit funds for a nonprofit organization. These feelings among your Board members should be respected. That is why it is important to start out modestly with achievable goals and to give Board members a lot of support in the overall fundraising process.

- *Develop a one year fundraising calendar.* To assure that the timing of every fundraising activity is compatible with each other, develop a complete 12-month calendar of all activities related to accomplishing your fundraising efforts. Be realistic about planning your fundraising strategy and make sure that you think through how much time it will take and how much time Board members and other volunteers have to give to the plan. Do not burn out your Board members on nonstop fundraising when there are several other important activities that Board members also need to be involved in.
- *Implement your plan.* Include "check points" throughout the implementation period to check your progress. A "telephone tree" for support calls will facilitate progress and minimize breakdown or outright project failure.
- *Evaluate.* Keep accurate records to determine which fundraising projects were cost effective, whether prospect lists were targeted correctly, and whether the projects were appropriate to the organization.

Be sure to ask everyone involved (staff and volunteers, alike) how they felt about the fundraising project. Everyone who was involved deserves feedback on the outcome of the project proceeds, at a minimum.

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- ***Provide for recognition and awards.*** Everyone involved in fundraising efforts likes to be thanked for their efforts. They are more likely to make return engagements for future events if they know how much they were appreciated.

In developing your plan, there are no right or wrong answers, no secret formulas, no magic. The plan simply is your best guess and guideline. It will serve you well to provide structure and feedback.

3. ***Target your solicitation.*** One of the best sources of fundraising is people who either need your services, or who already give time and money to your organization. This would include members, alumni, and clients. The two most popular ways to get money from people who need your organization are to ask them to pay dues (i.e., alumni group) or to charge a fee for service.

The second major source of dependable money is from the people who believe in the purpose of your organization. Although most organizations have a limited number of people who need services, you can "sell the value" of the organization to a much larger group of people. You need to design a strategy that will describe how your organization is of assistance to the community, or how it benefits a particular segment of the community. With precise information about your organization's benefits, you can contact for-profit corporations, business, and civic organizations in your area. You can use direct mail fundraising, remembering the more limited the purpose of your organization, the more restricted your mailing should be. Major donors become another possibility when you focus on who may believe in your organization rather than who needs your organization.

Lastly, people are more likely to give to your organization when:

1. They believe in your cause;
2. They know you and they trust you;
3. They are used to giving;
4. They are recognized and thanked for previous giving; and
5. They are asked.

Remember, people will usually not give unless you ask them to.

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## **"WE ALSO NEED MORE MEMBERS ON OUR BOARD"**

### **RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

Board membership is a critical area of organizational resource development, particularly in terms of human resources. It is important to have a Board which reflects the composition of the community and to provide adequate support for the care and maintenance of the Board. There are four elements to consider in the development of Board membership. These are:

- Board composition
- Strategies for recruitment
- Orientation and training for Board members
- Recognition of Board members

### **Board Composition**

The composition of the Board is a function of three key elements. First, it is essential to know the composition of the community in terms of age, race, and sex, as well as the local needs for program services. Secondly, after knowing the composition of the community, it is important that the Board have an adequate representation of this community. For the truly representative Board, this is a major strength of the organization. More often than not, however, a Board's membership reflects representation from just a few quarters of the community.

The third essential element of Board composition is the degree of commitment. This is demonstrated by attendance at meetings, agreement with the mission of the organization, and active participation in fundraising events. Careful screening for commitment among new Board recruits will serve the Board, as well as an up-front and realistic presentation of the level of effort desired from new members. Do not gloss over the demands of membership.

### **Strategies for Recruitment**

Recruiting volunteers for any purpose is a challenge for many programs. Board member recruitment requires careful planning and individual consideration of each candidate. There *is* no mystery about effective strategies; simply recall the strategies that resulted in your becoming a member of this Board, or other volunteer positions. There are five basic elements of recruitment that will help to focus your efforts. These elements are to define your personnel needs, identify target groups, select a strategy, implement, and evaluate.

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1. *Define* your Board's needs and target recruitment to those needs. To do this, you may need to review the composition of your existing Board membership and your community. How well does your Board reflect the community in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, geographic distribution, and client characteristics? Therefore, when there is a Board vacancy, define characteristics you would like to have represented and then seek out candidates which meet your Board's needs. Figure 3 provides a list of some of the characteristics of the community which could be instrumental in developing a useful profile. Figure 4 provides a sample of such a profile.
  2. For particular representation, *identify* those target groups where you are likely to find the kind of individuals you hope to invite to serve on your Board. If you are looking for older representation, contact the senior citizen's center in your area. For younger representatives, consider college students. Because you are also interested in finding candidates who are responsible volunteers, look into other volunteer-supported organizations such as churches, civic clubs, and fraternal groups. Figure 5 provides a list of target groups for focused recruitment, with suggested approaches.
  3. To determine the best method for recruitment, consider who you are targeting and *select strategies* which have been effective in recruiting the existing Board members. Personal invitation is very effective if you are approaching someone who knows a Board member. Post notices in newspapers and newsletters of target groups. Run a public service announcement (PSA) on the radio station(s) which appeal to your target group. While the one-on-one strategy seems to get the best results, other strategies can work, *and* the "broad sweep" strategies (i.e., newspaper notices, PSAs) also advance the visibility of your organization.
  4. **RECRUIT!** *Implement* the strategies you selected, systematically and professionally. Do it as well as you know how, to make a favorable impression about serving on your Board.
  5. *Evaluate* the effectiveness of each strategy you employ when you recruit successfully, and sort out why that strategy worked. When the next recruitment opportunity arises, repeat the exercise of asking each member what recruitment strategy appealed to them. For the attempts that do not result in a new recruit, assess the reasons and determine whether there are other benefits to the organization aside from the recruitment goal. The evaluation process will increase your ability to judge the most effective strategies, reapply them, and maintain a systematic, well conceived plan for Board member recruitment. (Remember to groom volunteers who serve the organization in other capacities, for eventual Board involvement, too.)

**FIGURE 3**  
**Determining Features for Desired Board Composition**

<i>Community Profile</i>	<i>Preferred Representation On Board of Directors</i>
<b><i>Geographic area served:</i></b> City County State Other	Residency in area served  Distribution throughout area if large (i.e., county or state)  Urban, rural, suburban if large and mixed area
<b><i>Demographic characteristics:</i></b> Age distribution  Gender distribution  Racial/ethnic distribution  Income/education/occupation (if relevant)	Represents either population of area, or population served if age-specific  Represents either population of area, or population served if gender-specific  Represents either population of area, or population served if race/ethnicity-specific  Reflects all levels in area served
<b><i>Professional/interest groups</i></b>	Reflects representation from groups with professional and personal interest in organization's mission (i.e., in alcohol prevention services might include representatives from public school system, local law enforcement, newspaper or other media, civic clubs, parent groups, students, and recreational groups)
<b><i>Potential bases for financial support, public relations, heightened visibility</i></b>	Individuals with "connections" in banking, local small business, major employers, other community fundraising efforts, the media
<b><i>Other sources of in-kind support for the organization</i></b>	Attorneys, knowledgeable about nonprofit corporations, accountants, health professionals, for example

**FIGURE 4**  
**Sample Community Profile**  
**Determining Board Composition for "Alive and Well"**  
**Alcohol Prevention Program for Youth**

<i>Community Profile</i>	<i>Source(s) of Information</i>	<i>Source(s) for Board Recruitment</i>
Serves City of Sacramento 1980 Population 275,741	1980 Census (U.S. Department of Commerce, County Planning Office, School District)	
Age Under 18                   24.6% 18-64                       61.8% 65 and over               13.6%	1980 Census (U.S. Department of Commerce, County Planning Office, School District)	High schools, SADD, Friday Night Live (FNL), PTA, churches, DBOs faculty, businesses, senior citizen centers
Gender Male                       55.4% Female                   50.3%	1980 Census (U.S. Department of Commerce, County Planning Office, School District)	High schools, SADD, Friday Night Live (FNL), PTA, churches, CBOs, faculty, businesses, senior citizen centers
Racial/Ethnic Caucasian               72.4% Black                     13.4% Hispanic                 14.2%	1980 Census (U.S. Department of Commerce, County Planning Office, School District)	High schools, SADD, Friday Night Live (FNL), PTA, churches, CBOs, faculty, businesses, senior citizen centers
Professional/Interest groups	N/A	Educators, PTA/other parent representatives, students, mental health and health professional recovering alcoholics
Potential bases for financial support, public relations, heightened visibility	N/A	Civic clubs, major area employer (i.e., Pacific Bell, Bank of America, Raley's supermarkets); media representatives (i.e., daily newspaper, local radio/television)
Other sources of in-kind support for the organization	N/A	Attorneys, accountants, physicians, child psychologists, public relations/advertising agency, etc.

\*Hypothetical agency



**FIGURE 5**  
**Board Recruitment Strategies**

<i>Desired Board Representation</i>	<i>Potential Target Groups</i>	<i>Method/ Approach</i>
Other source of in-kind support for the organization	Attorneys, accountants, physicians, child psychologists, public relations, advertising agencies, etc.	N/A
Youth (under 18)	High school students	Notice in school newspaper Announcement over public address system Flyers to homerooms Club presentations "Sign-up" table during lunch break
Youth (18 to 25)	College students	Notice in school newspaper Announcement in designated classes (i.e., social sciences, health, government) Flyers to recognized clubs Flyers posted on bulletin boards in residence housing and departmental offices
Senior citizens	R.S.V.P. (Retired Services Volunteer Program) Senior citizen centers Retirement communities/condominiums	Telephone inquiry to determine most appropriate approach Notice for bulletin board Advertisement in circular



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A recruitment strategy should include a defined target group, outreach methods, a timeline, and designated individual or committee responsibility. Be selective and screen candidates carefully to recruit the most appropriate and committed Board members.

## **Orientation and Training**

The dual purpose of orientation and training is (1) to prepare new and (2) to support existing Board members for service to the organization. In orientation, new members learn about the organization, its services and programs, history, and expectations for Board membership. Training opportunities for Board members usually focus on developing or refining process skills, clarification of Board roles and responsibilities, or trouble-shooting in a particular problem area. A check list of orientation and training resources are provided below:

### ***Orientation Package:***

- Organization description/brochure
- Mission statement, goals, objectives
- Bylaws
- Board directory
- Minutes from recent meetings
- Monthly/quarterly program statistics (recent)
- Monthly/quarterly financial statement (recent)
- Board member job description/responsibilities
- Board application form

In addition to providing orientation material to the new recruit, it is also helpful to welcome new members individually and collectively. Some Boards routinely have an informal reception for the new member at the beginning of their first meeting. Others have a welcome policy whereby selected members (1 or 2) take the new member to lunch. Some form of socializing and getting acquainted with the new member is extremely important to help them feel part of the team, and enthusiastic about their new commitment. You would be surprised to hear how many Board members "lose interest" in their organization as a function of feeling unwelcome, unprepared, or otherwise unsupported in their role.

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### ***Training Resources:***

- Staff presentations of services, special program/activities
- Volunteer center training workshops
- United Way training services
- Send Board representatives to regional and/or state training if possible

Keep an eye out for low cost or free training opportunities.

