

BEST PRACTICES IN BOARD GOVERNANCE

GREATER HARTFORD JEWISH
LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



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LEADERSHIP IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

- As Jewish communal leader, you are following Jewish tradition of serving & leading the community:
 - As the leader, so the generation; as the generation, so the leader. (Talmud Yerushalmi) Arachim 17a
 - Where there is no vision, the people perish.” Proverbs 29:18
 - “Always choose influence rather than power. It helps change people into people who can change the world.” — [Jonathan Sacks, Lessons in Leadership: A Weekly Reading of the Jewish Bible](#)

JEWISH COMMUNAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Are Jewish organizations unique from other non-profit organizations/churches?
- If so, how do we differ & why?
- Do we require different leadership requirements?
- And, what does all of this mean for us as board members?

What Do Boards Do?

- Boards Govern:
 - They establish mission & vision
 - Define goals & objectives & verify goal accomplishment
 - Address long term strategic issues
 - Exercise fiduciary responsibility through budget oversight & financial planning

What Do Boards Do, Cont.

- Fundraise
- Communicate with community stakeholders on behalf of the organization
- Approve new programming & conduct evaluation
- Hire & evaluate the CEO/lead professional

What Boards Do, cont.

- Discussion questions:
 - How can the work of the board differ from organization to organization?
 - Does organization type, size, & longevity impact board responsibilities?

Optimal Board Characteristics

- Broad minded
- Good listeners
- Strategic thinkers
- Mission driven
- Have leadership potential
- Respected by the community
- Consensus builders

Best Practices In Board Governance

What Is Required?

- Decision making
- Ensuring that programs are consistent with mission & vision
- Creating policy
- On-going evaluation
- Ensuring short & long-term fiscal stability
- Enhancing the organization's reputation
- Succession planning

Good Governance

- Requires the Duties of:
 - Care
 - Obedience
 - Loyalty
- Which place the institution over the personal interests of its members

Duty Of Care

Directors of nonprofit organizations are required to discharge their duties in good faith & with diligence, care, & skill

Duty Of Loyalty

A board member's duty of loyalty means that (s)he may not act in a manner contrary to the best interests of the organization by intent or omission in connection with a matter in which (s)he has a material conflict of interest.

Duty Of Obedience

Board members must be faithful to the organization's mission. They are not permitted to act in a way that is inconsistent with the central goals of the organization.

The 3 W's Required Of Board Members:

Wisdom

- Establishing mission, vision, and values
- Strategic decision making & long-range planning
- Exercising fiduciary responsibility through budget oversight & financial planning

The 3 W's, Cont.

Work

- Hiring & evaluating the lead professional (rabbi, CEO, Executive Director)
- Fundraising
- Communicating with stakeholders
- Evaluating current & prospect programming/services

The 3 W's, Cont.

Wealth

- Gives to best of his/her capacity, making the the organization a top philanthropic priority
- Personally supports all fundraising activities
- Is involved with raising funds from others
- Question: what is your board's role in fundraising?

What Are The Tools For Good Governance?

- Proper board size
- Diversity by age, gender, skills/expertise
- Term limits that balance the need for institutional history & leadership with engaging new people & new ideas
- Appropriate committees: standing & ad hoc

Tools For Good Management, Cont.

- Regular meetings with excellent attendance
- Appropriate By-laws, Minutes, Conflict of Interest policy, Budget, Audit (Optional: D&O insurance)
- On-going leadership training
- Succession plan

What Is Not A Board Responsibility?

- Management! Boards govern, they do not manage
- How do governance & management differ?
- Is there cross-over in your organization or synagogue?
 - How does the board get involved in management?
 - What is the opportunity cost of this involvement?
 - Does this cause conflict &/or inconsistency?

Which Is It: Management Or Governance?

- Hiring nursery teachers M or G
- Conducting staff evaluations M or G
- Developing fundraising strategy M or G
- Planning trips M or G
- Setting membership policies M or G
- Creating the budget M or G
- Promoting to the community M or G

In The End, We Are Obligated To Lead According To Our Jewish Values

-Leaders must establish a culture in which honest, open, respectful communication takes place, one that involves not just speaking but also listening. Without it, tragedy is waiting in the wings. [Jonathan Sacks](#)
- Leadership demands two kinds of courage: the strength to take a risk, and the humility to admit when a risk fails. [Jonathan Sacks](#)

Resources

- The Non-Profit Answer Book - A Practical Guide for Board Members & Chief Executives
 - Publisher: Jossey-Bass/BoardSource
- The Practitioners Guide to Governance as Leadership
 - Author: Cathy A. Trower
 - Publisher: Jossey-Bass/BoardSource