

# COMMITTEE ANSWERS

Forms and Templates  
for More Effective Committees



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**Note:** The Committee tips and templates represent good advice gathered from successful associations and chambers. The intent is to support successful committee work. Make use of the many free resources.

### Committee Management Manual – 18 pages

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/cmudk3x4aeu92qt/Committee%20Management%20Final%209-21.pdf?dl=0>

# COMMITTEE ORIENTATION WORKBOOK



**Improve  
Committee  
Outcomes**  
18-pages  
*New Edition*



**SCAN ME**

**RCH CAE**  
RobertCHarris, CAE



## Committee Guide “Cheat Sheet” (2 pages)

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/ceqa33r1s4wr3ex/Committee%20Responsibilities%20%20pg%20Guide%202022.pdf?dl=0>

# COMMITTEE

## RESPONSIBILITIES

Committees are an integral part of successful organizations. Their purposes include: supplementing the work of the board and staff; engaging members; and developing leaders. The *Committee Responsibilities* guide clarifies responsibilities, authority, recommendations, smart practices, trends and risk avoidance.

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center; background-color: yellow;"><b>Types of Committees</b></p> <p><b>Standing Committees</b> are identified in the bylaws and serve the duration of the year.</p> <p><b>Subcommittees</b> divide work amongst subgroups.</p> <p><b>Task Forces and Ad Hoc Committees</b> are appointed for a specific purpose. The committee disbands after completing the assignment. Because volunteers have limited time, consider using task forces or <b>Quick Action Teams</b> (similar to task forces but even shorter duration.)</p> <p><b>Councils, Think Tanks, Brain-Trusts, Strike-Forces and Special Interest Groups</b> are other committee names, often created to engage persons with similar interests, such as practice specialty, geography or ethnicity.</p> | <p>Use a <b>vice-chair</b> or <b>co-chair</b> for sustainability. The position supports the chair and may become next year's leader.</p> <p><b>Committee liaisons</b> serve as an advocate and champion. A <u>board liaison</u> is the communication channel between the committee and board. The <u>staff liaison</u> is a link to management and resources.</p> <p style="text-align: center; background-color: yellow;"><b>Alignment in the Organization</b></p> <p>Committees have a “fit” within the organization. Each has an explicit purpose often identified in the <b>governing documents</b> (bylaws, policies or committee purpose statements.)</p> <p>Efforts of the committee should align with the organization's structure, strategic goals and resources. An org-chart will depict hierarchy and the relationship to the board and staff.</p> <p style="text-align: center; background-color: yellow;"><b>Trends in Committees</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no “sacred cows.” Is the committee necessary?</li> <li>Elimination of standing committees in favor of task forces.</li> <li>Committees are all aligned with the organization's strategic goals.</li> <li>Technology use, on-line meetings and committee web portals.</li> <li>No silos. Committees should interface with other committees to collaborate.</li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center; background-color: yellow;"><b>Outcomes and Recommendations</b></p> <p>Committees should produce <i>results</i>. For example, instance, creating new educational content, programs, publications, fund raising, a robust special interest section or enhancements in the organization.</p> <p>Most efforts by a committee will require approval by the board. <i>Recommendations</i> should be in the form of a motion or resolution. A request to the board should be explicitly clear so that directors understand and approve.</p> <p>When setting committee goals, be realistic about what can be achieved. Break projects into monthly or quarterly steps.</p> <p style="text-align: center; background-color: yellow;"><b>Committee Resources</b></p> <p>Resources take the form of time and money:</p> <p><b>Finances</b> – The annual budget may have allocations for committees.</p> <p><b>Time</b> – Consider the value of a committee meeting by multiplying the # of persons involved x the length of the meeting x \$50 hour wage/vale (minimum).</p> <p><b>Information</b> – “Read to Lead.” Know the mission, bylaws, policies, strategic plan, budget and organizational chart.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p style="color: red; font-style: italic;">“Some committees keep minutes and waste hours.”</p> </div> |
|---|---|---|

**Chairs and Liaisons**

Every committee needs leadership.

The **chair** should have the best understanding of the purpose of the committee and the immediate tasks. He or she sets the tone for achieving results and engaging volunteers. The chair should be able to communicate a clear vision and desired outcomes.

## Committee Sunset Process

### Sunrise and Sunset Application

This is a request to ☐ SUNSET<sup>1</sup> (terminate) or ☐ SUNRISE (establish) a committee or task force<sup>2</sup>. Please complete and submit to the CEO or Board of Directors.

Committee Name or Proposed Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. Does the committee or task force advance our mission statement?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

2. Does the committee or task force align with the strategic plan (goals and/or strategies?) ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Please explain:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Does the termination, creation, or merger of this committee impact organizational resources, (funds, time, staff, volunteers?)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. In a short statement provide the rationale for your recommendation:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Action by the Board of Directors:

☐ Agree ☐ Deny ☐ Study ☐ Delay

\_\_\_\_\_  
<sup>1</sup> A Sunset provision is used by government bodies to review, justify, or eliminate a program. The Sunrise process addresses new programs. Both should include rationale and performance expectations.

<sup>2</sup> A task force disbands after completion of its purpose; a standing committee serves continuously.

## Volunteer Consent to Serve

I have been nominated, asked, or expressed an interest in serving in a board or committee role in the organization. Should I be elected or appointed, I will act responsibly and prudently, and I consent to the following:

### ☐ RESPONSIBILITIES

I understand the roles and responsibility of this position and have thoroughly reviewed the position description and have asked or will ask any questions I have regarding the post.

### ☐ ORIENTATION

I understand that I will be provided with orientation materials which includes general information about nonprofit service, current policies, background on the organization, recent activities, and other information relevant to my duties and I commit to reading this information prior to my first meeting.

