

Some Ways Modern Non-profit Boards Are Changing How They Work

In recent years many boards have made significant changes in how they work, what they focus on, and how they structure themselves. The goal is to “expect more and do less.” This responds to the need of volunteers to use their time efficiently; when the changes have been instituted the staff time required to support the board will be decreased as well.

Some of the most common changes that have occurred include the following:

1. Fewer, but longer meetings
2. Reduction in number of board members.
3. Fewer standing committees, more task forces
4. More board/staff work and work groups
5. In meetings, less reporting on what the staff did, more conversations about where the organization needs to go and how it needs to change to get there
6. Decreased quantity and clearer focus of information – use of graphs, charts, “red flags”
7. Increased interaction of members
8. Increased use of consent agendas
9. More explicit about roles, responsibilities and relationships
10. Greater linkage of board structure and work with strategic priorities of agency
11. Varied processes in meetings
12. More monitoring, less meddling
13. Periodic nominating process expanded to ongoing board development
14. Using e-mail and other technology to enhance communication