

## DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP ON BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

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Much has been written about governance on nonprofit boards, but there is little that addresses the development of leadership: how individuals who are volunteering their time transform themselves into an active, engaged, and knowledgeable team – one that can guide a nonprofit organization to anticipate and respond to the myriad challenges in the sector today. Based on a study of fifteen exemplary nonprofit boards, and the combined experience of a team of nonprofit professionals, this paper looks closely at what is meant by board leadership, what forms that leadership takes, and how to create an organizational culture that encourages and supports board members to step up to their leadership responsibilities.

### BACKGROUND

Governance Matters, the sponsor of the project, is a collaboration of nonprofit executive directors, board members, funders, consultants, umbrella organizations, and other professionals interested in raising the standard of governance within New York City's nonprofits. The Board Leadership Project was developed to encourage more active leadership on and by nonprofit boards. We wanted to explore why some boards and individual members step up to take the lead at times of change and why others do not. We also wanted to find out how boards create a culture of leadership, and what prepares board members to play a leadership role.

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The members of the project designed a research study to identify and describe the practices that nonprofit boards have used to develop, motivate, train, and sustain board leaders. The research strategy was based on the assumption that leadership is most apparent at times of transition or crisis, such as:

- the early stages of organizational development,
- transition from a founder/executive director or long-time board chair,
- responding to a major new initiative from external sources/conditions, and/or
- implementing the decisions of an internal planning process.

Leadership was operationally defined as *board actions that have served to move organizations forward* so they can successfully meet these challenges:

- mobilize action to further the mission,
- help the organization adapt to changing circumstances,
- respond to crisis,
- identify opportunities for change and growth, and/or
- create future leaders.

The team then asked a variety of sources, including umbrella organizations, technical assistance providers, funders and academics, to identify New York nonprofits whose boards demonstrated this type of leadership. Out of the fifty organizations recommended, fifteen were selected and interviewed by Governance Matters volunteers. Based on the findings, a series of hypotheses about board leadership were developed. To further test and refine the hypotheses, the project scheduled three focus groups with participating executive directors and board leaders.

A team from New York University's Wagner School's Non-profit Management Capstone Seminar then reviewed the case studies and identified those that best exemplified board leadership as it was defined. This team also conducted a literature review to determine gaps in the literature related to this topic. Concurrently, a group of Governance Matters members were convened to discuss their experience with board leadership at times of crisis (particularly during times of leadership succession) and to outline effective steps to develop an effective board culture. Finally, the Board Leadership Project Team took all of the material that had been collected and added their own experiences to produce the final products.

### REFLECTIONS ON WHAT IS MEANT BY LEADERSHIP ON NONPROFIT BOARDS

As we reviewed the input from our exemplary organizations, the Board Leadership Project Team identified the following characteristics of board leadership.

#### Leadership Qualities

A number of personal qualities of leadership were repeatedly identified by participants in our study. Some of these qualities may seem innate, but many arise from the alchemy of blending the desire to *make a difference*, together with known/learned skills and the opportunity to act. Good board leaders exhibit passion, commitment and vision, and they articulate these clearly. They have the ability to communicate with and engage others. They know what they do not know, are willing to take risks, are comfortable seeking outside help, and are honest and forthright in recognizing and naming problems. They are able to support the executive director by making time available to sustain his/her vision and implementation. However, the board leader's first loyalty is to the mission and the constituencies the organization serves.

#### Boards Govern Always, Lead Sometimes

While the basic governance responsibilities of boards of directors are constant, leadership on a good board is more fluid, ebbing and flowing as circumstances and organizational life cycles require. Board leadership is expressed most powerfully and crucially during times of transition and crisis; such periods are also when the *absence* of leadership is most visible and most devastating to an organization. When things are running smoothly, the more routine governance duties are primary and board leadership is devoted to streamlining systems, strategic planning and increased board fundraising. At such times, the board's leadership (in the sense of control and direction) may seem more below the surface. This is most often the case when there is a strong, skilled and effective executive director.

#### Ask Questions!

Leadership is often defined as having answers, or taking charge. However, one of the most important forms of leadership that board members undertake is simply to ask substantive questions. In some cases, board members will be part of researching and responding to these questions. In others, the board will rely on the executive director and/or other staff members for the information and input necessary to determine appropriate actions. Leadership in such cases takes the form of raising the questions and listening for responses that make sense.