### **"What About Volunteers?"**

In addition to having volunteers as full voting members of the Board, many (if not most) nonprofit organizations use volunteers in other capacities. Some agencies have volunteers serve on Board committees. Some use volunteers to assist in the organizational operations. This can be done through a structured volunteer program to provide ongoing support to services such as crisis hotlines. Or, volunteers can be used on an ad hoc, "as needed" basis, often drawing from the client population. This is especially true of residential alcohol recovery programs, which advocate service to the organization as a component of treatment and recovery. Problems with volunteers tend to arise at two levels: "where to find them" (recruitment) and "what to do with the ones we have" (supervision). EMT provided a comprehensive volunteer program development training curriculum, also under DADP contract. The following highlights are from that training course.

- *Determine your specific need for volunteers.* Why do you think the Board needs volunteers? Do you envision having committees with some volunteer participants? What would be their responsibilities? Are job descriptions warranted? Know what you have in mind before you have eager and motivated individuals waiting for marching orders. A plan helps.
- *Recruit selectively, screen and train volunteers.* Assuming you know what the volunteers will be doing, on which committee they will serve, and what special event they will help with, recruitment should be easier to target. Repeat the procedure you used for recruiting Board members. Be selective and seek responsible volunteers. Screen candidates to determine what they expect to get for their participation. Provide some form of orientation and/or training to acclimate new volunteers, welcome and reward them for making the

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commitment, and prepare them to serve the Board and the organization. Volunteers are an excellent way to "staff up" your Board committees. They also are prime recruitment resources for future Board members.

- *Recognize volunteers formally and informally.* Let volunteers know your appreciation at every opportunity. Verbal and written "thank-you" expressions, individual and collective praise, greetings, inclusion, and involvement are some ways of showing recognition informally. Formal approaches include volunteer recognition ceremonies or celebrations, awards, news items in organizational media, invitations to lunch, T-shirts, buttons, or other memorabilia. If you maintain some form of volunteer records, you will be able to reward star producers and hard workers. Log their time.

Volunteers are valuable to the nonprofit organization, both in direct service and indirect support through Board committee work or fundraising efforts.

Part of the magic of working with volunteers effectively is to plan for and know how you will be including volunteers in the organization, define their role(s), match the volunteer with a particular need, and prepare him/her for serving the organization through orientation, training, supervision, and recognition. As long as you hold a high standard for your volunteers, let them know your expectations, enter into a specific and finite agreement, and recognize them continuously, volunteer participation should be extremely rewarding -- for you and for them.

**"WE NEVER SEEM TO HAVE TIME TO PLAN AHEAD.  
WHAT IS THE VALUE OF PLANNING AND HOW DO WE DO IT?"  
PLANNING FOR ACTION**

The planning area of policy making finds its basis in the program's philosophy or mission statement. All short and long-range planning activities are legitimate Board functions which identify program direction. Program planning may result in expanding or reducing services in response to perceived community needs. The basis for planning consists of stated goals and objectives for the program which are consistent with the program's mission statement. Planning functions are also directly related to evaluation functions. In the course of developing the plan, a Board is essentially setting the stage for being able to assess and evaluate program accomplishments. Evaluation of the Board and the organization is discussed in the following section. Board member responsibilities related to planning focus on three key factors:

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1. Establishment and periodic review of the organization's mission, goals, and objectives;
  2. Developing short and long-term plans for the organization;
  3. Determining community needs and establishing program/service priorities.

## **The Value of Planning**

A critical tool for the effective Board is a sound planning strategy or process. The planning process is an activity which most of us recognize because we employ it in everyday decision making. Nevertheless, it is often useful to review and articulate the steps to ensure sound planning. Planning is time consuming and sometimes frustrating. What are the benefits of planning? These concerns may be diminished once you assess the purpose of planning and understand its value to the organization.

- Planning Board action is based on sound judgement. A plan precipitates acting on the basis of thoughtful consideration. Imagine developing a budget for the coming year *without* a plan!
- Planning permits input from the constituencies being served. This way an implemented plan truly represents the individuals being served.
- By planning ahead, you are in control as opposed to being controlled by the circumstances. This is a desirable position to be in any organization. Planning puts the organization in the driver's seat.
- Planning permits decisions by groups, rather than by individuals, and benefits from interaction among the individuals of the group. Therefore, planning is a good method for including group input.
- Planning provides a sense of ownership. By planning, an organization incorporates the viewpoints of many people who, thereby, own the product of the plan itself.
- Planning sets the criteria for systematic evaluation of where the organization has been and where it is headed. Applied to *any* project or activity, planning is the basis for follow through and completion, as well as insightful reflection on what worked best.

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**Goals and Objectives: What is the Difference?** -- An important step in planning is to develop goals and objectives. Although most of us bandy these terms about liberally, when asked to be specific about what we mean, we become a little unsure. It is not difficult to describe goals and objectives generally, but the distinctions between the two are not as well understood. This "aside" is a review of definitions for goals and objectives, as well as a description of the process of arriving at your own.

*A goal is a statement of broad intent.* It is grand enough to be an ideal condition, or a vision of the future. Quite often it reflects the mission of the organization, stated in more succinct terms. An example of a goal statement is "to reduce alcoholism in our community by offering a variety of supportive services and information". The following questions are helpful in determining one or two critical goals (i.e., directional guides):

- What is the problem?
- What are we trying to do?
- How will we know when we get there?
- Is it reasonable? Doable?
- Does everyone understand it?
- Is it acceptable?
- Is it consistent with the organization's mission?
- What will be the anticipated effect of this goal?
- Are there alternative solutions, or plans for pursuing this goal?

Answers to these questions will assist in the formulation of goal statements. Remember to keep your goals to fewer than three, or you will soon be overwhelmed by the multiplicity of directions, spreading resources too thin, and offering to be too many things to too many people.

*Objectives are the "to do" statements which back up each goal.* The objectives are specific, measurable, achievable, and consistent with the mission of the organization. There will likely be a few to several objectives per goal (all the more reasons not to start with too many goals!) for providing the framework for getting the goal actualized. Well stated objectives identify a deadline "by when?" Some task or activity will be completed with an indication of a measure which is the yardstick of completion or achievement. The process of developing goals and objectives is relatively simple, compared to defining each of these terms. Initially, you must undertake an exercise of assessing needs. What is needed? What is already available? Remember that the answers to these questions will be constantly changing, especially if you assess needs annually; therefore, you may check off particular objectives as you progress. You will find yourselves redefining objectives or articulating new ones each year. While the goal will remain the same, the specific objectives for reaching the goal will probably change.

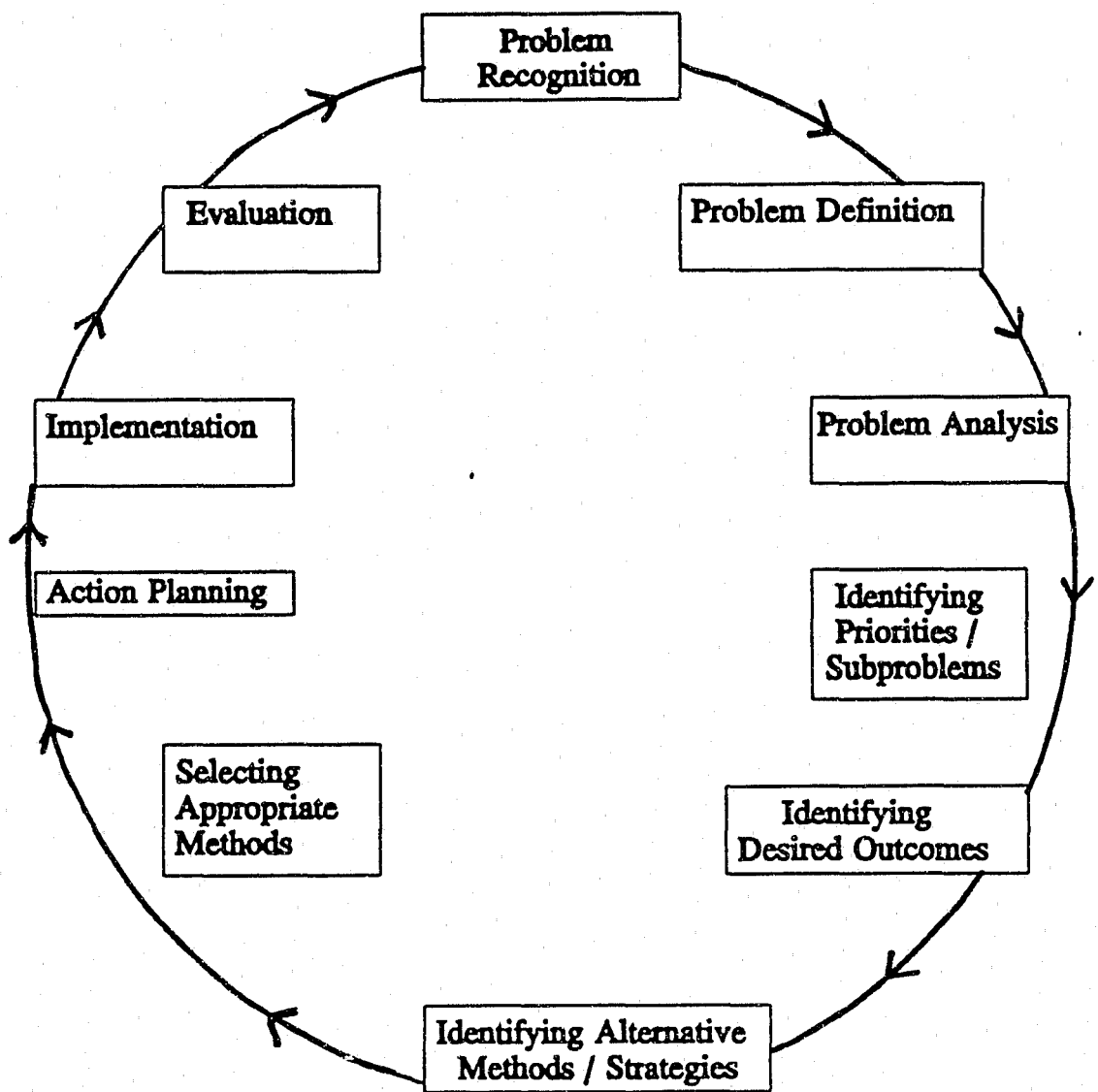
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## How to Develop a Plan for Board Action

The Figure 6 presents a quick summary of the model for planning strategies for action. The model is designed to work for a broad range of problem-solving activities, as well as the initiation of any organizational change. The stages include recognizing the problem, defining the problem, analyzing the problem, identifying priorities/subproblems, identifying desired outcomes, identifying alternate strategies, selecting appropriate methods, action planning, implementation, and evaluation. Each of these states is described briefly on the following diagram.

**A Strategy for Problem Solving**





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- ***Recognition of the Problem/Issue.*** This is the stage at which an individual on the Board identifies an issue or problem that they bring to the attention of the Board for consideration. It is the first step necessary for problem-solving or for embarking on any type of project. Initially someone or some group will declare a need – for services, for a policy change, for financial support, as examples. Until the attention focuses on the issue as a problem, it is not recognized as such.

