

## Forward

I have been working with non-profits for more than 20 years. During my work, I have found the Board can be the best friends or worst challenge a non-profit professional can have. If it is a challenge, we have to figure it out how to move forward.

I start with the belief that everyone working in the independent sector wants to be there. They are committed to their organization and making a difference. So what are the issues around working with the Board?

Sometimes we assume Board members know what their responsibilities are as a volunteer leader of your organization. In other situations, we are not selecting the right people to serve on our Board. Then again, we might not on-board them as effectively as possibly, starting the cycle all over.

This Talisman Tool Box presents best practices and tools you can use to empower your Board to work with you, you with them, and together raise more money for your organization. I believe we should treat our Board members like we would cultivate and solicit any major donor. We need to find out what interests them in general and specifically about your organization and cultivate to that strength. Just because someone is serving on your Board, we cannot assume we are talking to them about what interested them in service to your mission.

I hope you find this Talisman Tool Box useful and will share with me your successes and challenges. Best practices are all about honing, changing and adapting theory into a practice that works for you and possibly others. As long as we keep working on it, we are moving forward.

Here's to you and your Board!



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## Communication

Reaching out to Board members in between Board meetings is key to keeping the partnership working.

- 🌀 Set up an intranet or [Google Docs](#) for easy access to information or documents whenever they need or want it.
- 🌀 Send Board meeting information with enough time for Board members to review
  - ✳ Use an email program like [Constant Contact](#) to send meeting information. You can track who opened the email, clicked the documents or if the email was not delivered.
- 🌀 Create a special email update for Board members and agree on intervals to keep the Board informed, but not so much they get overloaded.
- 🌀 Celebrate their special life events with notes and cards.
- 🌀 Share good news immediately
- 🌀 Share challenges with a solution or ask for their advice.

## Cultivation

- 🌀 Like any major donor, find out what makes each Board member tick - likes, dislikes, hobbies, work, fun and family.
- 🌀 Read something of interest in the paper about a Board member, their company or interest? Send it to them with a note.
- 🌀 Outside of a Board meeting, ask their advice on a new program, idea or artwork.
- 🌀 Invite them to community events you are attending.

## Caring

- 🌀 Board members and staff need to care about each other and the organization to be successful as a team.
- 🌀 The ability to talk frankly and honestly comes from caring and passion for the organization and allows everyone to put their egos aside.