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FROM ENERGIZE

Online Seminar Trainer's Handouts

Building and Sustaining Strong Volunteer Leadership

Trainer: Carol Weisman, MSW, CSP

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Opening the Conversation on Leadership Development



1. How many nonprofits are in the United States today? *(answer on next page)*

___ 250,000

___ 1,500,000

___ 750,000

___ 2,000,000

2. Now go back and check how many you think existed in 1994. *(answer on next page)*

3. List three reasons why people are saying no to becoming board members or other volunteer leaders. (Note: there are no wrong answers on this one; extra credit if you go beyond the “the dog ate my homework” school of saying no.)

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

4. Give three reasons people would say “yes” to a leadership position. (Again, there are no wrong answers, and give yourself extra credit for originality!)

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

5. What are some of the societal factors that didn’t exist 20 years ago that affect the willingness of people to assume a volunteer leadership position?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

6. List three things your organization could do to encourage current donors and volunteers into more responsible leadership positions.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

7. List three technologies that didn’t exist before that you could use to recruit volunteers who already have leadership skills.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

continued

Opening the Conversation on Leadership Development *(continued)*

8. List three techniques you are using to recruit, manage, and reward volunteers with different technical skills and appetites.
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
9. Share three ways of coping with all of the different communication modalities your volunteers expect you to employ (I personally favor carbs, brief interludes of whining and swimming).
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

Answers to questions 1 and 2:

- 1. There are 1.5 million nonprofits in the United States today.
- 2. There were 750,000 in 1994.

Underlying Principles of Leadership Development



- There is more than one kind of leader and you will need to assess your needs and recruit accordingly.
- Your organization needs to be aware of societal changes in the lives of potential leaders and adapt your recruitment methods to accommodate these.
- Understanding why potential leaders say “no” will help you get them to say “yes.”
- Remember the “Jimmy Carter Phenomenon” and allow people to decide for themselves what level of responsibility or task they most want to accept.
- The clearer your expectations, the better the experience for both your paid staff and the volunteer leader.
- Although your leaders may already be very talented as well as experienced, ongoing leadership training is not only necessary but a perk of the job. Having no pay does not mean getting no pay-off.
- Some great potential leaders are right under your nose. Don’t typecast frontline volunteers into hands-on work only and remember to invite financial donors to get more personally involved.
- Other leaders can be found in all sorts of places – even by reading the newspaper and calling a stranger. Ultimately, prospects are all around us.
- When you ask someone to assume a leadership position, you are not only helping the organization, you are giving them a gift as well!

Why People Volunteer

(just a few possible motivations)



From [*The Volunteer Recruitment \(and Membership Development\) Book, 3rd ed.*](#), by Susan J. Ellis, copyright 2002, Energize, Inc.

- To feel needed
- To share skills
- For a change of pace
- To get to know a new community or neighborhood
- To help someone
- Because a family member or friend pressured them
- To gain leadership skills
- To get a change from being a leader
- To act out a fantasy
- To do their civic duty
- To earn academic credit
- To be with people who are different than themselves
- To keep busy
- The agency is geographically accessible
- To do something with a friend or family member
- To learn the truth
- To do one's share
- To see that resources are well allocated
- For recognition
- To make new friends
- To explore a career
- Parenthood
- To demonstrate commitment to a cause or belief
- To help a family member
- As therapy
- To do something different than their daily job
- For fun!!!
- For religious reasons
- To keep skills alive
- To repay a debt
- To donate their professional skills
- As a family tradition
- To be challenged
- To be able to criticize without personal jeopardy
- Because there is no one else to do it
- To get the meals, transportation, or other benefits
- To assure progress
- To protect clients from an institution
- To feel good
- To have an impact
- Because their boss expects it
- To be part of a team
- To learn something new
- To be an advocate
- To gain status
- To get out of the house
- For freedom of schedule
- Because they were asked
- Because of who did the asking
- To test themselves
- As an excuse to do something they love
- For escape
- To become an "insider"
- To be an agent of change
- Because of their personal experience with a cause or problem
- Guilt
- Because of interest in or concern for the particular client group
- To gain access to services for themselves
- To experiment with new ways of doing something
- As an alternative to giving money
- To be a watchdog
- To feel proud
- To stand up and be counted

Sample Board Commitment Letter



This concept can be applied to agreements on other leadership responsibilities, too.

