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# BOARD BREAK

Online Newsletter for Board Members

February 2006

A publication of the  
**CENTER FOR NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT**

An e-newsletter filled with the latest news and resources  
on nonprofit board governance.

Short enough to read on your break!

## IN THIS MONTH'S NEWSLETTER:

- \* **Board Development Available**
- \* **In the News...National and Local Perspectives**
- \* **Tools for Your Board**
- \* **On the Board Member's Nightstand**
- \* **Great Web Links**
- \* **Mark Your Calendar**
- \* **In Next Month's Newsletter**
- \* **Share the Wealth! Tell Others about Board Break!**

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### *Is it Time for Board Development for Your Organization?*

Learn how to govern more effectively and efficiently to help you organization succeed in today's tough environment by taking advantage of the Center's board training services. The Center's board development workshops help nonprofit boards develop better governance skills and learn proven best practices.

The **90 Minute Board Training Presentation** covers:

- Legal and ethical obligations of the board
- Roles and responsibilities of the board/staff/executive director
- Key functions of the board
- Work of the board
- Criteria for an effective board

**Half and Full Day Workshops** provide an interactive environment and a choice of additional topic components including:

- Committee structures and roles
- Emerging trends in governance
- Board passages - What stage is your board in?
- Governance habits
- Ideas for better meetings

The 90-minute presentation includes an interview with the board president to determine areas of emphasis for the training. The half and full day workshops include pre-workshop interviews with the executive director, board president, and other key personnel to provide the customization of the workshop with information about the agency, the current function of the board and board/staff relations.

Rates for board training services range from \$300 - \$1,500 depending on membership status and your agency's budget size.

### **Let Us Help Your Board Rise to the Challenge!**

For more information, [click here](#) or call Sally Lutz at 214-826-3470 ext. 231 to schedule your training for your next board meeting.

## IN LOCAL NEWS

### ***Evaluating the Board for High Performance***

Elliott Stephenson, Principal of WES Training and Consulting, joined our **Board Builder** luncheon session in January to give insight on the topic of board evaluation. Below is a summary of the items that were discussed at the luncheon.

How are we doing as a board and are we doing what is expected of us? These are two critical questions for a nonprofit board, yet often we are too busy to find the answers. Why take our valuable time to do a board evaluation?

BoardSource suggests that board assessment provides board members an opportunity to:

- Reflect on their individual and corporate responsibilities
- Identify different perceptions and opinions among board members
- Point to questions that need attention
- Use the results as a springboard for board improvement
- Increase the level of board teamwork
- Clarify mutual board/staff expectations
- Demonstrate that accountability is a serious organizational value
- Provide credibility with funders and other external audiences
- Look internally in addition to assessing the CEO and programs

Stephenson suggested various methods of evaluation, including:

- a) Self Evaluation: A survey that lets each member evaluate the current board - its strengths and weaknesses, its roles and responsibilities
- b) Board Skills Assessment Survey: A questionnaire that asks: Do we have the correct skills we need on the board to accomplish what we need to do? What skills or characteristics does our next board member need to bring to the table?
- c) Formal Board Evaluation: Similar to a self evaluation, this questionnaire's results are gathered, summarized, reported back and discussed at a board meeting or retreat

In a recent survey conducted by the BoardSource and Stanford University, 38 percent of respondents indicated that their boards formally assess their own performance. Of these, 75 percent use a written survey. The majority of boards that engage in self-assessment do it annually. According to a statewide survey by the Texas Nonprofit Management Assistance Network, the assessment rate of boards is somewhat higher, at 44 percent of the responding boards.

Check out the "Great Web Links" section for a variety of available evaluation tools.



#### **Tools for Your Board**

***Practical, actionable tips you can apply to your board...***



**Q: I keep hearing the term SWOT analysis when we are talking about strategic planning. What is this tool and how is it used?**

A SWOT analysis is an analysis of your organization's **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats. This type of analysis can help your organization in many ways and is often used in the strategic planning process to assess the current state of the organization and external conditions influencing its position and practices.



**Q: How frequently should we consider doing a board assessment or evaluation?**

If your organization and board are not in transition, every 2-3 years is the rule of thumb. An assessment is often part of the pre-work done during a strategic planning process or in conjunction with other significant events in the life of an organization, such as an important fundraising campaign or a major crisis.

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## On the Board Member's Nightstand

### **Self-Assessment for Nonprofit Governing Boards Kit**

**By: BoardSource**

Self-Assessment for Nonprofit Governing Boards helps boards determine how well they are carrying out their responsibilities and identify areas that need improvement. Board members complete the confidential questionnaires to evaluate the board's performance and their own contributions. Your board members' responses will help identify the strengths and weaknesses of your current board with questions focused on ten key areas of board responsibility. A 60-page user's guide leads facilitators through the process and provides sample forms and instructions for tabulating the results. The kit serves as ideal preparation for a board retreat and a valuable resource for consultants and others who promote good governance.

For more information or to order this book, [click here](#).



