

# ON BOARD(S)



## A **FOR IMPACT** GUIDE

For Greater BOARD ENGAGEMENT

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*“LEADERS LEAD”*

– Bob Werner  
Philanthropist  
World Class Mensch

## DEDICATION

This small guide is dedicated to all the amazing **leaders** I’ve worked with in the last 40 years.

The IMPACT that individual *CHAMPIONS* can have on the world is truly a magnificent thing.

I have found myself doing more and more ‘BOARD TRAINING’ with large and small organizations. I really love the term **BOARD ENGAGEMENT** vs. the idea of a ‘Board Retreat’ or ‘Training’.

The idea of creating *CHAMPIONS and PASSIONATE ADVOCATES* (as one For Impact Org Leader said to me) for an organization’s Vision, Mission and Purpose is an exciting opportunity.

I am just coming off **Board Engagements** in Dublin (Ireland), Florida, Indiana, Michigan and Colorado... helping meet the challenges of multiple Boards (at the same organization), turning Strategic Plans into Action Plans, building Leadership Consensus around the Priorities and helping with Message, Math and Model.

All of this fits perfectly into my own passion and enthusiasm to get people ON BOARD.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don (O.G.)". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. The word "Don" is on the top line, and "(O.G.)" is on the line below it, enclosed in parentheses.

# FOR IMPACT GUIDES

*“One WAY to get where you want to go...  
is to find a good MAP and a smart GUIDE.”*

– Juan Enriquez

These For Impact GUIDES on a particular topic or area are designed to help you find your ‘WAY’. (It’s the whole TAO thing.)

We can’t tell you how many times during our training or talks or with coaching clients we have had people stop us and say, *“Just tell us what to do. You’ve been there, done this. Save us the time, money and energy.”*

This is one way we can honor that request.

For Impact Guides are where we share our thoughts, ideas and experiences... in ‘nugget’ form...aggregated on a specific topic.

It’s meant to be a quick read. To provide **motivation**, as well as ‘How-To’.

**READ. PRINT. SHARE.  
USE.**

*“Let us, therefore, decide both upon the GOAL  
and upon the WAY, and not fail to find some experienced  
GUIDE who has explored the region towards  
which we are advancing, for the conditions of this JOURNEY  
are different from those of most travel.”*

– Seneca

# ON BOARD

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# INTRODUCTION

We are always amazed, and frankly stunned, that there does not seem to be a single 'Not-For-Profit' that has figured out the ROLE and RESPONSIBILITY of the BOARD!!!

We have worked with the boards of colleges, large national associations, (almost) every Catholic secondary school in America, national leaders in cancer research, education, homelessness, healthcare, youth development, the arts, and internationally.

In the tens of thousands of organizations we've worked with, there wouldn't be but a handful who are truly satisfied with their BOARD. Yet, your board and volunteer leadership are sooo critical and integral to your organization's success.

Following is a collection of ideas and thoughts based on our experience with Boards. It is designed to help senior staff and the board create a better working relationship. It is meant to be shared with every **current** board member and **future recruit**.

As W. Clement Stone used to say:

***“READ. RELATE. ASSIMILATE.”***

We hope this helps.

**P.S.** Please take a moment to familiarize or remind yourself of our For Impact Point Of View (summarized in the next few pages).

**It is particularly meaningful with BOARDS!!**

# FOR IMPACT POINT OF VIEW

A simple, powerful APPROACH designed to help you...  
FUND your VISION and SCALE/GROW your IMPACT!

Our entire MESSAGE and POINT OF VIEW can be summarized with these  
3 color coded words:

**IMPACT DRIVES INCOME**

Even simpler: 2 words and an arrow on a napkin!!



Your **IMPACT** drives, determines, demands **INCOME**...  
Not the other way around.

# FOR IMPACT POINT OF VIEW

## IMPACT DRIVES INCOME... NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND!

It is **not** about 'fundraising', 'development', 'soliciting people for money' and everything else you do under the guise of 'raising money'.

It is ALL about your IMPACT!!

The  
Size & Scope  
of your  
**IMPACT**

(should)  
Equal



The  
Size & Scope  
of your  
**INCOME**

With all due respect...

Nobody reading this has INCOME that MATCHES your IMPACT.

## Stop defining yourself in the negative!



Be what you are FOR: IMPACT!

*"No Board member  
wakes up in the morning and shouts:  
YEE-HAW! We don't get to make any money today!!!"*

– Tom Suddes





## FOR IMPACT POINT OF VIEW



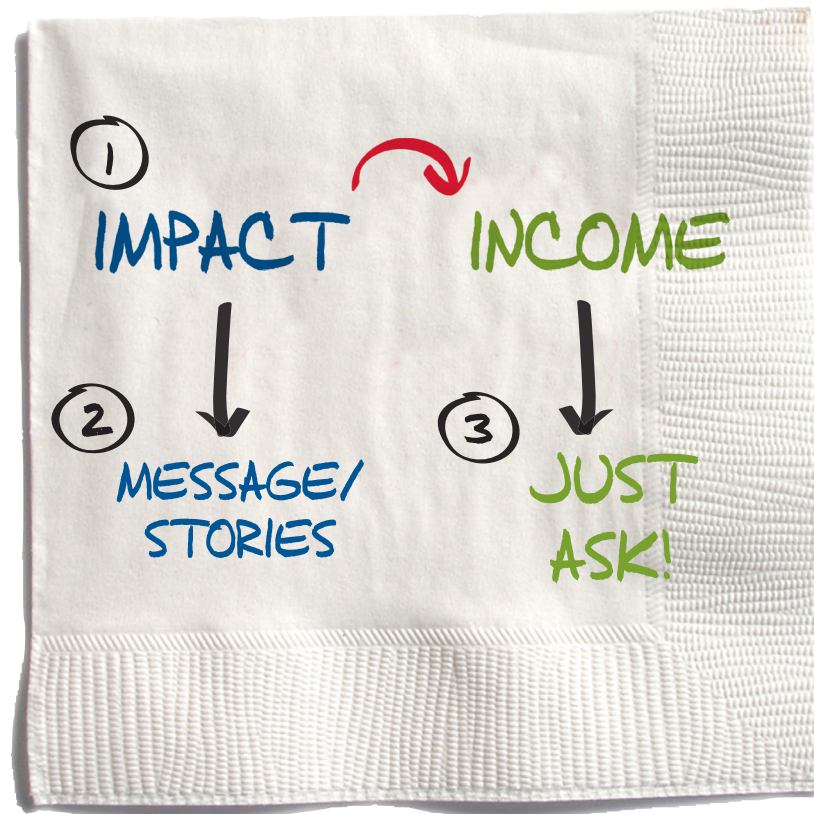
### Simple MESSAGE and Powerful STORIES

Your MESSAGE... at the highest level of Vision, Mission and Purpose... needs to be **conveyed... clearly, concisely, compellingly...** and **consistently** – by everyone among your Board, staff and constituents.