### ☐ ACCOUNTABILITY

I understand that I may or will have legal, fiscal, and ethical<sup>3</sup> responsibility for the well-being of the organization. As such, I accept it as my responsibility to:

- Be familiar with and protect organizational resources, funds, and intellectual property.

- Understand the applicable policies and programs and oversee or support their implementation.
- Be responsible for making decisions on organization issues and matters, by being an active participant at meetings.
- Respect the organization's values and recognize the official channels of communication.
- Stay current on the programs of the organization and the environment in which it operates.
- Excuse myself from discussions, decisions, and votes where I may have a conflict of interest.
- Adhere to state and federal laws, as well as the organization's governing documents.

### ☐ ATTENDANCE

I understand attendance at meetings, in person or by technology, is considered mandatory, recognizing that occasional absences may be excused. I will do everything

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<sup>3</sup> Conducting myself with integrity and excellence.

possible to be present at duly called meetings. I understand absence as defined in the bylaws or policies may be cause for dismissal.

#### ☐ **COOPERATION**

I understand that I will work in good faith with my fellow volunteers and professional staff in a constructive, collegial manner toward the achievement of the organization's goals.

#### ☐ **PREPARATION**

I understand effective meetings and tasks require that I prepare by reading and asking questions.

#### ☐ **FIDUCIARY**

I understand that I have fiduciary duties, including the principles of organizational loyalty, care, and obedience.

#### ☐ **DISMISSAL**

I understand that if I fail to fulfill these commitments to the organization, the chief elected officer, chief staff officer, or the executive committee may call upon me to discuss my responsibilities. Should there be a time where I am no longer able to fulfill my obligations to the organization, it will be my responsibility to resign my position.

#### **THEREFORE.**

As a volunteer, I understand that the organization has a responsibility to me in the following ways:

1. I will be provided with information updates about policies, resources, and finances at meetings.
2. Opportunities will be provided for me to discuss with officers and/or staff the organization's programs, goals, activities, and status.
3. I can expect transparency and responsiveness so that I can fulfill my fiscal, legal, and ethical responsibilities to the organization.
4. I will work as a team in good faith towards achievement of our goals.
5. If the organization does not fulfill its commitments to me, I may call upon chief elected officer or executive director to discuss the organization's responsibilities.
6. My liabilities may be reduced through insurance, incorporation, volunteer immunity, and/or indemnification so long as I am prudent and follow governing and legal parameters.

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**Print Name**

**Signature**

**Date**

## Frame Committee Motions



### FRAME COMMITTEE MOTIONS

1. Is it within the **SCOPE** of the committee's focus?
2. Does it advance the **MISSION** statement?
3. What **RESOURCES** are required?
4. How does it benefit the entire **MEMBERSHIP**?
5. Are we **LEGALLY** allowed to do it?
6. Does it fit within our **VALUES**?
7. Is it part of the **STRATEGIC PLAN**?
8. Will it set a **PRECEDENT**?
9. Does it reflect our **FIDUCIARY DUTY** to protect assets and the wellness of the organization?



## Committee Report Form

**Directions:** Each committee should complete one of these forms and return it to their liaison 10 days prior to the board meeting, so it can be included in the agenda packet.

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee name: \_\_\_\_\_

Most recent meeting date: \_\_\_\_\_

Issue(s) in question: \_\_\_\_\_

This committee is:

Reporting with no action ☐

Reporting Submitted in Writing ☐

Recommending board action ☐

Oral report to be given ☐

Time Needed \_\_\_\_\_

Funds Needed \_\_\_\_\_ Budgeted Yes \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Background information and possible impact of the issue(s) being studied:

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Recommendation for board action, if any (state in the form of a motion to be acted upon by the full board):

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Approved by BOD \_\_\_\_\_ Denied by BOD \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Committee Minutes Template

*Form 990 IRS queries if the organization document (minutes) meetings of the board and committees with authority to act on behalf of the governing body.*

Name of Committee: \_\_\_\_\_ Date and Time of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Staff or Liaisons Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Members Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Minutes/Discussions:

Motions/Recommendations:

A.

B.

C.

Economic Impact/Funding Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Collaborate with Other Committee(s)? \_\_\_No \_\_\_Yes Which Committees?

Signature of Chair or Acting Chair X \_\_\_\_\_

## Meeting Ground Rules

Discuss and set “ground rules” or guidelines for effective meetings at the start of the year.

- ☐ Meetings start and end on **time**.
- ☐ Turn off digital **distractions**.
- ☐ Treat discussions and documents with **confidentiality**.
- ☐ If you **arrive late**, please refrain from voting until the next agenda item so as not to interrupt the flow of discussion of those who arrived on time.
- ☐ An **agenda** will be distributed # \_\_\_\_ days in advance; it will be the primary guide for discussions and decisions.
- ☐ If you have “**new business**,” present it in advance of the meeting for proper preparation and placement.
- ☐ Avoid meeting **distractions and sidebar conversations**.
- ☐ Be prepared by **reviewing the materials in before** the meeting.
- ☐ Many **questions can be answered in advance** if you’ll direct them to officers, staff, and committees before the day of the meeting.
- ☐ **Minutes** will document decisions and actions of the meeting.
- ☐ **Majority decisions** of the group shall stand; expressing **dissenting opinions** after the meeting is inappropriate.
- ☐ Respect **diverse ideas and people**.
- ☐ Be sure everyone has an opportunity to speak before **speaking again**.
- ☐ Avoid **regurgitating information** and decisions that have already be processes.
- ☐ Be **accountable** for commitments you make.
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

