

## **Boards: Getting the Members' Best Attributes**

The board is the backbone of every nonprofit and its makeup can go a long way in determining the success. Simone P. Joyaux of Joyaux Associates, speaking at an international conference on fundraising, offered a sample policy for developing the optimum board of directors.

Joyaux mentioned certain attributes or qualities that an organization looks for in each board member. Board members are expected to affirm and demonstrate the following:

- Dedication to the values, mission and vision of the organization.
- Courtesy, honesty and integrity.
- Candid dialogue.
- Behaving as a team player and participating in the group that is the board.
- Expressing individual opinions and perspective balanced with supporting group decisions.
- Asking difficult questions without being overzealous.
- Being comfortable with diversity and agreeing to disagree.
- Accepting that disagreement and conflict are part of doing the organization's business well and working with colleagues to resolve differences.
- Bringing issues to the boardroom and discouraging behind-the-scenes conversation that creates divisiveness.

What are the typical skills needed within a board? The following are helpful:

- Financial expertise
- Investment experience
- Fundraising experience
- Legal expertise
- Property and facility management and construction
- Marketing
- Small business experience
- Personnel experience
- Not-for-profit management and governance

In addition, Joyaux urged avoidance of functional silos on the board, that is, isolating an individual in one skill area serves neither the organization nor the board well.

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