And, everything you do should be built around a STORY!!!  
Look for Story lines... draw Storyboards... practice Storytelling.

*“Selling is not telling... unless it’s a STORY.”*

# FOR IMPACT POINT OF VIEW



## JUST ASK. JUST ASK. JUST ASK.

The power of this ACTION STATEMENT provides the solution to Funding your Vision!

JUST ASK is a philosophy of life, an attitude, and a guiding principle.

JUST ASK... for help.

JUST ASK... for engagement.

JUST ASK... for involvement.

JUST ASK... for feedback.

### **\*Just don't ask for money!**

Instead, PRESENT THE OPPORTUNITY:

To Make an Impact.

To Move from Success to Significance.

To Save, Transform, Change Lives!

# NOTES ON **IMPACT** **INCOME**

# CHANGE THE STORY

The best way to begin changing the relationship/engagement with the board is to Change the Story.

The ***POWER OF STORY*** is not only a phenomenal book by Jim Loehr, but it is a great maxim to improve the dynamics of your Board relationship.

## OLD STORY

What is the current 'STORY' you're telling yourself about your Board?

- *They want to micro-manage everything.*
- *They won't give us names.*
- *They won't ask their friends for money.*
- *We can't get new and better Board Members.*
- *We are stuck with 'Legacy' Board Members.*
- *We all dread Board Meetings.*

This 'story' is familiar, but doesn't have to be true moving forward.

## NEW STORY

WHAT IF... you change that 'STORY' to one that sounded like this:

- *Our Collective Board is engaged with us at 30,000' around our Vision.*
- *Our Individual Board Members help us at 14,000' around our Strategy.*
- *Our Board truly understands their role when it comes to funding... and they love it.*
- *Successful community leaders who believe in our Cause and our Case are fighting to get on our Board.*
- *We have had great conversations with our entire Board about the 'BUS'... where it's going and who needs to be on it. Those who are not in alignment with our direction have gracefully and gratefully accepted either Emeritus status or rotated off the Board.*
- *Our Board Meetings are now Memorable Experiences... exciting opportunities to both see and talk about our Impact! We can't wait for the next one.*

You control the Board 'Story'. It can be a **negative** story or a **positive** story. Either way, it will become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

\*See more on Power of Story at [ForImpact.org](http://ForImpact.org).

# ON 'THE' BOARD vs ON BOARD

Drop the preposition (**THE**)... and it changes everything!

ON BOARD is about alignment with your Vision, Mission, Message... your Purpose, Priorities and Plan.

On 'THE' Board means simply filling a spot, holding a position, taking space on your stationery.

*“The bottleneck is at the TOP of the bottle.”*

– Anonymous Executive Director

There is a big part of us that simply wants to challenge the entire idea of the 'COLLECTIVE BOARD'. Very little ever gets done by the 'COLLECTIVE BOARD'.

Most 'NONPROFIT' BOARDS, in the collective sense, end up listening to Committee Reports and rubber stamping financial gobbledygook.

## Here's why:

- 'COLLECTIVE BOARDS' are all about being 'SAFE'... vs. SCALING and GROWING your **IMPACT**.
- 'COLLECTIVE BOARDS' are all about 'SUSTAINABILITY'... vs. VISION, PURPOSE and **IMPACT**.
- 'COLLECTIVE BOARDS' are all about FINANCIAL REPORTS and PORTFOLIO YIELDS... vs. again, **IMPACT**.
- 'COLLECTIVE BOARDS' create COMPLEXITY... vs. SIMPLICITY and **IMPACT**.

Here are three other reasons why I believe nonprofit 'Collective Boards' are ineffective:

- **They protect 'Sacred Cows'.** *"We've always done it this way."*  
Tom Peters calls these people DSGY's (Designated Self-Appointed Guardians of Yesterday).
- **They Self-Perpetuate.** Like-kind people nominating and finding like-kind people... who continue to provide no real leadership.
- **They Lack Entrepreneurial Attitude.** No entrepreneur worth their calling would spend time on a 'wishy-washy, play it safe, don't make waves' Board.

**A Very Personal Note:** Many Boards are made up of a politically crude acronym: BOWG, (Big Old White Guys). This, to me, is a euphemism for **traditional, bureaucratic, corporate, hierarchical thinking**, etc.

More Boards need an eclectic, diverse mix of entrepreneurs, business and community leaders and (most importantly) people who are actually **PASSIONATE** about the Cause and the Case and the organization.

\*They also need more WOMEN, but that's just too big a subject to tackle right here.

*"If they are not ON BOARD...  
maybe they should go OVERBOARD!"*

*"If they are not ON BOARD...  
they are a 'BORED' BOARD."*

# NO MORE BOARDS



My coaching style is **positive, pat on the back, supportive, you can do it...** like John Wooden, Phil Jackson, Lou Holtz, Mike Brey, and Pete Carroll.

Although rare, there are times when I feel like going off on a Tom Peters-like **rant** in order to grab people's attention, especially in this age of 3 million marketing messages a day, YouTube, Lady Gaga and Reality TV.

***NO MORE BOARDS*** is a quick shift from my normal style, but might challenge you even more to re-think this whole 'BOARD THING'.

This is not 'disrespecting' Board Members. Individually, these members are, for the most part, national or community leaders committed to your cause.

It's the idea of the Board as an entity, a collective 'mob', if you will, that I struggle with.

