

Great Board Dynamics

“Remember – the key to failure is trying to please everyone.”

1st Priority: The Mission

2nd Priority: The Needs of the Board

3rd Priority: The Needs of the Individual

- Not we can't — but how can we...
- Need the desire to win and willing to put in the time to accomplish the mission.
- Be willing to let someone else win...be willing to sit on the bench.
- Be willing to be personally accountable – no finger pointing.
- Use mistakes to empower and strengthen the Board.
- Participants must be willing to submit to the board's Code of Honor.
- Does the board member bring a unique talent and ability?

Great Board Communications

- Everyone must have a genuine interest in the mission of the board and in the well-being of other board members.
- Listen...to other board members. Speak “not” in response to what they say BUT to what they're thinking.
- Articulate what you want to say clearly and briefly – get to the point!

Idea #1 – When making a decision regarding an issue, there should be no discussion on the item at the board meeting unless there is a motion and a 2nd to the motion. There should be no surprises for the board or the manager at the meetings.

Idea #2 - Create a Consent Calendar to approve routing items such as minutes, the financial report, resolutions, committee reports, etc.

- Verify you have been heard by asking the other person to repeat what you've said and vice versa.
- Create a Code of Honor for the board and for the committees.

Meeting Your Objectives

Having a planning process to define the board's objectives should create a cohesive and positive board culture rather than a collection of individuals' objectives. It takes courage to make this leap because it is a different “management model” for community associations than what our industry has used during the past 25 years. Some managers are already using this approach with great success. It takes a new kind of leadership, constructive leadership, to make us face the reality that the old way doesn't work any more. Easier said than done? I don't think so.

Let's explore some aspects for policy governance; leadership skill set, consensus driven decisions and strategies, the one voice principal, and good ole' fashioned teamwork!

Leadership for the 21st Century

What kind of leadership skills will it take to lead community associations into the new century and what kind of expectations should board members have of each other? Creating and communicating vision is important in making sure board members work in concert with each other and with their defined policies. Promoting and initiating change will require a leader

IN THE LAST ISSUE OF VISION MAGAZINE, In the Boardroom, discussed the importance of building a strong board that governs by making policy, rather than by “managing” the community. Governance is having a vision and giving direction to those who are implementing board policies.

who can recognize that our communities are constantly evolving, both culturally and in managing the day-to-day operations. For example, leaders in a community with small children will need to adapt as they grow and become teenagers. The needs and challenges of the community will certainly require it.

Leaders will also need to recognize that building partnerships and utilizing key resources outside the norm will force communities to value diversity, rather than stay inside the fence lines. There isn't any “one size fits all” service provider or contractor for an association. Specialized services continue to evolve to respond to the growing needs of communities.

Managing information and technology will require a leader who can envision integration of web sites, intranet services, cable TV stations, and other technology owners will want to utilize. And last but definitely not least; 21st

century leaders will need to know how to achieve balance. A leader should know when to take a step back or recognize the importance of being in the moment. Remember – motivation is self-focused and inspiration is other focused.

Use Consensus Driven Governance

Consensus means the majority determines the decisions with the minority supporting the decisions. The majority and the minority respect the opinions of each participant and the decisions made. Consensus also means that there should be no dissention or divisiveness in front of the community or the media. By only taking care of yourself, you jeopardize the results of the whole.

One of the greatest challenges your board and community will face is reconciling the thoughts, ideas, & perceptions of each individual director and the owners into a single management plan supported by all.



Using a consensus driven approach to making policy (governance) is highly effective and leads the board to the single management plan. It naturally lends itself to understanding and respecting the various community views and observations. Remember... the board is charged with authority and accountability - not the board members. This is known as the one voice principal.

A critical step to switch to the governance model requires the board to employ the "one voice" policy. This step will also strengthen the board as a team by asking them to focus on what is good for the board and not what is good for the individual board members. The "one voice" principal makes it possible to know what the board has said and

what it has not said. Board decisions can be changed by the board but never by board members.

Ole' Fashioned Teamwork

All great teams become great by taking on challenge, adversity and pressure and seeing themselves through it together. Governance and the one voice policy bring back into focus the dynamics of good old fashioned team building.

A key element to working

with one voice is creating and living by a "Code of Honor" (or Code of Conduct) for board members and committee members. The code holds your team together under pressure and protects all its members when things get crazy.

Always remember the code rule of a successful team - "Never Abandon a Teammate in Need." Let's apply the following principles to the board of directors.

Being on a board of directors for a community

association creates powerful partnerships. Positive collaboration gives such great incentives to the owners in the community. Strong reserves, excellent financial condition, current maintenance for the sticks and the bricks and most importantly, a true sense of "community" are the ultimate rewards.

Next Issue: Understanding Fiduciary Roles in the Boardroom

Creating and communicating vision is important in making sure board members work in concert with each other and their defined policies.