## The Purpose of Committees

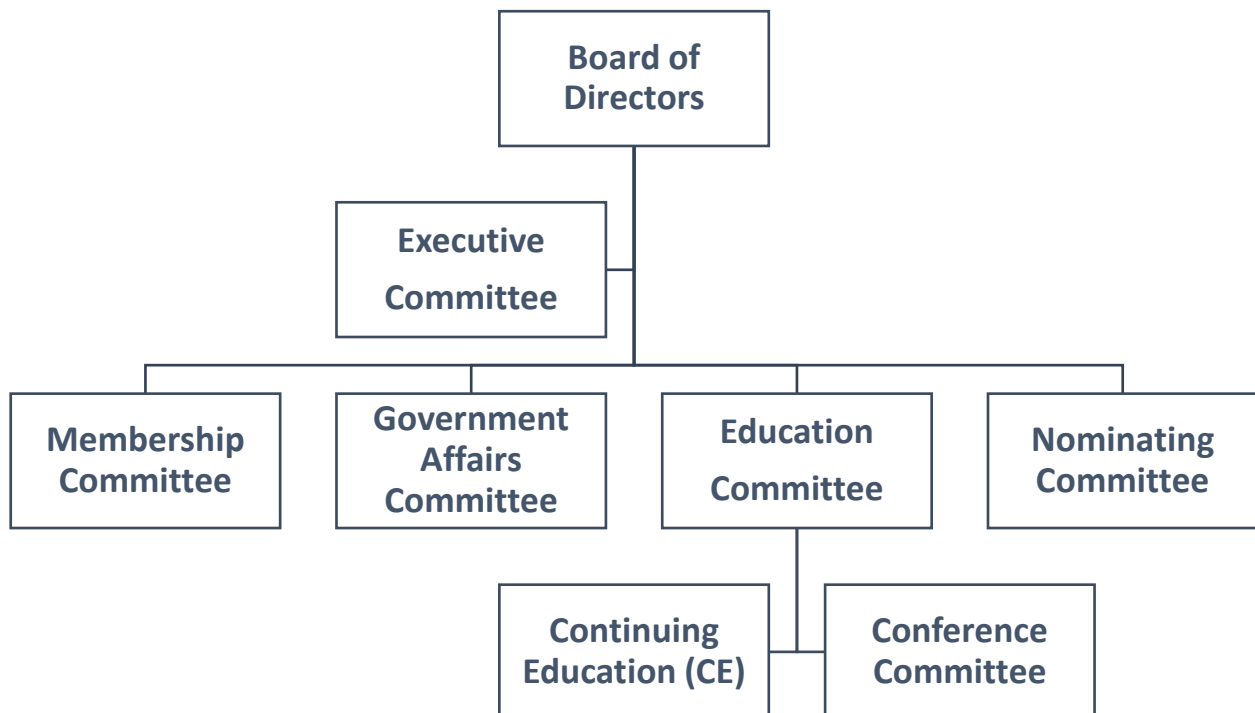
Committees supplement the work of the board of directors. They provide knowledge, time, and resources that the board and staff may not have.

Some of the most successful associations rely on committees to develop educational programs, research, fund raising and more.

Committees are a way to engage members and increase their understanding of the organization while developing leadership skills.

Committees get their *authority* from the governing documents and their *assignments* from the board of directors.

They are linked to the organization through channels of communication. The chart depicts relationship of committees to the board of directors. These committees are common in state associations. The bylaws identify the standing committees.



Though they have a relationship with the board, many organizations maintain a policy that committees *do not have authority* to contract or speak for the board without a specific mandate.



## Precautions

While committees are an asset, there are some concerns with unwieldy committee management.

- Too many committees.
- Poor committee leadership.
- Committees that exist but have minimal value or purpose.
- Lack of alignment between committees and the strategic plan.
- Disconnect between the board and committees.
- Exceeding authority.
- Board rehashing committee results at the board table.
- Keeping committees because they've always existed.

## Relation to the Strategic Plan

The strategic plan, a 3-to-5-year roadmap for the board and staff, should drive committee initiatives.



## Types of Committees

There are different kinds of committees serving varying purposes.

**Standing committees** are named in the bylaws and serve the duration of the term of the chief elected officer. They are assumed to continuously function.

**Task forces** or **ad hoc committees** are appointed for a specific purpose and disband when the work is done. To accommodate busy volunteers, many organizations prefer task forces over standing committees.

Other committee-like entities include subcommittees used to break up tasks into smaller work groups. Councils and special interest groups (SIGs) are often made of members with similar interests, such as ethnicity, practice setting or specialty. Be creative with volunteer groups with names like Quick Action Team, Project Teams, Brain Trusts, Strike Forces and Micro-Tasks.

### **Review the Committee Structure**

Periodically review the committee structure to determine if changes are warranted, possibly eliminating, or merging committees that have outlived their usefulness. This is often done under the process of a comprehensive “governance review” or by the incoming chief elected officer or immediately following strategic planning.

### **Composition of a Committee**

The committee composition should reflect the organization’s membership, including striving for diversity. Committees are a good way to engage members and thus should avoid being composed exclusively of board members.

It may be that the board appoints the committee members. Or, the board only appoints the committee chair --- and he or she in turn invites persons to join the committee. A call for committee volunteers is a way to promote and identify member interest (sample provided in the appendix).

### **Purpose Statements and Assignments**

Each committee should have a clear, concise purpose statement or mission. Purpose statements are likely to remain unchanged from year to year.



After the appointment of the committee chairs comes an assignment of tasks or current year charges.

## Assigning Current Year Tasks and KPIs

It is the committee's responsibility to advance its mission and complete its assignments. In some cases, if the work of the committee is not completed in a year it may roll over as a task for the ensuing year. (Well drafted reports and minutes will allow next year's committee to build off this year's committee accomplishments.)

Sample committee charge for 12 months:

| Committee  | Mission/Purpose Statement  | Assignments – Tasks - Charges   |
|------------|--|---|
| Membership | The mission is to recruit new members by developing a sustainable growth plan and at the same time, monitor retention. The committee should monitor member needs and the value of membership; recommending adjustments to benefits and services accordingly. | <p>1<sup>st</sup> quarter – focus on student members and increase by 10%.</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> quarter – create a campaign where board members can approach prospects.</p> <p>Overall – ensure that retention remains above 85%.</p> |



## Committee Liaisons – Staff and Board

Liaisons keep open communications between the board and the committee and serve as an advocate. A **board liaison** is a member of the board who is assigned to assist and report on committee progress.