Dear _____:

Thank you so much for agreeing to serve on the board of _____.
As I'm sure you know, our mission is _____.
_____. Our vision of the future of our agency is _____.

We expect the following of our board members:

- **Attendance at meetings:** Our meetings are held _____[*list times, date and place*] and our policy on attendance is _____[*what to do if one cannot attend and how many a member can miss*]
- The **length of your term** is _____. We anticipate that it will take you approximately _____ hours a ____ [week, month or year] minimum to serve on this board.
- **Committee service:** All board members are asked to serve on at least one committee. As we discussed, you will be on the _____committee.
- **Financial contributions:** We have the following financial expectations of our members: _____. We hope that you will consider including our organization in your will, as many of us have.
- **Participation in the following events:** [*List special events, symposiums, etc. and the level of participation expected, i.e., bring a foursome to the golf tournament, buy a table to the dinner dance*] _____.

In return, we will provide you with:

- **Orientation** and ongoing skill development
- Directors and officers **insurance**
- A **board mentor** [or sponsor]. Yours is _____
[include phone number and e-mail address] – expect to hear from her [him] soon.

Should you have any questions about being able to fulfill your duties, please call _____ [include phone number and e-mail address]. Please sign the enclosed two copies, keep one and send the other back to _____. Welcome aboard! We look forward to working with you to accomplish _____[refer once again to the mission].

Signed: _____

Board Candidate

Chair of Nominating Committee [or board president/chair]

Date: _____

52 Ways to Reward Your Board and Other Volunteers



By Carol Weisman, Board Builders

The following ideas are presented as thank-yous and motivators for board and leadership volunteers, but can be used to celebrate any volunteer and, for that matter, to recognize paid staff, too. They can also be effective in getting someone to take on more leadership responsibility.

1. When you have a new board member, send a press release to the local paper, business journal, alumni magazine, church or temple bulletin and/or PR department of his or her corporation.
2. Create a “Member of the Moment” award for your annual meeting for quiet, behind-the-scenes leaders. Tiaras and crowns from a party store are always an elegant gift.
3. Surprise a particularly industrious board member by having the member’s car washed and detailed during a meeting.
4. Give new board members—who have “seen the light” and joined your board—tiny flashlights for purse or pocket.
5. Start your board meetings with sharing and celebrating what is going well in your members’ personal, professional, or volunteer lives.
6. Get a funny award, like an old bowling trophy, from a pawn shop, and pass it on to the board member who asks the best question.
7. Provide every board member with business cards for your organization. (To save money, have them printed by the sheet without specific names and personalize them later on your computer.)
8. Create a Hall of Fame wall with photos of your board members and other leadership volunteers.
9. Put your board members’ photos on your website.
10. Link your organization’s website to your board members’ websites and ask them to do the same.
11. Give a creative toy to celebrate great service such as a stuffed roadrunner or the Energizer Bunny®.
12. Give all of your board members lottery tickets with the note, “Our clients or members don’t have to take a chance on their future with you on our board.”
13. Give your superstar a magnificent box of chocolates with the note, “I’ve gained so much from you; now it’s your turn,” or a heart-healthy box of goodies with the note, “From my heart to yours.”
14. When a volunteer takes on a big committee assignment or agrees to chair a special event, present a folder with an engraved name plate with his or her name, the assignment or event and the year.

