

TIME FOR YOUR BOARD TO MAKE CHANGES?



Is it time for your board to make changes related to the way it governs? The question of change is usually lurking behind the scenes when any training efforts begin. What are we doing well? What are we struggling with? What could we do better? And how difficult will making changes be?

Often the changes you have to implement are important to the survival or success of your organization. They aren't the "it would be nice if we could do it" or the "do it if you get around to it" kind of change. They involve the different technology the organization needs to be competitive, the new structure it needs to be effective, the reduced level of overhead it needs to be profitable. Change is the game today, and organizations that can't deal with it effectively aren't likely to be around long.

William Bridges in *Managing Transitions*

Changes in the board and the way governing is done is increasingly being recognized as a necessity for the future of many nonprofits. A good place to begin is to answer a few important questions.

1. Does your organization lack focus?
2. Are your programs lacking impact?
3. Do your board members lack enthusiasm?
4. Does the size of your board seem too small, or fail to meet by-law size requirements?
5. Do board members understand their responsibilities?
6. Are your board meetings characterized by what feels like busy work?
7. Do board members engage in discussion and decision making or are they a rubber stamp?
8. Is the board focused on important issues?
9. Do board members feel empowered rather than overwhelmed?
10. Is your organization facing financial struggles that threaten its future vitality?
11. Is there a solid working relationship between the board and CEO?
12. Is there open communication and accountability?
13. Do you know where the organization is going and whether or not it is getting there?
14. Do board members have time for social interaction?
15. Are you proud of your organization?

If most of your answers are favorable, congratulations. The changes you may want to make will help move your governance from good to great.

If more of your answers are negative, you have work to do. Most boards need to make some changes, get the fundamentals right, and adopt best practices that will positively influence their organization.