

Vision: Leadership Focus



September 2009

Fast Focus Tips

- A strong recruitment process is one of the highest priorities of an exceptional board.
- Exceptional boards see the correlation between mission, strategy, and board composition.
- They welcome differing voices and an array of board member perspectives.
- Exceptional board members bring personal and professional skills and talents that can positively enrich the group.

Find the book,
*www.boardsource.org

Revitalization Makes the Board World Go ‘Round – with Results

“I’m astonished!” said James, with a huge Monday morning smile.

“I’m exhausted!” said Andrea, with a bewildered look.

“Well, let’s catch up,” suggested James.

Andrea began, “I’ve been overwhelmed with five board commitments in the last two months. I want to be responsible. But I feel a little ambushed. I knew about the monthly board meetings, but not the 6:30 am coffee-with-no-bagels meetings. I didn’t know about nearly monthly required committee assignments. There are high expectations for event attendance too. Some work is high-level decision-making and strategic. Some is as simple as making colorful decorations. I do love the mission – I’m right there! But I guess I didn’t ask enough questions.”

“And maybe an orientation was missing-in-action? I think it’s true that a good orientation starts at recruitment,” observed James. “Well, I’m psyched about my new board role! They modeled an outstanding recruitment process.”

James continued, “First, I was contacted by a long-time volunteer who loves the United Way work. He asked great questions about my board experience and seemed really curious about what excites me in this community. It was obvious that he knew exactly what perspective he needed on the board. He confirmed what he suspected about my skills and connections, and was enthusiastic about what I might bring to the table. I was most impressed about their new aspirational goals and strategic initiatives that led him to someone with just my type of background. He left me with a small folder of both basic and inspiring material. Oh, and he left me the complete annual meeting schedule noting that the board culture leans to brownbag lunch meetings. I have to say that I was well-prepared, and there haven’t been any surprises.”

While James and Andrea compare board recruitment stories, read more about how exceptional boards energize themselves through thoughtful and strategic recruitment in *The Source: Twelve Principles of Governance that Power Exceptional Boards*, published by BoardSource. Learn about strategic steps, elements, and sample board conversations in this vital area.

* Reprinted with permission from *The Source: Twelve Principles That Power Exceptional Boards* by BoardSource Blue Ribbon Panel, a publication of BoardSource, formerly the National Center for Nonprofit Boards. For more information about BoardSource, call 800-883-6262 or visit www.boardsource.org. BoardSource © 2007. Text may not be reproduced without written permission from BoardSource.



12 Principles of Governance That Power Exceptional Boards

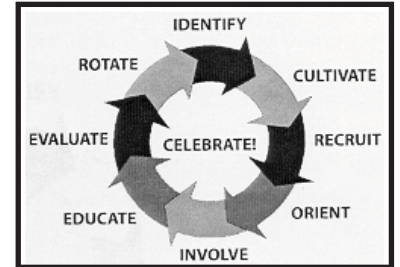
1. Constructive Partnership
2. Mission Driven
3. Strategic Thinking
4. Culture of Inquiry
5. Independent-Mindedness
6. Ethos of Transparency
7. Compliance with Integrity
8. Sustaining Resources
9. Results Oriented
10. Intentional Board Practices
11. Continuous Learning
12. Revitalization

Vision features one 'power' principle in each issue.

The Board Building Cycle: 9 Phases for Exceptional Board Performance

Thoughtful planning for new board members is vital to stewarding the community's investments. It's part of The Board Building Cycle* as noted by the BoardSource book of the same name. The Cycle identifies nine phases within two major purposes:

1. Replenish the board's power-people by bringing in new members: Identify, Cultivate, Recruit, Orient
2. Strengthen the board's performance: Involve, Educate, Assess, Rotate, Celebrate



To tackle this comprehensive cycle, start by forming a Governance Committee.

