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**Effective Nonprofit Organizations Through Leadership
And Alignment**

By

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INTRODUCTION

As nonprofit organizations grow in size and number, there is an ever-growing need for strength in leadership within these organizations that will help to combat the general ineffective nature of nonprofits. This leadership must follow a model that emphasizes the essential nature of a cooperative relationship among all of the primary leadership entities that exist in nonprofit organizations. Without a balance among these forces, nonprofit organizations risk their productivity and effectiveness.

In many cases, executive directors are seen as the only primary leaders of nonprofit organizations. In addition to ensuring that day to day tasks are accomplished by the staff of the organization, executive directors facilitate board productivity and carry out the mission of the organization. More specifically, the executive director reports to and is a nonvoting member of the board. In cooperation with the board, the executive director must establish the major direction for the organization and is responsible for expressing the mission and goals of the organization to its constituencies (Gelatt 1992: 196). But vision, direction, and leadership must also originate from a board of directors. This body of individuals must realize their role as a collective group of leaders that is responsible for the organization's success in the future. They are also the body of individuals that is responsible for the alignment and leadership development of the organization as a whole.

Many times boards of directors bog themselves down with details, while in reality, they should be seeing the forest, not merely the trees. In addition to overseeing the gathering and using of resources and the effectiveness of management (Carey 1995: 290), their true role is to set an attainable vision for the organization. This vision cannot be developed and set into action without leadership from the board president, staff, and

volunteers as well. The entire organization must work together in order to ensure success and productivity of this vision. Under shared, but different types or paradigms of leadership, these five separate entities of the nonprofit organization will reach their goals successfully and be equipped with tools that will ensure success.

Nonprofit Boards and Organizations:

Fifty years ago, the role of nonprofit organizations was to supplement governmental programs or to add special enhancements to them. Today, it is obvious that nonprofit organizations are a central fabric of American society. Nonprofit organizations are not only central to the quality of life in America, but central to its citizens, as they carry the values of American tradition (Drucker 1990: xiii). There are approximately three million such organizations in the United States engaged in nearly every type of social activity imaginable (Knauff, Berger, Gray 1991: xvii). To lead these organizations, boards of directors are needed to carry on the American tradition of service and give aid to those in need. Those people who have dedicated themselves as board members of these organizations, have taken on leadership positions with great dedication and commitment to act as human change-agents in society (Drucker 1990: xiv). It is the purpose of this paper to suggest a model which can lead to more effective board, and more specifically, nonprofit leadership.

Nonprofit organizations are corporations chartered for charitable interest purposes. They are different from for-profit corporations in that they are exempt from certain taxes and cannot distribute their surpluses to holders of equity. Much of their revenues are from “funding” and donations. The nonprofit governing board is similar to

the for-profit board in that their obligations under the law are comparable in many ways (Carver 1990: 5).

In addition to the legal accountability of nonprofit boards, they are also responsible for a great deal of other tasks and roles. Many authors disagree as to the definitive role that nonprofit boards are required to play in the organizations they serve. Some people believe that “the role or duty of a board is to oversee the gathering and using of resources and the efficiency and ethics of management” (Carey 1995: 291). Still others feel that it is the responsibility of the board “to keep the organization on a straight course for the long-term good of the whole. In other words, [board members] exist to govern the organization—to monitor the quality and to see to it that the organization fulfills its mission” (Chait, et al 1989: 44). These definitions of board responsibilities might be incompatible with each other, as board responsibilities differ from one organization to the next.

Each of these descriptions of board responsibilities holds merit, and each of them are correct in their own way. The requirements of one board may differ from the next depending on the mission, size, and longevity of the specific organization for which they serve. But most people can agree that boards must set a vision for the long-term, govern and realize the organization’s mission in the short-term, and be able to effectively and successfully lead the organization through changes that occur in the internal and external environment in which the nonprofit exists. Due to this ever-changing environment, nonprofit boards must be able to use their resources in order to assist these organizations during critical periods where the existence of these organizations many times hangs in the balance.