52 Ways to Reward Your Board and Other Volunteers *(continued)*

15. For your shining stars, present a certificate for one month of shoe-shines or a piece of jewelry with stars.
16. At the end of a long board meeting or retreat, hire a massage therapist to give everyone chair massages.
17. Give a “Life Saver Award” for someone who helps out at the last minute—the award should be packs of Life Savers® candies.
18. Use a wall chart to note the progress of a project in full view of everyone, whether it’s getting new members, raising funds or serving more clients.
19. Send birthday cards to your leaders. Better yet, call them (leave a message if they aren’t home).
20. Send an e-mail birthday greeting to each board member, reminding other board members to call or e-mail greetings of their own.
21. At the end of a short-term or a long project or special event, write a thank-you note to the lead volunteer’s family noting the contribution and acknowledging the time away from the family.
22. On your board roster, list hobbies. This will give members an opportunity to connect in new ways.
23. Provide a special parking space for new board members or officers, or other volunteers who have taken on extra responsibilities.
24. Give board members newly released books or videos that are germane to your organization.
25. To build relationships and to become “a learning organization,” create a book or movie club that convenes before your meetings to keep current on issues affecting your clients.
26. Send a meal, pay for a house-cleaning, lawn mowing, or snow removal service for a board member’s home during an illness or after a big project.
27. If you have a morning meeting and have reached a goal, give volunteers a boutonniere to wear to work. It will serve as a conversation starter.
28. Before talking about fundraising, give every board member a Nestle 100 Grand® or a Hershey’s PayDay® chocolate bar.
29. Give new board and leadership volunteers a coffee cup with your website URL and phone number. (Great also to give to funders and folks who refer clients.)
30. Also give Post-it® notes with your logo, phone number, and website URL.
31. Create a pin or other logo-wear for multi-generational members of families who have served your organization.
32. Take photos of leadership volunteers “on the job” during an organization event. Or make it personal and take photos with their kids. Frame the photos as a thank you.

52 Ways to Reward Your Board and Other Volunteers (continued)

33. Bring a pizza or sandwiches and invite the staff for a communal lunch with the board. Ask each group to prepare a list of questions for discussion. Learn and enjoy!
34. After a walk or run event, give the chair and his/her committee certificates for pedicures or a reflexology session. Have the pedicures as part of a "Happy Feet Debrief."
35. To celebrate an achievement, send an email message with an appropriate song as an MP3 attachment, such as "She Works Hard for Her Money," "Taking Care of Business" or "The Hallelujah Chorus."
36. Create an online "Good News Gazette" where fundraising, membership goals or other victories are shared.
37. Raise the bar. Increase the goals, and make specific plans to celebrate. Put your best party person in charge.
38. Give a board or other leadership volunteer an hourglass, watch or clock as thanks for the gift of his or her time.
39. After an event, name a volunteer of the year. Put a photo of that volunteer in your lobby and send a copy to the newspaper and to the volunteer's boss, spouse, parent and/or children.
40. Have a "bright idea" award for the volunteers with the most innovative idea that they have also implemented. You might want to give a lamp or a year's supply of light bulbs.
41. At the end of a board member's term, don't just "whack them and plaque 'em"—give them a final send off at a luncheon or breakfast in their honor. Share plans for future involvement.
42. Remember to celebrate holidays that are relevant to your mission. For instance, if you have a "new Americans program" or deal with other immigrant issues, invite a client to talk with the board about his/her experiences for the 4th of July.
43. For your annual meeting or board retreat, use software such as Photoshop® to put your board members' photos on a Wheaties® ("Breakfast of Champions") box. If you have a member with poor attendance and a really, really fabulous sense of humor, put his or her photo on a milk carton ("missing person").
44. Provide logo wear that proudly displays your web address. On the back, list what you can do/learn on the site.
45. When beginning the strategic planning process, give everyone involved a calculator, ruler or abacus that says "Everyone counts when it comes to (*then state your mission or organization's name*)."
46. At your national convention, surprise a board member who has done a particularly fabulous job with accommodations in a hotel suite.
47. Create a "President's Award," which is given yearly by the board president to the member of the board or other volunteer who has done exemplary work.
48. Inaugurate an "ABCD" award (Above and Beyond the Call of Duty) which can be given anytime during the year.