In general, questions will fall in the following categories.

#### 1. Compliance

As part of their governance responsibilities board members need to ask management to demonstrate compliance with the laws and requirements governing nonprofit organizations, and with the organization's commitments to clients, donors and other key stakeholders.

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## 2. Strategy

Board leadership related to programs and priorities is strategic in nature. Their focus is less on why we do things a certain way, and more on whether or not the organization is doing the right things. Strategic questions from the board encourage board and staff to identify internal and external changes and trends that affect clients, funding and activities so the organization can formulate appropriate responses. These questions help keep the focus on the big picture rather than on operations, and are typically future oriented. Finally, they encourage and shape board leadership by helping board members identify ways that they can help the organization respond to emerging needs and opportunities.

## 3. Evaluation

In most cases board members do not have the same level of programmatic expertise as the staff. As community members holding the organization in trust on behalf of the public, board members need to ask questions that help them evaluate the impact of the organization's work. By raising the question of how the organization will measure success, and by systematically asking for benchmarks related to these measurements, the board leads by focusing staff attention on results instead of methods. Comparing these results to those of other organizations in the same field is particularly helpful. Also tracking results over time provides useful information to allow the board to measure success.

## 4. Resources

Many boards spend a good deal of time thinking about and engaging in fundraising. One important question that can get overlooked is to ask how the organization is allocating the resources it does have, and to ensure that this allocation is reflective of the organization's priorities. Another set of questions relates to donor interests and trends. What are donors interested in? How has that changed? Should we (and, if so, how can we) position ourselves in

relationship to these interests? Finally, the board should ask and determine what role it needs to play in maintaining current resources as well as in attracting new or increased support.

## 5. Board Structures and Systems

A board is strengthened by asking questions about its own ways of working to make sure that its operating and decision-making practices keep up with changing demands, shifting responsibilities, board size and composition. A periodic self-evaluation can help board members determine if they are paying attention to that which is most important, and if there are smarter ways for them to work individually and collectively in order to achieve their goals.

### *Leadership from Any Seat*

There is a tendency to think of leadership in terms of hierarchy, with the board chair playing the strongest leadership role. It is certainly true that an effective board chair contributes enormously to the board's productivity, and that a poor board chair

can be a significant obstacle to performance. Every board member, however, has a leadership role to play. Any board member can and should raise the kinds of questions described previously. Every board member should have a role to play to move the board's agenda forward and to fulfill the

board's oversight role. Fundamentally, leadership entails speaking up when you have a concern and contributing what you can to make the organization successful.

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### *Different Leadership Styles*

Not all forms of leadership are recognized as such. In fact, often leaders do not recognize their own leadership or leadership potential. One of the lessons of our study is that people often became leaders because someone they respected called on them to lead. Also, leadership may take on very different attributes in different cultures, as well as among

different ethnic, age and/or gender groups. One community may admire forceful and outspoken leaders while another might respond to a more consensus-oriented approach.

Different organizational circumstances call for different leadership styles. At times of upheaval a consensus builder may be needed. If real change is needed to move the board forward, a more decisive leadership style may be called for. One organization described two types of leaders: Visionaries and Implementers. In the first group are the strategic thinkers who have imagination and are focused on “the long haul.” The second are those who can figure out what is needed, right now, in order to make something work and who enjoy concrete tasks. They can also help the executive director think through the impact a new undertaking may have on the organization’s ability to maintain its regular operations.

### DEVELOPING A BOARD CULTURE THAT PROMOTES LEADERSHIP

As we spoke with exemplary nonprofit boards, and reflected on our own experiences in the field, we came to recognize the importance of the board’s culture in determining whether or not board members are willing and able to step up at times of transition. Board members place a high value on efficiency because there are so many competing demands on their time. They are therefore often reluctant to invest the time required to build board cohesion and strong working relationships and may be unprepared to work well together at times of change or crisis.

#### What is Board Culture?

In the context of nonprofit boards, culture refers both to organizational culture – the shared meanings, understandings, ways of interacting, expectations, vocabulary, values and beliefs of the board members as a whole – and the individual cultures of all the members (which over time can transform the board’s culture). Board culture is crucial to performance and leadership because it can be a powerful

and sometimes invisible force that pressures members to conform to the established behaviors of the group. On the positive side, organizational cultures can inspire leadership, open debate and risk-taking. On the other hand, these unspoken norms can have a negative impact, causing new and veteran members alike to feel intimidated, or silenced, and those who would like to initiate changes in the organization may have difficulty introducing new ideas.

