Issue 6

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Managing the Big "D"

Your success or failure as a local board could very well hinge on your ability to **delegate** responsibility properly. If you delegate too little, and try to do everything yourself, you could burn out and fail. If you try to delegate too much and push everything off to your members, they may resent you for it. Successful delegation takes practice, and the first step is deciding what *kind* of work you should delegate to others. Here is a short list of what you can expect your board members to succeed at:

- 1. Tasks or jobs that are closely related to the work they are already doing. Ask yourself: Will the new work be a good fit with what the individual is doing right now? Or is it something completely different?
- 2. **Projects with clearly defined end results.** It is a big mistake to delegate work to someone if neither of you knows what the end result should look like.
- 3. Work that allows members to learn and grow. Sometimes the best kind of work to delegate is something that will challenge members and help them to grow new skills.
- 4. **Anything in which a member is more skilled than you.** For example, are you wasting a lot of time proofreading copy---despite the fact that one of the members is better at it than you and has more time to do it?

Of course, knowing what not to delegate is just as important as knowing what to hand off. You should keep the following items on your own plate:

Long-term planning and goal setting. This is the job of the President/Chair, you can ask for input from the membership but in the end, you are the one responsible for these.

Any kind of crisis. Some people like to delegate responsibility during a crisis so they can pass the buck if things do not work out. When there is trouble, you need to step up and be the go-to person. **Important decisions.** These must be made by a consensus of all the members.

-Adapted from <u>Management Skills for New Managers</u>, by Carol W. Ellis (American Management Association)

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Leadership Commission Members

- Toni Cacace-Beshears, VA
- Judy Carnahan-Webb, TX
- Susan Carrigan, OK
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Techniques for Managing Time

- 1. Have a "To Do" list. Focus on results, not busyness.
- 2. Clean up your work space at the end of each day so it's ready for a clean start tomorrow.
- 3. Learn the difference between "Where can I help?" and "Where am I needed?" Experienced leaders know that the last question is more important.
- 4. Delegate. Effective delegation will free up a great deal of time.
- 5. Categorize mail as "Read Now," "Attend to Now," or "Read Later." Most likely the "Read Later" mail isn't that important after all.
- 6. Organize. Have a place for everything and put everything in its place. This way you'll know where everything is and people around you will see that you're organized.
- 7. Schedule 10 minutes to do nothing so you'll have time to relax or just have an extra 10 minutes for a task taking more time than you thought it would.
- 8. Learn meeting management skills. Too much time is wasted in poorly run meetings.
- Excerpted from "Basics of Time and Stress Management" by Carter McNamara; http://www.managementhelp.org/

Consider Diversity Every Time You Speak or Write

When communicating, it is important to keep in mind that the workplace has become increasingly diverse---a variety of cultures, generations, religions, abilities, and ethnicities coexist daily. To avoid inadvertently offending anyone, keep these ideas in mind:

"We have become not a melting pot, but a beautiful mosaic." Jimmy Carter

Listen to what they say. Do your employees refer to themselves as Latino or Hispanic? The distinctions may not mean much to you, but it may be very important to them.

Rely on specifics instead of generic categories. One person's definition of elderly might be another's middle age. So talk about the 65-year-old person, not the elderly person.

Be consistent. Some people fall into the habit of referring to men by their full names and women by their first name only; or they may attach a Miss or Mrs. to the name of women but not attach Mr. to men. Choose one style and apply it to everyone.

Watch the *we.* Phrases like we approach Christmas... might offend those who observe other traditions and faiths. Stick with more inclusive phrases like the holidays.

-Adapted from "Tips on communicating With Diversity In Mind", on the Workforce Management Web site.

Board Training Modules Available

Remember, as you are planning for your summer and fall board meetings, SECA has seven **board training modules** that may be helpful in putting together your board orientation. SECA Executive Director, Glenda Bean can send them to you electronically or as hard copies available that include a Power Point presentation. E-mail her at <u>gbean@southernearlychildhood.org</u>, and she'll be happy to send one or all your way.

Page 2 LEADERSHIP LETTER

Making Meetings Fun!

Need a boost in attendance at meetings? Try these ideas from <effectivemeetings.com> for making meetings fun:

- Most people learn by doing. Whenever possible, include hands-on activities, live demonstrations, field trips, games, role-playing, etc. Don't be afraid to mix it up variety is what keeps people interested.
- Bribery works! Organize contests to generate ideas and offer prizes to encourage participation. A little friendly competition can bring great results.
- If your meetings tend to be dominated by a few people, try passing out five pennies to each meeting attendee. Attendees must "spend" a penny each time they talk. And no borrowing allowed!
- Consider appointing a Director of Fun for meetings. The Director will be responsible for dreaming up participatory activities, bringing in additional fun materials (videos, comic strips, articles, snacks) that relate to the meeting topic. A different Director could be appointed for each meeting.
- For a fun change of pace, consider hosting a meeting in talk-show style. Have the speakers act as guests, attendees are audience members and the meeting facilitator can be the talk show host. The host will encourage the audience to ask questions and share their opinions on the speakers' comments.

Embracing Diversity

"If we are to achieve a richer culture, rich in contrasting values, we must recognize the whole gamut of human potentialities, and so weave a less arbitrary social fabric, one in which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place."

Margaret Mead

Embracing diversity is more than tolerating people who are different. It means actively welcoming and involving them by:

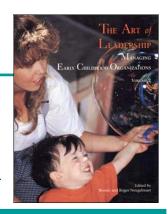
- Developing an atmosphere in which it is safe for all employees to ask for help. People should not be viewed as weak if they ask for help. This is what helps to build great teams joining weakness with strengths to get a goal or objective accomplished.
- Actively seeking information from people from a variety of backgrounds and cultures in order to develop a broad picture. Also, including everyone on the problem-solving and decision-making process.
- Including people who are different than you in informal gatherings such as lunch, coffee breaks, and spur-of-the-moment meetings.
- Creating a team spirit in which every member feels a part.

Resource Recommendation

The Art of Leadership: Managing Early Childhood Organizations

By: Bonnie and Roger Neugebauer

This 370-page resource is a practical, hands-on real-world guide for child care administrators. Included are 93 articles written by 63 recognized experts on child care administration as well as ideas from over 200 of our nations most successful, professional directors



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SOUTHERN EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION

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Promoting Quality Care and Education for Young Children and Their Families

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.

Increasing public understanding and support for policies and programs which ensure developmentally based services to young children and their families.

Focusing on Southern issues concerning children and their families.

http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/

Supporting New Employees

To help your new hires "hit the ground running," be sure to:

- ⇒ Have an orientation plan Prepare a schedule that details the training and orientation program and lists the people whom the employee will meet.
- ⇒ Conduct a formal orientation session Whether it's done online, through handouts, or in the class-room, new hires need to learn essential information immediately.
- ⇒ Put them to work pronto Too much time waiting to get started tends to lessen enthusiasm.
- ⇒ Consider a supplemental orientation program Bring recent hires back for orientation after they've been on the job a few weeks; this gives them opportunity to ask questions they didn't have at first.
- ⇒ Implement a mentoring program Consider having a formal mentor (someone you assign to mentor) and an informal mentor (someone the new hire chooses).
- ⇒ Offer training New hires may need more than mentoring once they've identified their strengths and need areas.
- Adapted from Alan S. Horowitz, Network World, 05/15/00 at http://www.networkworld.com/careers/2000/0515man.html

"No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care."

Most likely origin seems to be Don Swartz, a US broadcaster and entertainer.