

# WHO'S AT BAT?

## Session Two

## Session 2: The All Star Game: Drafting and Building Your Team

### Welcome and Introductions of Facilitators



#### Session Goals:

- Identify gaps in skill sets on your current board
- Identify potential new board members
- Practice leadership engagement conversations

**Opening Exercise:** Share the object that you brought that represents your organization.

#### Exercise by Team: Draw your Ideal Board Member

How does this align with your job description?

#### Current Board Member Roster:

- Analyze what demographics, skills and characteristics are well represented and where you'd like to build.



#### Current Job Description:

How does this translate to what you would like to see in your organization's culture?

Consider your sentence from last session and think about:

What does your organization expect in regards to

- Attendance
- Commitment
- Willingness
- Readiness
- Attitude

#### Exercise: Take Out Your Current Job Description And Work On It With Your Team

Job Descriptions:

When building a team, you need to be clear about what is being asked of potential members to do.

Job descriptions should include the following level of responsibilities:

- Provide oversight for the planning and implementation of initiatives
- Advise on policy issues at board meetings
- Guide programming
- Provide fiscal oversight
- Serve on a committee or task force
- Advocate for organization's program
- Support the organization's annual campaign or fundraising
- Communicate progress to community stakeholders

The board will support the work of the organization and provide mission-based leadership and strategic governance. While day-to-day operations are led by the organization's chief executive officer (CEO), the Board-CEO relationship is a partnership, and the appropriate involvement of the Board is both critical and expected.

**Specific Board Member responsibilities include:**

- Demonstrates leadership, governance and oversight.
- Serve as a trusted advisor to the CEO as s/he demonstrate develops and implements the strategic plan.
- Approve the annual budget and audit reports; adherency to all legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
- Contribute to an annual performance evaluation of the CEO.
- Assist the CEO and board chair in identifying and recruiting other board members.
- Partner with the CEO and other board members to ensure that board resolutions are carried out.
- Serve on committees or task forces and taking on special assignments.
- Represent the organization to stakeholders, acting as an ambassador for the organization.
- Ensure the organization's commitment to a diverse board and staff that reflects the communities the organization serves.

In addition to how the board is structured, it is also important for members to know their role.

See below for two sample job descriptions.

**Capital Camps - Board of Directors Expectations**

**MISSION**

To nurture and strengthen Jewish leadership and community through meaningful and active informal Jewish camp and retreat experiences, creating a legacy of Jewish identity for future generations.

**OVERVIEW**

Capital Camps & Retreat Center (CCRC), established in 1987, is a non-profit, community-based organization. Board members are responsible for overseeing agency governance, policies, programs, services and operations. Board members are elected at the annual meeting, been nominated, interviewed and affirmed by the Board of Directors via the Governance Committee.

**BOARD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. ATTENDANCE – To regularly attend board meetings, as well as participate in committee work and any special events.

Board members are expected to engage freely in board discussions, treating fellow members and staff with respect and consideration. Board meetings are typically held near Columbia, MD and begin at 7:00 p.m. One meeting is held at camp in Waynesboro, PA each summer. Dinner is provided for board members at all meetings.

2. MISSION – To define the mission and participate periodically in strategic planning in order to review purposes, programs, priorities, funding needs and targets of achievements. Board members should be aware of societal trends to help ensure the future of CCRC.

3. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER – To approve the selection, compensation, and if necessary, dismissal of the chief executive officer and assure regular evaluation of the chief executive officer's performance.

4. FINANCES – To assure financial responsibility by:
  - a. Approving the annual budget and overseeing adherence to it
  - b. Contracting an independent audit
  - c. Controlling the investment policies and management of capital or reserve funds
5. PROGRAM OVERSIGHT AND SUPPORT – To oversee and evaluate all programs and support professional staff and be an advocate in the community
6. FUNDRAISING – To contribute personally and annually, and participate in identification, cultivation, solicitation and acknowledgements of prospective supporters and to approve the development plan
7. BOARD EFFECTIVENESS – To assure the board fulfills the foregoing governance responsibilities and maintains effective organization, procedures and recruitment.
  - Respect the confidentiality of any and all deliberations made at board and committee meetings
  - Adhere to conflict of interest and confidentiality policies.
  - Review annual financial statements.
  - Attend new board member orientations and board retreats.
  - Ensure ethical conduct among the board and staff.