In today's world, it is difficult to escape contact with boards on a frequent basis. As a result of their relative ineffectiveness, many opportunities exist for leadership in nonprofit organizations (Carver 1990: 1). Nonprofit boards are comprised of individuals who have the ability and resources to fill the void of leadership that exists in the ever-growing and ever-changing world of nonprofit organizations. By seeking out leaders of integrity and by learning what a board's functional responsibilities are, most boards should discover a dramatic and productive change in their effectiveness (Duca 1986: ix).

By using the following model and practical suggestions, a new sense of leadership and effective governance will increase the productivity of the operations of nonprofit boards. With these tools, nonprofit boards will improve the organizations that they serve so that missions and goals are realized, and that the needs of the people receiving the services of the organization will be met and fulfilled. Nonprofit boards have the ability to truly make a difference in our world. If more boards took the time to make themselves effective, there would be more people being served, and less time and money being wasted in the nonprofit sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The size and number of nonprofit organizations in the United States has grown considerably over the past few years. As a result of the growing need for information on the subject, a great deal of literature has been published about nonprofits and more specifically, nonprofit boards. Much of this information is useful to existing boards, but there are areas that have yet to be explored by scholars, especially in the area of nonprofit board development and leadership.

There is a growing body of literature on nonprofit organizations and nonprofit boards that has been published over the past ten years. This literature provides a beneficial overview of the general responsibilities of boards in terms of procedure, policy, and accountability (Herman et al, 1989; Rozakis, 1995; Wolf, 1984; Young et al, 1993; Zander, 1993). A few authors have attempted to discuss the leadership implications of board membership and action (Carver, 1990; Gelatt, 1992; Kahn, 1991; Wood, 1996) but more substantive works of this nature have yet to surface.

Leadership scholars must try to apply their terms and theories to nonprofit organizations. In this paper, I have attempted to assign each leadership entity of the nonprofit with a specific leadership type or paradigm. The works of leadership scholars (Burns, 1993; Couto, 1992; Greenleaf, 1991; Mabey, 1992; Sashkin, 1989; Wellins et al, 1991) have proven to be the best and most reliable sources to begin the study of nonprofits through the lens of leadership. Their intelligent thoughts have added great substance and depth to my work.

In addition, there are many scholarly journals that are available in libraries and on the internet. Harvard Business Review and the Journal on Nonprofit Management, as well as other public administration journals seem to contain the most useful articles on nonprofit boards. A by-monthly journal entitled, Nonprofit Board Report, is also available as a resource to nonprofit directors and managers as a practical guide that addresses day to day problems and success stories of nonprofits around the country.

More specifically, much of the existing literature on boards and their relationship to executive directors and the organizations they govern focuses on one of two main issues: defining the appropriate responsibilities or turf of the board and the executive

director (Adizes 1972; Herman & Tulipana, 1985; Howell, 1979; Leduc & Block, 1985; Middleton, 1987; Nason, 1982; Young, 1987), or delivering prescriptive consultation on how they should perform their duties (Carver, 1990; Eyster, 1978; Houle, 1989; Loudon, 1975; Mueller, 1982; O'Connell, 1985). Both of these perspectives not only promote a static nature of unchanging roles, but they also suggest that the fulfillment of these roles will cause the organization to function more effectively (Bailey & Grochau 1993: 23).

When studying boards, one finds that there is a need for boards and the organizations they serve to be constantly ready to change. The environment in which nonprofits exist is not static in nature, but rather, constantly in motion. The structure and responsibilities that are fulfilled by the nonprofit board must compliment the ever-changing environment so that they can be effective governing bodies comprised of resourceful individuals.

There has also been a great deal of literature that has developed life-cycle models (and theories related to mature organizations) to be applied to the broader field of organizational behavior (Van de Ven and Poole, 1995; Kimberly, 1980; Greiner, 1972; Starbuck, 1971). However, there have been only few works on nonprofit board life cycles, and most of these have not yet been empirically tested. Mathiasen (1990) and Wood (1992) provide two examples of nonprofit board life-cycles where boards under certain environmental conditions will respond in ways similar to the phases of human maturation (birth, adolescence, maturation, and so on) (Dart et al 1996: 367-368).

