The ROI on board service

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"Leaders are made, they are not born," said NFL Hall of Fame coach Vince Lombardi.

So where does one find a good source for leadership development? Association boardrooms are ideal schools for leadership.

Most volunteers join a board out of a sense of responsibility and passion. Few people consider that board service results in enhanced skills to support personal and career growth.

If the nominating committee comes up short on candidates, be certain they are conveying the indirect value of board service.

"Board service has high rewards in a low-cost environment with minimal risk," an outgoing president told the annual meeting. The experience is an opportunity for learning an array of leadership and business skills that will have long-term benefits.

He described the lessons he learned while serving, stating there are not many forums in which one can learn so many lifelong skills.

**Account retention** — Focusing on recruitment and satisfaction of members.

**Budgeting** — Understanding budgeting and reporting; monitoring costs.

**Collaboration and negotiation** — Identifying partnerships outside of the association to build strength through collaboration.

**Community service** — Learning to position the association as a good corporate citizen.

**Customer focus** — Serving members and attracting prospective members through customer service excellence.

**Evaluation** — Using tools to assess financial performance, committees and the performance of the board of directors.

**Forecasting** — Monitoring internal and external forces which have an impact on programming.

**Governing documents** — Recognizing how articles of incorporation, bylaws and policies guide an organization.

**Leadership** — Recognizing the desirable behaviors genuine leaders and developing one's own style of leadership.

**Lobbying** — Understanding civics, how laws are made, coalition building and seeking opportunities to influence regulations.
Marketing — Using traditional and digital marketing initiatives, including improved use of social media.

Meeting planning — Learning about negotiating with facilities and speakers, setting guarantees and estimating attendance while working to protect revenues.

Meeting rules — Understanding rules of order, agendas and consensus building.

Networking — Improving networking skills in a variety of settings.

Printing — Realizing the processes and deadlines necessary to keep projects within budget and on schedule.

Public speaking — Enhancing speaking confidence through opportunities to represent the association.

Revenue generation — Identifying new sources of revenue to sustain and organization.

Roles respect — Respecting the distinctions of board governance and staff management; working as partners.

Selflessness — Deflecting credit to ensure that the entire leadership receives due recognition.

Strategic planning — Planning strategically for the long-term, and making best use of resources.

Time management — Learning to better manage time and set priorities between volunteer responsibilities, business and family.

Training and programming — Identifying educational needs and finding ways to offer cost effective programming.

Values and principles — Respecting the culture and principles within the organization.

Website enhancement — Maintaining a vibrant website for members and consumers; monitoring analytics and increasing search engine optimization.

Writing — Improving written communication so messages are consistent, brief and effective.

The past president closed by telling members the commitment to lead has a greater return on investment than it costs: "All the functions that the board completes within the year are similar to the business functions needed in your own work environment."
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