## CRC RESPONSIBILITIES

### **Capital Camps & Retreat Center will provide board members opportunities to:**

- Review agency-related information in a timely manner prior to meetings.
- Review, discuss and determine agency policy.
- Promote agency programs and events.
- Learn about agency-related issues and challenges in order to discuss possible solutions.
- Serve as a resource in areas of personal and professional expertise.
- Encourage friends and colleagues to become involved with CCRC.
- Evaluate overall board effectiveness.
- Discuss and determine agency strategic direction, values and vision.
- Learn and grow as a board member.
- Develop a greater understanding of the role CCRC plays throughout the communities it serves.
- Enjoy board service through meaningful and engaging board retreats, board meetings and events.

For any questions or comments regarding the Objectives for Service on the Board of Directors, please contact: Jonah Geller, CEO, at [jonah@campandretreat.org](mailto:jonah@campandretreat.org) or 240-283-6161 or Fred Heyman, Board Chair, at [fred@bennettheymanlaw.com](mailto:fred@bennettheymanlaw.com) or 410-409-8733.

### **Jewish Community Services - Board Member Responsibilities**

1. Attend all board meetings and be prepared to participate.
2. Maintain strict confidentiality of board business and client and board member information.
3. Serve on at least one board committee. Serve on task forces, take on special assignments, if asked, and participate in periodic retreats.
4. Follow developments in the community, economy, government, etc. that may affect JCS.
5. Make a personal priority gift to The Associated Annual Campaign. A minimum gift of \$1,000 is required.
6. Participate in Associated fundraising activities.

7. Consider special funding opportunities at JCS.
8. Be an ambassador in the community for JCS.
9. Get to know other board members. Build working relationships that encourage, respect, and include multiple perspectives.
10. Suggest nominees to the board who can make significant contributions to the work of the Board and to JCS.
11. Assist the board in carrying out its fiduciary responsibility by active engagement in the budget process.
12. Participate actively in the board's annual evaluation process. Be prepared to assess your own involvement in the board on a yearly basis.
13. Commit to becoming knowledgeable about JCS by attending new board member orientation and taking advantage of information that is offered online.
14. Participate in Council meetings, if possible.
15. Seek out information on areas that are of interest or need clarification.



### **Fundraising**

Board members will consider the organization a philanthropic priority and make annual gifts that reflect that priority. The organization expects to have 100 percent of board members make an annual contribution that is commensurate with their capacity.

### **Board terms/participation**

Board members will serve a three-year term to be eligible for re-appointment for one additional term. Board meetings will be held quarterly and committee meetings will be held in coordination with full board meetings.

### **Expectations:**

Clear expectations are the foundation for a happy board relationship, both between the professional and lay leader and the lay leaders and each other.

### **Here is a sample:**

The concept of *Brit* (covenant) is central to Judaism. From Abraham and Sarah to our collective experience at Sinai, the theme of *Brit* appears over and over again. Our relationship with G-d and our Jewish family is one of partnership. Striving to understand what is expected of us and endeavoring to fulfill these expectations is part of the essence of being a Jew.

### **Board members understand and accept their responsibility by:**

- Ensuring that everyone involved in programs and leadership is treated with *kavod* (respect).
- Being familiar with by-laws, policies, procedures, history, traditions, practices and financial affairs.
- Attending regular and special board meetings, annual meetings and events or programs.
- Being prepared at board meetings by reading all pertinent materials beforehand and arriving on time.
- Giving financial support to the annual campaign in accordance with one's own means and support in raising funds.
- Supporting the final decisions of the board and take a leadership role in disseminating information to the community.

### **As a Member of the Board Expect:**

- Notices, agendas and reports will be sent in advance of meetings.
- Board meetings will begin on time and be run in an expeditious matter.

- All members will have an opportunity to express their views freely without recriminations and all matters requiring confidentiality will be unequivocally respected.
- All board members will respect privacy of deliberations and discussions that take place within meetings.
- Criticism of policy, positions, programs or individuals will be expressed constructively and addressed to the appropriate party.
- A warm welcome by staff and fellow board members, a one on one mid-year check in and the opportunity for a transition conversation about next steps and opportunities near the conclusion of one's term of service.