**Organizational cultures tend to be self-perpetuating.** People who are uncomfortable with the board culture as it is will leave, and those who like the status quo will feel welcomed and supported. Founders’ boards are obvious examples of boards with cultures oriented to *follower-ship*, but other boards may also silently (or actively) discourage members from asking questions, taking the initiative or raising criticisms. The persistence of organizational culture can make diversifying a board difficult: new members from new or different constituencies may be denied meaningful roles or otherwise be informally silenced. Board members need to be aware of their organization’s culture, discuss it openly, and, if they want to change it, do so intentionally and with sincerity of purpose.

**Boards are social groups and each has its own distinctive culture.** Boards that work well have incorporated governance and personal initiative into their organizational culture. They have enthusiasm, momentum, and flexibility. Effective leadership boards foster environments where directors trust and respect one another, communicate clearly and often, know their organizations well, care deeply about mission, and understand their legal and moral responsibilities.

**The board’s culture is also fluid and changes as the makeup of the group and the situations, conditions and issues shift.** Clarity and openness (and, conversely, confusion and secretiveness) are features of organizational culture that can be inculcated.

#### Characteristics of a Productive Board Culture

The following elements emerged from our research as essential to a productive board culture.

**1. *Respect.*** When asked to reflect on their success, the board members of a parents' advocacy organization pointed out that *respect* is crucial. There is respect – among the current board for each other and for the executive director – that comes from acknowledging and honoring their mutual responsibilities for their work and for the organization. One member commented, “A board should be a group that each member is proud to be part of.”

**2. *Communication and Transparency.*** Good communication was cited by the representatives of almost every organization studied as a key to their effectiveness. Board members are encouraged to ask hard questions and get honest and complete answers. For example, at a settlement house, the new president and executive director instituted procedures that ensured that board members were kept fully informed about developments in the organization and the neighborhood, and, therefore, were able to respond appropriately to a changing situation. As a result, even in the face of caustic complaints from members of the local community, the board remained committed to change but resisted being drawn into pointless arguments and confrontations with neighborhood residents.

**3. *The Ability to Learn from Conflict/Debate.*** Board members of a parents' advocacy organization found a way to use conflict to continue the organization's forward movement. They, and others, point out that when you give everyone a voice, conflict will arise. As the executive director says, “Give people the opportunity to express their opinion, and do not react negatively when they do. Really take [their comments] to heart.”

- The willingness and ability to struggle through conflict can strengthen a board and the organization. The ability to disagree productively is one sign of a strong board culture. Such debate often results in decisions that are more fully thought out.

Civility without debate may mean that the board admits only other like-minded people or that only a select group are the real decision makers. Conversely, debate without civility often reflects individual agendas that are not motivated by concern for mission, and rarely leads to better decisions.

- Directors from the settlement house's board stressed that when an issue is presented for board consideration, all related possibilities and solutions are discussed – sometimes vigorously – and, therefore, the decisions reached tend to be representative of all or a great majority of the directors. The president manages disagreements well and the directors defer to his judgment and decisions. Says the board president, “Don't give me a smiley-smiley group. I make [vigorous discussion] happen by encouraging freedom of speech.”

- For others, consensus is seen as an indicator of board health. For example, the president of a counseling organization says: “Not

only does the board rarely ever get into a big argument, there's not factionalism within this board. But there is a respectfulness, collaborativeness and a sense of pride that generations of trustees share, which has to come from something, and it does not come from something

intellectual. It comes from something more emotional or spiritual, the sense of purpose that they share together. That's what gives life to the organization.”

- The role of the board chair is critical to the board's ability to engage in open discussion. The board chair of an advocacy and direct service organization for the formerly incarcerated makes sure that everyone has a voice and is heard. He realizes that there will not always be consensus, but generally the group does reach an agreement. Occasionally, a board member who is known to

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hold a particular point of view might be approached prior to the meeting to allow for a more open and thorough discussion outside the board meeting. But the intent of this conversation is to make sure that that director feels like his/her viewpoint is aired, not to stifle that person's participation.