The Power of the Governance Committee

Also known as a Nominating or Organizational Development Committee, the newer term "Governance Committee" involves several vital roles (see pp. 3 & 4):

- ☑ Regularly review the **board roles and responsibilities** to ensure they are consistent with your current board work.
- ☑ Lead a **board composition** assessment using a **board profile**.
- ☑ Lead **board recruitment** that ultimately includes all board members in the process. Along with the chief executive, keep an idea file for newspaper clippings or notes such as community award recipients, a new CEO in town, or changes in local leadership.
- ☑ Take charge of **board knowledge** by designing or assisting with or approving an orientation process and suggesting needed board information and training priorities.
- ☑ Ensure **board effectiveness** by assisting with ongoing board performance assessments, proposing board structure and operations changes, and taking on other roles such as reviewing board member participation, conflicts of interests, bylaws, term limits, and suggestions for important board work. Does your current board structure support your priorities?
- ☑ Lead succession planning for **board leadership**, especially nominations for **officers**.

Responsible Boards x	The Source of Power =	Exceptional Boards
Recruit based on individual competencies and personal connections Establish a committee to manage the recruitment process	Clarity around expectations of board members Diversity of perspectives Continuous recruitment Thoughtful use of term renewals Officer succession planning	Know their roles and function well as a group Include important voices at the board table Have a ready supply of new board members Experience smooth leadership transitions

* Reprinted with permission from *Exceptional Board Practices: The Source in Action*, a publication of BoardSource, formerly the National Center for Nonprofit Boards. For more information about BoardSource, call 800-883-6262 or visit www.boardsource.org. BoardSource © 2009. Text may not be reproduced without written permission from BoardSource.

Sharpen Your Pencils: Getting Into the Details

To reach the most skilled and engaged board for your strategic directions, here are some key board activities:

□ Make a Board Profile: Ask “What if?” What if we could do “x” that we never thought we could? Preferably, this step is part of a strategic planning process or strategic direction review resulting in clearly defined goals. The Governance Committee can start by creating a profile or grid analyzing your current board composition based on skill, age, gender, geography, volunteer experiences, and connections, to name a few. List your observations. Are most members over 55 with fierce leadership skills but no ability to be reflective or mostly women between 40 and 50? How many are “10s” with top leadership ability? All organizations need a range of skills and backgrounds.

Now create a new chart guided by your key goals, cross-listed with skills and other characteristics that will support them. Although they may not appear on the grid, consider personal qualities, too – consensus-builder, aspirational thinker, risk-taker, or adapter. Rich board conversations will define the right attributes for your United Way’s work.

□ Include the Chief Executive: The “inside story” must be included in an accurate and realistic assessment of the board’s needs. The chief executive also plays an important

role by identifying board candidates and acclimating new members into the board’s work and culture.

□ Cultivating Relationships and the Art of the Ask:

So, you have some great candidates. Acquiring really great board members can take time; they may not be available when you first connect. Decide who will make the initial contact based on the candidate’s background and circle of friends or colleagues. Think of it like a first date. You are curious about each other and want to see where the relationship could go. Establish trust by being up front about the meeting’s purpose. Be sure it’s not a “Have I got a deal for you!” approach. The chair, perhaps with the chief executive, can follow-up with a thank-you letter.

Invite candidates to events or a board meeting. Stay in touch. Work toward building interest and increasing comfort levels. Once the relationship evolves, whether it is one month or three years, make sure the candidate knows why his/her role is important. No one wants to “just fill a seat.” Be thoughtful about why you are asking and why that role is important to the board’s work.

	Ben Franklin	Eleanor Roosevelt
Age under 40		x
Rural county	x	
People skills		x
Innovator	x	

“Simon, are you aware of some of the exciting things going on at our United Way? A lot has changed in the last 5 years. I’d like buy you a cup of coffee and chat about it.”

Appreciative Corner: Up the Ladder with Confidence and Style

Quiz! Who’s in line next for board chair? Someone who is serious about being chair? Whoever’s available? Here are some good board conversations to have about officer succession planning.