Logic drives us to ask the question, "How do you know this is a real problem?" This natural line of inquiry leads to the next step of the process defining the problem.

- ***Definition of the Problem.*** At this stage, it is necessary to provide supporting documentation which delineates the parameters of the problem. This is the information-gathering step, used to identify specific details about the problem. This will require a willingness to take the necessary time for collecting information. It also helps to maintain a commitment to dealing with the information as it surfaces because it may suggest the problem differs from your initial perception of it. Remember, you are learning at this stage.

When in the process of problem definition, avoid the temptation to assign blame for the problem, to jump to conclusions about the cause and solutions, or to otherwise generalize from the definition. Blaming society, an individual, or other external forces will not empower you to get to a solution that stands a chance of working. It is usually a waste of time and energy to find fault and simplify the problem by attributing responsibility. Jumping to conclusions may steer you down the wrong path and will certainly narrow the possibilities for solutions. Take care not to apply your power of reasoning at this stage. There is a more appropriate time to do so.

- ***Analyze the Problem.*** Having defined the problem, the group then is able to analyze the problem and its constituent parts. The analysis stage permits the group to assess the problem in terms of its component parts. In the process of defining the problem, several subproblems may emerge. Indeed, part of the process is to reduce a problem to a manageable scope for a Board to take on as a project. Thus, the subproblems are underlying problems or a series of several contributing factors to the original problem. At the analysis stage, it is then important to gather information on each subproblem.

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- *Identify Priorities and Subproblems.* Having analyzed the problem, it then becomes necessary to identify the priorities for potential action. With the problem now analyzed in terms of subproblems, the group should rank these according to priority need. If six subproblems are identified, each Board should rank all six individually.

### HOW TO DO A GROUP RANKING

Compile a master ranking sheet with each individual's priorities showing. Add the values and divide the total by the number of entries/member votes. The lower rankings are the high priority rankings are the high priority sub-problems. It will be important for all members present to rank each item in order for this formula to work. Identify the top three priorities when you have several.

- *Identify Desired Outcome.* Once your group has agreed upon the singular problem to be addressed, determine what will guide you in the decision to act. You may find that the best way to isolate your purpose is to ask the question, "What would it look like if this problem no longer existed?" Have Board members create a description of the intended result of a successful endeavor before embarking on the next step.
- *Identify Alternate Strategies.* This is the opportunity for brainstorming (creative and innovative thinking) and developing possible methods which would address the subproblem. Take care to not restrict your thinking by identifying all the barriers to the suggestions.
- *Select the Most Appropriate Strategy.* Begin to evaluate the list of methods suggested from the previous step. Consider the positive and the negative features of each method. Estimate the additional costs which are likely to be incurred: from additional personnel, more rented space, special equipment, and administration and management. Make sure the selected strategy is consistent with the organization's mission.
- *Develop an Action Plan.* Once the strategy has been identified, it would be appropriate to identify its goals and objectives, from which a detailed action plan can be developed. (See Figure 6, "Developing and Action Plan") This

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is the step for outlining a detailed action plan for determining how the project will be implemented. The Board has completed all the conceptual work so far. Now it is time to take specific action.

An action plan usually consists of a list of steps to get to the goal, each of which is followed by an indication of by whom? how? and by when? each step will be completed. Provide as much detail as the group feels comfortable with. Carefully describe what will be undertaken; list any progress milestones, and map out a reporting schedule. Use the plan shown in Figure 6 to guide you through the process, to identify and monitor committees, and to complete the project. It is important to be realistic at this step, remember that committee members have full time lives outside their Board activities. Individuals should have the opportunity to set their own deadlines, within a suggested range, rather than be told or ordered as to when a product is due.

- *Implementation.* If you have completed all previous steps carefully and developed a realistic and comprehensive action plan, the implementation step is relatively effortless. Implementation is simply follow through on tasks and decisions which were decided previously. Expect some slippage from the original target dates for completing committee assignments. There will almost always be more required to get the job done than was originally anticipated. This should not discourage Board members who should be reminded of possible pitfalls and delays. The schedule is intended for support and guidance, not punishment.
- *Evaluation.* The final step is to evaluate the process and the content of your problem-solving exercise. You may review the steps you followed to reach a solution, assess the overall appropriateness of the solution for addressing the problem and consider improvements in either. You should also use the evaluation as an opportunity to give yourselves credit for plowing through the problem-solving exercise in an organized and systematic manner.

Because you followed steps, the evaluation will enable you to be more specific about isolating problems with the process. Likewise, you will be able to replicate any aspects of the process which were highly successful. Take the Board through an evaluation process to simply brainstorm about what helped get the job done and what hindered the goal accomplishment. Use the evaluation for future planning, or new problem-solving.

If you complete a plan in this format, you will find that you minimize the chances of specific tasks being forgotten or overlooked. Delegation of responsibilities will help ensure tasks are completed. Setting deadlines will facilitate completion and establish an order to tasks which

build on one another or are prerequisites. Identification of resources (what you have; what you need) and barriers (what you will need to plan for or overcome, or anticipate) will also facilitate you and other Board members with thinking through what will be required to get the tasks completed. In total, the action plan is a comprehensive guide and support for moving from good ideas and plans to implementation.

**FIGURE 6**  
**Developing an Action Plan**

<i>OBJECTIVE #1</i>				
<i>Tasks</i>	<i>Who?</i>	<i>By When?</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Barriers</i>
1.				
2.				
3.				
etc.				

<i>OBJECTIVE #2</i>				
<i>Tasks</i>	<i>Who?</i>	<i>By When?</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Barriers</i>
1.				
2.				
3.				
etc.				

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## **"HOW DO WE KNOW IF WE ARE DOING A GOOD JOB?" EVALUATION**

Evaluation is the process of determining what worked and what did not work. Stated differently, evaluation is a management tool to determine (1) the *level of effort* (how many clients served, units/hours of service, speaking engagements); (2) the *effectiveness* (what impact against "success" objectives); and (3) the *efficiency* of the activity of service (was it worth the cost?). Evaluation can be relatively complicated. For the purpose of this manual it is simplified to permit the Board instant application.

Whenever the organization engages in planning, particularly when an action plan is produced, use the plan as a checklist of achievements. Note completion dates compared to target dates, and try to ascertain any reasons for delay when they occur. This assessment will help you plan more realistically next time.

Employ evaluation to assess the programs of the organization as well as the effectiveness of the Board individually and collectively. Feel free to evaluate by brainstorming at a meeting or in a structured, facilitated workshop. The method for evaluation is less important in this context than developing a tradition of relating planning to evaluation. The evaluation is a status report of a plan.

### **What Makes a Good Board Member?**

The good Board member is a composite of attributes that most of us aspire to. While they may appear to be characteristics of saints, it is important to recognize that there are some common characteristics among good Board members. You should acknowledge yourself for those that you recognize as your own characteristics. The following list is a fairly comprehensive identification of some of those key characteristics of a good Board member.

The good Board member . . .

- Is dedicated to helping others and is modest in responsibilities as a member of the Board.
- Approaches Board responsibilities in a public spirit.
- Stands up for his or her convictions.
- Backs up other Board members and/or staff.

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- Treats staff as a partner (maintains supervision without interfering in day-to-day program operations).
  - Avoids being overawed by other members of the Board.
  - Welcomes information and advice but always reserves the final right to decide.
  - Respects the right of other Board members and staff to disagree among themselves.
  - Accepts majority rule and that there may be minority positions sometimes (except for groups that make decisions using a consensus model, seeking full group approval).
  - Criticizes, when necessary, constructively and with suggestions.
  - Recognizes that time and energy are finite resources.
  - Watches out for over-commitment.
  - Strives to keep disagreements impersonal to promote Board unity.
  - Maintains loyalty to the organization to its higher purpose and to its place in the community.

Most individuals sincerely want to be good Board members when they agree to serve in that role. However, most Board members learn how to be good as a result of their personal experience. This quick summary is provided for you to assess your own participation, and to establish some standards for you and your co-members to strive for.

### **What Does It Take to be a Good Board Leader?**

While there are no right or wrong ways to carry out a leadership role, there are some qualities of Board leader that facilitate carrying out that job. Below, there are seven characteristics or qualities that seem to enhance the leadership role and provide some guidance for the Board leader.

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- ***Determine What is Right.*** Ask yourself the question, "What is right?", before you ask the question, "What if?", or "So what?" The reasons for this is that the good Board leader will always be looking to the higher purpose of any Board or organizational activity. Therefore, he or she should always look to the mission or purpose statement for the organization if the direction of rightness is in question.
  - ***Be Fair.*** Sometimes being fair is in conflict with what is right. This is a dilemma that the Board leader may face from time to time. Fairness is best achieved by giving credit to other Board members or others outside the Board when credit is due. Also, fairness may be manifested in permitting Board members equal say on issues that come up. Fairness and rightness may sometimes appear to be in conflict. However, if one determines that pursuing what is right over what seems fair is the appropriate course to take, this leader would owe it to the Board to explain that course of action.
  - ***Balance Toughness with Sensitivity.*** Stand tough, but allow yourself to see the human side of things. The good Board leader will find that he or she must be firm and exercise courage. This can be accomplished when the Board leader is also able to provide direction and acknowledge individuals' sensitivities. For example, sometimes the Board leader will find it is necessary to intervene in a heated discussion. He or she will have to be careful not to take sides when doing this, but interrupt the debate reminding both parties that there is an agenda to continue to work on and suggesting that this issue may be deferred to a later agenda at which time further action can be discussed. At the same time the leader may acknowledge that he or she understands that the issue is important to both people but that it will be necessary to bring it before the Board in a more constructive and less emotional manner.
  - ***Be Reliable.*** Reliability is important for developing a sense of team effort because it fosters peer support, and it also permits the superstars to emerge. Stability is a good means of assuring workability for a group. With reliable leadership comes stability for the Board; and, therefore, the overall workability for the entire Board is strengthened with the reliable Board leader.
  - ***Have Controlled Ambition.*** The good Board leader will need to have sufficient ambition to achieve those goals set out for the Board, but also needs to exercise humility so that he or she does not take on grand airs or a pompous attitude. The leader of a Board should have sufficient ambition to

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see that goals are achieved. However, he or she should do so in a way that does not call a lot of attention to their particular role in achieving those goals.

- ***Be Flexible.*** It is important for the Board leader to remain open, particularly during Board meetings, because this will enhance creative input, indicate to other Board members a spirit of fairness and equal participation, and also fully utilize the talents of the various members on the Board. In the course of being flexible, enjoy the use of your sense of humor. This will help to keep the good Board flexible. Being able to enjoy the proceedings of meetings and Board activities will allow the Board leader to remain open.
- ***Be Enthusiastic.*** Enthusiasm is a crucial motivator for the Board leader. It is essential for survival of the Board and provides the Board leader with the energy it requires to serve a Board.

## **How Do We Establish and/or Make Better Use of Our Board Committees?**

There are some simple tools for enhancing Board operations. These tools are for strengthening the Board, improving Board efficiency, and making Board membership a satisfying and rewarding experience. One of the primary tools is using committees.

