



5 Reasons Why Every Board Should Have Term Limits

1. BATTERIES MUST BE RECHARGED

Being an active and committed board member to any organization requires hard work! In between regularly scheduled board meetings, board members should be doing the following:

- Serving on or leading vital committee work
- Reviewing upcoming meeting materials
- Engaging in fundraising outreach
- Volunteering the actual mission work

Properly serving on a nonprofit board is literally a part-time job entailing several hours per week in many cases. If you are the board chair it might even be considered a full-time job!

After one or two terms of doing this, fatigue can and will set in or worse yet apathy. Automatically providing for an ending time frame allows the effort to stay focused during the term(s) of service then insures there is time away to recharge the batteries. It also insures an outside perspective is gained prior to possibly returning to board service later.

2. INVOLVING MORE BOARD MEMBERS AIDS FUNDRAISING

Just do the math; if you have more former board members, who is better at understanding the mission and carrying it outward to the world? Former board members are usually the very best ambassadors for your organization.

If the above explanation rings true, then why not have as many of the as possible to supplement or even lead your fundraising campaigns? Even if a portion of the former board members turn out to be not as good in this realm, the more of them you have the better your chances are of having numerous outstanding ones!

3. NEW MEMBERS BRING ADDITIONAL TALENTS AND PERSPECTIVES

Although this reason seems way too obvious to mention, we must, because of the importance. Each new board member brings a clean perspective of what the rest of the world thinks about your organization and its mission.

Such new members are like running your own Gallup Poll. They must be listened to, especially during the recruiting and orientation process since they might be "tainted" by the old guard at the very first meeting.

Remember it can be a bit intimidating to offer up any bold new perspectives during the first few full meetings!

Also, keep in mind to embrace and then utilize these new talents and perspectives. They are only fresh for so long...

4. IT ALLOWS REMOVAL OF BAD BOARD MEMBERS

They aren't "bad" people; they're just not the best board members. Any of us who have been part of more than one board knows it is more or less inevitable a few less than adequate board members will emerge.

How do we define less than adequate board members? Here are a few:

- Their meeting attendance is poor
- They are not active with any board related committees
- They are not good ambassadors in any manner
- They seldom volunteer or attend events
- They do not donate at the proper level
- They are disruptive in meetings

I bet you recognize a few or all of the above. Think how nice it is that the term limits easily remove such members and allows everyone to move on with new and hopefully quite different board members.

5. TERM LIMITS ALLOW YOUNGER MEMBERS TO YOUR BOARD

The concept of reaching out and embracing future generations is often mentioned but seldom put into practice.

What better bridge to those future generations is there than having 1-2 board member positions reserved, as well as numerous committee slots for members below the age of forty? Just think how valuable such individuals will be if they roll off the board at age 35 then come back ten or even twenty years later. You could have an avid ambassador for five or six decades!

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