

Board and Operational Leader Expectations

The relationship between the Board and the President/Executive Director is key to the healthy operation of your organization. Unfortunately, many Boards don't pay attention to cultivating this relationship, and instead often act in ways that breeds distrust in the organization. The Board may not be providing adequate direction to the President/Executive Director, leading to frustration on both sides. Or the President/Executive Director may not be involving the Board in the organization's decisions. It's key to create a collaborative relationship built on trust, good communication, and mutual respect.

President/Executive Director Expectations of Board

- Regular, standing meetings with the Board Chair
- Easy access to the entire Board by phone, email and visitation
- Fulfillment of commitments within agreed upon deadlines
- Fully prepared for Board meetings, ready to vote
- Organizational knowledge and ability
- Leadership rather than followship; initiation rather than response
- Leader/follower dynamic shifts with the situation and expertise needed
- Sensitivity to organizational and staff conflict issues
- Candid annual performance appraisal
- Loyalty and confidentiality

Board Expectations of President/Executive Director

- Regular meetings with the chair and other Board members
- Prompt return of phone calls and emails
- Candor in actual issues in the organization and not just glossing over areas needing improvement
- Meeting agreed upon deadlines and notification if cannot be met
- Prompt response to requests for information
- Complete, concise, and accurate information
- Adequate preparation and organization for meetings
- Judicious use of their time

It is important that the President/Executive Director is included in Executive Committee meetings and in Board communications. Leaving the President/Executive Director out of key meetings will foster an atmosphere of distrust and create issues that are difficult to recover from.