

# NOFA Vermont Direct Marketing Conference

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Boarding 2.0

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## Caveat

With Boards (and probably most everything else in life), size matters and one size or approach doesn't fit all.



# Board Quiz

True or False?

- 1) Boards must focus on long-range strategic planning and policy . . . Not operations.
- 2) Boards need committees to do homework of the Board.
- 3) Board members should have term limits.
- 4) Boards should not be smaller than 9 persons or bigger than 20 persons.



# Board Life Cycles

1. Infancy (start up or start over)
2. Juvenile (growth)
3. Adolescence (growth and decline spurts)
4. Maturity (established)

Know where you are!



# Infancy Stage

- Founders
- Does the work of organization
- Grassroots
- Evaluation – next week, next month, next year
- Service providers first and foremost
- Uncertainty prevails



# Juvenile Stage

- Often some staff hired . . . Often for “support”
- Focus still on operations
- Starts to see need for more systems/role clarification
- Reluctant to make big changes



# Adolescence Stage

- Staff provides services and support
- Board in gray area
- Different skills needed – fundraising, financial oversight, addressing “governance” responsibilities
- Staff the driving force
- Boards often struggle, loss of dedicated board and staff occur
- Episodes of chaos, confusion, absenteeism, poor productivity are common



# Mature Stage

- Roles/responsibilities between staff (mainly executive director) and Board established and clear
- Both sides hold each other accountable
- Board governs / staff manage = the partnership leads
- But the relationship can get unbalanced – either Board-centric or staff-centric
- Can have a false sense of security and unexpected or unplanned events can be devastating





# Know What Stage You Are In

- Take stock
- Assess external circumstances
- Identify needs and activities
- Fill in the gaps
- Reach out and take action; get the skills, training, concepts that are right for the stage you are in . . . Or more importantly, the stage you want to be in!



No Matter What Stage You Are In . . .

What is the Board Role  
and How Is It Changing in 2012?



## Dictionary Definition of Boards

A board of directors is an “organized body of administrators” who “supervise, control, or manage.”


This definition is archaic and an invitation for disaster.



# To govern, not manage


Not to direct the work or make operational decisions (manage). Rather, governance is a separate process and a distinct part of leadership. Board governance relates to decisions that:

- 1) define expectations,
- 2) grant power, and
- 3) verify performance.



“Ah, the temptation is great – but keep your hands out of the operation! Trustees are not to manage the institution, but to make certain that it is managed well.”

*- Jerald Panas*



If you don't want board members involved in the daily business of the organization, why give them an invitation by reporting to them about daily activities?

*- Anonymous Administrator*