

Boardroom Bearings

Navigating to Board Excellence



July 1, 2014

Board Development Step 9: CELEBRATE



With July 4 just a three days away, this month's focus on CELEBRATION seems especially timely.

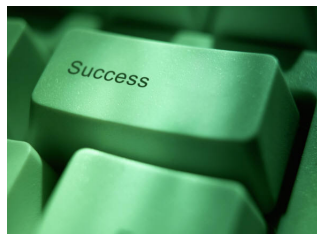
While "Celebrate" is the last article in our nine-part series on the board-building cycle, like most of the other practices in the cycle, celebration is not a once-a-year event. Instead, it is an ongoing practice that infuses energy and a sense of accomplishment into the board culture.

Why celebrate?

Pausing to acknowledge milestones or something "well-done" brings many gifts to the boardroom. For example, recognition and appreciation for board service increases commitment to the cause. When people are appreciated for their efforts, teamwork is improved and the tone of board discussion is elevated. Celebration also offers an opportunity for reflection - What worked? What didn't work? Why? What will we do differently next time?

What to celebrate?

There are many occasions for celebration. Here are a few. You will be able to think of more: organizational milestones; completion of a difficult project; achieving a particular goal; putting a new strategic plan in place and/or recognizing that the strategic initiatives of the current plan have been accomplished; passage of a relevant piece of legislation; receiving a new grant; new members added to the board; senior members retiring from the board; etc. Even celebrating an idea that flopped is worthwhile because it rewards experimentation - something needed in most organizations.



How to celebrate?

In This Issue

Why celebrate? What to celebrate?

How to celebrate?

The most valuable director of all

Connect with mission to enliven board meetings

Findings from research on decision-making

Question of the Month

Re-cap

About Boardroom Bearings

The range of ways to celebrate is as broad as the occasions to celebrate. Simple celebrations can include food and beverages at a meeting; going out for a meal after a board meeting; a thank you card; a poster from a client group; the new, much-debated mission statement in a frame; etc.



More elaborate celebrations can include board recognition at special events or annual meetings; a reception at someone's home; a picnic at a local park; gifts such as coffee mugs or special shirts; plaques, certificates, or awards; etc.

The most valuable director of all



Here is an insightful article by Harry J. Bruce, published in the *Private Company Director* magazine. Bruce writes, "The most valuable director of all is the one who can challenge the CEO while at the same time supporting him, a person who has mastered the difficult art of 'disagreeing without being disagreeable.' These extremely rare individuals can contribute much-needed knowledge and experience and are able to help steer the business around potential hazards without displaying the type of know-it-all attitude that alienates fellow directors."

Read this short article [here](#).

Connect with mission to enliven board meetings

If your board meetings have become dull and routine, try this simple and free technique - sometimes called a "mission moment." Start each board meeting with a letter (anonymous or not) from someone who benefitted from your organization's services. These letters are often heartfelt and powerful, reminding directors of why they agreed to serve on the board in the first place. Some organizations take this technique a step further by inviting service recipients to read their letter in person at a board meeting. And occasionally staff can be invited to give a short presentation on the impact of a particular program or new initiative.

Quirky, but possibly useful, findings from research on decision-making

Ever since hearing Robert Cialdini, the author of *Influence: Science and Practice*, speak at a conference, I've been interested in the use of research findings to improve organizational performance. Here is a 2.5 page article by Gary Belsky, published in *Re/Sci* that gives "...a handful of recent takeaways from the academic literature that can improve the way your NPO interacts with board members, donors, volunteers and employees."

The article is free for download [here](#). If you prefer not to register for the download, I will send you the .pdf - just ask: kdw@centerpointinstitute.com.

Question of the Month

Q: Should you expect a board member to donate his/her professional services to the organization?



A: Generally, it is preferable to engage professional services from an outsider. These professional services may include legal, real estate, insurance, technology, marketing, accounting, construction, and other services. There is an important distinction between having board members with an array of professional and business skills on the board and actually using them to provide their professional services to the organization, whether *pro bono* or for pay.

Why? You DO want people with a variety of professional and business skills on the board but using a board member to provide services more than likely will result in a conflict of interest which will require him/her to abstain from relevant discussions and decision-making - something you DO NOT want.

For an explanation of conflict of interest, please see the Question of the Month in the [February 2014](#) issue of *Boardroom Bearings*.

Remember, you are invited to submit questions simply by emailing them to kdw@centerpointinstitute.com. And, if you have a question or troubling board issue and just want someone to talk it over with, confidentially, you can call 815-545-1300 or send email. There is no charge for these conversations.

Re-cap

Since choosing board members has powerful implications for the future effectiveness of the board and the success of the organization, we devoted the first 9 issues of this newsletter to practices for building an effective board of directors. The nine practices are IDENTIFY, CULTIVATE, RECRUIT, ORIENT, INVOLVE, EDUCATE, EVALUATE, ROTATE, and CELEBRATE. [Previous newsletters may be accessed here.](#)

Boardroom Bearings...

...is written by Katheryn Wiedman, Ph.D, a BoardSource Certified Governance Trainer at Centerpoint Institute. You may reach her at kdw@centerpointinstitute.com or at 815-545-1300.



...is published monthly. To subscribe your organization's chief executive, board chair, board members, or other staff, please forward the newsletter with a suggestion to subscribe.

Forward this email

[Forward this email](#)



This email was sent to kdw@centerpointinstitute.com by kdw@centerpointinstitute.com | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).



Try it FREE today.

Centerpoint Institute | 2419 Suffolk Lane | Joliet | IL | 60433