**WHAT IF... there were literally no more 'BOARDS'?**

**WHAT IF... it was a TABULA RASA?**

**How would we DESIGN the PERFECT, IDEAL BOARD???**

Here is one scenario...



# A NEW MODEL

1. **'EXECUTIVE BOARD' (GROUP).** A five-member group (since it needs to be an odd number) responsible only for **fiduciary matters** and for meeting governmental regulations, etc. They would be smart. Have sector expertise in law, accounting and business. Not 'yes men', but **collaborative** men and women who understood their role and responsibility for the organization.
2. **'MASTERMIND' ALLIANCE.** Right out of Napoleon Hill's *THINK & GROW RICH*. Again, this would be a group of really smart and talented individuals who would get together to explore the absolute best way to have the highest level of IMPACT. It would be kind of a 3rd Sector, mini-version of the YPO (Young President's Organization) or EO (Entrepreneur Organization). Would include other respected 3rd Sector leaders, entrepreneurs and big-time community leaders.
3. **ADVISORY COUNCIL** or **AMBASSADORS.** This group would be made up of **only** CHAMPIONS and PASSIONATE ADVOCATES. The size would be limited only by the criteria! (Again, Champions or Passionate Advocates). No 'meetings'. Selected 'gatherings' of like-kind 'C.P.A.'s. (Not accountants! *Champions* and *Passionate Advocates*.)

In this **3-Part Model**, the only 'Board Meeting' would be with the Executive Group to insure compliance and maybe some risk management.

The Mastermind Alliance Group would get together at least monthly to do some serious brainstorming and benchmarking. (Think of this as your SUPPORT GROUP... a kind of 'Kitchen Cabinet'.)

The Advisory Group of Ambassadors/Champions would get together quarterly to talk about the Vision, Mission and Purpose at 30,000'... and the CHALLENGES that needed to be met to reach these goals. Not sure when the whole idea of a 'Board' within the nonprofit world was even first created, but it's time (**NOW**) to CHANGE!

Again, WHAT IF... you could start fresh??? How would you Re-Think and Re-Design and Re-Focus on Boards and on Leadership and on Champions?

# GIVE US CHAMPIONS

You should be looking for **CHAMPIONS**, not just 'BOARD MEMBERS'!

'**STUFF**' gets done by **CHAMPIONS**... by people who **believe** in your Mission, Message, Vision.

**CHAMPIONS** are involved with you because of your **IMPACT!**  
(They are NOT there because they want to be 'fundraisers'.)

Success with your Board is more about RELATIONSHIPS with INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS... not the Board as a whole!

Stay focused on these **CHAMPIONS!** They will lead you to the proverbial 'Promised Land'.

\*For us, it's really simple:

**CHAMPIONS will exponentially outperform any  
'COLLECTIVE BOARD' by 10x to 100x.**

**Special Note: *THE POWER OF ONE.*** John W. Gardner wrote a pretty powerful quote that might encourage you to focus on three **CHAMPIONS**, rather than worrying about your entire Board. (He uses the term 'MAN'. Obviously, this would be WO-MAN as well.)

*"The cynic says one (wo)man can't do anything. I say 'Only one (wo)man can do anything'."*

*"All good ideas start with one (wo)man."*

*"The creative, caring, believing person sends out waves of influence."*

*"(S)He affects others who in turn affect others."*

# GIVE US PASSIONATE ADVOCATES

*“I want **PASSIONATE ADVOCATES**.”*

In preparing to facilitate and lead a Board Xperience (Annual ‘Retreat’ at Disney World.) for an absolutely amazing group of business and community leaders, I was going over the goals for the day. The President, an experienced and extremely talented For Impact leader, said it this way,

*“It is very simple. I’m looking to have the members of my Board be **PASSIONATE ADVOCATES** for what we do.”*

If you think about these three **BIG WORDS:**  
**CHAMPIONS, PASSIONATE, ADVOCATES...**

It certainly creates the ‘PERFECT PROFILE’ of a committed, (on) Board Member.

# CHANGE THE VOCABULARY

Here's one great way to dramatically impact your Board's productivity and effectiveness:

## CHANGE THEIR VOCABULARY!

Right now you are using a lot of 'words' that support the whole 'not-for-profit, charity, woe is us' thing. You are also using a lot of 'industry jargon' that mystifies and confuses most business and community leaders.

Many of our For Impact Organizations have left a Training Camp or a Live Experience or a Custom Training and gone back to their Boards and shared just this CHANGE IN VOCABULARY! (A few have even put the words up on big posters in their Board Room to really make the point.)

**\* Note:** Here's powerful incentive to help you understand what this change could mean to your Board Members.

A very successful entrepreneur and businessman in Ireland said to the Senior Staff, *"Why didn't you just say this was SALES in the beginning? I hate fundraising. I understand and love SALES."* One small example.

Following is a starter list of ways to change your vocabulary. A lot more at [ForImpact.org](http://ForImpact.org).

