

Getting The Most From Your Advisory Board

Monday, May 5, 2008

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Family Support and Community
Development Coordinator



Today's Goals

- Understand the unique characteristics of an Advisory Boards
- Know the 5 barriers to effectively utilizing boards.
- Come away with at least one new strategy for improving the performance of your board.

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Advisory Boards

- Merely consultative
- Have no governing power
- Posses no budget authority
- Aim is to help you be more effective and efficient

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Types of Advisory Boards

- Program creation and planning
- Development of program policy
- Operations review
- Funding leadership
- Any other areas where you need advice

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What Do You Want Them To Do?

- Problems arise from
 - Lack of vision about what leadership wants the board to accomplish
 - Little forethought about *who* should be on the board
 - Poor orientation procedures

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What Do You Want Them To Do?

- Have an job description
 - Formal document
 - Clarifies what you want from a board
- Recruit members based upon specific needs
 - Target specific individuals
- Formal orientation
 - Personalized
 - Before 1st meeting

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What Do They Need To Know?

- If 'Knowledge Is Power', some believe sharing information diminishes their power.
- Some fear loss of confidential business information.
- Inadequate information renders an advisory board impotent.

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What Do They Need To Know?

- Transparency is critical
- Transparency is *cultural*, not managerial
- It's an attitude more than a practice
- Confidentiality agreements can help
- Less Information = Less Useful Advice

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What Do They Need To Know?

- Provide information you believe is pertinent.
- Keep asking board members what other information they need.

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Are You Using Their Wisdom?

- People believe in you and are willing to invest time into your efforts.
- They must feel their time is a good investment.
- If they believe their ideas are not taken seriously, they'll leave.

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Are You Using Their Wisdom?

- Every recommendation of your advisory board requires action.
- Follow up action must be communicated to board in a timely fashion.
- Momentum is critical to keeping morale and interest high.

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Are You Using Their Wisdom?

- Document all the ideas/concepts generated at advisory board meetings
- Produce minutes in a timely fashion – distributed no less than 72 hours after end of meeting
- Maintain contact in between meetings
- Report back on discussion items at subsequent meetings

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Are You Using Their Time Well?

- Time is a limited resource
- The most productive people value their time more than their money
- Use their time to your maximum benefit

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Are You Using Their Time Well?

- Agendas out at least 48 hours in advance
- Clearly stated goals for the meeting
- Justify the discussion topics
- Provide pertinent background material *in advance*

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Are You Using Their Time Well?

- Choose a quiet, comfortable location
- Start and end on time
- Consider size of advisory board for maximum input
- Strong facilitation to keep discussion focused

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How Do They Know You Care?

- Honorarium or Stipend
- Treat them professionally
- Take their role seriously
- Act on and explore their advice

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How Do They Know You Care?

- Special recognition
- Professional setting for meetings
- Quality food and beverage
- "Thank You"

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**Faith
and
Philanthropy**

the connection between personal
faith and charitable behavior

Monday June 2, 2008 - 9:00 am

What Responsibilities Should You Give Your Advisory Board?

Effective advisory boards are critical to the success of programs. Having an independent body of community leaders, parents, and other interested community members can be key to building a secure, ongoing program.

The advisory board plays an important public relations role, as well as, providing program staff with a fresh perspective on programmatic issues. In addition, working with an advisory board may increase the organization's potential to broaden its funding through contacts for in-kind resources, and for direct financial support.

Each advisory board member brings something unique to the program. Some members will take responsibility for specific tasks. Other members will not be able to accept specific responsibilities, but will attend meetings and provide valuable input. Others may not be able to attend many meetings, but have good contacts or can carry out a specific function independently. Some board members may not be able to attend meetings or take any specific responsibilities, yet their support, even if in name only, may be important because it lends credibility to the project.

Advisory boards do not have any legal authority, therefore all of their responsibilities are assigned at the discretion of the executive director and/or board of directors.

Responsibilities assigned to an advisory board may include any or all of the following.

Program Creation and Planning. It can be beneficial to create an advisory board during the early stages of developing a program so that board members can provide advice concerning the design and plans for the program. It is easiest to begin with a small advisory board, for example, four to seven community leaders and community members (including parents), during the planning process.

Development of Program Policy. While advisory boards cannot create legally binding policies for the organization, they can help create policies which provide direction and support for the program staff.

Planning and Implementing Public Relations. An advisory board which includes influential community leaders and parent advocates can be effective at spreading the word about program services.

Funding Leadership. Often advisory boards are created specifically to raise program funds. The advisory board must be granted this authority by the executive director or the board of directors. Individuals committed to the organization with the influence to leverage resources will be most successful.

Subcommittees. The advisory board may develop subcommittees which have assigned tasks in specific areas. For example, a public awareness subcommittee composed of four members may be responsible for making recommendations about public awareness strategies and resources. Subcommittees may be short-lived according to a specific assignment or ongoing.

Other Tasks. Advisory boards can be created to address a specific organizational need. These advisory boards are usually short-lived and are disbanded as soon as their specific goals are met.

