Organizations develop guiding principles from inception. Founding leaders instill their values. Through time, culture and environmental changes, the ideals evolve.

Values apply to organizational priorities and decisions; as well as the selection of leaders.

**Desired Traits**

Discuss organizational and individual values in the nomination and selection process. They should frame discussions and decisions of the board throughout the year.

- **Authentic** – An authentic leader is not there for personal gain or fame. They have an ability to recognize what’s important and are charismatic about influencing others to action.
- **Candid** – Directors are expected to be “up front” with their ideas and concerns. They should be frank in expressing thoughts.
- **Committed** – There will be good and bad times in the organization. A director should be committed for the long term; not only interested in a few priorities and then lose interest.
- **Community Minded** – The director should prefer unity over exclusion. They embrace and represent the entire community; not just subgroups or personal preferences.
- **Considerate** – There will be times when the board may disagree, or a discussion may cause conflict. Courtesy to colleagues and staff is essential.
- **Diversity of Thought** – A director should be open to new ideas, new models and new people. The opposite is the director stating, “That’s not how we used to do it.”
- **Engaged** – Though meetings are periodic, a director should remain engaged in the interim. Adjournment of the board meeting is not a cue to lose
interest until the next meeting.

- **Innovative** – The director seeks solutions with available resources; frequently applying new technologies.

- **Inquisitive** – Curiosity, to a point, is an asset. Directors should ask questions or “verify and trust” that processes and initiatives are in good order.

- **Integrity** – A director should support the highest standards of excellence, honesty and ethics in carrying out duties.

- **Objective** – Directors must make decisions based on facts and knowledge. Too often proposals are adopted because they sound like a good idea or simply support a friend on the board.

- **Optimistic** – Directors should have a positive attitude; it is far better than the pessimist who postures, “You guys better solve this problem.” Positivity encourages team problem solving.

- **Passion** – The director has enthusiasm for the purpose and advancement of the organization.

- **Proactive** – The director offers ideas and volunteers for tasks, not one to wait to be “voluntold” (the opposite of volunteering).

- **Relentless** – With a mission and strategic plan in place, a director should work steadily for their advancement; while serving members and the community.

- **Resources** – A director should have sufficient time and finances to fulfill board duties. A prospective director might confirm with an employer and family that there is sufficient time for the role.

- **Respected** – The organization needs persons who are respected in the community. Directors should be considered models of excellence.

- **Selfless** – The director is more about giving than taking credit; ideas are generously shared with others.

- **Supportive** – The director comprehends and is committed to teamwork with the board, committees and staff while advancing the mission.

- **Time Management** – A director respects time; realizing the value of meetings, honoring commitments, and allocating time to fulfill commitments.

- **Thought Leaders** – Thought leaders offer insights and vision. They continually conduct environmental scans to share in board discussions.

- **Transparent** – Secrecy has no place in governance. A director should promote openness.

**Understand and promote the values associated with the organization.**

Encourage the nominating committee to discuss existing and desired values with candidates.

Bob Harris, CAE, provides free governance tips and templates for associations and chambers at

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