### **Great Web Links**

Below are web site links that provide guidance in Board Evaluation:

- o [http://www.managementhelp.org/org\\_eval/uw\\_brd.htm](http://www.managementhelp.org/org_eval/uw_brd.htm)
- o [http://www.managementhelp.org/boards/brd\\_eval.htm](http://www.managementhelp.org/boards/brd_eval.htm)
- o [http://garberconsulting.com/governance\\_checkup1.htm](http://garberconsulting.com/governance_checkup1.htm)
- o <http://www.kintera.org/atf/cf/{6E82A132-D7FC-40A8-82E0-B3F53D775F45}/Discussion%20Questions%20for%20Board%20Self.doc>

### **Mark Your Calendar**

#### ***Nonprofit Breakfast Bite: "Let's Form a Committee...Right?"***

**Tuesday, February 28, 7:30 - 9:00 a.m.**

Committees are formed to solve problems, but more often than we like, they create problems. Governance expert Jonathan D. Schick explores what frequently goes wrong with board committees and how to avoid those common pitfalls. Participants will learn the latest wisdom about structuring committees, the when and how of forming task-forces and best practices to ensure strategic and effective committee work.

[Register now!](#) The fee for this session is \$25 for members, \$35 for non-members and includes continental breakfast.

#### ***From Donor Fatigue to Resiliency to Uplift: Not Just Another 1-Day Workshop***

**With National Expert Charles Maclean**

**Thursday, March 2, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

**For board members who "make the ask" this session is a must to gain the knowledge and skills to:**

- \* Avoid triggering the 6 kinds of donor fatigue
- \* Shift fatigue to resilience, uplift and the "giver's high"
- \* Prevent and recover from broken pledges
- \* Claim the benefits of best, lapsed and lost donor debriefings
- \* Contract with donors for a lifetime of sustainable giving
- \* Position your nonprofit to become the donor's choice
- \* And more!

The fee for this session, which will be held at the Center for Community Cooperation, is \$150 for members and \$180 for non-members, which includes lunch and a package of pre- and post-workshop sustained learning activities. [Register now!](#)

#### ***SPECIAL INVITATION - Building Earned Income through Social Enterprise***

**Monday, March 6, 8:15 am to 12 pm**

In partnership with the McCune Foundation and an anonymous national foundation, the Center will host a special, half-day presentation featuring several leading organizations that are advancing social enterprise around the country.

Are you looking for an innovative way to increase your unrestricted revenue or do you have an idea for a business venture that could earn income and help your organization achieve its mission? This session will introduce nonprofit leaders to

social enterprise through a series of discussions and case studies of innovative earned income work going on nationwide and how these ideas can be applied to your organization.

**Bill Shore**, internationally known author and executive director of Share Our Strength, will give a keynote address followed by brief presentations from other nonprofit experts.

Presenters include:

- **Alfred Wise & Amy Celep** of Community Wealth Ventures
- **Ben Litalien**, President of Social Franchise Ventures
- **Tim Zak**, President of the Pittsburgh Social Enterprise Accelerator

The fee for this session, which will be held at the Communities Foundation of Texas, is \$25 and includes continental breakfast. Space is limited, so please register early to ensure your reservation. Payment must be made in advance in order to attend. [Register now!](#)

**Board Builder Luncheon:**

**[Straight Talk about Strategic Planning](#)**

**March 15, 11:30 a.m. -1 p.m.**

**Speaker: Betty Richardson, Nonprofit Management Consultant**

Every board development effort emphasizes the central role that strategic planning plays in laying the foundation for strong governance, sound management, effective fundraising and the solid evaluation of mission fulfillment. Experienced board volunteers know that the process can be time consuming and tedious, with uncertain results. Others envision their involvement as limited to the reviewing and rubber-stamping of a staff-created document at the annual half-day board retreat. Still others fear to rock the organizational boat when “things are going so well,” fearing that a closer examination of individual agendas would reveal different, competing assumptions about the purpose and direction of the organization and the board’s role. Despite the risks and challenges entailed by the strategic planning process, its value for renewing board and staff commitment to organizational purpose and mission endures. Join independent nonprofit consultant and strategic planning expert Betty Richardson for some straight talk and lively discussion about this critical practice in nonprofit governance. Seating is limited to 30, please register early.

The fee for each lunch session is \$25 for members, \$35 for non-members. This session will be held at the Center, 2902 Floyd, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Lunch is included. [Register now!](#)

**Save the Date: 2006 Get On Board Fair – May 16**

Are you looking for new blood on your organization’s board? Mark your calendar for the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual, Get On Board Fair on Tuesday, May 16 at the Conference Center at Cityplace. This is a unique opportunity for your organization to visit with potential board members who possess special skills and represent a diverse segment of our community. Booths are now available to member organizations. Non-members will have access to registration on April 3.

[Click here](#) to download an exhibitor registration form to secure your spot now.

For more information, [click here](#) or call Amanda Smithson at 214-826-3470 ext. 232.

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**In Coming Newsletters**

Don’t miss these upcoming topics...

- Executive director assessments- Is your organization doing them? How to make it easier for your board.
- Highlights from March’s Board Builder session, “[Straight Talk about Strategic Planning](#)”

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**Share the Wealth! Tell other board members about *Board Break!***

Do you know someone who would be interested in receiving ***Board Break!***

E-mail Nichole Tilson at [tilson@cnmdallas.org](mailto:tilson@cnmdallas.org) with e-mails to add or

[click here to sign up now!](#)

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Send comments and questions to [sally.lutz@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sally.lutz@sbcglobal.net).

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