

CHALLENGE THE STATUS QUO™

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The Value of Face-Time

Many boards recruit geographically dispersed board members. As a result, many board meetings are held electronically using conference phone connections.

Conference connections provide two of the three components of communication: words and tone of voice. Communication professionals assert that the third component, body language, is more important than the other two combined. Body language is not present on conference calls.

What can you do?

Skype, an internet based

resource, offers multiple connections showing the images of the participants in the conference. Each participant connects to the conference using a PC and a Webcam. Many laptops have a Webcam built-in.

Webcams can be added to most PCs and Apple machines at reasonable cost.

The more your board meetings become forums for strategic discussions, do what you can to get body language included in the process.



Reverse the Question

On a recent Webinar with Dottie Schindlinger of Board Effect® I received a question. I had brought up the idea that a director could receive more than one delivery of study materials each month. This can be better than receiving everything in one package, usually the meeting agenda packet.

The question was, “What should the board member receive that is not in the agenda packet?” Turning that question around makes it better to answer. Based on the assumption that board members are receiving everything they need now, and that it is all in the agenda packet, take all items out of the agenda that do not support discussion, debate and decision items

scheduled on the agenda for the meeting.

What materials remain are those to deliver separately.

For example, few boards today make decisions that depend on last month’s financial reports; board decisions more often are responses to long-term trends and then, only if financial management has not been delegated to the Executive to decide and report. Therefore, board members can receive financial reports when they are prepared and not have to wait for them to arrive with the meeting.

If your practice is to include the financial reports with the agenda because the board will

ITEMS IN THIS ISSUE:

- ◆ The Value of Face-Time
- ◆ Reverse the Question
- ◆ Your Organization’s Mission (Core Purpose) is a Human Thing



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approve them, STOP that practice: it adds no value; it adds liability to the board and its directors; and there is no requirement for it. (If you have information or beliefs to the contrary, please tell me.) Separate from the meeting preparation packet, schedule physical or electronic delivery of all the materials a board needs to accomplish its fiduciary duty of care.



SEEKING FARTHER HORIZONS

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This eZine's title, "Challenge the Status Quo," reminds us all that leaders are change agents. A leader's job is to decide the right things to do as times change.

Your Organization's Mission (Core Purpose) is a Human Thing

In his book, *The Power of Purpose: Find Meaning, Live Longer, Better*, Second Edition, Richard J. Leider writes, "At our very core we need to matter. We need evidence to believe that we are good people and are evolving — becoming the best we can be. Naming our purpose helps us satisfy a basic need that we're being used for a purpose that we recognize as a worthy one."

Your organization's mission statement makes your entity more human and lets it relate to employee and volunteers' needs to matter. Anyone involved in an organization's process to establish its mission statement knows how difficult and time consuming it can be. Perhaps having read Leider's words above you have a better idea how powerful it can be.

While some of the people supporting your organization have not identified their personal purpose, working with you they participate in your corporate-purpose; that is better than nothing and helps fill a personal human need. That's a symbiotic relationship.

Those who work with you and do have a sense of personal purpose must see the correlation of those two purposes, the synergy between them, and approach their tasks in a very positive way.



Strategic Issues for Board Meetings

Parse your vision statement. In a series of meetings, take a portion of the vision-related elements, and discuss who benefits when that piece of the vision is achieved. Does it benefit the communities in the "world" served by your organization? How can you measure it and know when that outcome is achieved?



This is the true joy in life, being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one. Being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it what I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for the moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

~George Bernard Shaw

Now, do your people find joy in your organization's stated purpose?