**4. Trust and the Ability to Take Risks.** Risk and trust go together. Board members are willing to take greater risks if they trust each other and/or the individuals in leadership positions. It helps to have steps for assessing the risk, making it more manageable, and having multiple go/no points, particularly when contemplating new initiatives.

#### HOW BOARDS CREATE A CULTURE THAT PROMOTES LEADERSHIP

We have found the following practices key to creating a productive culture on a board:

- *Recruit people to the board who have a passion for your mission.*
- *Connect trustees with the organization's work through direct experience, conversations with program staff and compelling stories that illustrate the importance of the organization's work.*
- *State expectations of board members up front during the recruitment process.*
- *Make time to talk together as a board about the culture that you want to create or perpetuate on the board, and how you can work together most productively.*
- *Let potential board members know about the culture of the board up front.*
- *Create rituals to celebrate achievements, recognize people who have made a contribution, and mark new moments in an organization's history.*
- *Compare how the board operates with the organization's values, and determine if the structure and the values need to be more closely aligned.*

- *Acknowledge the contributions of those who have made the organization what it is today, and then focus on how to maintain the founding principles in a changing environment.*

**Recruit individuals who are passionate about the mission.** When asked what motivated them to step up to leadership, even in times of crisis, board members talked about their belief that the work of their organizations needed to be continued for the sake of the community. Their commitment to the mission went beyond their loyalty to any one individual. In times of crisis, board leaders show personal commitment, determination and courage, each of which is crucial to the maturation of the full board. One board member offered the following observation:

What helped our organization deal with the crisis was the deep commitment by a lot of the board at that time that the organization was so valuable that it had to survive. Many of the board had come from the trenches and understood the value of the program and the need for the organization. The incoming chair took a firm hold. The search committee stepped up to the plate. And the executive committee functioned in a supportive role once the executive director was chosen.

Nonprofits are often tempted to add members to the board for other reasons than passion – a person's expertise is needed or their financial support is sought. One board member responded by saying:

Some not-for-profits will look at financial means as the most significant issue, to find a trustee who's sufficiently wealthy that they could be a substantial contributor to the work of the particular organization, or that they are positioned in such a way that you can leverage their influence and support to others, and that's why you want them as trustees. Well, I would be dishonest if I didn't say that some of those things figure into our selection of trustees.

While another board member responded:

In recruiting new board members I need to sense there is a passion for the mission. I have to see there is flint that catches a spark... believing, of course, that if somebody connects to the mission, they would do whatever they can with whatever resources they might command to support and to help the organization further its objectives. But the most important component of their trusteeship has to be do they connect or can they be helped to connect more deeply to the mission of organization. And you can usually pick that up very quickly.

***Keep a board's passion alive by finding ways to keep trustees closely connected with the organization's work.*** One former board member of the counseling organization commented:

We have been very gifted in who has been led to us or we have found, in that they do understand the mission of the organization, the pain that people feel when they've lost a loved one or when you're the patient that is dying. Our trustees have felt that, and they have felt it because maybe they've experienced it, but they've also heard the stories of counselors' experiences. It's those stories of how they've helped other human beings that brings the organization alive. The best way to have that happen is to get the staff and trustees together.

A current board member from the same organization observed:

I think we've often said to one another that the organization is a history of stories, and each of these encounters between a counselor and a family, or counselor and a very ill person, has its own story and takes on a life of its own. More often than not, they are wonderful stories, beautiful stories.

***Use strategic planning to create a forum and a context for leadership.*** Strategic planning can motivate board members to become more involved, and to step up to their governance responsibilities

without risking the upheaval inherent in a crisis. The process allows the board to identify urgent opportunities that include exciting possibilities like significant expansion, purchasing a facility, or developing programs for a new constituency. When these opportunities present themselves, previously inactive board members may be inspired enough to intensify their commitment and step up as leaders.

The majority of the organizations participating in this study linked the emergence of board leadership with a strategic planning process. For example, the parents' advocacy group used the process as a way of refocusing the board's attention on the mission, and created a framework in which the discussion of board composition could be held without personalizing the decisions made. In other words, the form and function of the board grew directly out of the strategic discussions.