Committees are a critical resource for Board work. Committees may be "standing" (all the time) or "ad hoc" (as needed for the short term). They are the primary organizational vehicle for delegating Board member assignments and "staffing up" for special projects. Ideally, each Board member should belong to a committee of their choice. Remember that Board committees should be chaired by Board members, but may be comprised of other volunteers from the community. In fact, Board committees provide an ideal structure for volunteer participation with the agency.

In addition to the delegation feature of committees, they offer the following advantages to further Board effectiveness:

- Committees facilitate decision making;
- Committee projects are the basis of Board action, problem solving, and substance of agendas for regular meetings; and
- Committee work permits full participation from all members of the Board.



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Whenever feasible, Boards can increase their effectiveness by establishing and using committees for specialized tasks. Committees may focus on issues, gather information, develop action plans, and carry out task assignments, leaving major decisions to the full Board. Decision making may well rely on considerable input from committees, but the smaller, more focused groups is a more efficient use of volunteer time. The full Board will learn to trust committees and seek their "services" and input as needed.

In working with committees, the name of the game is delegation. Committees provide the structure and support for things to be done. The only way teamwork will be effective is through committees and smaller teams for special projects. Committees ensure that the Board or agency will not over rely on the same individuals all the time, reducing the likelihood of individual burnout. There are ad hoc committees for special one time, short-term projects. Some organizations have a big annual fundraiser which requires delegation of committees for a two or three month period of time. The remainder of the year these committees are inactive. Standing committees, however, are those committees that function all the time. Committees might adopt purpose and activities from the following five functional areas:

- Human resources
- Planning
- Finance
- Community relations
- Organizational operations

Committees should operate in much the same manner as the total Board. To minimize the tendency to increase meeting requirements for committee members, committees may opt to meet just prior to the regularly scheduled Board meeting or just after that meeting. The following five structured components will enhance the workability of your Board's committees:

- Each committee should have goals and objectives which reflect the topical area (i.e., planning) for which it is assuming responsibility.
- Each committee should have a designated leader or chairperson, a member of the Board. This will prevent disorganized and directionless committee work. It will also assure some stability for the committee, much like the Chair of the Board provides to the full Board.

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- Committees should have scheduled meetings and use an agenda to conduct the meetings. Minutes should be taken and distributed to the committee members and the Board chair.
  - Committees should plan to make presentations at regularly scheduled Board meetings. The committee reports can become the mainstay of regular Board meetings. With well working committees, this reporting is sufficient to sustain nearly all Board activity year in and year out.
  - Use the committee structure to promote teamwork with smaller groups through expressed goals and objectives. Teamwork is relatively easy to master with a good committee structure. This is true for both standing and ad hoc committees. The committee structure also facilitates a group support mechanism whereby individuals may request someone to accompany them on certain tasks, or remind one another of deadlines and task requirements for proceeding on particular projects.

As a side benefit of committee structuring, your board may decide to involve volunteers as committee members. These volunteers may be groomed for future Board service.

Review the five functional policy making areas for ideas on structuring your committees. Some boards have adopted that format, creating committees which mirror the functional areas. For example, a nominating committee addresses an aspect of the Human Resources area; a Public Relations committee is community relations; and the Fundraising committee addresses the Finance area.

A final comment about the functions of committees: committees of a Board may be composed only of Board members, or they may be composed of Board members plus additional community volunteers who do not have full Board status, and/or they can include paid or nonpaid staff. The purpose of committees is to make the work of the Board more efficient and effective by spreading the responsibility around to as many people as possible. Some committees meet on a regular basis, and some committees meet on an as needed basis, but few Boards are able to function effectively for very long without some use of committees.

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**"ALTHOUGH WE FUNCTION PRETTY WELL, WE JUST TOOK A CRITICAL LOOK AT OUR BOARD AND DECIDED WE NEED TO ..." MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR**

Regardless of the strength and stability of your Board, most can find some area for further development or improvement. If your Board is not engaged in one of the major survival areas, such as fundraising or recruitment, perhaps you are interested in some "fine tuning". The areas described briefly below represent some of the items EMT Board development trainers hear about frequently. Both the healthy and the struggling Boards identify these areas of training interest. For the healthy Board, they represent flaws in an otherwise stable government. For the struggling Board, they offer incremental steps toward bolstering the Board in preparation for undertaking more substantial projects or overhauling. Either way, these are mostly practical tips for the maintenance and repair of your Board:

- the community needs assessment survey
- effective meetings
- organizational operations
- understanding Board and staff roles
- the rights of Board members

**"... Conduct a Community Needs Assessment Survey to Identify Needs and Gaps in Services."**

In the area of community relations, the Board of Directors is responsible for policy which addresses the needs of the client and community, marketing, public relations, and cooperative actions with other agencies of the community. The Board members are active emissaries for the organization, which means they need to stay informed of organizational programs and services, as well as unmet needs in the community.

Community relation functions may include conducting periodic assessment studies of community needs which might be addressed by the organization. Some Boards undertake an annual survey to continually reassess local program need. A needs assessment survey may consist of systematically canvassing the community, interviewing key stakeholders in the community, or systematically asking clients what services are most valued and what service gaps exist. Related to assessment of community needs are marketing and public relations functions of the Board. In the process of asking the community what services are needed, the Board is effectively promoting the organization by increasing its visibility and calling attention to its sensitivity to community service needs. Likewise, assessing needs and services is the basis for establishing good public relations in the community.

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The Executive Director's responsibilities in community relations focus on public relations, personal contact in the community, development and dissemination of program literature, and developing good relations with the local media. Good client relations also contribute to a positive community perception. Satisfied clients are the best "PR" your program could ask for. The Executive Director functions as a personal liaison with other community service organizations. The Board may actively participate in a study to assess community needs. At a minimum, the Board should review any findings of such a survey, even if it is directed by staff and/or volunteers.

There are several ways to conduct a needs assessment. First and foremost, a needs assessment is a tool for incorporating community representation in the planning process. Generally speaking, a well defined needs assessment determines the importance of a number of community issues and problems as perceived throughout the community. Likewise, there are a variety of ways one can go about representing the community. These include the following:

- Conduct a public hearing.
- Solicit input from the community from community leaders.
- Conduct a community-wide survey.
- Determine needs from calls requesting service from clients or families of clients.
- Solicit input from volunteers.
- Solicit input from other service providers.
- Approach social services providers to identify needed services.
- Review the newspaper, particularly the editorial section and the letters to the editor.
- Contact other agencies, particularly in the criminal justice system.
- Assess feature stories in local news publications.
- Plan to participate in or host health service fairs which provide the basis for large-scale input from the community.

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All of these are ways of incorporating community input in the planning process. Each represents different advantages and benefits, as well as shortcomings, in terms of obtaining solid representation from the community.

The following represents a number of purposeful statements related to conducting a community needs assessment.

- To find out if we really have the resources (e.g., people in program resources).
- To find out if the service provided is responsive to the need.
- To see direction (that is, to avoid duplication of services or to redirect existing services).
- To revise organizational objectives.
- To provide assistance in writing grants by finding ways to justify the expenditure.
- To identify an unmet service need.
- To find out the level of community awareness and the effectiveness of educational efforts.

The development of a survey plan can be greatly facilitated with a well thought out community needs assessment. All of the aforementioned community relation areas are significant in terms of Board functions which serve the organization. Indeed, the Board may develop policy regarding the regularity of conducting a needs assessment survey; or the Board may take an active stance with regard to marketing the services provided by the organization, participating in newspaper feature stories or news telecasts. In the area of community relations, it becomes self-evident that Board members should avail themselves of current program information in order to effectively promote the organization and generate good will in the community. Lastly, the Board may become involved in developing policy specific to cooperative actions and relationships with other agencies in the community which also participate in ancillary and similar services.

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## "... Conduct Our Meetings More Effectively"

Most of us remember some of the meetings we have attended as being a tremendous waste of time. We may also recall meetings which were productive and skillfully handled, but we are less certain about what worked to make this happen. Quick to criticize, we know and recognize problems in meetings. Below are a series of pointers for maximizing the utilization and productivity of your Board meetings.

- *Have a clearly stated purpose.* The purpose for the meeting should be understood by everyone who is present, regardless of whether their attendance is mandatory or voluntary. Even for regularly scheduled meetings (i.e., monthly, weekly, quarterly, or annual), the purpose should be communicated in advance either from the previous meeting or other notice.
- *Have an agenda.* Without an agenda, the purpose of the meeting is less likely to be met, or at least not met in a timely fashion. An agenda provides the formal structure of the meeting and also provides the Chair and the group with advance knowledge and ownership of the topics of the meeting. When new topics are introduced which do not adhere to the agenda, it is then appropriate for a member to suggest, or the Chair to offer, that the new item be scheduled for the next meeting when it can be given more attention as an agenda item. The agenda is the steering course for the meeting.
- *Have an explicit set of rules for proceedings, and to acknowledge the implicit rules.* Hopefully, you already have established acceptable ground rules and rules for proceedings, such as those suggested in *Robert's Rules of Order*. It is extremely difficult to introduce or try to impose *explicit* rules for proceedings after the group has some history of operating without rules. Simple ground rules include the accepted way of recognizing speakers, decision making, voting, and handling rule compliance or noncompliance. The Chair may use the rules to return the discussion to the agenda, to handle dissension, to permit equitable discussion on issues, and to call for voting in decision making. *Robert's Rules of Order* is a commonly used form of moving through the process of decision making.

Once there are explicit rules in place it is important that they are known to the members of the group which may require some form of brief orientation for new members. In addition, it is the responsibility of the Chair to know and apply the explicit rules consistently.

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The *implicit* rules are those unstated-but-understood rules of conduct or behavior which evolve as a feature of the culture of the group. For example, some groups tacitly accept late arrival of members to scheduled meetings. Yet even if late arrival is acceptable, there is probably some measure of lateness which is not acceptable and yet remains unspoken. Five minutes may be all right; fifteen minutes is disruptive to the meeting. Implicit rules are mostly about testing limits anyway; thus, it is useful for the group to occasionally review among the membership what the limits are. If the group is very forgiving about tardiness to meetings, perhaps it should inquire within itself just what the outer limit for tolerating lateness is or to identify the possible contributing factors (location, time of day, traffic patterns, lack of parking, etc.) Other examples of implicit rules are whether smoking is permitted, whether participants await recognition from the chair before speaking or simply speak out, and whether there is built in time for socializing before, during, or after the meeting.

- *Have a skilled Chairperson and skilled members.* The Chairperson can determine differing levels of control in Board meetings, from passive, minimal control to domination and control by intimidation. The skilled Chair should exercise neither too little nor too much control, allowing equal participation from all members. He/she should be well prepared for each meeting, familiar with the issues, having gathered together any information which may answer questions raised at the previous meeting. The skilled Chairperson does not demonstrate partiality over issues. He/she also maintains impeccable attention to each member as well as to the proceedings overall. A skilled Chair knows when to sum up a point that has been made (particularly points made more than once) and moves on to the next item for discussion. The Chairperson can make the difference between the agenda being followed or not, can ensure rules for proceedings are understood and applied consistently or inconsistently, and can demonstrate impartiality or bias.
- *Form and employ committees to conduct board business and special projects.* Committees are the backbone of any Board, and an enormous source of energy. Using committees helps to avoid overworking individual Board members. Members are permitted to volunteer for projects of special interest to them and to create solutions to problems they identify and discuss. Committees may be the most effective way to maintain Board momentum and interest because members have tasks and a sense of purpose for immediate and tangible accomplishments. Committees provide the structure which ensures the effectiveness of Board members by enabling active participation.