52 Ways to Reward Your Board and Other Volunteers *(continued)*

49. Instead of the traditional gavel, give a conductor's baton, magic wand or magic lamp to rub, to a new board or committee chair.
50. Have a professional photo taken of a board member, get him or her to autograph it, and frame it for your wall of fame or executive's office.
51. For the board member who is always putting out fires, buy and present him or her with a real fire fighter's hat. Present several different hats to the board member who wears many hats.
52. Buy a toy sheriff's badge for every member of the development committee, and deputize them as fundraisers.

Resources for Further Study



OTHER RELEVANT *EVERYONE READY* RESOURCES

Depending on the *Everyone Ready* membership level of your organization, you may have access to some or all of the following topics. To access, just go to the “All Topics” section of your Main Page (located on the right in the orange sidebar) and use the search/sort functions to get to a topic.

- *Expanding Your Vision of Volunteer Engagement: The People Lens® Model*. Online Seminar by Colleen Kelly
- *Keeping Volunteers Motivated (So They Stay!)*. Online Seminar by Betty B. Stallings
- *Managing Change (and Dealing with Resistance to It!)*. Online Seminar by Connie Pirtle.
- *Turning Volunteers into Advocates for Your Cause*. Self-Instruction Guide by Marlene Hammerman.

BOOKS

Brinckerhoff, Peter C. *Faith-Based Management: Leading Organizations that Are Based on More Than Just Mission*. San Francisco: Wiley Nonprofit Law, Finance and Management Series, 1999.

Brinckerhoff, Peter C. *Mission-Based Marketing: Positioning Your Not-for-Profit in an Increasingly Competitive World*. San Francisco: Wiley, 2010.

Collins, Jim. *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Others Don't*. New York: HarperBusiness, 2001. (Excerpt at http://www.jimcollins.com/article_topics/articles/good-to-great.html)

Collins, Jim. *Good to Great and the Social Sectors: Why Business Thinking Is Not the Answer -- A Monograph to Accompany Good to Great*. New York: HarperCollins: 2005. (Excerpt at <http://www.jimcollins.com/books/g2g-ss.html>)

Search Institute. *An Asset Builder's Guide to Youth Leadership*. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute, 1999.*

Weisman, Carol. *Build a Better Board in 30 Days: A Practical Guide for Busy Trustees*. St. Louis, MO, F.E. Robbins and Sons Press, 1998.*

Weisman, Carol. *Raising Charitable Children*. St. Louis, MO: F.E. Robbins and Sons, 2006.*

Weisman, Carol, ed. *Secrets of Successful Boards: The Best from the Nonprofit Pros*. St. Louis, MO, F. E. Robbins & Sons Press, 1998.*

Weisman, Carol. *Transforming Ordinary People into Fundraising Superheroes: Even Those Who Hate to Ask*. St. Louis, MO: F.E. Robbins and Sons, 2009.

* Can be purchased using your *Everyone Ready* discount code in the Energize, Inc. online bookstore at www.energizeinc.com/bookstore . Your discount code, which you will need to enter upon checkout, can be found on your *Everyone Ready* Main Page.

ARTICLES

Anything in the *Harvard Business Review* (<http://hbr.org/>) will expand your horizons about leadership—become a regular reader.

Blanke, Heidi Griminger. "The Volunteer as Leader." *e-Volunteerism*, Vol. VI, Issue 2, January 2006.^

Ellis, Susan J. and Steve McCurley, "Trolling for Leadership: Applying Classic Volunteer Management to Working with Boards and Trustees." *e-Volunteerism*, Vol. VIII, Issue 3, April 2008.^

Leipper, Bryan R. and Diane L. Leipper. "Where Have All the Leaders Gone?" *e-Volunteerism*, Vol. II, Issue 2, January 2002.^

Lynch, Rick. "The Language of Leadership." *e-Volunteerism*, Vol. VII, Issue 2, January 2007.^

Somerville, Bill with Fred Setterberg. "The Search for Outstanding People." *e-Volunteerism*, Vol. VIII, Issue 4, July 2008.^

^ To read articles, access the *e-Volunteerism* journal from your *Everyone Ready* Main Page

WEB SITES ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Board Builders

<http://www.BoardBuilders.com>

Carol Weisman's site. Sign up for the free monthly e-newsletter with tips on governance and fundraising (see link at top of home page), plus you can cruise through articles on the site.

