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September 16, 2010

Board Members Are Not Hypothetical Constructs

It's fairly common among board development writers and consultants to suggest that nonprofits take inventory of their current boards and develop lists of what they need and want to add to the strengths of those boards. Then [goes the conventional wisdom] put your list in priority order, and you'll be ready to do board recruitment.

What a waste of time! What's the point of identifying a desired outcome ("Someone wealthy, with lots of connections, who's eager to do fundraising") if there's no way to accomplish the outcome? What's the point of fantasizing about imaginary people ("Someone wealthy, with lots of connections, who's eager to do fundraising") when the point is to find real people and attract them to your cause?

The real process of board development takes place when an entire board sits down in a room and says: who do we know? After the obligatory 10 minutes of "We don't know anybody," people will start saying, "Well, there is my cousin's brother-in-law, who owns the copy shop on Fourth Street and has been looking for a board to join." ... [Read more](#)

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"Receptionist" vs. "Director of First Brand Impressions"

I needed to change my flight plans—and dreaded going through the process.

I'd done it with other airlines, and it was always a protracted, frustrating ordeal. To make matters worse, this particular morning I was on a deadline and had little time to spare.

I braced myself for dealing either with an automaton-like personality or, worse yet, the dreaded "Press 1 for this. ... Press 2 for that. ... Press 3. ... Press 4. ... and if you'd like this menu repeated, please press. ..." Yikes! I drew a deep breath and made the call.

"Hello, my name is Susie. How may I help you today?" ... [Read more](#)

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IRS Updates, September 2010: Automatic Revocations, Health Care Tax Credit, Flexible Spending Arrangements in 2011

[The IRS needs] your help to prevent tax-exempt organizations in your community from losing their tax exemption. Tax-exempt organizations, except churches and church-related groups, that fail to file for three consecutive years automatically lose their tax-exempt status. The IRS is providing one-time relief to allow small tax-exempt organizations to come back into compliance by October 15, 2010, and retain their tax-exempt status even though they failed to file for three consecutive years. The IRS has published a list of over 300,000 organizations at risk of losing their exemption because the IRS has no record of their filing for 2007, 2008, or 2009.

If you are a volunteer, member or just a friend of an organization at risk of losing its exemption, please alert the organization and encourage it to go to IRS.gov and find out how the organization can come back into compliance today. ... [Read more](#)

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This Month's Webinars

- September 28—Grantmaker Due Diligence in the Pension Protection Act Era. Register now
- September 29—The 7 Steps for Data-Driven Decision Making. Register now

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