**Best Practices for the Best Boards**

**The most effective boards**

* Recognize the role of the board in supporting the chief executive.
* Govern the organization as a group and support the organization as individuals.
* Make strategic decisions to guide the organization.
* Establish group norms that govern how they operate.
* Encourage questions and respect differences of opinion.
* Encourage EVERY board member to participate.
* Make member expectations clear to prospective board members before election to the board.
* Help new board members to feel part of the group by having a thorough orientation.
* Develop new leaders for the board.
* Recruit new members from outside their circle of friends.
* Define diversity requirements for their nonprofit. Seek members who will add diverse skills, diversity of thought and diverse community connections to the board.

**The most effective board members**

* Attend every meeting.
* Prepare for every meeting by reading materials sent in advance.
* Express their opinions in the board meeting.
* Respect the decisions of the board as a whole.
* Serve as ambassadors to the larger community for the organization.
* Make a personal gift of time, talent AND treasure.
* Bring their professional skills to the board.
* Respect the authority of the chief executive in the day to day operation of the nonprofit.

**The most effective board chairs**

* Establish a cooperative and supportive relationship with the chief executive.
* Have regular meetings with the chief executive to discuss upcoming issues, serve as a sounding board and to establish the agenda for the board meeting.
* Make sure that meetings start and end on time.
* Make use of strong meeting management skills to keep meetings on task and on time.
* Make sure that discussions are not dominated by one or two people.
* Meet with each board member individually once a year
* Holds committee chairs and other officers accountable for the work they have been assigned.
* Call board members who have not attended a meeting to hold them accountable for attendance.
* Identify and develop new leaders on the board.
* Make board service fun and rewarding for the members.