



LOTUS LETTER

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With Spring soon behind us and Summer on the horizon, this is a perfect time to address the issue of board development. Many organizations I work with seek advice on how to develop their board of directors into a well-functioning team that is involved with programs, fundraising and community outreach as well as guiding the organization through policy development and strategic planning. This edition of the **LOTUS LETTER** focuses on building your board.

Vivian

WHO IS ON YOUR BOARD?

Organizations often seek out attorneys, accountants, marketing directors and other professionals to serve on their board of directors. The thinking goes that if we have an accountant on our board he can assume the treasurer's position and oversee the correctness of our financial statements. We need an attorney so she'll be available to advise on fiduciary responsibilities and review contracts, labor issues and any litigation.

Yet, many see serving on a board as an opportunity to be involved with something different from day to day job responsibilities. It's their chance to network and be involved with other community members while helping those less fortunate. Maybe this is why our boards don't live up to our expectations and members fail to be as engaged as we'd like them to. We want them to "work" in professional roles, yet they're seeking something to do outside of "work."

Best practices: recruit board members who have the skills, abilities and willingness to make your mission happen, not just professionals. Look to your volunteers and donors for passionate board members. Make sure they are a diversified group representative of your clients and community to guarantee an exchange of ideas and perspectives. Use a skills and diversity matrix when identifying board needs and recruiting new members. Create an advisory board of professionals to offer occasional pro bono advice.

FINDING BOARD MEMBERS

More and more websites are popping up that assist nonprofit organizations with finding and matching board members. Most are easy to navigate and require your completing an online form to describe your agency and identify your board needs. Try these:

www.boardnetusa.com

www.volunteermatch.com

Also check out your local volunteer or nonprofit resource center (see Blue Lotus website for links to CA NRCs).

Don't forget to put out a press release to the local media and radio stations and mail it to human resource departments at local corporations, faith based organizations, service clubs, community and senior centers and chambers of commerce and request that they run the announcement in their upcoming newsletter. When you are out and about in the community, be sure to make it known you are seeking new board members and volunteers.

LONG OR SHORT BOARDS

Imposing specific terms of office for board members can keep an organization vibrant and focused by regularly bringing in members with new ideas who are passionate about your mission. Yes, you might lose an active, committed board member, but her time away will invigorate her for a new or different commitment in the future.



PHONE: 562-260-9825 ♦ WWW.BLUELOTUS-CONSULTING.COM ♦ VIVIAN@BLUELOTUS-CONSULTING.COM

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