# CHANGE THE VOCABULARY

## OLD WORDS

~~NOT FOR PROFIT~~

~~CHARITY~~

~~MISSION STATEMENT~~

~~SURVIVAL~~

~~INFORM~~

~~ON THE BOARD~~

~~COMPETITION~~

~~DONOR/DONATION~~

~~WARM FUZZIES~~

~~CULTIVATION~~

~~CAMPAIGNS~~

~~FUNDRAISING~~

~~TRANSACTIONS~~

~~APPOINTMENT~~

~~ASK FOR MONEY~~

## NEW WORDS

FOR IMPACT

PHILANTHROPY/CAUSE

MESSAGE

VISION

INVOLVE

ON BOARD

COLLABORATION

INVESTOR/INVESTMENT

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

COMMUNICATION

FUNDING INITIATIVES

SALES

RELATIONSHIPS

VISIT

PRESENT THE OPPORTUNITY

*“Words are important.”*

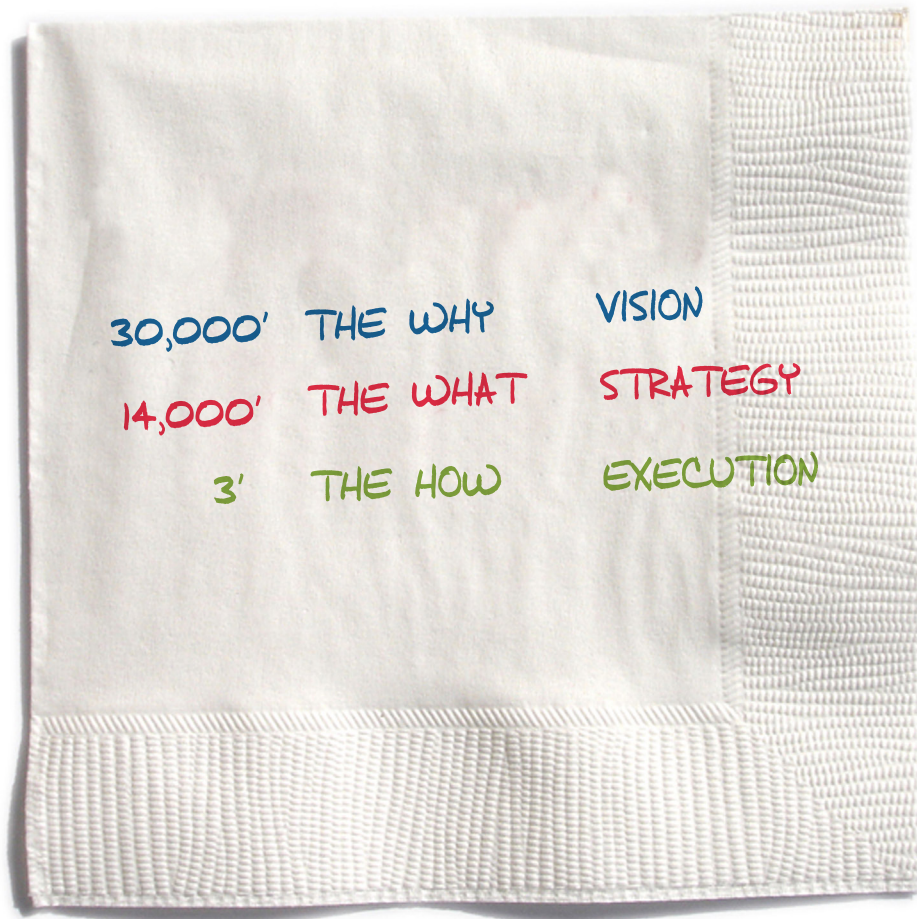
– Tom Peters

*“We need a new language”*

– Jim Collins.

# ALTITUDE determines ATTITUDE

Use our simple ALTITUDE FRAMEWORK to help you **engage** and **work with** your Board.



**30,000'** View from Airplane

A Green Blur

Telescope

**14,000'** Top of Mountain

A Forest

Binoculars

**3'** Nap of the Earth

A Tree

Glasses

# ALTITUDE: FOR BOARDS

Here's how you can use this Framework to create **dialogue** with your **Board** around their relationship with your organization.

- Your COLLECTIVE BOARD should be engaged at the **30,000' level** (WHY... we exist) around VISION and PURPOSE and MISSION.
- INDIVIDUAL Board Members (CHAMPIONS) can be engaged with you at the **14,000' level** around STRATEGY (WHAT...needs to be done.) They should be **specifically** asked to help within their own areas of **expertise** and **experience**.
- **No** Board/Board Member should be engaged with you or your organization **at 3'!!!** (the HOW).

*“Tom, our Board is AFRAID OF HEIGHTS!!!”*

– Irish Social Entrepreneur

We can't tell you how many times organizational leaders and staff have come up and said, *“My Board is at 3” (inches)! They tell us what kind of soda should go in the machine!”*

\*While we primarily use this for Boards, there's a case to be made that no one should be dealing with issues at **3'...** Micro-micro-managing..sweating the really, really small stuff, etc.

**Action:** Review this ALTITUDE FRAMEWORK with your **Board**. Encourage them to get and stay 'HIGH'. ☺

# THE BOARD IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR FUNDRAISING!

There it is. It's out there. Get over it.

There is no such thing as a 'FUNDRAISING BOARD'!

STOP whining that the Board *"Doesn't understand that they need to raise money"*.

STOP complaining that the *"Board won't give or get"*.

STOP moaning about *"Asking the Board for names... and getting no response"*. (As Nick always says, *"How's that working for you?"*)

## Face the brutal facts:

- The Board doesn't want to 'fundraise'. Actually, the Board hates to 'fundraise'!
- The Board doesn't want to ASK THEIR FRIENDS FOR MONEY!! Actually, they would rather crawl through that broken glass...
- They spend (collectively) thousands of hours on a SPECIAL EVENT (that is not SPECIAL and not an EVENT) and raise \$1,600... because that's what you trained them to do.

If you think keep doing what you are doing, it just leads to:

FRUSTRATION (for Staff and Board).

STRESS (for Staff and Board).

UNHAPPINESS (for Staff and Board).

\*At almost every single training we've done, which has included a lot of Board Members, as well as staff, someone comes up at the break and says,

*"Finally. Somebody is telling like it is."*



# THE FOR IMPACT BOARD'S FUNDING ROLE

Every single Board that we have worked with, without exception, has a very fuzzy and ill-defined **ROLE** for their Board vis-à-vis INCOME.

\*One of the very best Executive Directors I've ever worked with actually told me that her Board's 'funding strategy' was to buy LOTTERY TICKETS! It would be funny, if it wasn't so sad. ☹️

Here's what we believe the **ROLE** of the Board should be in an

**IMPACT**  **INCOME** CULTURE:

1. **CHAMPION...**  
the **CAUSE** and the **CASE**.
2. **INVITE...**  
others to get **INVOLVED** and **ENGAGED**.
3. **INVEST ...**  
with a **COMMENSURATE COMMITMENT**  
(to help **FUND THE VISION**).

\* Specific Board Members are a critical part of your **SALES TEAM**! They can help **get the visit**, **predispose before the visit**, possibly **join you on the visit**, and definitely help **follow-up after the visit**.

# FUNDING ROLE (con't)

Following are some thoughts to help you and your Board better understand these 3 big words.

**1. CHAMPION.** The power of this word is that everyone can and should know what it means to CHAMPION your organization, your Cause and your Case.