### Exceptional Boards

Exceptional boards add significant value to their organizations or programs, making a discernible difference in their advance on mission. Good governance requires the board to balance its role as an oversight body with its role as a force supporting the organization. The difference between responsible and exceptional board lies in though fullness and intentionality, action and engagement, knowledge and communication. The following principles provide board members a vision of what is possible and a way to add lasting value:

**PARTNERSHIP-** Exceptional boards run in partnership with their chairs and professional staff. They build this partnership through trust, candor, respect and honest communication.

**MISSION DRIVEN-** Exceptional boards shape and uphold the mission, articulate a compelling vision and ensure the congruence between decisions and values.

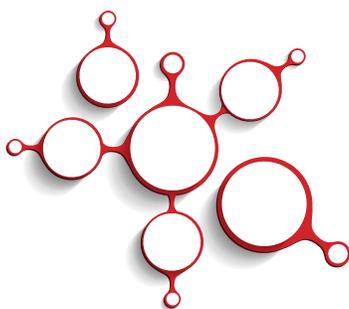
**STRATEGIC THINKING-** Exceptional boards allocate time to what matters most and continuously engage in strategic thinking to hone the organization's direction. They align agendas, goals and recruitment with strategic priorities.

**CULTURE OF INQUIRY-** Exceptional boards institutionalize a culture of inquiry, mutual respect and constructive debate that leads to sound and shared decision making. They seek more information and challenge conclusions so that they may advocated for solutions based on analysis.

**INDEPENDENT THINKING-** Exceptional board members are free thinking. They do not allow their votes to be influenced by loyalty to other members of the board.

**MOTIVATED-** Exceptional boards seek results. They measure progress towards the mission and evaluate the performance of major programs and services.

**CONTINUOUS LEARNING-** Exceptional boards embrace the qualities of a continuous learning organization, evaluating their own performance and assess the value they add to the organization.



### Activity: Network Mapping

#### Questions to Consider:

Who are your stakeholders?

What do you want to accomplish, and who can help you get there?

What do you know about this person, and who is the right person to have the conversation?

What does your nonprofit need to advance its mission right now and in the future?

- A board member with financial expertise
- Connections in the community
- Someone familiar with the individuals served by the nonprofit

Once you have identified the skills and experience your nonprofit needs, you're ready to identify and recruit new board members. The recruitment process requires both "vetting" a candidate and "cultivating" the interest of a potential future board member until he or she is ready to accept an invitation to become an ambassador and advocate for the nonprofit. Some nonprofits find that asking potential board candidates to first serve on a committee or task force, or volunteer for the nonprofit in another way, is a good way for both nonprofit and potential board member to find a good fit.

Nominating committee implies that the only function is to nominate board members for election to the board, but that limits our vision of good governance. It's helpful to have a task force or committee of the board authorized not only to identify new board prospects but also to focus on the effectiveness of the board. Serving on a charitable nonprofit's board is about more than just being elected – it requires continuous learning about those served and being an advocate for the mission, making decisions that are in the best interest of the organization, ensuring prudent use of the nonprofit's assets and looking ahead to help the nonprofit plan for the future. All this requires "the vision thing," which is bolstered by ongoing education and exposure to issues that affect the nonprofit's operations – both its external and internal environments. As the name "Governance Committee" suggests, the focus of what used to be called the "nominating committee" is now on effective board governance, and its role goes well beyond nominating. The committee tasked with keeping the board on track is usually also responsible for ensuring that the nonprofit has effective governance practices, that individual board members are engaged, and that the board as a whole is effectively fulfilling its obligations as a steward of the nonprofit's assets, reputation, financial and human resources and mission.

