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November 30, 2022

As part of its 2022-2023 business plan, QUILL Learning Network and its partners: Community Literacy of Ontario, Literacy Link South Central, Project Read Learning Network, and the Tri-County Literacy Network, will hold three meetings of community-based LBS programs in Southwestern Ontario. These meetings are designed to support programs and build capacity. After each meeting, a Resource Bulletin will be shared.

The second meeting was held October 12, 2022, and QUILL is pleased to present **Resource Bulletin #2**.

For **Resource Bulletin #2**, QUILL and its partners hosted guest speaker, Gay Douglas, on the topic: "5 Specific Strategies to get the Most out of Your Board of Directors." This bulletin aims to share resources and experiences for getting the most out of your Board of Directors, as well as links, tips, and recordings that we hope are valuable to your organization.

~ Heather Robinet, Executive Director, QUILL

This Employment Ontario service is funded in part by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario and through the Canada-Ontario Job Fund Agreement. Their support is gratefully acknowledged.



“Excellence in board governance is not the job of staff. Supporting excellence is.”
Gay Douglas

Resource: October 12, 2022 Meeting Recording

The second meeting of community-based LBS programs in Southwestern Ontario was held on October 12, 2022, and hosted guest speaker, Gay Douglas, on the topic: “5 Specific Strategies to get the Most out of Your Board of Directors.” In her presentation, Gay Douglas shares resources and experiences for getting the most out of your Board of Directors. This meeting is a valuable resource, and we recommend that everyone watch the recording in addition to reading this summary bulletin. You can find the recording of the meeting in its entirety here: <https://youtu.be/rRIZaPTcKUQ>.

Strategy 1: Assess Your Board’s Needs

It is important to first understand your individual organization’s needs in the context of your Board of Directors. Keep your organizations’ mission, vision and values centered in all board planning and decisions. Understand your Board governance model and the roles and responsibilities of Board members and the Executive Director. As often as necessary, complete an environmental scan or SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) so you can identify any key issues and challenges, and any recent developments for your organization and/or sector. With this information, identify what key skills or abilities would benefit your organization in a board member. Also consider the value of a variety of perspectives of diverse Board members.



Strategy 2: Understand Your Board Member's Motivations

People volunteer on a Board of Directors for a variety of reasons, and it is important to understand each person's motivation to provide a positive experience and ideally gain the most out of their time on the board. Many people volunteer for altruistic reasons such as to make a difference with a cause they personally support. Some people have a professional goal of building their CV, networking in a specific sector, or to build their reputation. Others may have a goal of building their knowledge on a particular topic, or to share their existing knowledge.

It is important to understand each board member's motivation or goal of joining your board and this should happen during recruitment and onboarding of new board members. A simple self-assessment intake form will suffice. Every board needs a variety of skills and perspectives, and it is important to match your board members' skills and goals to the available executive positions, committees, and special projects available on your board.

Strategy 3: Create Structure

Creating structure will set your board up for success. It is important to start every new board member with board orientation, including clear job descriptions and terms of reference and access to the organization's policies and bylaws. An organizational chart can also be helpful, especially if it is a person's first time on a board of directors. Providing all of this information, as well as the roles and opportunities available, will help your directors find their place quickly and easily and start their term efficiently.

Strategy 4: Recruit Strategically

Knowing your organization's goals and the skills or attributes needed on your board allows you to recruit new board members strategically. It is important to spend time understanding your organization's current and future needs and the seats and roles that are coming available on your board. Succession planning is a key piece to board management. Be aware of the need for diversity and inclusion on your board and plan your recruitment accordingly. Once you have identified the type of board member that would best suit your board, you must identify where and how you will reach potential candidates, and how you will entice them to volunteer for your board.

Once you have connected with potential board members, it is important to create an application process that gathers all the information you need to be able to screen and select potential candidates.



Strategy 5: Keep Motivating and Managing

Once you have your board of directors in place and have identified their motivations and goals for being on your board, continuous motivation and management is key. Throughout the year, review your policies to ensure both you and your directors are meeting your requirements. Continue to check in with your board members over their term to find out if their needs or motivations have changed since their onboarding and adjust their role as necessary. Consider providing ongoing education and knowledge exchanges during scheduled meetings. You can also consider inviting guest speakers at your meetings for professional development. Plan your meetings and agendas strategically to meet your directors' motivations, and to meet the needs of your organization. During your succession planning for board members, understand how outgoing and incoming board members will affect overall board dynamics, and conduct exit interviews to continually optimize your board experience.

Tip: Be Aware of the Basics of Board Governance

Board service is complex and involves multiple stakeholders and accountabilities. With changing not-for-profit regulations and increased scrutiny, there is a lot to consider when choosing to volunteer on a board of directors. It is important to be aware of the legal and ethical regulations for your board members so they can feel secure in volunteering for your organization. Your organization should have clear policies and bylaws in place as well as clear terms of service for board members. Your board should be aware of any legal issues, such as applicable federal and provincial legislation, the board's responsibilities as the employer of the senior manager, conflicts of interests, and confidentiality. The board should also be aware of ethical issues that can arise, such as duties of care, fiduciary duties, and being clear about whose interests the board serves and staying focused on the organization's mission, vision, and values.



Resources: Theories for Identifying Your Board’s Motivations and Roles

- Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs
<https://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Maslow/motivation.htm>
- Lawrence and Nohria’s 4-Drive Theory: Acquire, Bond, Defend, Create
<https://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/driven-the-four-drives-underlying-our-human-nature-driven-how-human-nature-shapes-organizations>
- McClelland’s Needs Theory: Power, Achievement, Affiliation
<https://educationlibrary.org/mcclellands-three-needs-theory-power-achievement-and-affiliation/>
- Belbin Team Roles: Social roles, Thinking roles, Action or Task roles
<https://www.belbin.com/about/belbin-team-roles>

Resource: Application Form

Gay shared an application interview form that approaches applications through motivations. Motivation is a key aspect of effective governance. People will volunteer and engage in activities that fit with their motivations.

- Role clarity
- Structure
- Policies
- Explicit responsibilities
- Variety of options to serve on your board





**Sample Volunteer
Application/Interview Form**
(based on Ivan Scheier's Window of Work)



Thank you for completing this form. It has been designed to help us locate a special place for you within our organization. By providing this information, we are better able to tailor a volunteer position just for you. We know if we can ensure an enjoyable work environment for you, we are more strongly positioned to accomplish a rewarding and beneficial volunteer experience for both you and our organization.

Our Mission, Vision & Values: (to be added by organization)

Name of Volunteer:

Address:

Daytime Phone:

Evening Phone:

Email:

1. Motivations: I'm most motivated by:

- change
- collaboration
- regularity
- learning
- challenge
- other?

2. Relationships: with whom would you prefer to work'?

- alone
- with a partner
- in a group
- on a committee
- other?

3. Time Available or preferred work schedule – check all that apply

- occasional service
- regular schedule
- 1 x per week (1-3 hrs)
- 2 x per month (1-3 hrs)
- 1 x per month (1-3 hrs)
- primarily weekdays
- primarily evenings or weekends
- other: _____

4. Glad Gifts ... any talents, skills, interests and hobbies that you do well and you would enjoy sharing:

5. Quests (or Yearn-to-Learn)... those things you would like to learn more about or skills you might like to develop:

6. No, No.... please don't ask me to:

7. I think the world would be a better place if.....