\* When you present these 3 roles to your Board, if there are any Board Members who are reluctant to CHAMPION your organization, they need to be removed immediately. (Call security and have them escorted from the building. 😊)

**2. INVITE.** Your Board Members and Champions need the opportunity to INVITE OTHERS to become INVOLVED and ENGAGED in your organization and Cause and Case.

Just imagine if you went to your Board and said, *“We do not want you asking people for money! We need you to INVITE a Qualified Prospect to a TOUR or a MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE.”*

This is **100 times** better than asking them for ‘names’!

\*One of the best ways we’ve found to execute on this role is with specific ‘membership’ opportunities. Let them INVITE prospects to join the President’s Circle or a Legacy Society. Then they get ‘MEMBERS’... not MONEY!

**3. INVEST.** The ‘COMMENSURATE’ word changes everything! Every single Board Member/Champion should make an INVESTMENT (in time, energy *and* money) that is COMMENSURATE with their **Relationship... Capacity...and Involvement** with your organization.

## SPECIAL NOTE

'**INVEST**' has nothing to do with Board Members 'giving or getting \$10,000'. Nothing to do with 'time, treasure and talents' from the 1950's.

A \$250 gift from one Board Member could be both commensurate and sacrificial. A \$1 Million gift from another Board Member could be neither commensurate or anywhere near a sacrifice.

This COMMENSURATE strategy allows you to take a Board Member who is a \$10,000 (commensurate) investor on a visit to Present the Opportunity to a \$1 Million investor.

\* We realize (from a lot of comments and feedback from our For Impact audience) that a lot of Board Members were told very specifically that they did **not** have to give money to be on the Board. We still strongly believe that you should have this discussion with your Board around their **ROLE**, including the 'INVEST with a COMMENSURATE COMMITMENT' conversation.

Why? Because it's all about the **IMPACT**.

If they believe (**CHAMPION**), they should both **INVITE** and **INVEST**.

\*The following is a direct quote from a 'FEASIBILITY STUDY' conducted by a very old and well respected 'consulting firm'.

*"The Board must feel charged with the BURDEN(our caps) of the fundraising campaign's success."*

*"Trustees are expected to give SACRIFICIALLY."* (Again, our caps.)

*"BURDEN." "SACRIFICE."* Is it no wonder that your Board Members are not very enthusiastically and passionately engaged in your fundraising and your campaigns?

# THE FOR IMPACT BOARD'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The RESPONSIBILITIES of a Board Member should be driven by a desire to help IMPACT, Change the World, solve a social problem, etc.

It is not as a place to 'SIT'! (i.e. A 'SEAT ON the Board???)

We don't want them to 'SIT'. We want them to ACT!

WHAT IF... you could go to your Board (or recruit new talent to your Board) and talk about 3 specific things you need from them:

## 1. THINK...

and ***GROW RICH***

## 2. FOCUS...

at ***APPROPRIATE ALTITUDE***

## 3. COUNSEL...

based on ***EXPERIENCE/EXPERTISE***

## 1. **THINK...** and **GROW RICH**

This is from Napoleon Hill's powerful book ***THINK & GROW RICH***. The 'RICH' in both the book, the title and the responsibility really has nothing to do with 'money'... but it has everything to do with **IMPACT!**

When people commit to be on Board, they need to commit to THINK! (Again, not 'sit'.) Use words like solutions, ideas, innovation to get them THINKING.

**ASK** (Beg?) them not to check their 'brain' at the door... *"because it's a Not-For-Profit"*!

## 2. **FOCUS...** at **APPROPRIATE ALTITUDE**

Getting Board Members and community leaders to truly **FOCUS** on particular CHALLENGES (PROBLEMS) and look for INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS is a wonderful use of a CHAMPION'S/LEADER'S time.

Review ALTITUDE framework... and then USE IT!!!

## 3. **COUNSEL...** based on **EXPERIENCE/EXPERTISE**

**STOP** 'INFORMING' and start 'INVOLVING'! Asking community leaders and Board Members to actually help in an area in which they have INTEREST and EXPERIENCE and EXPERTISE will have amazing results!

\*A really good CHAMPION or BOARD MEMBER should be there for you to provide 'COUNSEL'. Think of them as your *FOR IMPACT* 'CONSIGLIERE'.

# NO MORE 'BORED' MEETINGS



A play on words and pun intended.

At my very first Notre Dame Board Meeting as the Director of Development, a very prominent international business leader leaned over to shake my hand... and he had a GUN on his belt! That's when I learned that Board Meetings are serious stuff!

I served on a Board at one of the finest For Impact Organizations around. I was actually there at the founding of this organization and helped them raise \$20 Million to get going. The CAUSE is unbelievable.....

Kids – College. Its staff is committed and passionate. Its founder and key Board Members are truly exceptional!

And... its Board Meetings were boring, dull and totally forgettable. Who wants to drive 45 minutes to a 'Bored Meeting' to review the 'financials'... listen to Committee 'reports'... and dose off during the staff/department 'activities'???

WHAT IF... you made every Board Meeting a ***MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE?***

WHAT IF... these ***MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES*** had PARTICIPATION, FEEDBACK, and ACTUAL CONTACT with those you SERVE, or those who DELIVER or your PARTNERS???

WHAT IF... you always did something dramatic that **TOLD A STORY...** around your **IMPACT???** (A Tour. Actual Participation. A Beneficiary. Whatever.)

WHAT IF... you never held your Board Meetings in a Board (BORED) Room...But somewhere that just generated HUGE excitement and energy??

# MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE

The key to a great BOARD MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE (**BME**) or GATHERING is to get people **engaged** and **involved** in the session vs. listening to one person ramble on with no purpose.

These **BME**'s are also wonderful opportunities for CELEBRATIONS of accomplishments and success, rather than just talking about what we're going to do in year four of our Strategic Plan (a totally worthless document, by the way).

Again, I would urge you to use the ALTITUDE FRAMEWORK. BHAG's happen at 30,000'; incremental tweaks at 3'.

And, don't be afraid to take time to THINK!  
(See Board Responsibility #1!)

A '**BME**' is not the place to INFORM! If you want to share information, get it out in advance of the meeting. (There's some new thing called e-mail. Might be a fad, but worth looking into.)