When considering potential board members, we recommend thinking about the Five Ws:

1. Work 2. Wisdom 3. Wealth 4. Wit 5. Wallop

## **Board or Superboard: The engaged board member difference at Moving in the Spirit**

Dana Lupton and Heather Infantry | Georgia Nonprofit NOW, Winter 2014

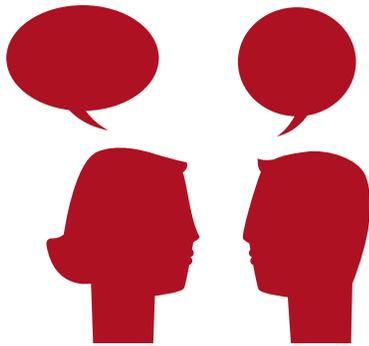
At GCN's annual Board Leadership Clinic, two leaders at member nonprofit Moving in the Spirit, a youth development organization that uses dance to transform kids into leaders, brought a room of executive directors and board members to their feet while teaching them how to achieve an engaged, active board—and what's possible when you do.

We all know a functioning board is essential to a nonprofit's success, yet many organizations struggle with how to engage this well-meaning group of volunteers.

At Moving in the Spirit, we experienced this challenge. That's because time wasn't being made to get to know board members, to challenge them, to check in with them, and more importantly, to celebrate them.

A board engagement process, like the one we have used for five years, goes beyond improving metrics like participation and finances (though that's a vital part!). It's made the overall board experience a joy. We genuinely look forward to board meetings, and we've got a development committee putting "fun" back in fundraising. Instead of, "so who has to go to this event?", we hear, "Oh, I want to go to that one!" and "I'll drive!" In short, our board members are having a blast while furthering our mission.

If you want a vibrant, healthy organization, you need an engaged board, and the only way to get an engaged board is by investing in them. For us, that means focusing on three things: the relationship, the expectations, and the assessment.



## The Relationship

As an executive director, you must know every one of your board members on a personal basis. Their phone numbers should be in your cell phone. You should know what's going on in their lives, the motives driving them to volunteer for your organization and the circumstances affecting their volunteer work. And that's just the start: as you continue to work together your relationship will grow, benefitting everyone involved. After all, relationships are what we're living for, and a board member with a personal bond to the organization is someone who will go the distance for it.

**In short, our board members are having a blast while furthering our mission.**

We start working on the relationship from the very beginning with a deliberate vetting process that can take up to 18 months. When someone is recommended by our team, the first step is a lunch with the ED to start getting to know the candidate and her interests; if the intersection between his or her story and the organization's seems strong, then we'll invite the candidate to tour our theater, attend an event and sit in on a class for an on-the-ground sense of what we do. Then she'll meet with our board chair, and only after that—when we've both invested a pretty good amount of time, not knowing if the invitation will be extended (or accepted)—is the candidate invited to submit a letter of intent and presented to the board.

The letter of intent tells us what a prospective board member thinks she has to give, and what she hopes to gain in return. That's the beginning of the Leadership Plan—our tool for cementing everyone's expectations and making sure we have goals to work toward, discuss and celebrate throughout the year.

## The Expectations

Our board has always been an incredibly intelligent, talented, loving and hard-working group, but they didn't always have the structure—the specific roadmap—they needed to be a successful, high-performing board. That's why we introduced the Leadership Plan, which came directly from our work with teens. Our Outreach Director, Dr. Charné Fucron-Mack, noticed that the students in our program, like our board members, had a strong desire to grow as leaders but needed a path to do so. The solution we designed is a joint process for developing a written development plan, promoting self-evaluation and self-motivated change. We quickly realized it was exactly the mechanism we needed to get our board firing on all cylinders.

The idea behind the Leadership Plan is to make sure all expectations are laid out and agreed upon before a board member his or her tenure. Otherwise, you're setting yourself up for disappointment. It's not enough for a board member to say, "I want to be a champion for the Men in Motion program." In my mind, that might mean she comes to every Men in Motion performance, that she brings friends and kids to explore the possibility of participating, that she's promoting it to her networks; while in her mind, it might mean scoring a \$10,000 donation. Both those expectations are equally exciting; they just miss each other.

The Leadership Plan is a way to align our expectations in order to create a spectacular experience for everyone. It's comprised of a set of goals related to our strategic plan, with a concrete plan to achieve those goals—one that includes specific action steps, a timetable and a way to measure progress.

We work collaboratively on developing the Leadership Plan, with an open, honest conversation about that board member's interests, strengths and capacity. In that conversation, you might discover a board member wants to try a project contrary to what they do professionally. We've had finance folks who serve on the development committee finding greater satisfaction hosting a fundraising dinner than doing the audit review.