A **staff liaison** is assigned to serve as a resource and promote progress. Liaisons do not replace the authority of a committee chair.

## Distinction between the Committee Chair and the Members

The appointed chair, and possibly a vice chair, have responsibility for managing the efforts and ensuring progress. This chart compares the roles of the committee chair to the members.

| Responsibility            | Committee Chair<br>  | Committee Member<br>   |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| <i>Before the Meeting</i> | The chair sets the time and prepares an agenda, envisioning what must be accomplished at the meeting.   | Members need to make time for the meeting and prepare by reading or completing reports.   |
| <i>At the Meeting</i>     | The chair ensures a quorum is present and follows the set agenda, monitoring the time. The chair's role is much like an orchestra conductor, ensuring that all persons are heard, and the program of work is completed. | Members are engaged in discussions, asking questions, and potentially making motions. The diversity of the committee brings new ideas and resources to the table. |
| <i>After the Meeting</i>  | The chair ensures that a report is submitted to the board in a timely manner describing how the committee is advancing the mission and assignments.   | After the meeting, committee members are accountable for the tasks for which they volunteered.  |

**E.L.M.O.**  
**"Enough, Let's  
 Move On!"**





## **Rules of Order and Agendas**

Committee meetings should rely on an agenda. Members will appreciate that an agenda was crafted to guide the discussions and achieve results. It is a responsibility of the committee chair, assisted by staff or committee liaisons, to draft or approve an agenda.

Rules of order help to manage discussions. While they do not have to be cumbersome, it is expected that motions will be made, seconded, and recorded.

## **Meeting Guidelines**

The committee chair may want to develop guidelines so that committee members know what to expect. For example:

- ☐ An agenda will be distributed at least 10 days in advance; it will frame our discussions; avoid meeting distractions and sidebar conversations.
- ☐ Prepare for meetings by reviewing advance materials.
- ☐ Meetings will start and end on time.
- ☐ Turn off digital distractions.
- ☐ If you arrive late, please refrain from voting until the next agenda item so as not to interrupt the flow of discussion of those who arrived on time.
- ☐ Minutes will document decisions and actions of the committee.
- ☐ Decisions of the committee shall stand; expressing dissenting opinions after the meeting is inappropriate.
- ☐ Respect new ideas and new people on the committee.

## Risk Management

While it is unlikely the committee will cause risk for the association, it is important to avoid potential risks.

Violating state or federal antitrust laws carries significant penalties. Avoid discussions of prices, rates, discounts, competitive practices, and boycotts that might lead to agreement or collusion. Some committees start each meeting by reading an antitrust avoidance statement or including the statement on a committee sign in sheet and/or on the agenda.

The committee should not violate any copyright laws by using materials that are protected by licenses and/or copyrights. It should be clear that the work of the committee is the intellectual property of the association.

The committee does not have authority other than that identified in the association's governing documents and specifically assigned by the board or chief elected officer. Committees shall not usurp the authority of the board nor sign contracts.

### Better Committee and Board Meetings

#### Prepare

- ❖ Read governing documents that define duties.
- ❖ Prepare for meetings by reading advance reports (consent agenda).
- ❖ RSVP to ensure a quorum will be present.
- ❖ Contact the board chair or CEO in advance with clarifying questions.
- ❖ Avoid "rump sessions" before or after the meeting.

#### Engage


- ❖ Arrive on time and stay engaged until adjournment.
- ❖ Respect the chair's role and the meeting agenda.
- ❖ Be accountable for commitments you make.
- ❖ Avoid side conversations and digital distractions.

#### Discuss

- ❖ Listen to facts without preconceived notions; be open minded.
- ❖ Allow everyone an opportunity to speak before speaking again.
- ❖ Disagree with ideas, not with people.
- ❖ Add value to discussions; don't be the "devil's advocate."

#### Decide

- ❖ Frame discussions and decisions by the mission statement.
- ❖ Ask how performance will be measured.
- ❖ Refrain from abstentions except for conflicts of interest.
- ❖ Support the decisions of the group.



[bob@rchcae.com](mailto:bob@rchcae.com)  
[www.nonprofitcenter.com](http://www.nonprofitcenter.com)

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Will we have a budget?

While financial resources are not automatically assigned to committees, it is possible that the board will fund committee projects that fit within the mission and goals. It is hoped that committee projects can generate income.

### Do I have access to the governing documents?

Yes, the bylaws, budget and strategic plan are tools that will benefit the committee's work and frame discussions.

### How many members are on a committee?

The board may appoint or suggest committee members or the committee chairman may be asked to invite members to serve. A large committee is an opportunity to maximize input and resources. A small committee finds it easy to meet with fewer people to invite or make up a quorum. The organization is always seeking member involvement on committees.

### Do we know what last year's committee did?

Every committee keeps a record (either working notebook or on-line) of their work, including minutes, projects, contacts, and resources. The current year committee should review the prior year's work and build upon it.

### Can we meet on-line between our face-to-face meetings?

There are collaboration tools available that facilitate the on-line committee meetings and document editing. On-line meetings should supplement face to face meetings, not replace them. During COVID 19 is may be the best and only way to meet.

### How long is my term on the committee?

Committees serve at the request of the current year's board. While committee members may be asked to remain on a committee for continuity, it is the preference of the board to rotate members to varying committees to benefit from their expertise.

### How do we communicate with the board?

Most committees are assigned either a staff or board liaison. The liaison serves as a resource and advocate for the committee to the board of directors. If no liaison exists, it is important that the committee chair communicate with the board's chief elected officer to provide reports, calls for action and time on the agenda.