■ Think of the last 5 years. How did you find your best board chairs or other officers? Did the strongest ones rise to the challenge easily? Many United Ways have a firm officer succession plan that works very well, First Vice President becomes Chair, Secretary becomes First or Second Vice President. It ensures that someone with experience and commitment takes the reins.

■ What if you had a board chair for two years? Many United Ways do. While it’s a huge commitment, it ensures more continuity in rapidly changing times and less transition time for board and staff. Sometimes one chair’s unique connections are key to starting or completing an initiative or lengthy task. Two years could encourage more stable support from key partners. (A two-year Campaign Chair commitment is also a very successful model, maybe even more important.)

■ There is a case to be made for more flexibility, too. If you have a two-year Chair and it doesn’t work well, you have few options with great stress. If your Vice President’s commitment is sliding, for good reasons or not, how do you decide about an automatic succession to Chair? Here again, the Governance Committee can help by taking an objective view. Have the conversation about what will take your United Way where it wants to go.

Indiana Association of United Ways...Bringing Indiana United Ways together to help them create a successful future.

Relationship/Association - Members actively engage with their IaUW neighbors and peers around issues and experience, contributing to higher performance.

- 63 member organizations
- 4community2 matching grant program
- Roundtables and collaborative assistance

Learning/Training - Members involved with IaUW learning opportunities are strengthened to improve organizational functioning.

- State Leaders Conference and recognition programs
- 4community2 technical assistance and training
- Regional conferencing and national program hosting
- Software user groups
- Vision Leadership Focus newsletter
- Indiana Nonprofit Resource Network

Research & Development/Innovation - Members have improved capacity to engage organizational technology with confidence.

- NP&AS, Nonprofit Processing & Accounting Service
- www.iauw.org and other Web site features

Representation - Members receive substantial grant support and have strong state-level relationships.

- Partnerships and strong relationships with Indiana University Center on Philanthropy, Indiana Coalition for Human Services, Indiana Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
- Public Policy
- United Way Council of States and other national involvement
- Indiana 211
- Youth Philanthropy Initiative of Indiana
- United Way of America

Indiana Association of United Ways Staff

Roger Frick, President
317-921-1399
Mike Cabat
317-921-1395
Lisa Hanger
317-921-1393
Sue Koralewski
317-921-1390
Lucinda Nord
317-921-1394
Iverne Russell
317-921-1391
Kimberly Sokolow
317-921-1398

Nonprofit Processing & Accounting Services Staff

Lucy Abshear
317-921-2241
Briann Black
317-921-1358
Emily Campbell
317-921-7526
Stephanie Coon
317-921-7507
Kathy Downing
317-921-7509
Linda Firebaugh
317-926-1490
Melody McVicar
317-926-1491
Cheryl Mitchell
317-921-2240
Sue Odom
317-921-1359
Rita Wootton
317-923-1882

Give it a Try: A Great Start Out of the Blocks Begins with an Inspiring Orientation



Do you have an orientation process? Do board members leave excited about being a part of your team? Having a quality orientation is essential to strong board performance.

The board chair or chief executive should plan to meet as soon as a new board member is confirmed. Review meeting schedules and key information or a full board manual. In this more

private setting, it's a great time to ask questions about the new member's committee interests and personal organizational visions. What will make this a rewarding experience for the board member?

Always schedule an annual orientation to catch the majority of new members. Be sure it includes a quick overview of board responsibilities. How will you ensure that everyone leaves inspired? Watch for a comprehensive list of suggested board manual content and an orientation outline at www.iauw.org.

IaUW Supports

Watch for more board recruitment samples and tools in the IaUW member's area at www.iauw.org. Contact Roger or Lisa for technical assistance on finer points of orientation, recruitment, and board training. Contact Lucinda for ideas on connecting to board candidates that will help you advocate your mission. Contact Indiana Nonprofit Resource Network, www.inrn.org, for any aspect of board training.