



Qualities of an Officer/Director

(Extracted from "The Principles of Association Management" by the American Society of Association Executives)

Electing members of the Board of Directors is one of the most important responsibilities of any association member. First, the Board of Directors serves as the official spokesman for the entire industry. Secondly, every director should be viewed as a potential president. High integrity and an understanding of the ethics of the association are, of course, prime requisites in a director. High on the list of desirable qualifications are business experience, knowledge, and capability. The director should be a proven performer, active in both association and community affairs.

Fourteen Points to Consider in Electing the Ideal Officer/Director:

1. How knowledgeable is the candidate for the office sought?
2. How experienced is the candidate for the office sought?
3. Is the candidate interested in more than honor?
4. Will he or she be able to devote adequate time to the job?
5. Does his or her health permit the exertion and energy required to serve as a successful director?
6. Will he or she be able to work effectively with the association staff?
7. Can he or she stand the limelight and the criticism of leadership, particularly in times of crises?
8. Can he or she communicate effectively, both orally and in writing?
9. Can he or she subordinate regional, personal and business biases for the good of the association?
10. Does his or her personal conduct reflect favorably on the Association?
11. If the candidate is married, will his or her spouse be helpful or resentful?
12. Will he or she be able to step down gracefully at the end of their term of office?
13. Will he or she recognize the validity and importance of the group process in decision making?
14. Will he or she support the decision/policies of the Association, State and National Associations?

To do its best work, the Board of Directors must operate in a free atmosphere where there is uninhibited, reasonably polite, exposition of feelings and ideas. Open exchange and honest debate are called for. Once this discussion state is past and the decision is made, however, the entire Board must work to make that decision effective.

The directors' efforts are aimed towards influencing policy, but once the decision is made, the directors should stand together to support the implementation of that decision, rather than frustrate the Board's effort. Every director must believe profoundly in the validity of the group process.