## Committee Mission Statements

By maintaining a consistent mission statement for each committee, the incoming chair and members understand how their work fits within the mission of the association. These are provided as examples common to associations.

**Budget Committee** – The mission is to prepare the annual budget, monitor the budget and ensures that reports are presented to the board and reflected in the meeting minutes. The committee is most often chaired by the Treasurer. Their concerns may expand as the organization seeks to diversify income sources.

**Conference Committee** – The mission is to plan, organize and conduct the annual conference. The committee reviews prior conference strengths and weaknesses and makes recommendations for educational tracks and speakers. The committee does not select the site nor plan the details or logistics.

**Education** – The mission is to determine the continuing and practical education needs of members and the profession, and develop or plan courses, content, and speakers accordingly. Offerings should produce revenue or at least break even.

**Ethics Committee** – The mission is to encourage ethical conduct of the members by providing informal non-binding ethics opinions, and to recommend and/or review proposed changes to the Code of Standards.

**Executive Committee** - The mission is prescribed in the bylaws --- to conduct necessary business on matters of urgency in between meetings of the board of directors.

**Government Affairs Committee** – The mission is to ensure that there is adequate monitoring, lobbying and oversight on legislative and regulatory issues that could affect the association and the members. And make recommendations to the board on official positions.

**Membership Committee** - The mission is to recruit new members by developing a sustainable growth plan and, at the same time monitor retention. The committee should monitor member needs and the value of membership; recommending adjustments to benefits and services accordingly.

**Nominating Committee** – The mission is to develop a process by which the organization may identify and vet candidates and make recommendations to the board in a timely and prescribed format. Additional duties may be assigned related to planning board orientation and board performance evaluation.

**Past Chairs Council** - The mission is to undertake special assignments suggested by the chief elected officer or board. The Council's projects are often special tasks and fund-raising projects not in the purview of other committees.

**Program Committee** - The mission is to develop and ensure the highest quality of events and education offered to members and non-members. They may work with other committees such as Conference and Publicity. They should strive to continually be aware of industry trends and members' needs.

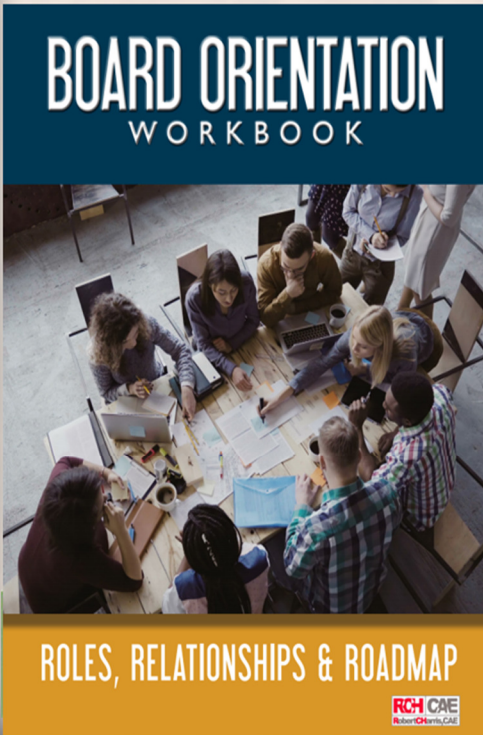


**Publicity Committee** – The mission is to improve understanding of the profession and the association through a variety of public outreach efforts, marketing, and public relations.

**Task Force on Mentoring** – The mission is to study, evaluate and make recommendations concerning whether mentoring of members is desirable and cost effective. The task force should consider liability, member needs and use of technology.

**FREE RESOURCE FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS' ORIENTATION (20-pgs.)**

## Roles and Responsibilities



**BOARD ORIENTATION**  
WORKBOOK


ROLES, RELATIONSHIPS & ROADMAP

**RCH CAE**  
RobertCHarris,CAE

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**SCAN ME**



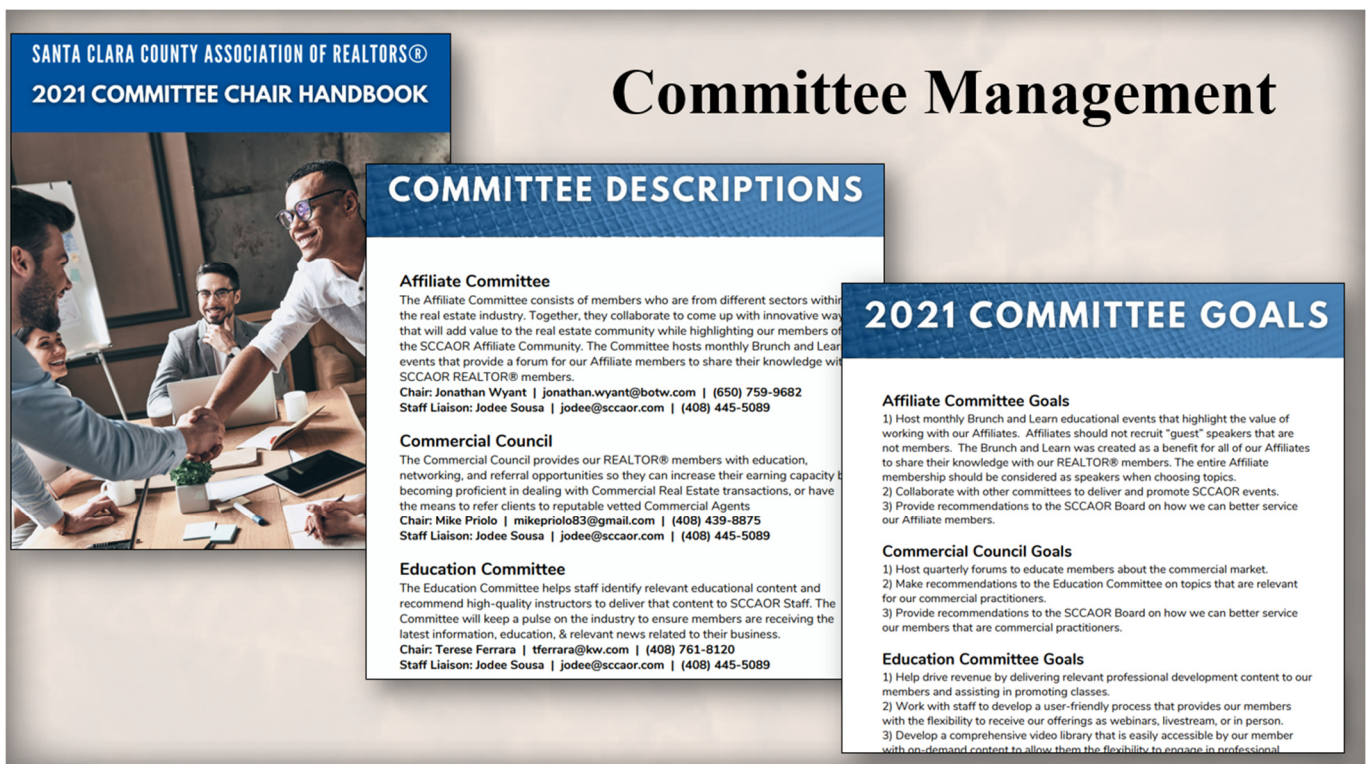
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## Charging the Committees – Sample