Nor should these **BME**'s focus on FINANCIAL REPORTS! The fastest way to lose the attention and involvement of your Board is to review the entire financial statements, details, audits, etc. That's why we have a Finance Committee and an Executive Committee!

At the **BME**, you should be talking the WHY behind the numbers... not the actual numbers themselves. (IMPACT vs. INCOME) Better yet, DO THE MATH with your Board!

**Note:** The staff is responsible for the FRAMEWORK and FLOW of the **BME**. This is not about going to your Board and asking them if this is what we should do. Somebody needs to go in and say, *"This is what we're going to do. We need your help. Give us your thoughts, ideas and feedback."*

# No More Meetings. Period.



I know I am not the only one who is actually sick of ALL 'meetings'.  
(Luckily, I'm at an age where I can just say 'no'.)

Political consultant and pundit James Carville says,

***“LOSERS MEET. WINNERS DO.”***

He goes on to say that, *“Absent a major peace negotiation, complicated merger or complex legal settlement... there's no reason on earth to have a meeting last more than 30 minutes.”*

After 35 years in the 'business world', I'm convinced that nobody really wants to go to another 'meeting' (except for maybe the meeting planner or the boss who is holding the meeting).

**A suggested alternative:** 'GATHERINGS.' Instead of a 'meeting', try a 'GATHERING' of the **right people** at the **right time** on the right **subject**... to brainstorm, re-design or correct course. (Imagine what life would be like without meetings, but where you gathered together in a **fun, productive session with real results!**)

Some companies/organizations hold 'standing' meetings! Bet no one rambles at those!

\* Best 'Meeting': Go for a **walk**! It worked for Leonardo da Vinci and Thomas Edison. It will work for you.



# NO MORE COMMITTEES



Sorry. This is a personal hang up. Other people have said this in better ways, but I've never met a '**COMMITTEE**' that actually **ACHIEVED ANYTHING!**

Yet, the '**CAMPAIGN COMMITTEES**' and '**FINANCE COMMITTEES**' and '**DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES**' and '**LONG-RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEES**' and '**NOMINATION COMMITTEES**' and '**COMMITTEE COMMITTEES**' (to establish new **COMMITTEES**) are everywhere.

**STOP** all **COMMITTEES**. (Again) **START** working with **CHAMPIONS** and **PASSIONATE ADVOCATES**.

**Special Note re CAMPAIGN COMMITTEES:** These are usually about 'length' (the more names we get the better) and 'depth' (lining up the names on the side of our stationery).

Are you putting people on your 'Campaign Committee' because:

1. You don't 'like' the people on your Board?
2. You can't 'get' these people on your Board?
3. You're hoping that they'd agree to be on your 'Campaign Committee' so it will make it a lot easier to get money???

(Read this again and see if you'd like that to be published in your next 'campaign newsletter'.)

\* **Read** Nick Feller's wonderful thoughts on 'Killing of a Campaign' in the Addendum.

*"A committee should consist of no more than three people;  
two of whom are absent."*

– Todd Marian

# PUTTING 'PROSPECTS' ON YOUR BOARD

Joining the Board is NOT a prerequisite or a requirement for Maximizing the Relationship!

A common question we get during Prospect Strategy is *“Should we try to see if he/she would like to be on our Board?”*

First, every prospect should have a **Customized** Strategy, including goals. Putting them on the Board is not a goal or a Strategy. It's a tactic that usually has nothing to do with **Maximizing the Relationship at this given moment!**

Most of your very best prospects are on enough Boards already. They don't want to make that time commitment, but will help you any other way they can.

In addition, when you put somebody on the Board, you almost always want to 'wait' an appropriate amount of time before making a significant ASK. *“We have to let them attend two (or twenty) Board Meetings.”* UGH!

From a lot of experience, it's actually easier to PRESENT THE OPPORTUNITY for a LEADERSHIP INVESTMENT from your very best prospects **without** implementing the 'get them on the Board' tactic.

# BOARD MEMBER CHALLENGE

If you are 'uncomfortable' sharing this **Guide** with your current Board Members... that would seem to signify a BIG problem.

If you **are** sharing this with your Board, we would like to encourage those individual CHAMPIONS and PASSIONATE ADVOCATES to **do these 3 things**:

1. **Bring Your Leadership Skills!** Bring your entrepreneurial, sales, business and community skills and talents to the proverbial table! If something doesn't make sense, don't 'cop out' by saying, *"This is a 'Not-for-Profit'. It must be okay."*

*"Leaders Lead"*: My friend Bob Werner's words. My emphasis. (Bob is a big-time Mensch and Jewish philanthropic superstar.) SUCCESS for any For Impact Organization is a direct result of LEADERS LEADING! Passion and commitment from LEADERSHIP will overcome all obstacles.

2. **Ask A Lot Of Questions!** As long as you are a *CHAMPION* and truly believe in the Cause and the Case, your questions are important and valuable... and should be dealt with/answered.
3. **Challenge The Staff's Thinking!** The staff is committed, competent and also Champions for the Cause. However, they are usually singularly focused on the Mission/Solution and delivering the Impact. They rarely have a business background. Few have any true entrepreneurial experience. And none have ever been trained in **sales**. Staff should be looking to you (Board Members) for some out-of-the-box thinking and some great ideas around **funding, revenue streams, sales** and more. Give it to them.

# CALL TO ACTION

This collection of thoughts and ideas and nuggets is meant to be a **guide**. With that in mind, here's the summary.

## IF IT WERE ME... I WOULD:

1. Figure out who were MY **C.P.A.'s**... and then work directly with them!
2. Recruit more **women, entrepreneurs** and **small business owners** who get stuff done.
3. Hold my next Board '*Memorable Xperience*' either where you deliver your service/solutions... or a really, really cool place that sparks ideas, creativity and innovation. (e.g. the zoo or children's museum).
4. Change the Framework of the Board 'Gatherings' (meetings) and focus on **Altitude** and **Impact** and **Feedback**.
5. Share the **CHANGE IN VOCABULARY** as a means of creating great conversation/dialogue on WHY you exist, WHAT you do, and HOW you deliver on your premise (Mission, Vision).
6. Spend the entire next Board session talking about the **ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES** of the Board, summarized on a card (Addendum).
7. And, perhaps most importantly, I would restructure my entire schedule in order to have **one-on-one VISITS** with each member of the Board to go over their ROLE and how they can best HELP!