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- ***Have a quorum.*** The Board may determine whether the quorum is 51 percent (or half plus one), 67 percent (two-thirds majority), 75 percent (three-quarters majority), or any other proportion of the total membership. The way to determine what is an acceptable quorum is to ascertain what number of members present is truly representative of the Board. When there is no quorum present, decisions which arise during the meeting should be tabled until the next time a quorum is present. It is the responsibility of the Chair and/or support staff from the organization to provide the necessary support (i.e., telephone calls, written reminders, carpool suggestions or provision, etc.) to maximize the attendance for Board meetings.
  - ***Have meetings in an appropriate facility.*** The atmosphere and environment of a Board meeting will impact the quality of the meeting. Seating the Board around a table where members may see each other when they speak is conducive to group interaction. Members should be comfortable, but not inclined to slide into sleep in an easy chair. It helps if the facility is adequately lighted and has a comfortable temperature. Refreshments (or dinner) are a definite plus, facilitating the information communication and encouraging interaction outside the meeting agenda before, during breaks, and after the meeting. It is not usually appropriate to conduct a business meeting in a noisy public gathering place, nor in locations which are inaccessible or consistently inconvenient to the same members. Over wide geographic areas, it helps to move locations periodically to balance the long distances traveled by members from outlying areas.

### **" . . . Review Our Organizational Operations "**

Organizational operations are those features of the organization which are designed for and intended to assure it will function. The Board's role in this policy area is to oversee and ensure that the systems and structural supports for the organizational administration are adequate and appropriate. Thus, the Board has four areas of responsibility relative to organizational operations: (1) the administrative systems; (2) the Board's operations; (3) the legal structure of the organization; and (4) legal compliance by the organization and the Board. There are a variety of tools and resources available to the Board which help assure these responsibilities are met.

The organization's Executive Director shoulders responsibilities in operations and administration on a more practical level. It is the responsibility of the Executive Director to assure policy is implemented as the Board intended, assist the Board in development of



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policies which are effective and economical, and administer the organization responsibly on a day-to-day basis. While the Board functions in an oversight capacity, the Executive Director is directly responsible for carrying out the administrative procedures which back up the Board-developed policies. This accounts for the Board's interest in working closely with the Executive Director, including hiring, firing, and evaluating his/her performance.

There are two general categories of resources available to Boards which will facilitate policy decision making relative to organizational operations. These are either "essential" resources, some of which are mandated by law, and "nuts and bolts" tools to enhance Board process and decision making.

### *Essentials*

The bare essentials for organizational operations include Articles of Incorporation on file with the state, bylaws, and fiscal accountability. These tools are essential for sound business management and apply to the nonprofit organization. These four essential tools are of interest to the Board of Directors because Board members are legally responsible for the operation of the organization. There is legislation in the State of California to make that legal responsibility a reasonable one, given the voluntary nature of Board members' participation. Basically, a Board member is responsible for discharging his/her responsibilities in a conscientious way by avoiding certain management errors. In legalese, a Board member is expected to be a "prudent person, acting with due care and diligence and in good faith". These terms simply mean that the average person who conscientiously and in good faith discharges his/her responsibilities as a Board member is exempt from liability for any mistakes made if he or she avoids the following management errors:

- **Mismanagement.** This refers to making decisions or taking actions that do not follow established systems or mechanisms of good management practices (i.e., spending agency funds irresponsibly, approving a budget that is not balanced that would put the organization in serious jeopardy of continuing, or allowing the Executive Director to handle a personnel problem in a way that does not conform to the grievance procedure in the personnel policies, etc.).
- **Non-Management.** This refers to taking a passive approach as a Board member (i.e., not reading reports, not requesting audits, not taking the time to read the bylaws, the personnel policies, etc., to make sure that you agree with them or know that they are following necessary formats). Not attending Board meetings is a form of non-management. Board members are liable for any decision made at a Board meeting that they do not attend. Just because

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a Board member is absent does not free them from responsibility for what their fellow Board members have decided.

- ***Self-Dealing.*** This error of management occurs when a Board member votes on an issue or makes a decision as a Board member from which he or she or family members or business associates will make personal gain. For example, if a Board member were an attorney and the organization voted to take their legal business to that attorney's law firm and the attorney Board member voted "aye" on that motion, it could be definitely seen as self-dealing.
- ***Lobbying and Political Activity.*** As a private, nonprofit organization, you may lose your 501(c)3 status if you, as a Board, engage in excessive lobbying or political activity that is prohibited by the Internal Revenue statutes. This does not mean that you may not do any lobbying. It simply means that you have to be careful how much and the nature of the lobbying that you do.

There are a few organizational documents which provide some measure of procedural accountability, and minimize the chances of mismanagement or other legal problems. The State of California requires that a corporation file Articles of Incorporation and bylaws with the Secretary of State. These documents alone should act as guidelines for the organization to preclude legal problems from arising. In addition, some nonprofit organizations also maintain errors and omissions insurance policies to diminish personal liability even further. However, this type of insurance is beyond the grasp of many nonprofits due to costs. The following information provides descriptions of each of these types of assurances of sound and responsible organizational management.

- ***Articles of Incorporation.*** The organization must file Articles of Incorporation with the California Secretary of State, either before or after obtaining tax exempt status from the Franchise Tax Board. Filing is a formality, marking the date of incorporation. Articles of Incorporation remain on file with the Secretary of State, and typically contain a declaration of the name of the organization, its nonprofit status and purpose, with the address and named Directors of the corporation. Often time, the articles also contain a brief reiteration of the requirements for nonprofit status and a succinct statement of types of nonprofit activities to be pursued by the organization. Mancuso has authored a comprehensive handbook for nonprofit corporations in California, with instructions for filing Articles of Incorporation (see bibliography).

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- **Bylaws.** Bylaws are also filed with the organization's Articles of Incorporation with the California Secretary of State. Bylaws are a formal and structured description of the organization's purpose(s), place of operation, number of members and terms of service for the Board of Directors, powers, duties, meeting requirements, definition of quorum, and other matters specific to the Board. Detailed examples of bylaws and instructions for developing them are also provided by Mancuso (see bibliography). The critical aspect of the bylaws is that it is the "law" of the organization, its constitution and outline of policy at the broadest operational level. Refer to your bylaws for the organization's mission, as well as procedural requirements for amending the bylaws as needed. Review your bylaws periodically to assure they are up-to-date and an accurate representation of the organization and Board operations.
  - **Fiscal Accountability.** The best way to have fiscal accountability is to assure periodic review of the organization's books and bookkeeping by a certified public accountant (CPA). While the Board may not actually engage in hiring a CPA, it behooves you to require that the accounting process incorporate a professional review and audit. Read the monthly/quarterly and annual financial statements that are provided. Ask questions if items require explanation or seem out of line with other information you have.
  - **Errors and Omissions Insurance.** Although the organization's insurance policy may provide coverage for the Board of Directors, find out whether it is inclusive and explore liability insurance for Directors. Generally speaking, Board members are liable for organizational accountability. The best guard against legal problems directed to the Board are to assess risk, be familiar with the Articles of Incorporation and bylaws, be informed, make sound hiring decisions, and investigate the coverage and costs associated with errors and omissions insurance if you are concerned about lawsuits. The insurance provides an additional buffer from personal liability. The insurance protects the organization if and when a lawsuit is filed for nonprovision of services or unfulfilled promises of success associated with the service.

### ***"Nuts and Bolts"***

There are a broad variety of responsibilities which impact the legal stability of the organization. The following list of rules is a "nuts and bolts" guide for Board members to minimize their risk associated with the possibility of lawsuits:

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- **Attend Board meetings regularly.**
  - **Ensure that the Board keeps a written, permanent record of all minutes and official actions.**
  - **Exercise general supervision over the affairs of the organization, including the Executive Officer.**
  - **Investigate and audit decisions of the organization.**
  - **Make informed decisions.**
  - **Organizational decisions require knowledge of a subject as well as a great deal of common sense.**
  - **Pursue any warning signs that something is wrong. These hunches will save you trouble in the long run.**
  - **Insist on meaningful Board meetings with full disclosure of operating results.**
  - **Require the organization to retain a professional auditing service, preferably a certified public accountant.**
  - **Require the organization to retain competent legal counsel.**
  - **Require reports at the Board meetings of all committees to the organization as appropriate.**
  - **Authorize appropriate organizational indebtedness. This means the Board should be informed of organizational indebtedness and promote a policy of reducing and/or cleaning up outstanding debt.**
  - **Know all of the Directors and the Officers of the organization.**
  - **Adopt and follow sound business policies and practices.**
  - **Avoid self-serving policies.**
  - **Avoid conflicts of interest with the organization.**

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- See that the organization maintains a good credit and financial standing.
  - Review the adequacy of the organization's insurance program, including insurance for volunteers as needed.
  - Have full knowledge of the organization in order to assume your proper responsibility in managing the organization effectively.

### **"... Make distinctions Between Board and Staff Roles"**

Board and staff roles sometimes become unclear in the life of a Board for an organization. The confusion arises when Board members or staff cross the lines of responsibilities and assume those ordinarily undertaken by the other group. It is important to recognize that role distinctions are broad and simple: The Board makes policy and the staff carries it out. In the ideal situation, roles and responsibilities are distinct and easy to understand. In reality, the Board, with the help of staff, make policy. Figure 7 presents a list of primary functional areas and indicates where the primary responsibility rests -- with the Board, or the staff.

Under the five functional policy areas described at the beginning of this section, the following table presents an overview of Board and staff (i.e., Executive Director) roles, according to the designated *primary* responsible party. Remember, most of these responsibilities are shared, but *either* the Board or the staff takes the lead.