Sample committee mission statements and examples of charging them with tasks from the strategic plan for the current year.

| Sample Mission Statement - Scope  | Sample Current Year Charges – Tasks – Metrics  |
|---|--|
| <b>Government Affairs Committee</b> – The mission is to ensure that there is adequate monitoring, lobbying and oversight on legislative and regulatory issues that could affect the association and members. And make recommendations to the board on official positions.   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monitor the state or federal legislature for issues impacting the profession and report to the Board.</li> <li>2. Identify groups with which to collaborate or join forces to increase clout.</li> <li>3. Develop position papers on issues identified by the board.</li> <li>4. Plan and promote attendance at annual Day on the Hill.</li> </ol>   |
| <b>Budget Committee</b> – The mission is to prepare the annual budget, monitor the budget and ensure that reports are presented to the board and reflected in the meeting minutes. The committee is most often chaired by the Treasurer. Their concerns may expand as the organization seeks to diversify income sources. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create the annual budget and present to the board at least 90 days prior to the start of the fiscal year.</li> <li>2. Ensure the financial reports are presented according to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.</li> <li>3. Research and recommend non-dues income sources that can supplement income by at least 5 percent this fiscal year.</li> <li>4. Develop a policy for reserve funds and savings.</li> </ol> |
| <b>Membership Committee</b> - The mission is to recruit new members by developing a sustainable growth plan, and at the same time monitor retention. The committee should monitor member needs and the value of membership; recommending adjustments to benefits and services accordingly.                                | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Realizing the current benchmark for our market share of potential members is <u>X</u>%, it is our aim to increase it to 5%.</li> <li>2. Survey members' needs and satisfaction in a professional manner.</li> <li>3. Reach out to college faculty and students to build a pipeline of future members.</li> <li>4. Maintain retention rate of at least 85%.</li> </ol>  |
| <b>Program Committee</b> - The mission is to develop and ensure the highest quality of events and education offered to members and non-members. They may work with other committees such as Conference and Publicity. They should strive to continually be aware of industry trends and members' needs.                   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review the prior year of programs as related to return on investment and member value, making recommendations for the year ahead.</li> <li>2. Develop one signature program incorporating a nationally recognized speaker and an opportunity to draw from other professions.</li> <li>3. Collaborate with publicity committee to improve member awareness of programs.</li> </ol>  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | 4. Develop a master calendar of programs and events.  |
| <b>Nominations Committee</b> – The mission is to develop a process by which the organization may identify and vet candidates and make recommendations to the board in a timely and prescribed format. Additional duties related to planning board orientation and board performance evaluation may be assigned. | 1. Review the strengths and weaknesses of our current board.<br>2. Follow the bylaws in announcing nominations, making recommendations to the board of directors, and preparing the slate of nominees.<br>3. Vet candidates by discussing our conflict-of-interest statement and board duties.<br>4. Assist with the board orientation process. |



**Figure 1** Do you conduct committee orientation and provide a handbook of essential information, for example bylaws, strategic plan, policies?

## Committee Volunteer Form

If you are interested in serving on a committee, please complete this form. Committee appointments are one year in duration in accordance with the bylaws. Some committees may be shorter ad hoc and task forces. It is recommended that committee members, in accepting appointments, commit themselves to attending the mid-year and annual meetings, since meetings are normally held at these times.

**Name, Title, Organization**

**Mailing Address**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Telephone: Work** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Cell** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-Mail Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

|   |
|---|
| Committee Preferences (Please rank areas of interest) |
|---|

- ☐ Awards and Scholarships
- ☐ Membership – Recruitment and Retention
- ☐ Member Benefits and Services
- ☐ Government Relations
- ☐ Nominations and Leadership Development
- ☐ Technology
- ☐ Professional Development and Education
- ☐ Finance Committee

Can you attend the Midyear and/or Annual Conference? Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you have computer access to meet, collaborate or work on-line? Yes ☐ No ☐

Numbers of years you have been a member? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you check e-mail daily? Yes ☐ No ☐ Access to Internet? Yes ☐ No ☐

List any committees on which you have served on our organization:

List relevant background experience for committee assignment:

Thank you for your willingness to serve on a committee.

