

ASSOCIATION ETHICS SURVEY

For Association Volunteers

Please complete this survey before attending the session. We'll compare answers during the session.

#1 . Your association Board has decided to downsize the staff. The Executive Director is supposed to bring recommendations for downsizing to the Board without talking to the staff about the assignment. The Board doesn't want to frighten staff that won't be affected. The Executive Director feels that the staff deserves to have input on decisions that will so centrally involve them. But the Executive Director reports to the Board. What should the Board expect the Executive to do?

1. Do as the Board directed.
2. Tell the staff what he/she has been directed to do.
3. Lay off everyone and start over from scratch.
4. Take this opportunity to restructure job descriptions and reassign key personnel to utilize their talents. Get rid of dead wood.
5. Tell the Board that its decisions are strategic ones that involve what value is to be delivered to the membership. The Board's job is to make those priority decisions and the executive's job is to make the staffing decisions that support them.
6. Start a rumor.

#2. One of your association volunteers (and a friend) asks you to influence the Nominating Committee to select him/her for President-Elect and hence the person will become President. What do you do?

1. Check the association's policies first. Then follow the policy. Tell your friend that is what you are doing.
2. Ask the Nominating Committee to set up procedures for the Board's input into the process.
3. Tell the Nominating Committee that you would like to recommend this volunteer as a qualified candidate for President-Elect.
4. Stay away from king-making. Recuse yourself from the nominating process.
5. Provide input to the Nominating Committee only if asked.
6. Advise any candidate on the most appropriate methods that you have seen successful past candidates use.

#3. The hotel sales representative from the hotel where your next tradeshow will be held calls and tells you that your executive has asked him to set up free rooms and other amenities for his family to have a vacation. What do you do?

1. Ask for some free rooms for your family, too.
2. Advise the hotel contact that you are the only person empowered to make changes to the signed contract.

3. Call the executive and discuss the inappropriateness of the request.
4. Do nothing.
5. Have the hotel person give the executive's family the worst possible room and forget to do the amenities. That should teach him a lesson.
6. Make it clear with your hotel contact that he/she should tell the executive that this is not a hotel policy.

#4. A member of your Executive Committee has been issuing e-mails and letters on personal letterhead on a variety of industry/association issues. They conflict with the association's positions. What should you do?

1. Do nothing.
2. Establish a policy that Board members cannot have different positions than the Association.
3. Issue a counter press release negating the Executive Committee member's position and stating the position of the Board.
4. Have the President and chief staff person talk with the Executive Committee member about the situation and work out a solution.
5. Ask the member to resign from the Board.

#5. You hear from an unimpeachable source that your executive director is interviewing for other jobs and is close to making a decision to accept an offer. What should you do?

1. Call legal counsel and discuss the situation.
2. Conduct a conference call with the Executive Committee without the executive.
3. Without disclosing any information, begin a secret search process to find and hire a new executive should the current executive resign.
4. Sell all your shares in that company before the report is made public.
5. Speak FIRST with executive to verify the allegation and then get the Executive Committee and legal counsel involved.
6. Wait to find out for sure that your unimpeachable source is truly unimpeachable!

#6. The Board has adopted a policy that you vigorously oppose and believe is detrimental to the association's members. As President, the Board expects you to be the association's advocate. What do you do?

1. Discuss the situation with the Executive Committee and express your personal reaction to the policy.
2. Suggest to the Board that you cannot be the spokesperson.
3. Quit.
4. Get over it and do your job unless the policy is unethical, immoral, or illegal.
5. Make it clear whenever advocating for the association that you disagree with the position, but this is what your Board wants.

#7. Your executive director, known for hoisting a few, comes in to a Board meeting at the last minute and starts to disrupt the meeting. The executive is intoxicated. What do you do?

1. Do nothing.
2. Ask the President to call for a five-minute break and suggest that the executive might want to retire to his/her room to recover.
3. Order another round and hope he passes out.
4. Order some drinks for the rest of the Board so everyone can join in the fun.
5. Have discussions regarding inappropriate behavior discussions in private at the Executive Committee level.
6. Make a motion to fire the executive on the spot.

#8. Is it ethical to continue the membership of a company, or accept advertising or sponsorships from companies that have declared bankruptcy under Chapter 11 and that have angered other industry companies who may suffer financial losses as a result of the bankruptcy?

1. Charge those companies a surcharge for advertising, or sponsoring association events.
2. Establish policies that address membership and the ability to refuse advertising, or sponsorships that do not fulfill the mission of the publication, association, or that impact negatively on the association's image.
3. Handle on a case-by-case analysis.
4. Then turn it down.
5. Take the ads.

#9. Several Board members have argued that they be reimbursed for all travel related to society business, including the days they will be in attendance at the annual tradeshow. Some of the Board are suppliers and will be selling their products, or services throughout the show. Others are free to attend all education and social events at no cost. The executive director thinks attendance at the annual conference should be considered professional development and/or a business expense and not be reimbursable by the Association. Is the Board behaving responsibly and what should you, as President, do?

1. Ask the Board members to reconsider on the basis of appearance of action to membership.
2. Do nothing.
3. Support a policy to reimburse Board members for expenses directly related to society business only.
4. Publish the new policy to the membership and wait for the feedback from them to come to the Board.
5. Quit.
6. Forget to send the checks.

#10. One of the association's top Board officers is also well known as an educational presenter and speaker on industry issues. Issue #1 is whether she has to discontinue such speaking engagements during her term as President of the Association since it will be difficult to distinguish between her private opinions and the Association's policies.

Furthermore, since speaking fees have made up a significant portion of this individual's income in the past, she has requested to continue to receive compensation for such talks while serving in office. Indeed, you learn that some program sponsors have increased their payments to her as she approaches the top leadership position.

The Board's written policy is that any Board member writing a paper, or giving a talk is required to state that the opinions are private and not those of the association. The Board's other policy is that Board members may not enrich themselves by their service on the Board. What should the association do?

1. Do nothing.
2. Establish a conflict of interest policy that addresses ethical, businesslike and lawful conduct, including proper use of authority and appropriate decorum when acting as Board members—specifically the obligations of fiduciary duty, conflicts of interest and confidentiality.
3. Make sure that all announcements and programs for the President's speeches disclose the fact that she is receiving monies from sponsors and that her opinions are private and not those of the association. She may not receive money from sponsors for talks at association functions.
4. Offer her the option of following the policy, or resigning from office.
5. Accept the fact that this individual brings high visibility to the organization and was elected with the knowledge of where her income was derived.
6. Tell her to omit any reference to the association when speaking.

ETHICS SURVEY RESPONSE FORM
For Association Volunteers

READ EACH SITUATION. DECIDE ON THE BEST ANSWER THAT IS PRESENTED. PUT THAT NUMBER IN THE COLUMN "BEST ANSWER." FEEL FREE TO ADD COMMENTS. IF YOU HAVE AN EDITORIAL SUGGESTION TO MAKE THE SITUATION AND RESPONSES MORE CLEAR, PLEASE INCLUDE THOSE WITH YOUR COMMENTS.

#	DESCRIPTION	BEST ANSWER (by number)	COMMENTS
1	Downsizing Staff		
2	Help with Nominating Committee		
3	President Requests Hotel Room		
4	E-mails and Letters		
5	President Fired		
6	Offensive Policy		
7	Intoxicated Executive		
8	Advertising/Sponsorships		
9	Travel Reimbursements		
10	Speaker Fees While Serving		