**FIGURE 7  
Who Does What?**

<i>Functional Area</i>	<i>Board of Directors Primary Responsibility</i>	<i>Staff Primary Responsibility</i>
<i>Human Resources and Personnel</i>	<p>Recruits, screens, hires, supervises and terminates: Executive Director Board Members</p> <p>Provides training and development opportunities for: Executive Director Board Members</p> <p>Develops evaluation procedures and evaluates the performance of: Executive Director Board Members</p>	<p>Recruits, screens, hires, supervises, and terminates: Paid Staff Direct-Service Volunteers</p> <p>Provides training and development opportunities for: Paid Staff Direct-Service Volunteers</p> <p>Develops evaluation procedures and evaluates the performance of: Paid Staff Direct-Service Volunteers</p>
<i>Board Development</i>	<p>Develops Board nominating procedures</p> <p>Suggests potential members to the nominating committee</p> <p>Develops Board orientation and training</p>	
<i>Organizational Operations</i>	<p>Develops agency personnel policies</p> <p>Develops policies to assure effective organizational operations</p>	<p>Implements policies enacted by the Board</p>
<i>Finance</i>	<p>Monitors total budget and funding picture</p>	<p>Prepares agency budget</p>

**FIGURE 7**  
**Who Does What?**  
**(Continued)**

<i>Functional Area</i>	<i>Board of Directors Primary Responsibility</i>	<i>Staff Primary Responsibility</i>
<i>Financial Management</i>	Hires a CPA for the annual audit (or simply ensures hiring occurs)	Monitors spending on daily basis
<i>Fundraising</i>	Participates in fundraising activities  Contributes in dollars or in-kind	Develops fundraising plan  Participates in fundraising activities
<i>Community Relations</i>	Develops a formal plan for better community relations  Supports a needs assessment survey  Maintains contact with state, regional, and national organizations with similar interests	Develops a formal public relations plan  Implements the public relations plan  Maintains contact with state, regional, and national organizations with similar interests  Establishes method of assessing management practices which impact "internal" public relations
<i>Planning</i>	Determines basic organizational purpose and goals  Determines which community needs should be met and to what extent  Determines categories of services to be provided  Develops long-range plans for the organization	Develops programs to meet identified need  Sets specific program objectives  Establishes funding level needed to run organization  Develops program evaluation system

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## **". . . Know Our Rights"**

Finally, Board members are also entitled to information, respect, dignity, fairness, and recognition. The following list is a summary of your basic "rights" as a Board member.

- To be fully informed of the responsibilities of Board membership, including the anticipated time commitment and the nature of the organization.
- To have ample opportunity for both orientation and training. Therefore, Board members have the right to receive an adequate introduction to the program and their Board responsibilities. They also have a right to ongoing opportunities for training as those opportunities arise. This training represents such an opportunity.
- To be informed of financial reports, organizational management, as well as operational aspects of the program. Because the Board is faced with considerable liability, it is the right of the board member to have access to, and be provided, information which would prevent or minimize any litigation.
- To expect that volunteer time is not wasted. Board members contribute much in the way of time, energy, and sometimes money. It is a volunteer's right to not have his or her time used frivolously. As an example, it is inappropriate to conduct meetings which are not necessary because most volunteer Board members have busy personal schedules.
- To be assigned worthwhile jobs where you can demonstrate existing skills or develop new ones. In the course of being a Board member, a variety of projects will arise for which members volunteer. Members have the right to be assigned jobs that they consider to be worthwhile or otherwise permit self-expression.
- To be able to decline assignments, particularly if the skills required do not match those of the Board member. Board members are not generally characterized for their ability to refuse opportunities to work. However, they should remember that they have the right to decline particular assignments.
- To have successful job experiences, as well as personal growth, in the process of exercising Board responsibilities. Being on the Board should be a fun and positive experience.
- To be trusted with confidential information, particularly when it will be helpful toward the fulfillment of Board responsibilities or Board duties.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **"HOW DO WE DETERMINE THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF OUR BOARD?" TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSED**

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### "HOW DO WE DETERMINE THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF OUR BOARD?" TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSED

There are a myriad of things to know and do as a member of the Board of Directors to a nonprofit organization. Oversight functions focus on financial accountability and policy development. Given the considerable choices for developing a training agenda, it is essential for the Board to evaluate its current operations. Once you develop a sense of your Board's strengths and weaknesses, you will be able to define the areas of focus for training. The proclamation, "But we need everything!" is not only an attempt to avoid taking a close look at your Board, but an oversimplification and misrepresentation of reality. You have strengths and weaknesses, not just weaknesses. Once you have learned to identify them specifically, you can build upon the former and work on improving the latter. The strengths are essential resources for you to draw upon while you are working on the challenges of so-called weaknesses.

The remainder of this section is a series of practical exercises for Board self-assessment. Each one is designed to take the input of all members to determine directions for the Board development training. For this section, EMT identified several excellent assessment guides from other sources, documented for each one. We have found these exercises to be useful in our working with Boards and share them with you for self-assessment. In conjunction with the exercises, EMT staff typically consulted with the Executive Director and Board President to the organization seeking training or technical assistance.

The exercises are self-explanatory. We have added brief descriptive comments and instructions as they pertain to each one.

*How Are Our Vital Signs.* This questionnaire presents 40 questions for Board members to answer, ranking each statement about their board from 1 to 5. The purpose of the questionnaire is to evaluate Board activities from "doing this very well" (ranked 5) to "not doing this" (ranked 1). The scoresheet indicates how to tally group scores and identify areas

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of strength and areas in need of development. There are eight categories of development. Your strengths will be those areas with rankings of 4 or 5; challenges are ranked 1 and 2. (Source: The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture)

*Board and Staff . . . Who Does What.* This is an area of Board development which Boards strive to understand by requesting training to resolve issues of conflict or confusion. The purpose of this exercise is to identify roles and responsibilities according to the way your organization currently operates, and then to compare this to the key at the close of the exercise. This exercise is particularly useful because it focuses attention on each of the major functional areas of Board work and because it identifies responsibilities as either primary or secondary. It also includes both the Executive Director and other staff as important actors. We suggest you use the key to move through the lists indicating the primary and secondary responsibilities by column, for instructional purposes. At a minimum, trace the primary ones through each function/task. (Source: Arty Trost and Judy Rauner)

*What I Expect . . . What is Expected of Me.* This assessment form is a series of six open-ended questions about personal expectations for Board participation, and a checklist of four broad areas of responsibilities for Board work. The first part, where you identify your expectations, is useful for individual introspection as well as group discussion to understand the variety of expectations among your Board members. The second section provides a checklist of responsibilities for you to assess yourself. The authors suggest the latter list consists of elements of the Board member job description. This exercise is useful for new Board members, particularly following major membership turnover. (Source: Arty Trost and Judy Rauner)

*Your Community.* This worksheet helps to decipher the demographic characteristics of your community in order to target Board member recruitment to reflect the community. This guide may be modified to include specific constituencies your organization serves, or to seek overrepresentation of some groups. The recruitment grid following the community analysis is a worksheet for targeting Board recruitment efforts. You may check off those characteristics already represented on the Board, and identify gaps which you want to fill with new membership. Again, the specific traits will vary according to your organizational interest. (Source: Arty Trost and Judy Rauner)

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***Planning.*** This guide resembles the figure and description for planning provided in Chapter Three. The worksheet actually provides a paper-and-pencil exercise for moving through the steps of planning. Each step is directed by specific queries to facilitate your group in developing a workable action plan. (Source: Arty Trost and Judy Rauner)

***Board Development Readiness Survey.*** This survey is designed to help determine the level of commitment from the Board related to Board development training. It assesses both individual attitudes and individuals' perceptions of the Board's attitude. The grid at the bottom of the exercise provides a graphic illustration of the individual and Board commitment. (Source: Arty Trost and Judy Rauner)

***Gaining Momentum for Board Action.*** This is a comprehensive guide for determining current Board effectiveness and identifying areas for development. Again, this exercise employs a ranking process, with plus and minus values to indicate the opposite ends of the continuum. We tally the number of checks in the extreme categories to identify relative strengths and weaknesses. Board members may also check off those specific areas of training interest throughout the exercise. (Source: Arty Trost and Judy Rauner)

The individual exercises follow these descriptions. If you elect to use any of these exercises, you will derive some kind of a profile of strengths and weaknesses for your Board. Use the information to direct your attention back to a previous section for detailed reading about the area of interest. Also, seek training resources for Board development, such as the United Way series for affiliates of that network. All in all, remember that good Boards are developed; we are not born into excellence, and traditional educational experiences do not address this level of participation in the community. Even the most sophisticated Boards continue to seek ways of improving. So take this opportunity to assess the status of your Board, and use this manual to work on those challenges you identify in the process. And have fun learning!



Over-All Questionnaire:

**How Are Our Vital Signs**

Read over each one and circle the appropriate response.

<i>Statements</i>	<i>Doing This Very Well</i>	<i>Doing This Well</i>	<i>Doing This O.K.</i>	<i>Doing This Poorly</i>	<i>Not Doing This</i>
1. Information on community needs and resources is collected yearly and is easily accessible.	5	4	3	2	1
2. We spend adequate time considering community needs and relating our plans and priorities to the needs.	5	4	3	2	1
3. We ask people in our organization what they think our organizational needs and priorities are.	5	4	3	2	1
4. We are interested in how people feel about working here.	5	4	3	2	1
5. We collect information on what our members want and need.	5	4	3	2	1
6. The purposes and goals of our organization, each program, and each committee, are identified.	5	4	3	2	1
7. We consider past performance, needs, our resources, and then set objectives.	5	4	3	2	1
8. Our plans clearly identify objectives, tasks, who will do what, and target dates for review and completion.	5	4	3	2	1
9. Our plans are based on careful consideration of alternatives.	5	4	3	2	1
10. When work is allocated, people make sure the work loads are realistic and agreed to.	5	4	3	2	1
11. People follow through on plans and commitments.	5	4	3	2	1
12. People's efforts are co-ordinated.	5	4	3	2	1
13. People are advised when problems arise in implementing plans.	5	4	3	2	1
14. Appropriate people are consulted before plans are changed.	5	4	3	2	1
15. People work together on problems that arise as conditions change or as plans are implemented.	5	4	3	2	1
16. Every year, we review the previous year's objectives, accomplishments and methods to identify needed changes.	5	4	3	2	1
17. Each year, we review what each board member and each key staff person did in the previous 12 months to assess strengths and weaknesses in what was done and how it was done.	5	4	3	2	1

continued next page

## How Are Our Vital Signs

<i>Statements</i>	<i>Doing This Very Well</i>	<i>Doing This Well</i>	<i>Doing This O.K.</i>	<i>Doing This Poorly</i>	<i>Not Doing This</i>
18. Each sub-group of the organization (committees, program groups, etc.) evaluates past activities.	5	4	3	2	1
19. The strengths and weaknesses of our meetings are regularly evaluated.	5	4	3	2	1
20. We provide time to learn from past experience.	5	4	3	2	1
21. We maintain regular contact with other organizations (funders, similar organizations) to keep them informed.	5	4	3	2	1
22. Inside this organization, people provide each other with adequate information for problem solving and planning.	5	4	3	2	1
23. When people tread on each other's toes, the situation is handled respectfully and effectively.	5	4	3	2	1
24. People say what they think and feel, in a way that promotes problem-solving.	5	4	3	2	1
25. The roles of board and staff are clearly understood.	5	4	3	2	1
26. People feel they are valued members of this organization.	5	4	3	2	1
27. People feel they belong.	5	4	3	2	1
28. People can find challenging and satisfying things to do in this organization.	5	4	3	2	1
29. Jobs that are hard to fill are viewed to see how they might be reorganized to be more satisfying.	5	4	3	2	1
30. People feel they are making a contribution.	5	4	3	2	1
31. We have attractive print materials about our organization, jobs to be done, programs, and needs.	5	4	3	2	1
32. We have orientation materials and programs appropriate for board members and volunteers.	5	4	3	2	1
33. We keep up-to-date, useful records on community needs, contact people, funders and resources.	5	4	3	2	1
34. We have agreed-to processes for evaluating the strength and weaknesses of committee and board meetings, and other working relationships.	5	4	3	2	1
35. We have accepted procedures for regularly reviewing the roles of board and staff.	5	4	3	2	1
36. This organization provides a learning environment in which people get support, encouragement, and feedback.	5	4	3	2	1
37. Support and resources are available to help people learn new skills.	5	4	3	2	1
38. People are encouraged to develop skills and knowledge about conducting meetings.	5	4	3	2	1
39. People know several methods of planning and problem solving.	5	4	3	2	1
40. When new people arrive they are given useful information about this organization.	5	4	3	2	1



## SCORESHEET

**How Are Our Vital Signs**

Transfer your scores from each question to the corresponding numbered boxes below. Then add up your scores for each set of five questions, under each of the lettered columns, to obtain your own individual perception of how your organization is functioning.