In the organizations we studied it was often the executive director who introduced the planning process and the importance of strategy to the board. In all cases board members played leadership roles in defining strategy and shaping the direction of the organization. Board members of the counseling organization, most of whom have corporate backgrounds, described their process and philosophy as follows:

One of the things that [the President and CEO] has taught me is that if you dream and you have a dream that makes sense to other people, the money will be there, and you don't have to raise the money before the dream. So it's a question of articulating what we're about and making the case so compelling that the community comes forth and supports it in a way that makes it work. But I don't think you raise the money first. I think you dream first. You have your strategic plan, and then you go raise the money for it... If there is proper leadership – the more you do the better you get. No decision is made at [our organization] without the context of the strategy. We have seven task forces for the plan, plus the standing committees of the board. Quite a bit is done with a small group of people here.

**Build high expectations into the culture.** Perhaps the most crucial dimension of organizational culture for encouraging leadership is high peer expectations. Indeed, boards seem often to replicate themselves: weak boards expect little of new members, while strong boards seek out similarly engaged individuals. On one of the more highly performing boards we studied, many members exerted leadership and worked hard because there were clear expectations that service to their board was a serious and demanding job.

Some accountability mechanisms that the boards we interviewed use are as follows:

- One group requires 100% attendance at board meetings. Several others track attendance and ask members who miss the number of meetings specified in the bylaws to either recommit or resign.
- A rigorous recruiting system brought engaged, effective directors to a settlement house. Members hold each other to a higher standard of performance and even pressure the chair to take action on unsatisfactory service, such as absenteeism.
- At an organization that works with the formerly incarcerated, the chair of the board said that he, too, had become a more demanding recruiter over the years. He has implemented a more rigorous vetting process – checking references, asking about other board obligations, and seeking an alignment with the agency's values, as well as demonstrated leadership and management experience. He makes sure that candidates understand that they are signing on to do a serious job, for which they will be held accountable by their peers and the chair. He has found that these standards, far from discouraging prospects, have improved retention and director engagement.

- Institute an annual evaluation of the board's performance in relationship to its goals.

Negative sanctions are seldom necessary on strong boards. The clear focus of these boards on their work and their goals creates a strong feeling of community, rewards accomplishments and enthusiastically integrates new members.

Such high standards contrast sharply with the approach of organizations whose recruitment pitches emphasize the minimal demands that will be put upon board members beyond lending their names. Getting people to join a board by assuring them they need to do nothing only guarantees complacency.

**Establish and clearly articulate norms for board engagement.** Creating a productive board culture requires conscious effort to continuously encourage and provide opportunities for members' active involvement. A board member from an educational organization observed:

You need to attend to group process and make things explicit. The old ED wanted everyone to get along. I want all the ugly stuff to be out in the open. At a recent meeting, the new chair helped discussion open up. She has the skills. In the past, people said they were open but they weren't. Now they really can speak.

To ensure that you are really acting in accordance with the norms you want for your board requires periodic discussions about the board's culture, and explicit agreements about how to be most productive in board and committee meetings. These discussions are often part of a board retreat agenda in which the board reviews its progress for the year and plans for the upcoming years' goals and objectives.

Examples of *ground rules* that the groups we surveyed have established, whether explicitly or implicitly, include:

- Be open and dedicated to information sharing.
- Focus on the common good, not individual egos.
- Make decisions by consensus.
- It's okay to make mistakes – “we'll grow from them.”
- Be willing and able to change how things are done.
- Take calculated risks.
- Trust the group to be able to figure it out.
- Maintain an uncompromising focus on mission.

**Create opportunities for board members to get to know each other.** Many boards pride themselves on the efficiency of their board meetings. “We've got the meeting down to an hour!” However, if board members do not have the opportunity to get to know each other – and to work together effectively when things are going smoothly – they will not have the skills needed to come together to face difficult challenges. Part of what allows groups of people to work together effectively is to have some sense of who each person is as an individual and how they think.

**Mark Moments of Change.** Simple rituals for the initiation of new members, the installation of officers, and/or the retirement of long-time members can strengthen a board's culture. Rituals of achievement and celebrating major accomplishments can allow the whole group to share in the resulting sense of pride and momentum, which, in turn, helps deepen their involvement and raises their level of functioning.

Retelling the story of the organization's founding helps to reinforce the board's sense of purpose, keeping members focused on

mission and goals rather than allowing them to drift into more personal agendas.

**The structure of the board can reinforce the organization's values and culture.** The structure of the board of directors is also important in terms of supporting the development of a culture of leadership. It is also true that the systems and structures that the board develops at one point in the organization's development are likely to need to change as the organization matures. According to a board member with a parents' advocacy organization, “There may be a lot of trial and error. It takes time to discover the right structure.”

