

12 Weeks to a Better Board!

Mission... read it, know it, understand it... it is the purpose of your association!

Strategic Plan... plan *ahead*, delegate to committees, set action steps, support the mission, manage resources. Without a plan, you have no “road map” of goals.

Tools... request the documents you need to be a leader. Knowledge is power and there is plenty of information to help you be successful in your term.

Finances... understand them, work with them, help raise \$\$—it’s part of your responsibility on the board.

Risks... don’t assume authority, know what you should not do. You serve much like a “jury,” decisions belong to the whole and debate is limited to inside the meeting. Also know what risks exist, such as antitrust, public information, restraint of trade, member expulsion, *etc.*

Structure & Systems... learn the protocol and structure, use your affiliations, allies, chapters—build on what you have. Collaboration is a key for successful organizations.

Accountability... set and adhere to performance standards and measurable goals—don’t slip and slide on dates, goals, *etc.* Accountability is not a four-letter word.

Celebrate... big and small achievements, tell the members, stroke the achievers, reward the staff!

Govern... don’t administer, don’t micro-manage—govern!! Think in the future; let the staff take care of the administrative tasks.

Interim Work... between board meetings—use technology such as virtual meetings and conference calls between meetings, communicate so that the chair and staff know how your work is progressing, write and share reports before board meetings.

Micro-management... avoid supervision at all costs. It is demeaning to staff and limits leader effectiveness.

Rules of Order... take time at the start to understand your organization’s rules of order, whether they be formal (Parliamentary Procedure), or informal. Motions, seconds, and voting streamline the meeting. Also show respect for the chair of the meeting as well as the agenda.

In summary, focus on a leadership concept each week and by your next quarterly board meeting, you will be a better-prepared volunteer leader!

Note: Robert C. Harris, CAE, teaching association management and facilitate strategic planning. He can be contacted at 850/570-6000 or bob@RCHCAE.com. His website offers free association management tools at www.nonprofitcenter.com.