**Note:** Any original works created by the committee will transfer to the intellectual property of the association.

Committee Volunteer Form Sample 3-12.doc



## Committee Agenda Sample

*(Insert mission statement at top or bottom of the agenda: i.e. The mission is to determine the continuing and practical education needs of members and the profession, and develop or plan courses, content, and speakers to fulfill the needs. Offerings should produce revenue or at least break even.)*

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_ Vice-Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Members Present: ☐ Sign-in Sheet attached or listed on back.

| ✓ | Agenda Item   | Action-Status-Outcome       | Assigned To | Due Date |
|---|---|-----------------------------|-------------|----------|
| ✓ | Call to Order.  | Roll call or sign in sheet. | Chair       | n/a      |
|   | Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes.                                |                             |             |          |
|   | Next Month's Education Program                                    |                             |             |          |
|   | Compensating Speakers – Economic Issues                           |                             |             |          |
|   | Interface with the Conference Committee – Education Program Needs |                             |             |          |
|   | Expanding the Committee to Include More Members                   |                             |             |          |
|   | Unfinished Business   |                             |             |          |
|   | New Business  |                             |             |          |
|   | Adjournment (time)  |                             |             |          |

Recommendations to Board of Directors or Staff :

\*  
\*  
\*

Person Completing This Form: \_\_\_\_\_ Submission Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Self-Evaluation and Meeting Feedback

| <b>Feedback and Input to Improve Governance and Board Meetings</b>  | <b>Excellent</b> | <b>Good</b> | <b>Average</b> | <b>Fair</b> | <b>Not Sure<br/>N/A</b> |
|---|------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Meeting agendas and room set ups are conducive to achieving meaningful results.  |                  |             |                |             |                         |
| Comments  |                  |             |                |             |                         |
| 2. Committee focuses on goals that support the mission statement.   |                  |             |                |             |                         |
| Comments  |                  |             |                |             |                         |
| 3. Chairman encourages and respects diverse viewpoints and new ideas.   |                  |             |                |             |                         |
| Comments  |                  |             |                |             |                         |
| 4. Lines of authority and responsibility are clearly distinct between the committee, board, and staff (staff is utilized as a valued resource.) |                  |             |                |             |                         |
| Comments  |                  |             |                |             |                         |
| 5. Outcomes are relevant to members and advance the mission statement.  |                  |             |                |             |                         |
| Comments  |                  |             |                |             |                         |
| 6. Discussions focus on the future solutions rather than discussions of the past.   |                  |             |                |             |                         |
| Comments  |                  |             |                |             |                         |

## **Appoint a Committee to Review Committees**

Bob Harris, CAE

“We need a task force to review our committee structure,” board members quipped.

The issue in this association is the existence of 75 committees. They built up over decades without a review of purpose and effectiveness.

Committees have important roles; engaging members, developing leaders, and producing results to support board and staff.

Board members explained, “Committee chairs have held their positions for years and will not secede.” “We tried to reduce the number of committees, but nobody wanted to give up their turf.” “It’s too political to touch.”

“Committees that are not aligned with an association’s goals can drain time and energy from the important work of staff and volunteers. Conversely, committees that have a clear purpose can play a vital role in helping an association fulfill its mission,” explain Tom Agnew, Ed.D., Associate Executive Director, Global Development, Society of Exploration Geophysicists (SEG).

### **Sunset Process**

Governments use a “sunset process” to regularly review agencies and laws. The private sector does similar when a product or service is no longer sufficiently profitable or when a company changes its focus.

Associations should review the committee structure on a periodic basis, say every 5 years. The task is to analyze committees to identify those that add value from those that are unneeded, ineffective or a liability.

Check alignment by creating a chart with the main goals listed at the top of each column. Under each goal, list the committees that fit. A goal without any committees is problematic. Maintain a balance of committees across the strategic goals.

### **Committees Principles**

These principles apply to nearly every association and chamber.

- Committees are a great way to engage members. Conversely, they can repel volunteers who find the meetings a waste of their time.

- Committees get their authority from the board, bylaws, and policies. They do not have authority to speak for the organization or contract on its behalf.
- Committees are meant to supplement the work of the board and staff. A committee should not be a drain on resources.
- Committees advance the mission and goals. Seldom should a committee sit down to ask, “What do you want to do this year.” They are charged with strategies from the strategic plan.

## **Review Process**

In reviewing the committees, be sure to remove personalities. It is not about a person, it’s about the rationale and return on investment.

Ironically, it may require a task force to review and sunset committees. The task is to analyze structure, efficiency, outcomes, costs, information flow, etc. to make recommendations to retain, revamp, merge, or eliminate.

**Alignment** – Committees should align with goals in the strategic plan. Their initiatives advance elements of the plan.

**Asset or Liability** – A committee should produce results, or is it a liability, using up time, resources and causing risk for the organization.

**Composition** – The committee represents diverse opinions of the membership. Too many committees are made up of only one or two persons.

**Innovation** – A committee should identify issues and offer solutions. It must be innovative and strategic rather than identifying a problem and admitting defeat.

**Meetings** – Meetings should be efficient and produce results. Minutes should reflect significant progress. The chair must communicate a vision of what a successful year looks like. Rules of order and protocols are respected.

**Performance** – Does the committee use performance metrics to gauge its work? KPIs should be a part of every project, including accountability and timelines.

**Pet Project** – Was the committee formed for a pet project that should have been sunset at the end of its useful life?

**Purpose Statement** – Each committee has a clear and understandable purpose statement to frame its work.

**Reporting** – Committees make recommendations to the board when new ideas and resources are necessary. Their reporting mechanisms should be efficient for the board to understand, including how success will be measured.

**Results** – Does the committee generate revenue? Has it created content or programs that add value?

**Structure** – Committees must fit within the structure and work under the guidelines of bylaws and policies.

**Sustainability** – Chairs usually serve for a year. How long has the chair had the seat? If he or she departed would a successor be able to advance its purpose and projects?

**Staffing** – Staff support a committee with resources, reports, agenda development and minutes. Some committees manage themselves without a reliance on staff.