The Leadership Plan is a way to align our expectations in order to create a spectacular experience for everyone. We also discuss the kind of support that board member will need from the organization, including staff involvement; at *Moving in the Spirit*, we assign each board member a staff person whose job it is to support the board member in achieving her goals. Staff members are also encouraged to develop their own personal relationships with the board.

The result is a framework that everyone can refer back to throughout the year, and which serves as the basis of each mid-year and year-end assessment.

## **6 Steps To A Leadership Plan**

1. Discuss interests and strengths.
2. Look at where interests and strengths align and develop a set of goals for the year. These goals should all follow the SMART rubric: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound.
3. Create at least one action step for every goal. These should be practical and as specific as possible.
4. Decide on a timetable for achieving each goal.
5. Come up with an evaluation method for each goal—that is, how you will measure what's been accomplished.
6. It's also helpful for everyone to discuss the kinds of support your board member will need to fulfill their goals, including technical considerations and personnel to involve.

## **The Assessment**

We make a point to monitor each board member's progress throughout the year: at board meetings, over the phone, through our calendars (which are all linked) and through our volunteer coordinator. We track hours, we stay abreast, we celebrate steps taken and we always make a point to give "Sunshine," an act of affirmation we use with our students and faculty as well, in which team members pair up to express appreciation for another's work, support and dedication, without being afraid to get specific and personal. In fact, we set aside time at each board meeting for everyone to give Sunshine to each other.

Honest and direct feedback, however, is absolutely critical to engaging board members. As nonprofit leaders, we can sometimes shy away from critiquing board members because we know they're busy professionals, volunteering highly valuable time and expertise. That's something we need to get over. To help, we make the mid-year assessment more of a celebration than an evaluation: a time for us to thank each board member for the gifts they've contributed, to check in and to discuss the work before us.

If we've invested time in the relationship then we should know about any successes or issues by the time we get to the mid-year check-in, and certainly by the end-of-year assessment. If there are issues, we talk them over and revise the Leadership Plan by asking some simple questions: Was this goal realistic? Is the plan too involved, given what's going on in the board member's life?

The point is to make the assessment a conversation—an extension of the relationship—but also to give everyone a structured way to measure progress. During the assessment, both the ED and the board member rate the board member’s performance on each strategic goal using a scale of one to 10: How I think she did, and how she thinks she did. Then we’ll discuss any differences and what, for example, could have made a seven into a 10—which could be as broad as, “I missed a few meetings,” or as specific as, “I wanted to exceed my fundraising target.” And at the end of each year, we decide which ongoing goals we want to continue and consider new goals rooted in the strategic plan.

More importantly, and more frequently, the assessment is helpful in reminding board members of their contributions. Sometimes board members rate themselves harshly, but when we look back on what they have done, more often than not they exceed expectations. Everything is documented and passed on to our board chair so he or she is fully informed about the challenges and accomplishments of the team.

### **The Engaged Board Difference**

Board members are a powerful resource: they propel everything your nonprofit does. It’s the responsibility of every ED to make sure her board functions well. If the only time you interact with them, or they interact with each other, is at your bimonthly board meetings, you’ve got to rethink your role as a partner in leadership. You’ve got to find the time to understand each board member as an individual, with her own life, priorities and goals. And you’ve got to encourage board members to be just as familiar with each other.

We make the mid-year assessment more of a celebration than an evaluation: a time for us to thank each board member and to discuss the work before us.

If it sounds like a lot, it is. If it feels overwhelming, it should. But it’s worth it. One good place to start: at Moving in the Spirit, we schedule social time before each board meeting (not after!) for members to chat with each other, our staff, and the young people we serve. Keep in mind: relationships are fundamental. Everything—the Leadership Plan, the evaluation and the important work your board does—is an extension of the bond you build. Work to make your board more active, accountable and passionate about their work, and they’ll push your organization to fulfill every bit of its promise—then thank you for the opportunity to be a part of it.

Dana Lupton is co-founder, executive director and artistic director at Moving in the Spirit, as well as a performer and teacher of dance.

Heather Infantry is development director and major gifts officer at Moving in the Spirit, and serves on the board of Whitefoord, Inc.

### **The Art of the Ask: Conversation Case Studies**

#### **“Let’s Talk!”**