\*I would also share this For Impact Guide with everyone on my Board.

# **ADDENDUM**

# 9 BIG BOARD QUESTIONS

By Nick Fellers

*[Nick is a superstar when it comes to Boards. Here are his big questions for you and your Board.]*

I've been a part of dozens of board retreats (leader/observer participant), meetings and planning sessions in the last few years. A traditional strategic planning session lays out goals and actions but often fails to ask some really big driving questions.

WHAT IF... we asked these questions?

1. **What is our purpose or raison d'être?** This is different from mission – which should be the same thing but usually ends up being more about 'place in the world' vs. purpose. Raison d'être literally means REASON FOR EXISTENCE. It's the WHY question. If you can't answer WHY, then WHAT and HOW are irrelevant.
2. **How can we (intentionally) go out of business?** Is this for the short term (1000 days) or long term (50+ years). You exist to change lives, save lives or transform lives. How often do we re-examine our activities and ask, *“Can we find a SOLUTION?”* I started to qualify this question – to say that it might not apply to some organizations such as schools. Then, I withdrew my qualification. Ask it anyway; see where the conversation takes you. Education is changing.
3. **What would you do with \$10M or \$100M?** Or pick a number that is a factor of 10x higher than anything you're thinking about now. I recently attended a board retreat as a Board Member for Road of Life Cancer Prevention For Kids. With \$100M, one Board Member said she would get laws changed to make health education mandatory at an earlier age and another said we should invest in longitudinal studies to understand how health prevention impacts kids.

Those are two VERY DIFFERENT priorities and we aren't doing either right now. Ultimately, the question helped to build consensus around focusing on EDUCATION. Until the question was asked, every debate was about incremental tactics, not Vision or even, I would argue, Strategy.

- 4. What Strategic Partnerships can we pursue?** You have finance committees, development committees, marketing committees, campaign committees. If anything, I would like to see a partnership committee. Better yet, just a commitment to partnerships as a core priority (DNA) of the organization. I haven't seen the numbers in a while but there are somewhere in excess of 2 million nonprofits and many more socially focused businesses (all For Impact). Current structures and strategic planning questions focus on bloat, not partnerships. We're all trying to make a difference, so let's make a commitment (financial resources) to exploring this full time.
- 4. How can we scale our Impact?** Simple and open-ended... but not asked enough.
- 6. What are we best in the world at?** Jim Collins has made this conversation prevalent in the last few years (revisiting the Hedgehog Concept). It's ultimately a question of priorities and focus. Consider finding the one thing you do very well and FOCUS on that. I can't tell you how important this discussion is for your staff. It helps them make decisions about grants, programs, staffing, etc. Equally important is identifying those things that you're not good at. Side note: I am a big Marcus Buckingham believer. He tells you to focus on your strengths. [Our strength at For Impact is live training, facilitating and coaching. We're focusing on ways to do more of that.]

7. **Should we grow ‘wider’ or ‘deeper’?** It’s a Scope of Services question. Ultimately a lot of ‘strategic planning’ comes down to this question. Do we add more depth to our current programs (make them longer, more available, etc)? Or, do we expand our scope of services (diverse offerings, expanded continuum, etc.)? Refer back to question six to help you frame this debate.
8. **How much money do we need to achieve our vision?** What usually happens: we spend time tweaking funding goals based on last year’s results. It would be of huge value [to everyone] if we knew how much money we really needed to accomplish our Vision (annually or over time via a campaign initiative). Reflecting on this, I would say that this question *is* often asked in preparation for a campaign but it is *not* asked in relation to our operation (annual). Why not? Instead, we set a number and then allocate it (budget)... every year.
9. **What is our business model? What business are we in?** I think this goes along with several other questions and relates to strengths, focus and priorities. It also adds clarity and could even become part of your message.

I think these questions would also SOLVE a lot of the problems I hear about every day:

1. **Board Engagement/Staff Communication:** It works both ways.
2. **Board Meetings:** If we’re on board about the big stuff it raises the level of the conversation. I think a lot of the comments I hear about Board Members being too detail focused or staff members seeming unfocused is resolved when we can communicate about and focus on the big picture.
3. **The Proverbial Rat Race:** Incremental thinking gets incremental results (some times).





# KILLING OFF CAMPAIGN COMMITTEES...

## (THE MESSAGE AND MEETINGS, NOT THE PEOPLE)

By Nick Fellers

Here's a story about an organization that was having a hard time getting leadership engaged and 'on board' through a Campaign Committee / Chair Structure.

A youth-serving organization in the Midwest started a campaign two years ago – then put on the brakes. It couldn't find a 'Capital Campaign Committee Chairperson'.

The description for this 'Capital Campaign Committee Chair' was four pages in length. It included things like (and we're not making this up):

[First line of the description:] Acceptance of the Capital Campaign's **financial goal** by the General Chairperson represents his/her **commitment to raise this goal** for this Campaign.

This person should make a lead or the lead commitment for the Campaign.

The Chairperson is responsible for achieving the Campaign Funding Goal. [Yes, essentially this is stated twice.]

The Chairperson is responsible for identifying, recruiting and soliciting other members of the Campaign Committee.

The four pages did have other filler that wasn't as harsh, but...

The message? The Capital Campaign Committee Chairperson basically has to do the whole Campaign... devote the next two years to focusing on Income, no Impact... he's on his own... except he's not because he's going to sell others to come along for the ride.

OBVIOUSLY no one in his or her right mind would sign onto this. it's no wonder this organization was having trouble finding a chair. The description above probably works (but not because of the description) when there is one clear and strong leader that STARTED the Campaign Effort... that's LEADING the Campaign Effort... from day one.... As in, it was HIS or HER idea. For the other 98% of Campaigns, it's completely unrealistic and completely off-putting.

Prior to putting on the brakes, the organization profiled had asked **eight people** to be the Chair – without success. All eight have expressed STRONG enthusiasm for the Vision, the Case and the Project.

