



The Leadership Letter

Motivating and Sustaining Board Membership

As volunteer board members, part of our job description is to motivate people to change, knowing when to restart when we have lost our momentum, and having the courage to overcome the most daunting obstacles. Whether you are on a board or a committee, you need to work with others to accomplish a task. Where do you start? What if people do not have the skills to do the work? Training and mentoring may be part of the process. Focusing on the mission is important. Differences in opinion can divide a committee or a board. It is only through succession planning and conflict resolution that boards can move forward and regenerate. Jump start your members by providing them with an orientation which helps them to understand their function and role as a member. Work on potential conflicts and get ahead of potential relationship issues between members.

Some boards around the country are using a different format that reintroduces us to a process we may have forgotten: enjoying the process of good conversation. This format fosters facilitation that creates structured problem solving in an atmosphere of trust and collaboration. The flow is different from a business meeting in that there is no agenda, or presentation, people move from conversation to conversation, with a

focus on well thought out questions that explore complex issues of the association. In this format, the facilitator is key to its success. The facilitator acts as a host, if you will, inviting people to enter into conversations around topics that are relevant to them, and then moving them on to other groups to connect with new people and topics.

People are more polarized, more overwhelmed, more impatient, more easily disappointed by others and more withdrawn than ever. We rely more on technology and less on face to face conversation. This conversation format creates an opportunity to connect with colleagues and innovate in a safe environment. For this format to be successful, we have to:

- create opportunities for people to explore relevant topics in small groups;
- discuss questions with several different people, from relationships through small group interaction;
- identify issues and discuss and think more deeply about those issues;
- access mutual intelligence and wisdom to create new pathways to change; and
- transcribe notes from the session for the entire group.

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Leadership Commission Members

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Generational Differences

Although we have been trained in the skills necessary to work with different races and genders, the current most pressing leadership skill is how to get along with people of different generations! How do we understand each group, respect each group, and listen to each group without bias or stereotype? How do you manage each group and listen to what is important to them? There are generational markers that define each group and separate them histori-

cally, and each group has its own vernacular.

As members of an association board, we need to:

- understand the impact of our generation's behavior on others;
- assess the accuracy of our knowledge about differences and listen empathetically;
- reduce the conflict between generations;
- embrace our differences as a source of strength;
- explore our individual uniqueness;
- practice interpersonal skills which allow us insight into those who are different from us;
- and create a plan to grow the next generation of leaders in our organization and keep them engaged.

How to Run Effective, Productive, Efficient Meetings

How many meetings have you attended that were frustrating, unfocused, too long, and a waste of time? Do you groan when you have to go to a meeting or sigh when you have to lead one? How do you create comfort in a meeting environment and still stay forward focused? Some ideas:

1. Decide when you need a

meeting and when you can conference call or e-mail.

2. Control distracters and challenging behaviors before they control the group.
3. Help members to connect new knowledge to the organizational mission and goals.
4. Create effective agendas.

5. Use various questioning techniques and strategies for reflective statements.

6. Maximize your resources to find the best approach to problems.

7. Give each member a specific tool for gathering information, like process flow charting or mind mapping.

CompassPoint Nonprofit Services

CompassPoint is a 501(c)3 nonprofit whose mission is to increase the impact of non-profit community-based organizations and the people who work and volunteer in them. One of its newest services is providing professional development through coaching and mentoring. Through a network of funders, coaches, and sector leaders, they have developed several

coaching projects throughout the country.

The Coaching and Philanthropy Project helps non-profits and funders become "conscious consumers of coaching" as a means of leadership development and organizational effectiveness by developing the coaching profession to support non-profit organizations.

Coaching Skills for Nonprofit Managers and Leaders: Developing People to Achieve Your Mission is a publication that provides its readers an understanding of why and how to coach, how to initiate coaching in specific situations, how to make coaching work, and how to refine coaching for long-term success.

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Board Café

Looking for Interesting information for non-profit organizations and Boards?

Here is what is currently on the Blue Avocado website:

Taking On the Big Stuff

The Golden Rule of Board Resignations

Updates on Some Sacred Cows

Three Easy Ways for Foundations to Support Democracy

Five Emergency Musts for Your Desk



“I used to think that running an organization was equivalent to conducting a symphony orchestra. But I don’t think that’s quite it; it’s more like jazz. There’s more improvisation.”

–Warren Bennis

Unpaid Internships –Are They Legal?

Stephen Greenhouse published an article in the *New York Times* on April 2, 2010 asking this very question. According to his research the number of unpaid interns has increased over the years. Many regulators are concerned that more employers are using interns for free labor illegally. Many states have begun investigations as a result. Interns are reluctant to report employers because they feel it will impact their ability to get a job within their chosen field.

The Labor Department is investigating firms who fail to pay interns and is educating companies, colleges and students on the laws regarding internships. “If you are a for-profit employer or you want to pursue an internship with a for-profit employer, there aren’t going to be many circumstances where

you can have an internship and not be paid and still be in compliance with the law,” said Nancy J. Leppink, the acting director of the department’s wage and hour division.

Ms. Leppink said, “many employers failed to pay even though their internships did not comply with the six federal legal criteria that must be satisfied for internships to be unpaid. Among those criteria are that the internship should be similar to the training given in a vocational school or academic institution, that the intern does not displace regular paid workers and that the employer “derives no immediate advantage” from the intern’s activities — in other words, it’s largely a benevolent contribution to the intern. ”

According to Greenhouse, in 2008 the National Association of Col-

leges and Employers found that 50 percent of graduating students had held internships, up from 17 percent in 1992. Of the hundreds of thousands of interns, some experts estimate that one-fourth to one-half are unpaid.

While many colleges are accepting more moderate and low-income students to increase economic mobility, many students and administrators complain that the growth in unpaid internships undercuts that effort by favoring well-to-do and well-connected students, speeding their climb up the career ladder.

Source: Greenhouse, S. (2010, April 2). The Unpaid Intern, Legal or Not. *New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/03/business/03intern.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=unpaid+interns&st=nyt



**SOUTHERN EARLY CHILD HOOD
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*Promoting Quality Care and Education for
Young Children and Their Families*

[www.southernearlychildhood.org **]**

The Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA) is a regional organization committed to promoting quality care and education for young children and their families. SECA is committed to providing leadership and support to individuals and groups by:

- *Enhancing the quality of young children's lives through early childhood care and education.*
- *Supporting families in their roles of caring for their children.*

Fostering the professional growth and status of individuals working with young children and their families

CompassPoint Nonprofit Services

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In 2002, Compass Point began the **Leadership Coaching Project**, a 12 month demonstration project of Executive coaching with 25 Executive Directors in the San Francisco Bay Area. A longitudinal evaluation studied these new executive directors who worked one on one with coaches that helped them navigate personal and organizational leadership matters.

Individual Development Plan coaches assist participants with a 360 assessment summary report as well as underlying challenges

and needs, then develop and implement a specific individual plan.

On an individual basis, **CompassPoint** will design and implement an efficient, well-managed **strategic coaching program** for leaders and funders of a specific group. This may include selecting, orienting, or training coaches, and assisting with managing progress and program alignment.

CompassPoint Coaching Services include:

- Executive and leadership

Coaching Referral

- Targeted Content Coaching
- Coaching Skills for Managers
- Peer coaching

For more information please contact MichelleG@compasspoint.org.