50 Tips to Improve Nonprofit Board Governance

A well-run board of directors is every fundraisers dream. Read on for 50 tips to help you improve the way your board operates. And if you'd like to learn how to leverage your board in your major donor fundraising, and a whole lot more about fundraising in general, come to the Nonprofit Storytelling Conference (https://nonprofitstorytellingconference.com)

1. **Clarify the Board's Role**: Ensure each board member understands their responsibilities and roles.

2. **Regular Training**: Provide regular training for board members about governance and the specifics of your nonprofit.

3. **Create Committees**: Form committees for different functions, like fundraising or audit.

4. **Diverse Membership**: Seek board members from different backgrounds and experiences.

5. **Regular Meetings**: Conduct meetings regularly to review progress and make decisions.

6. **Strategic Planning**: Develop a strategic plan that guides the organization's work and the board's decision-making.

7. **Conflict of Interest Policy**: Adopt a conflict of interest policy to avoid any potential conflicts.

8. **Financial Oversight**: Review financial reports in every board meeting to maintain fiscal responsibility.

9. **Evaluation**: Regularly evaluate the performance of the board, its members, and the executive director.

10. **Term Limits**: Set term limits to ensure fresh perspectives on the board.

11. **Board Job Descriptions**: Have a written job description for board members.

12. **Board Member Recruitment**: Actively recruit board members who bring needed skills and perspectives.

13. **Board Orientation**: Provide an orientation for new board members.

14. **Clear Expectations**: Make clear expectations of board member roles, including fundraising.

15. **Code of Conduct**: Establish a code of conduct to guide board members.

16. **Board Chair Leadership**: The board chair should effectively lead the board and work closely with the executive director.

17. **Respect Professional Boundaries**: The board should respect the distinction between governance and management.

18. **Succession Planning**: Have a succession plan in place for board leaders and key roles.

19. **Board Self-Assessment**: Conduct regular self-assessments of the board's performance.

20. **Policy Development**: The board should develop and approve key policies for the organization.

21. **Engaged Participation**: Ensure board members are engaged and actively participating.

22. **Mission-Driven**: Always keep the mission of the organization at the forefront of decisions.

23. **Advisory Boards**: Use advisory boards or committees for non-governing roles.

24. **Transparent Communication**: Foster open and transparent communication in the board.

25. **Fundraising Participation**: All board members should participate in fundraising.

26. **Legal Compliance**: Ensure compliance with laws and regulations related to nonprofits.

27. **Risk Management**: Regularly assess and manage organizational risk.

28. **Board Documentation**: Keep thorough documentation of board activities and decisions.

29. **Use of Technology**: Leverage technology to increase board efficiency.

30. **Board Diversity**: Strive for diversity in terms of skills, gender, race, and age on the board.

31. **CEO/Executive Director Evaluation**: Regularly evaluate the performance of the CEO or Executive Director.

32. **Personal Giving**: Encourage board members to make a personal financial contribution.

33. **Organizational Culture**: Foster a positive organizational culture that starts at the board level.

34. **Meeting Preparation**: Ensure board members come prepared to meetings by sending materials in advance.

35. **Consent Agenda**: Use a consent agenda to streamline meetings and focus on strategic discussions.

36. **Board Retreats**: Hold board retreats to build relationships and focus on strategic planning.

37. **Nonprofit Trends**: Stay informed on trends and changes in the nonprofit sector.

38. **Accountability**: Hold board members accountable for their responsibilities.

39. **Values**: Make decisions in alignment with the organization's values.

40. **Bylaws Review**: Regularly review and update the organization's bylaws.

41. **Commitment to Mission**: Regularly revisit the mission statement to ensure board decisions align with it.

42. **Stakeholder Engagement**: Engage with stakeholders, including staff, volunteers, and beneficiaries.

43. **Board Expansion**: Consider expanding the board size if necessary for adequate governance.

44. **Leadership Development**: Invest in leadership development for board members.

45. **Mentorship**: Pair new board members with more experienced ones for mentorship.

46. **Volunteerism**: Encourage board members to volunteer their time in organizational activities.

47. **Advocacy**: Have board members participate in advocacy activities on behalf of the organization.

48. **Networking**: Encourage board members to leverage their networks for the organization's benefit.

49. **Embrace Change**: Be open to change and adaptation as the organization evolves.

50. **Celebrate Success**: Regularly acknowledge and celebrate the successes and milestones of the organization.