So here's what we did.

We scrapped the Capital Campaign Committee all together.

'Capital Campaign' tells a story about a building. The building is a means to an end. 'Committee' connotes committee. Ugh.

What we really need is LEADERSHIP – so that the community OWNS the project – not the nonprofit development team. We also need *CHAMPIONS* – people that will help us make the vision a reality.

Instead of a Campaign Committee, we're identifying 'Ambassadors for the Children of [CITY]'. We're focusing on ten great ambassadors who can help us Advance the Vision by doing three things (that match our Champion/Invite/Invest strategy).

## **1. Be a Voice** – For the Children. [CHAMPION]

2 out of 4 children in this city's metro area live below the poverty level. Many are on a path to gangs and unemployment. This is all in an affluent city where people would probably guess the numbers to be much lower.

We're asking the Ambassadors first and foremost to lend their name and endorsement to the Vision, the Mission and Project.

## **2. Help us Share the Story** [Invite]

When people come down to our existing neighborhood center it takes about ten minutes of walking THROUGH the story before they ask us, “How can I help?” We’re reinforcing to our Ambassadors that the story illustrates itself... but we need their help by bringing people TO the story.

We even note that in doing this, it’s all about ‘Sharing the Story’ and not about asking their friends for money. We have a well equipped staff with a killer process if someone is moved by the Impact.

## **3. Invest with a Commensurate Commitment**

It’s also important to note that we are not dodgy or coy about needing help. Instead of building out meetings we’re focused on building and leading a movement in the community – with the help of these 10 voices. And, we pretty much explain this thinking to them in the same way.

We’re not focusing on ‘the group’ but instead on individuals that comprise the group. We’re only holding 1-2 gatherings per year for formal group updates about the Impact and Income. Otherwise, accountability is specific for each individual most months as needed. Notably, we ARE putting in place a ‘Lead Ambassador’ – someone who can help rally the troops!

Though we’re just rolling this out at this organization, we’ve used the same strategy with great success on other ‘Campaigns’/Funding Initiatives.

Community leaders want to help. They want to be Champions for your Vision. They want to make the Impact happen. They will even invest in the Impact and help to get others investing in the Impact. This enthusiasm is muted (maybe killed?) when it becomes all about signing in blood to be a ‘Capital Campaign Committee Chairperson’ (or member).

# A PERSONAL STORY

## ON CAMPAIGN CHAIRS

By Tom Suddes

I founded The Suddes Group in 1983. My very first 'client' was an amazing 100-year-old Catholic High School in the Chicago area. At the time, I was using pretty much everything I had learned at Notre Dame on THE CAMPAIGN for NOTRE DAME.

The model at the time was to have a CAMPAIGN CHAIR. The absolute best candidate for that was an alum who happened to be a Chairman of (at that time) one of the largest retail operations in the United States with a huge 'Tower' in downtown Chicago. We got our 20 minutes on the 44th floor. Showed the Plan and Structure. Told him we needed him to do **"These 6 Things"** (none of which were about taking personal responsibility for raising all the money).

He said, *"I can do everything but this one."* I took my pen and put a line through #4. I don't even remember what it was. I asked him if he could do it now. He said, *"Yes."* It was huge.

## 3 BOARD FRAMEWORKS

Here are the 3 Frameworks that should help you make your board more productive, more satisfying and more fun!

### ALTITUDE: ATTITUDE



## FOR IMPACT BOARD ROLE

### 1. CHAMPION...

the **CAUSE** and the **CASE**.

### 2. INVITE...

others to get **INVOLVED** & **ENGAGED**.

### 3. INVEST...

with a **COMMENSURATE COMMITMENT**...  
(to help **FUND THE VISION**.)

## FOR IMPACT BOARD RESPONSIBILITY

### 1. THINK...

and ***GROW RICH***.

### 2. FOCUS...

at **APPROPRIATE ALTITUDE**.

### 3. COUNSEL...

based on ***EXPERIENCE/EXPERTISE***.

# ABOUT TOM SUDDER

Tom Sudder has made a name for himself as a thought **leader**, a motivating **coach**, a master **facilitator** & **trainer**, an engaging **speaker** and a prolific **writer**. Tom has almost 40 years of experience in Strategic Visioning, Fund Development, Business and Entrepreneurship.

He began his career in the Development Office at the University of Notre Dame in 1973. In 1983, he founded The Sudder Group, which has managed over 400 Campaigns, raised over **\$1 Billion** and helped generate 3 million new jobs in their work with 125 Economic Development Organizations around the country.

And, in the last 10 years, the For Impact Partners and Coaches have helped organizations raise **another \$1 Billion** to scale and grow their Impact.

Tom has made more than 6,000 one-on-one 'sales' presentations... and has trained thousands of 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector and Business Leaders in the art and science of becoming a For Impact Organization. He is the author of ***Take A Quantum Leap***, a number of ***For Impact Guides*** and co-author with Nick Fellers of the content at **ForImpact.org**.

A **serial entrepreneur** since age 16, Tom has founded 19 businesses; and now dedicates one-third of his 'work' schedule to helping social entrepreneurs change the world. He also spends significant time in Ireland helping to transform the country's philanthropic model.

In 1997, Tom **won a Trip Around the World** (the only contest he has ever entered) where Success Magazine and Opportunity International awarded him a chance to share his entrepreneurial experiences with Third-World Micro Entrepreneurs in Russia, Poland, India, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Australia.

Tom served in the U.S. Army as an Infantry Officer, Airborne and Pathfinder. He was a two-time welterweight boxing champion at Notre Dame, and has been the **boxing coach** there for almost 40 years. He returns every year for a six-week 'mini-sabbatical' to coach and referee the Bengal Bouts. He is the **Executive Producer** of ***STRONG BODIES FIGHT***, a documentary film about Notre Dame Boxing and its impact upon the Missions in Bangladesh.

Tom recently competed in the Masters Division of the Ringside Boxing World Championship and **won the title** in his weight class.

Throughout his crazy, eclectic, eccentric life, Tom has been anchored by his family. Now, his seven grandchildren are the centerpiece of life on his 50-acre farm/training center, Eagle Creek, outside of Columbus, Ohio.