Building Effective Nonprofit Boards

<http://www.boardsource.org/>

Consulting, publications, tools, and a membership program for strengthening boards of directors in order to increase the effectiveness of nonprofit organizations.

Leader Values

<http://www.leader-values.com/>

One of the widest collections of free resources available on the Web on the subject of leadership – searchable themes, links, articles, quotations, and a glossary.

Leadership Development Planning

http://www.managementhelp.org/ldr_dev/ldr_dev.htm

Section of Carter MacNamara's extensive site for nonprofits, with many valuable articles, references, and links.

Leadership Now

<http://www.leadershipnow.com/>

Site focused on encouraging everyone to see their leadership potential.

Mission-Based Management

<http://www.missionbased.com>

Web site of Peter Brinckerhoff, best-selling author on mission-based management, which includes articles, self-assessment tools, and other useful resources. You can sign up for the free newsletter (<http://www.missionbased.com/newsletters/currentnewsletter.htm>) and follow the blog (<http://missionbased.blogspot.com>).

National School Boards Foundation Toolkit – Section on Professional and Leadership Development

<http://www.nsba.org/sbot/toolkit/PandLDev.html>

Tools for identifying and developing leadership styles.

continued

Resources for Further Study (*continued*)

Your Field Guide to Community Building

<http://www.heartlandcenter.info/fieldguide/>

A variety of resources to help leadership volunteers “navigate through what may sometimes seem like a minefield of interpersonal and political relationships.” From the Heartland Center for Leadership Development.

Carol Weisman, MSW, CSP



Carol is the president of Board Builders (www.boardbuilders.com). She works primarily in the US, Canada, the UK and Australia. She specializes in fundraising, philanthropy, volunteerism and governance. She has served on 32 boards and has been president of seven.

Carol began her professional career working with street gangs, a marvelous background for working with boards. She found the gangs better organized, with clearer expectations and a solid leadership training program. Although she doesn't recommend any fund raising that would end in incarceration, the gangs certainly had some “creative” ideas.

Carol is the author of nine books on fundraising, governance and philanthropy, including her latest, *Transforming Ordinary People into Fundraising Superheroes: Even Those Who Hate to Ask*. Carol's first book on philanthropy, *Raising Charitable Children*, is in its third printing. It has been featured in *The New York Times* and *Parade Magazine* and was the cover story for *Scholastic Parent and Child Magazine*.

Carol has won two Telly awards; the first for her five-year PBS satellite broadcast, “Creating a Board with a Passion for Mission,” and the other for her work with Hugh Downs in the video “Speaking of Money.” She is still trying to figure out how to mount her awards on her car. *The Carol Weisman Story* has not yet been cast, although both Sharon Stone and Henry Kissinger are hoping to play the title role.

Carol is the mother of two grown sons. She has two grandsons who love to run, read and are champion ice cream eaters when her kids allow her to spoil them.

She has been married for 35 years and admits that there are 37 pounds her husband Frank is not legally married to. Carol currently serves on the boards of the National Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse and Trailnet.

When not speaking and writing, Carol trains with an elite group of plus-size runners called the Chafing Dishes.

Carol has a Master's Degree in Social Work from Washington University in St. Louis. She was a pediatric oncology and hematology social worker at St. Louis Children's Hospital and Children's Hospital National Medical Center.

For wonderful tips on working with boards -- and for guaranteed laughter -- visit Carol's Web site at <http://www.boardbuilders.com> .