**Charge committees with clear objectives that are tied to the strategic plan.** Effective committees are a key element of structure that supports leadership. Providing all members with focused work and important responsibilities is crucial to developing and sustaining effective board leadership. Board members' knowledge of and commitment to the organization is deepened and strengthened by engaging them in meaningful committee work. A museum we studied re-organized the board to better match the management structure. They found that the new structure helped communication and coordination and increased board and staff accountability for outcomes.

**Balance future orientation with an appreciation**

**of the past.** Board members at the museum we studied knew that they were entrusted with the responsibility of perpetuating the museum's legacy and founding vision. However, board members also understood that simply looking backward to the museum's many accomplishments and awards is not enough. They have to focus their attention on opportunities to serve the community in

the future. The organization can be both grounded and adaptive. Too much emphasis on the legacy

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can paralyze an institution, threatening to embalm current practices instead of preserving core values of service and excellence.

### ADDITIONAL KEYS TO BOARD LEADERSHIP

#### ***1. Crisis is not all bad.***

Like the proverbial ill wind, there's something to be said for a good crisis to wake up the board and move them to action. Sometimes a crisis gives board members a focus for their efforts, which they may not otherwise have had. Some situations that are perceived by the board as a crisis, such as the decision of an executive director to leave, may in fact be part of the natural life cycle of an organization. Executive transition, or genuine emergencies, force boards to fully assume their governance and leadership responsibilities. Once they learn to do so, it is easier for board members to continue to play a more active role even after the transition is complete. So while we do not recommend going into crisis, do recognize that there can be long term benefits for board leadership if the board is able to successfully respond to the situation. Short of a crisis, an urgent opportunity (such as the ability to purchase a building or take over a program from another agency) can also serve to galvanize the board and help them learn to fully assume their leadership responsibilities.

#### ***2. Leadership is both recruited for and developed.***

Are leaders born or made? The clear answer is both. Effective boards and executive directors constantly recruit for and build board leadership capacity. They also continuously plan for succession, even during periods of routine board governance. Strong boards create and maintain expectations, structures, processes (including regular training) and opportunities that build and elicit leadership so potential leaders can emerge. Practices that help ensure that boards can and will fulfill their leadership responsibilities include:

- Train inexperienced board members in meeting facilitation and volunteer management.
- Have a transition period of a year so that an outgoing committee chair or officer can train their successor. One approach is for committees to have co-chairs, with one co-chair being the more experienced and the other being the person who will take over responsibilities.
- Create a clear "career path" through the board – from committee participation to committee leadership to becoming an officer – so people can take small steps that lead to formal leadership roles.
- Long time board members need to step back so that new leaders can step forward. They can help newer members become leaders by mentoring them and making themselves available as needed rather than by holding on to leadership responsibilities.

Although it does not occur to many organizations, it is possible and desirable to include questions about leadership skills and interests when considering potential board members. Ask candidates whether they would be willing to assume a leadership position on the board over time, and what experience they have as leaders.

#### ***3. Executive directors have an important role in developing board leaders and board leadership.***

While some executive directors may prefer passive boards with little initiative, great executive directors welcome board initiative and oversight. Executive directors help board members develop the knowledge they need to be effective ambassadors for the organization. For example, they invite board members to join them for key meetings with government agencies and foundations so they can learn the agency's values, the appropriate language with which to represent it, and the political and bureaucratic world within which it must operate. They also encourage board leadership by sharing the issues facing the organization with the board,

giving the board the information they need to make a useful contribution, and allowing board members to be active partners in formulating responses.

## CONCLUSION

Leadership on boards takes many forms, ranging from asking useful questions about the direction, priorities and practices of the organization, to assuming responsibility for addressing the questions raised. In order for board members to feel comfortable and motivated to assume their leadership responsibilities the organization has to engage in practices that allow board members to develop the skills and conditions that promote leadership. Doing so means revisiting the balance between efficiency and effectiveness, creating opportunities at board meetings for real discussion and debate within a productive framework, and finding ways for board members to get to know each other on a personal level so that they can work together more effectively. Board members are most likely to step up to fulfill their leadership responsibilities when they start with a passion for mission, since it is this passion that motivates volunteers to overcome their natural reticence to make waves and make whole-hearted commitment to the organization. ■

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