No matter the number of committees, a review of their structure and effectiveness is prudent. If there is a recommendation to eliminate some committees, be ready to grieve.

# # #

Note: Bob Harris, CAE, provides free governance tips and templates at [www.nonprofitcenter.com](http://www.nonprofitcenter.com).

Free 2-page guide for **Committee Responsibilities**.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/ceqa33r1s4wr3ex/Committee%20Responsibilities%202%20pg%20Guide%202022.pdf?dl=0>

## Extending the Life of Committees

Bob Harris, CAE

Committees begin the year with enthusiasm. They receive assignments from the board and authority from the bylaws. An orientation and policies point them in the right direction.

Volunteer groups supplement the work of the board, vet ideas, engage members, and develop future leaders. They can tackle tough issues, create new programs and generate income.

They have a variety of names, each with similar purpose. Standing committees are identified in the bylaws. Others disband when their assignment is completed, called quick action teams, task forces, micro-tasks, project teams and strategic councils.

### Momentum Wanes

Six months after getting organized, many groups lose momentum. The excitement has worn off. “Real jobs” and other priorities distract the volunteers.

Some committee chairs aggressively complete their tasks in the first months, leaving little to do in the second half of the year. Some committees quit meeting without anybody noticing.

Barbara Radke, president elect at the Conejo, Simi, Moorpark Association of REALTORS® offers, “CSMAR relies on our committees to achieve results. Losing a committee to a lack of understanding or motivation is harmful to our program of work.”

### Extending Committee Life

To avoid committee failure, consider these ideas:

**Orientation** – Include committee chairs with the board’s orientation. They should feel as part of the leadership. Provide essential documents such as strategic plan, bylaws, and policies.

- ✓ **Strategic Alignment** – Every committee should be aligned with goals in the strategic plan. A goal without work groups risks failure. Make it clear in the strategic plan how committees are essential to advancing programs and priorities.

- ✓ **Program of Work** – Track assignments and deadlines with a spreadsheet. Stretch the committee initiatives over 12-months. The program of work is built upon the board's strategic plan.
- ✓ **Performance Measures** – When assigning tasks include performance metrics. For example, increase membership by 3 percent or plan a quarterly webinar that produces net revenue.
- ✓ **Appointments** – Get the right people on the committees. While a call for volunteers may have been issued, the selected members should bring with them desire and determination. Get the right people in the right seats on the bus as the book *Good to Great* suggests.
- ✓ **Meeting Protocols** – Bad behaviors at meetings hampers enthusiasm to volunteer. Every meeting should have a well-crafted agenda. Start and end on time. The chair should orchestrate a relevant conversation, working to include all members. Agree that nobody speaks twice, or dominates the conversation, until everybody has had opportunity to speak once.
- ✓ **Preparation** – Preparation improves outcomes. Ample notice of upcoming meeting (set an annual calendar). Distribute the agenda and reports in advance. Set up a comfortable environment, whether virtual or in person.
- ✓ **Collaboration** – Committees should not work in a silo. Facilitate opportunities to cross pollinate ideas by meeting with other committees. Shared ideas increase motivation to achieve as a team.
- ✓ **Liaisons** – Appoint a liaison from the staff or board, or both, to guide and monitor the committee. The liaison will report if the work group is losing steam or needs bolstering.
- ✓ **Meeting Minutes** – A sure way to find out if a committee is on track is to read their minutes. The IRS queries if this is a general practice. The elected president should know how committees are performing by reading their minutes.
- ✓ **Mid-Year Huddle** – Reconvene at six months as committee chairs and board to assess progress, celebrate successes, and tweak the second half of the year. A pep rally and check of accountability is always a good idea.
- ✓ **Making Recommendations** – Committee work usually results in recommendations for board consideration. It is discouraging if the board second-guesses the committee or demeans their efforts. Be certain recommendations are clear and understandable with facts to back up a motion,



including economic impact.

- ✓ **Risk Avoidance** – By being aware of risks, the committee can avoid infractions. For example, committees don't have authority to contract or speak for the association. Discussions should be treated with confidentiality. Conflicts of interest should be disclosed.
- ✓ **Celebrate** – Recognize committee volunteers and herald their contributions to the organization.

Nearly all associations rely on committees. Keep them engaged the full year.

# # #

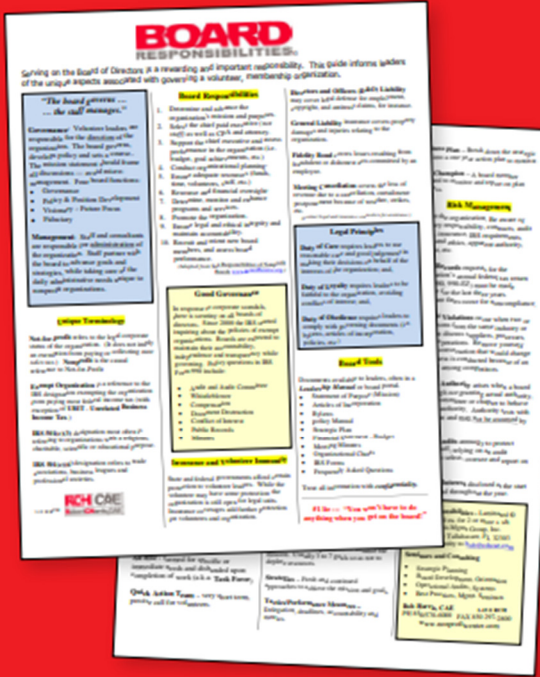
Note: Bob Harris, CAE, provides free governance tips and templates at [www.nonprofitcenter.com](http://www.nonprofitcenter.com). [bob@rchcae.com](mailto:bob@rchcae.com)



Figure 2 **Governance Altimeter** - noting that committees supplement the work of the board of directors.

## Laminated Guide to Board Responsibilities Order Form

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