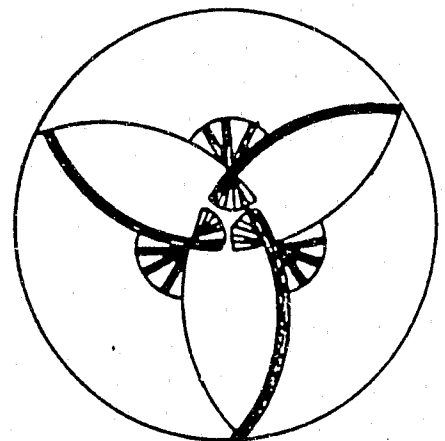
	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>H</i>
1	6	11	16	21	26	31	36	
2	7	12	17	22	27	32	37	
3	8	13	18	23	28	33	38	
4	9	14	19	24	29	34	39	
5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	
<i>Column Totals</i>								

Columns A - H correspond to the EIGHT BASIC ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES, as detailed in Chapter 2.

- |                |                             |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| A Assess Needs | E Manage Relationships      |
| B Plan         | F Motivate                  |
| C Implement    | G Provide Resources         |
| D Evaluate     | H Develop Skills Competency |

A high score indicates you feel that your organization is performing well for a specific process, while a low score indicates that there is room for some improvements.

To calculate the GROUP AVERAGE SCORES and to obtain some tips on interpreting and analysing the group results, turn to APPENDIX A. (P. 128)



# Worksheet 15

## Board & Staff . . . Who Does What

Goal: To improve board-staff relationships by coming to consensus on who has *primary* responsibility for various organizational tasks.

Suggestions: Read each task and determine who has primary responsibility for doing it; write a 1 in that column. If someone/group has strong secondary responsibility, or the task/decision shouldn't be made without input from them, put a 2 in that column.

FUNCTION/TASK

RESPONSIBILITY

1 — Primary  
2 — Secondary/input and assistance

	Board	Executive Director/ Admin.	Staff
<b>I. PLANNING</b>			
1. Determine basic organizational purpose and goals			
2. Determine which community needs should be met and to what extent			
3. Determine categories of service to be provided.			
4. Develop long-range plans for the organization.			
5. Develop programs to meet identified needs			
6. Set specific program objectives			
7. Establish funding level needed to run organization			
8. Develop program evaluation system			
<b>II. POLICY</b>			
1. Provides background information necessary for policy decisions			
2. Gives input to policy			
3. Makes policy			
<b>III. FUND RAISING</b>			
1. Develop fund raising plan			
2. Develop funding sources			
3. Solicit funds and other resources			
4. Evaluate fund raising success			
<b>IV. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT</b>			
1. Prepare agency budget			
2. Monitor how funds are spent on a day to day basis			
3. Monitors total funding picture			
4. Hire a CPA for annual audit			
5. Do bookkeeping			
<b>V. PERSONNEL</b>			
1. Develop agency personnel policies			
2. Recruit, screen, hire, supervise, and terminate:			
a. executive director			
b. paid staff			
c. board members			
d. direct-service volunteers			
3. Provide training and development opportunities for:			
a. executive director			
b. paid staff			
c. board members			
d. direct service volunteers			

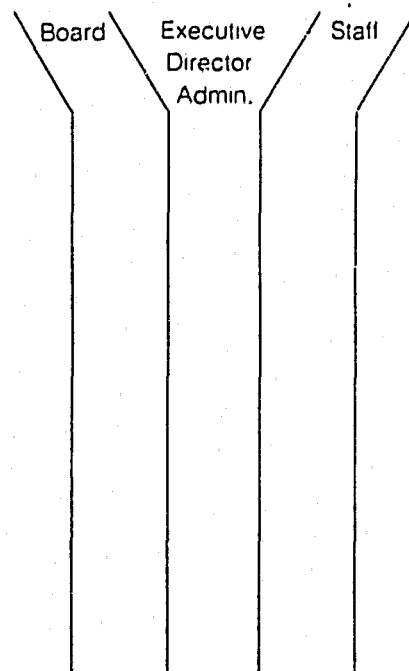
4. Develops evaluation procedures and evaluates the performance of:
  - a. executive director
  - b. paid staff
  - c. board members
  - d. direct service volunteers

**VI. PUBLIC RELATIONS**

1. Develop a formal public relations plan
2. Implement the public relations plan
3. Serve on the boards of other community agencies
4. Maintain contact with state, regional, and national organizations with similar interests.
5. Establish method of assessing management practices which impact 'internal' public relations

**VII. BOARD RECRUITMENT**

1. Develop board nominating procedures
2. Suggest potential members to the nominating committee
3. Develop board orientation and training



The following key is provided for *policy making* boards. It reflects accepted practice and delineates responsibilities of the Board of Directors/Trustees and paid staff.

When the organization has a voting electorate or membership, they ultimately determine the Board's actions. Some of the responsibilities indicated as primary to the executive might be delegated to other staff in a large organization. In an organization without paid staff, the Board members may perform some of the functions indicated for the executive or staff.

Some tasks have not been included in the key, because the responsibility is based on agreements between Board and staff depending on the situation.

We haven't indicated responsibilities for advisory councils, because their responsibilities are set directly by the individuals or groups which have commissioned them.

Tasks*	Degree of Responsibility	Boards	Executive Director	Staff
		1,2,3,4	5,6,7,8	5,6,7,8
Planning	Primary	1,2,3,4	5,6,7,8	
	Secondary		2,3,4	5,6,7,8
Policy	Primary	3	1,2	
	Secondary			1
Fund raising	Primary		1	
	Secondary	1		
Financial management	Primary	3,4	1,2	5
	Secondary		3	1
Personnel	Primary	1, 2a, 2c, 3a, 3c, 4a, 4c	2b, 3b, 4b,	2d, 3d, 4d
	Secondary		1	
Public relations	Primary	4	1,2,4,5	
	Secondary	1		1,2
Board recruitment	Primary	1,2,3		
	Secondary		2,3	

\*The numbers correspond to the numbered tasks in Worksheet 15

# Worksheet 1

## What I Expect . . .

## What is Expected of Me

**Goal:** To assess the expectations you have about board membership and to understand the expectations other people have of you as a board member.

**Suggestions:** Be honest and analytic as you complete the first section, "What I Expect." It will help you decide if you are willing to commit the time and energy expected of you in "What is Expected of Me."

### **What I Expect**

In thinking about my position as board (or committee) member, I believe I bring the following strengths, skills and knowledge as assets:

I want to serve on this board because:

I anticipate that the things I'll enjoy most about being a member of this board are:

What I'll probably enjoy least are:

In order for me to be satisfied, the things I want to have happen are:

By the time my term of office is over, I hope to have accomplished:

## II. What is Expected of Me:

(This list is really a generalized job description for *all* board members. Job descriptions for specific board positions such as president, vice president, etc. define additional responsibilities.) Check off your willingness to accept these responsibilities.

### 1. Knowledge and Preparation

- educate myself on the organization, its history, goals, clients/constituency, staff, current situation, problems and needs
- keep abreast of national, state and local trends that affect the organization and its clients/constituency.
- educate myself on the role and responsibility of the board as a whole as well as individual board members

### 2. Participation

- participate in the tasks of the board
- be an enthusiastic and knowledgeable voice for the organization
- serve actively on at least one committee; understand how committees relate to the board
- act as an advocate for the organization and its clientele
- contribute financially to the organization, if agreed upon by the board
- participate in discussions at meetings; ask probing questions and seek relevant answers before voting
- report to the board, in written or verbal form, as appropriate
- recognize my role as a member of a team

### 3. Time Commitment

- attend board orientation and training
- attend board meetings, committee meetings and general membership meetings
- do assigned work between meetings, including preparing for meetings by reading reports and background material

### 4. Constraints

- support board decisions once they're made, (even if I voted against the decision) or resign if I can't
- avoid any possibility of conflict of interest
- understand the difference between the roles of the board and the staff; don't attempt to do a staff's job, or let them do mine

# Worksheet 5

## Your Community

Goal: To help you begin gathering information about your organization and its community. This information helps you determine if you are serving the community as well as you would like.

Suggestions: Use staff assistance to compile the information gathered by a committee. Think of it as a research project. The results can be used for long range planning, fund-raising, and public relations.

### OUR ORGANIZATION

### TOTAL COMMUNITY

#### Geographic area

%. . . .

OUR  
BOARD

#### Population statistics

- youth
- young adult
- adult
- senior

#### Sex

- Male
- Female

#### Ethnic background or race

- Hispanic
- Black
- Asian
- American Indian
- Caucasian

#### Economic bracket

- Under \$10,000
- \$10-19,999
- \$20-29,999
- \$30,000 plus

#### Households — % of

- single
- couples
- families with children
- single parent

#### Services Available

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Our organization collaborates with the following  
Coordinating organizations

Other organizations that share our goals

Government agencies, programs

State, regional, and national organizations

# Worksheet 6

## Planning

Goal: To help your board plan more effectively.

Suggestions: No one should try to plan alone. If you are using this worksheet by yourself, be sure to have other members, paid staff, volunteers, clients, look at it and share their opinions. Ideally, the worksheet should be used by the entire planning committee with ample discussion time. Thought provoking questions and comments are on the right side.

### I. ASSESS NEEDS

1. What is the present situation?

What's happening now that is different from what we want it to be? Is there a 'problem' that needs correcting or do we need to stretch our wings with a program or process that is adequate but could be improved or strengthened? What is needed that we could provide?

2. What will happen if nothing is done by our organization?

This may help your board decide if your organization should get involved with a particular situation. Maybe another group is already dealing with it. Maybe things will continue as they are without any intervention or perhaps they'll deteriorate.

### II. SET YOUR GOALS

1. What do we want the situation to look like?

What should be happening that isn't happening? By what date should it be different? How will we be able to measure the difference? Given our past history, is it realistic? This is your chance to turn a problem statement (#1) into a specific goal.

2. How committed are we to achieving the goals stated in #1? How will accomplishing it fit in with our overall purpose?

No matter how worthy/noble the goal is, if people don't want to work to achieve it, it won't happen. And -- no matter how worthy, if it doesn't fit your organization's overall purpose, you should not be dealing with it.

### III. PLAN YOUR STRATEGY

1. DEVELOP ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

a. How many different ways are there to reach our goal?

This is a *crucial* step in the planning process. People often want to lock in on one way of solving the problem. Even if the solution seems obvious, force yourselves to come up with at least 3 different approaches and assess each. You may be surprised to find there's a better way than the most obvious!

b. Assess each possible solution.