Afterschool Mission

1465 Peach Street Bellewood, PA 16888 * 717-679-3423 * www.afterschoolmission.org

Ms. LaTrella Johnson
IMPECO Corporation
PO Box 245
Bellewood, PA 16888

Dear Ms. Johnson,

I'm pleased to invite you to become a member of the Afterschool Mission's Advisory Board for 2008-09. Since you are one of the pioneers of in the field, being a member of Afterschool Mission's Advisory Board provides a stellar opportunity to continue to shape the education sector.

Our organization needs new direction. A person with your experience and insight would be the perfect person to help us determine whether our organization should break new ground or whether there's still value to be gleaned from traditional territory. I will certainly cover any expenses you incur from attending advisory board meetings and also offer a \$200 honorarium to be paid directly to you or to a charity of your choice.

Operating since 1984, Afterschool Mission. provides a spectrum of tutoring and life skills training to children ranging from pre-k through high school. First started by Pastor Miller as a street outreach project more than two decades ago, for many years it was a one man operation run out of the church basement. Afterschool Mission's now has three full-time employees and a host of part-time contract workers. We continue to focus on filling children's needs for academic enrichment and social support. Our motto is 'The Whole Child'.

The main purpose of the Afterschool Mission Advisory Board is to provide management advice about the direction the organization should follow. Specific goals for this year include developing a niche fund development strategy and revamping/updating the organization's Web presence.

The Advisory Board will meet three times this year, each meeting consisting of a dinner and following two hour discussion. There may also be some follow-up questions/discussions by email. Because of the nature of the matters to be discussed, members will need to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and to consider being a part of Afterschool Mission's Advisory Board. I will be in touch with you soon but in the meantime, I'm available to discuss any questions you may have. You can reach me by phone at 717-679-3423 or via email at Jessica@afterschoolmission.org

Sincerely,

Jessica Talbot
Executive Director

How to Write an Advisory Board Invitation Letter

Your letter should contain six parts

1. Introduction
 - a. Keep it short and direct
2. Pitch
 - a. What are the benefits to this advisory board member?
3. Overview of the Organization
 - a. Describe what your outfit does.
 - b. A short history
4. Advisory board's mandate and focus
 - a. What are the advisory board's goals?
5. Details
 - a. What are the responsibilities of board members?
 - b. How often will they meet?
6. Close and thank you
 - a. Indicate that YOU will follow up with them.
 - b. Tell them when you will follow up

ETV Radio

Community Advisory Board Job Description

ETV's and ETV Radio's Community Advisory Boards were established in 1996 to serve as ETV's "eyes and ears" around the state. The CABs are loosely grouped by television transmitter sites and consist of 12 - 15 local leaders in education, government and business.

Meetings

Each group meets at least once annually in its own community and all CAB members are invited to Columbia each year for a joint meeting with the ETV Commission. ETV staff works with the local CAB chairman to schedule time and location of the meetings.

Job Description

- Participate in scheduled meetings 1 - 2 times annually.
- Provide input and advice to ETV staff regarding the needs of the local communities.
- Assist ETV in identifying local speaking engagements, public relations opportunities and other local activities to help ETV become a better utilized resource in each community.
- Agree to serve a two-year term that can be extended annually.

ETV Community Advisory Boards' Mission Statement*

The role of the ETV Community Advisory Boards is to help ETV and ETV Radio maximize their usefulness to South Carolina citizens by providing advice and being the communications link between ETV and Radio and the various constituencies they serve.

What does it mean to be a communications link?

1. The Advisory Board should be composed of citizens who represent the various constituencies served as well as the general populace.
2. Each Advisory Board member should be responsible for gathering input from representatives of the specific constituency he or she represents in order to seek ways ETV can better serve them, as well as reporting to that group on service provided by ETV in their area.
3. The Advisory Board should consider all the input from the various constituencies, prioritize it and pass the ideas and recommendations on to the local station and/or the ETV Commission and President. The Advisory Board should meet regularly with elected officials and other community leaders in their geographic area to report on the ETV services provided to their constituents and to discuss concerns on both sides concerning funding and support for ETV and the local station.

What is your role as advisors?

1. **The Advisory Board should act as a sounding board for ETV and ETV Radio on new opportunities and challenges.
2. The Advisory Board should be an advocate with the ETV Commission and President for providing services which give all citizens the opportunity to learn about and appreciate the many positive aspects of every area in this state, and to thus encourage our own citizens to be tourists of their own state
3. The Advisory Board should learn about opportunities that new technologies and services offer in order to assist the local station and ETV in uncovering every possible avenue of service to all areas of the state.

**Brain Injury Connection
Advisory Board Member
Job Description**

Responsibilities of the Advisory Board include:

- A. Be familiar with the basic programs and goals of the **Brain Injury Connection (BIC)**.
- B. Lend expertise and experience to the **BIC**. Represent the **BIC** in and to the community.
- D. Fundraise and contribute to the **BIC's** financial development.
- E. Contribute to the **BIC's** financial development by introducing others to the important work of the Brain Injury Connection.
- F. Seek to involve others in the **Brain Injury Connection**.
- G. Attend, whenever possible, the **BIC's** fundraising events.
- H. Advisory Board members are not required to be in attendance at regular and special meetings of the Board of Directors but are welcome to attend at their convenience.
- I. Participate on at least one committee.
- J. Be accessible to staff, Board of Directors and other Advisory Board members.