

Graham Corporate Communications IAPD Webinar 3

Your Board and Your Strategic Plan

Mission: *Where we are going.*

Strategic Plan: *The roadmap for getting there*

- ◆ Boards use strategic plans to keep their organization and staff focused in the right direction.
The staff manages the journey. They decide the trip details.
- ◆ Board members and staff have valuable, distinct responsibilities. Problems will occur when responsibilities are confused.
- ◆ This program will review many of the structures and concepts that can help board members successfully achieve their mission.

Learning Outcomes:

- ◆ Understand your board's value, role and responsibilities.
- ◆ Learn your strategic plan's value for keeping all stakeholders in their lane and helping everyone stay focused on the mission.
- ◆ Review pitfalls and precautions for boards and strategic planning.

Thanks to Bob Harris, CAE of: THE NONPROFIT CENTER, *promoting the association management profession*,
for his guidance, content and generosity: bob@rchcae.com

Perspective:

- ◆ Boards guide their organization towards a successful future. They accomplish this task by flying high above the “day to day”.
- ◆ Staff uses ground transportation. Given guidance and support from the big world view, they decide details of moving forward.

Trip Objectives: *The Governing Documents*

- ◆ **Mission**– Statement submitted to the IRS.
(supplemented with vision and values statements.)
- ◆ **Articles of Incorporation** – State approved.
- ◆ **Bylaws** – Relationship between Board and Membership.

As well as:

- ◆ **Policies** - Prior Boards' Wisdom through Experience
- ◆ **Strategic Plan** – Roadmap for the Board.

**Your board's
value, role and responsibilities.**

Corpus

Your board is like a corporate body ...

- Each body part has a different job
 - You accepted the role of brain,
don't try to be the legs.

Good Board Values

- ◆ Honest
- ◆ Transparent
- ◆ Accountable
- ◆ Respectful
- ◆ Engaged
- ◆ Effective

If you can't do these, the board may not be a good fit.

Your Board's Role

A board of directors' primary role:

- ◆ Govern (*not manage*) the organization.
- ◆ Set a strategic direction with a plan.
- ◆ Set policies and positions.
- ◆ Protect assets.
- ◆ Represent stakeholder/the public interests.
- ◆ Be a fiduciary (*usually: legally and ethically responsible.*)

Top Ten Board Responsibilities (6-10)

10. Leadership Sustainability

- ◆ Identify, ask, train potential leaders. Do you know someone who should replace you?

9. Legal and Ethical Integrity

- ◆ Comply with all laws, disclose conflicts of interest.
- ◆ Do you avoid all risks? How often do you disclose conflicts?

8. Promotion of the Organization

- ◆ Can you express the mission and goals? Could you do it in an elevator?
- ◆ Do you know who officially speaks for your organization?

7. Program Development

- ◆ Do you know your benefits? Programs? Services?
- ◆ Do you drop programs that exhaust resources or don't advance your mission?

6. Oversight of Resources

- ◆ Do you monitor and protect resources as you make governance decisions?

Top Ten Board Responsibilities (1-5)

5. Ensure Sufficient Resources

- ◆ Create a budget, raise funds and maximize resources.
- ◆ Are you familiar with your annual budget, your savings, your assets?

4. Strategic Planning

- ◆ Develop and monitor your realistic strategic plan (3 to 5 years) Do you know it?

3. Evaluate Performance

- ◆ Evaluate the executive director's performance, monitor the budget, track the strategic plan, and evaluate board performance.
- ◆ Do your performance metrics measure activity? Customer outcomes?

2. Select the Executive Director *(and maybe CFO and legal voice)*

- ◆ Create and maintain a true partnership with the chief executive.

1. Advance the Mission

- ◆ The mission frames all board discussions and actions. *Do you know your mission?*
- ◆ *You should!*

Top Ten Board Responsibilities

Anything missing?

1. Advance the Mission
2. Select the Executive Director
3. Evaluate Performance
4. Strategic Planning
5. Ensure Sufficient Resources
6. Oversight of Resources
7. Program Development
8. Promotion of the Organization
9. Legal and Ethical Integrity
10. Leadership Sustainability

Your strategic plan's value:

- **Keeping all stakeholders in their lanes**
- **Helping everyone stay focused on your mission.**

Your strategic plan's value

Talk less, and carry a good strategic plan

A strategic plan:

- ◆ Focuses on the future: success, survival, impact ...
- ◆ Usually contains the mission, vision and values.
- ◆ Describes long-term goals, updated strategies, and even tactics to track success.
- ◆ Is the guide for successive leaders.

Your strategic plan's value

Talk less, and carry a good strategic plan

You could say:

- ◆ *“Would this motion align with our mission?”*
- ◆ *“Does this conversation address one of our goals?”*
- ◆ *“Are we now discussing a topic better left for the staff?”*
- ◆ *“Do we have the resources for that strategy this year?”*

**Pitfalls and precautions for
boards and strategic planning.**

Board **Pitfalls:**

- ◆ I can miss, I don't really do anything.
Absentee board members: You have to show up!
- ◆ What's our mission again?
Stay mission focused.
- ◆ It's not connected to anything, but it's a good idea, right?
Stay goal aligned.
- ◆ I've been on a board. Do we need orientation?
All boards are different.
- ◆ Explain this little number in the budget.
Can you see weeds at 50K feet?
- ◆ Board meetings are not committee meetings:
Send reports in advance

Strategic Planning **Pitfalls:**

- ◆ Low expectations: Why are we here?
Strategize for the organization's future
- ◆ You'll love it, the retreat is an opportunity for bonding.
Let them know their purpose in advance.
- ◆ We are starting over! The old plan never worked.
Build from the last plan or you will need a lot more time!
- ◆ Everybody knows their job!
Give them their responsibilities for leadership in writing.
- ◆ It's noisy, but it's free!
Find workable place for focused, undistracted.
- ◆ We have lots of activities planned so it won't be boring!
Stay mission focused and results oriented.

Mission Statement

A statement required for most organizations in IRS Form 990 and the bylaws. (It should line up with the statement of purpose.)

It should answer:

- ◆ Who are we?
- ◆ Who do we serve?
- ◆ What do we offer?

while being ...

- both motivating and easy-to-say,
- usually in one sentence.

The mission, vision and values help distinguish an organization from others with similar purposes.

Mission Statement **Pitfalls**:

- ♦ Active: *serving* | Passive: *to serve*
- ♦ Clear: *promotes, advances* | Soft: *possible, potential, offer*
- ♦ Avoid hoping for competent: *to be recognized ...*
- ♦ Avoid repeating or nuancing: i.e.- find one word for ...
commerce, business & industry
- ♦ Avoid excessive adjectives: “*leader*” doesn’t need “*strong*”
“*advocate*” doesn’t need “*proactive*”
- ♦ Think results: *developing, promoting and pursuing*
over activities: *providing opportunities*
- ♦ Be Repeatable: *20-25 words are plenty.*

6 Steps to a Mission Statement for Water.org

1. Why do you exist? (problem/needs)
Millions lack access to safe water
2. What's the broadest way to describe the work? (1-5 word answer)
Providing clean drinking water
3. For whom do you do this work?
For people without access to clean drinking water
4. Where do you work? (geographic boundaries)
In developing countries
5. What type of entity/program?
a nonprofit, volunteer program, event, business, etc.
6. Review your answers, delete unnecessary words, and craft your statement.
WATER is a non-profit organization bringing clean, safe drinking water to people in developing nations.
(15 words)

Graham Corporate Communications

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and the simple powerful®*

Bill@GrahamCC.com

CONTACT: Bill Graham
917-705-0663
www.GrahamCC.com