What resources are needed? What would help us or hinder us as we apply this particular approach? Would working on this drain resources from other projects? This step takes time. Take one possible solution and analyze it -- then analyze the 2nd and 3rd. Don't shortcut! Only by analyzing each possible solution in the same way can you compare them and make the best choice or combination of choices.

c. Select the best possible solution.

After looking carefully at the various options, decide which is best.

## 2. DEVELOP A SPECIFIC APPROACH

a. *How* — What has to be done — and in what order — to make the plan happen?

List every possible step and then put the steps in order. You can't print up promotional flyers until someone has written the material.

b. *What* — Specify resources needed and where you'll get them.

These resources include money, materials, equipment, people, time, authority to act. This is a good job for detail people. Think of every possible thing needed to accomplish your objective and specify where you're going to get it.

c. *Who* — Who needs to be lined up to support this plan — even if they won't be working on it directly?

Some people can sabotage your plan, others can help it. Figure out what you have to do to get active support — or at least neutrality!

d. *When* — When will each step be done? What is the target date for completion of the entire project?

Set specific deadlines for each step listed in #1. Then you will know early on if you will meet your final deadline.

## IV. IMPLEMENT YOUR PLAN

Gather your resources and put your plan to work.

Monitor carefully. Be willing to change your strategy if it becomes obvious that your original plans aren't working.

## V. EVALUATE WHAT HAPPENED

1. How will we meet our objectives? Were they overly optimistic or too easy to reach?

You should know *before* you begin how you'll evaluate what happens, and how you'll collect data to answer this question.

2. How well did the strategies and activities work?

Did things go according to the plan? What happened that wasn't thought of . . . and were you able to deal with it? Did you have sufficient information?

3. How effectively were the resources used?

Could better planning have allowed better utilization of your resource sources? Did you allocate adequate resources? Were there any reserves?

4. What recommendations can you make for future programs and projects?

What should be done with your evaluation? Who needs to see it? How can the information be helpful in future planning?



# Worksheet 16

## Board Development Readiness Survey

Goal: To help gauge individual and total board's commitment to development.

Suggestions: First, check which column reflects your own opinion, then to the best of your knowledge and observation check what you think the total board's attitude is.

	Individual			Total Board		
	Agree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
1. Board development is defined and understood.						
2. Each board member respects the right of other members to experience personal growth.						
3. Individual differences of members (due to different life experiences, values, and length of time on board) are accepted.						
4. Board members who are experienced in group process aid others on the board by their example.						
5. Board members participate in determining board development needs and planning group activities.						
6. The board is willing to explore ways of improving effectiveness, even though time is limited.						
7. Board members are aware of what is needed to increase effectiveness.						
8. Time will be made for training activities if needs are identified.						
9. The total board membership would participate in training activities.						
10. Effectiveness could increase by working on one area at a time.						

Complete the bar graphs below — for your individual response and the response you projected as total board readiness. Fill in two squares for each 'agree' and one square for each unsure. Start from the left and move sequentially to the right. When completed, the chart will provide some measure of the board's openness to exploring and improving effectiveness.

Individual  
Start  
here

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Total board

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

There may be a slow start —  
may be resistance



Ready to GO  
and GROW!

# Worksheet 6

## Planning

Goal: To help your board plan more effectively.

Suggestions: No one should try to plan alone. If you are using this worksheet by yourself, be sure to have other members, paid staff, volunteers, clients, look at it and share their opinions. Ideally, the worksheet should be used by the entire planning committee with ample discussion time. Thought provoking questions and comments are on the right side.

### I. ASSESS NEEDS

1. What is the present situation?

What's happening now that is different from what we want it to be? Is there a 'problem' that needs correcting or do we need to stretch our wings with a program or process that is adequate but could be improved or strengthened? What is needed that we could provide?

2. What will happen if nothing is done by our organization?

This may help your board decide if your organization should get involved with a particular situation. Maybe another group is already dealing with it. Maybe things will continue as they are without any intervention or perhaps they'll deteriorate.

### II. SET YOUR GOALS

1. What do we want the situation to look like?

What should be happening that isn't happening? By what date should it be different? How will we be able to measure the difference? Given our past history, is it realistic? This is your chance to turn a problem statement (#1) into a specific goal.

2. How committed are we to achieving the goals stated in #1? How will accomplishing it fit in with our overall purpose?

No matter how worthy/noble the goal is, if people don't want to work to achieve it, it won't happen. And -- no matter how worthy, if it doesn't fit your organization's overall purpose, you should not be dealing with it

### III. PLAN YOUR STRATEGY

1. DEVELOP ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

a. How many different ways are there to reach our goal?

This is a *crucial* step in the planning process. People often want to lock in on one way of solving the problem. Even if the solution seems obvious, force yourselves to come up with at least 3 different approaches and assess each. You may be surprised to find there's a better way than the most obvious!

b. Assess each possible solution.

What resources are needed? What would help us or hinder us as we apply this particular approach? Would working on this drain resources from other projects? This step takes time. Take one possible solution and analyze it — then analyze the 2nd and 3rd. Don't shortcut! Only by analyzing each possible solution in the same way can you compare them and make the best choice or combination of choices

c. Select the best possible solution.

After looking carefully at the various options, decide which is best.

## 2. DEVELOP A SPECIFIC APPROACH

a. *How* — What has to be done — and in what order — to make the plan happen?

List every possible step and then put the steps in order. You can't print up promotional flyers until someone has written the material.

b. *What* — Specify resources needed and where you'll get them.

These resources include money materials equipment, people, time, authority to act. This is a good job for detail people. Think of every possible thing needed to accomplish your objective and specify where you're going to get it.

c. *Who* — Who needs to be lined up to support this plan — even if they won't be working on it directly?

Some people can sabotage your plan — others can help it. Figure out what you have to do to get active support — or at least neutrality!

d. *When* — When will each step be done? What is the target date for completion of the entire project?

Set specific deadlines for each step listed in #1. Then you will know early on if you will meet your final deadline.

## IV. IMPLEMENT YOUR PLAN

Gather your resources and put your plan to work.

Monitor carefully. Be willing to change your strategy if it becomes obvious that your original plans aren't working.

## V. EVALUATE WHAT HAPPENED

1. How will we meet our objectives? Were they overly optimistic or too easy to reach?

You should know *before* you begin how you'll evaluate what happens, and how you'll collect data to answer this question.

2. How well did the strategies and activities work?

Did things go according to the plan? What happened that wasn't thought of — and were you able to deal with it? Did you have sufficient information?

3. How effectively were the resources used?

Could better planning have allowed better utilization of your resource sources? Did you allocate adequate resources? Were there any reserves?

4. What recommendations can you make for future programs and projects?

What should be done with your evaluation? Who needs to see it? How can the information be helpful in future planning?

# Worksheet 17

## Gaining Momentum for Board Action Survey

Goal: To assess current board effectiveness of 'preparedness'.

Suggestions: Please read each statement, then mark your opinion of current effectiveness or, in the case of a new board, what you think reflects the board's current awareness and planning. If an item doesn't apply, just skip it for now. Each check is your opinion of how negative (-) or positive (+) the board's effectiveness is right now.

			✓	
--	--	--	---	--

This survey is designed to be:

- ✓ an overview of information and tools that are needed by board members. INFORMATION
- ✓ an opportunity to evaluate just how many components are working or are ready to work. (Those checks that are on the right, +, side of the dotted line) VALIDATION
- ✓ insight on those components that currently need work. CHALLENGE

It is very easy to go through this survey and make marks on the scale without much thought. We recommend that you approach it this way:

- 1) Complete the survey.
- 2) Go back and think about each item for a few minutes.

Answer these questions:

- a) What made me answer as I did?
- b) What specific things have I seen or heard that substantiate my responses? For example:

### BACKGROUND/STRUCTURE

The board understands and agrees upon the board's purpose, as stated in the Bylaws.

We know this because: 1) we have discussed it fully within the past year, and 2) during board decision making we specifically discuss how the decision related to the organization's goals and purpose.

			✓	
--	--	--	---	--

### GAINING MOMENTUM . . .

#### . . . FOR UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS

You as Board Member

The board job description includes requirements, time commitment, and constraints.

--	--	--	--	--

Training  
Interest

Individual members: 1) expectations are explored and valued, 2) fulfill their responsibilities.

--	--	--	--	--

Boards defined

The board understands and agrees upon the board purpose, as stated in the bylaws.

--	--	--	--	--

The board is aware of who has legal liability.

--	--	--	--	--

Limitations, as set by any governing organization bylaws or government regulations, are understood.

--	--	--	--	--

**Board Structure**

Officers, committee chairpersons, and other leaders understand and fulfill their roles.

-									+

---

All members actively participate on at least one committee

-									+

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Lines of authority and responsibility are clear.

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**Your Community**

The board evaluates and responds to the community to which the organization is accountable, and to the total community.

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The board is aware of current national trends that influence boards today

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**GAINING MOMENTUM . . .  
 . . . FOR ACCOMPLISHING TASKS**

**Planning**

Long range and short term plans for the organization, that reflect it's values and direction, are made by the board.

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Specific program plans are possible to achieve, measurable, and time oriented.

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**Policy Making**

Written policies reflect the organization purpose and are understood by the board.

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There is a process for policy development that works effectively.

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**Fund-raising**

Board members understand fund raising needs and are committed to active support.

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Funding sources have been researched, projects planned, personnel trained

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**Financial management**

The board actively participates in budget development that reflects the organization program priorities.

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The organization accounting system includes appropriate controls, annual audit, and periodic reports to the board.

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**Public relations**

A positive image of the organization is seen by the community

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Board members, individually and as a group, assume responsibility for public relations strategies whenever appropriate.

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**Personnel**

The policy making board recognizes its responsibility for selecting and supervising the executive director.

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The board demonstrates their commitment to paid and volunteer personnel management and development through specific written policies.

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**Board Recruitment and retainment**

The nominating committee process for new board members is carefully planned and implemented to build board strength.

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Orientation prepares new members to function effectively.

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**GAINING MOMENTUM . . .  
 . . . FOR WORKING TOGETHER**

**Leadership**

Leaders are supported and given opportunity to grow in their role.

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There is an active plan to develop new leadership.

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**Group Process**

Board and committee meetings are productive and time is well spent.

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Decision making methods are defined and agreed upon; a variety of solutions are explored when making decisions.

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**Team Building**

Board members and staff know each other well enough to work effectively as a group.

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There is enough trust and sharing of values within the group that members are free to express their feelings.

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**Board and Staff**

Roles and responsibilities of board members and staff are defined so it is clear who implements decisions made by the board.

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The board receives adequate information to make decisions based on data.

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**GAINING MOMENTUM . . .  
 . . . FOR CONTINUING BOARD DEVELOPMENT**

There is commitment to ongoing evaluation of board effectiveness

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Time is committed to ongoing board development for the total board and/or individual board members.

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 If our board decides to plan future board inservice, the following times are my preferences:

Weekends \_\_\_\_\_ Evenings \_\_\_\_\_ (preferred evenings \_\_\_\_\_)

Short inservice during regularly scheduled meetings \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Other ideas, suggestions, responses .....

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