Although there is a great deal of information on the topic of nonprofit boards, few leadership scholars have published works that combine research, models, and actual case studies of nonprofit boards and leadership development. This is an area that would benefit significantly from research and literature on the subject, as leadership is an essential

element to any nonprofit organization. An article that was insightful in the development of my research was “Aligning Leadership Needs to the Organizational Stage of Development: Applying Management Theory to Nonprofit Organizations” by Darlyne Bailey, and Karen E. Grochau. In this article, the authors offer a model of nonprofit development and leadership alignment. For the organizational stages of development to be successful, they suggest that there must be alignment among the organization, the executive director, and the board. This article is innovative and creative, as it approaches the study of nonprofit organizations using a new method of analysis. The article addresses specific issues that challenge the nonprofit organization, while providing practical suggestions for nonprofit management.

The research study that is to follow will use portions of Bailey and Grochau’s research on organizational stages of development, while emphasizing the importance of a healthy, productive, and “aligned” relationship among the staff, the executive director, volunteers, staff, and most importantly, the board of directors. Each of these entities has been given a type or paradigm of leadership that fits its position and role within the nonprofit organization. These leadership terms will provide true insight into the roles that individuals play in the success and productivity of nonprofit organizations. Where applicable, relevant terms and situations will be applied to an emerging nonprofit, Project America, that will help the reader gain a greater understanding of the challenges faced by nonprofits while providing concrete examples of the terms and concepts of nonprofit leadership that have been provided.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Using this concept of shared, but different types of leadership paradigms that exist among the executive director, the board president, the board, staff, and volunteers of the organization, a proposal for effective nonprofit board development has been devised. The final product of much research and thought has taken the form of a model which is intended to be used by members of organizations, and more importantly, boards of directors, to improve nonprofit organizations across the country. The proposed model is a culmination of different leadership concepts, nonprofit organizational development, and my own research and knowledge of leadership studies.

This leadership model has taken the form of a wheel that requires participation from all five leadership entities of the nonprofit organization. The board cannot be expected to make important decisions and competent choices without expert knowledge of the day to day workings of the organization, and the staff and volunteers who invest their time and energy on a daily basis. I suggest that although leadership must be demonstrated by the executive director, the board, the board president, staff, and volunteers, an effective organization that exerts leadership in the community must have effective communication and more importantly, refined alignment among all five of these leadership entities that are represented in the model.

In addition, the model will be applied through the consideration of many of the misunderstandings and mistakes that are commonly made by nonprofit boards. Knowledge of common mistakes might prevent new boards from making the same errors. Productive solutions and suggestions will also be included that will orient boards in the right direction toward proper alignment that will facilitate productivity and maximum effectiveness. As was stated earlier, some of these suggestions will be applied to Project

America. This case study will provide real-life examples that will demonstrate the applicability practicality of the research that had been presented.

In order to understand the development of the proposed model of nonprofit leadership, we must first consider its origins. The “Bailey and Grochau Model” provided the foundation for my research.

The Bailey and Grochau Model:

Bailey and Grochau offer a nonprofit life-cycle that describes different organizational stages of development along with the concept of alignment among the organization, the board, and the executive director. By adapting Bailey and Grochau’s concepts of sub-system alignment and organizational life-cycles, I have conceived of a model for effective board leadership development that will improve the effectiveness of governance and communication of boards in nonprofit organizations. Through governing boards and strength in leadership among the five entities of the nonprofit organization, proper alignment can be achieved, and nonprofit organizations will combat their relative ineffectiveness in the early stages of development.

Organizational life-cycle models have not been widely applied and used to understand nonprofit organizations. By applying such a concept, board members and executive directors can see their organizations in a larger context and anticipate future scenarios where effective leadership and governance will be useful tools for coping with change (1993: 23, 27).

Bailey and Grochau suggest that there are four critical stages through which nonprofits can develop. This model studies the evolution of organizational stages as they

relate to administrative leadership and explores the behaviors and socio-emotional characteristics of an aligned staff and board (1993: 27). Each stage is followed by a transition point where members of the organization notice that the organization is not working as smoothly as before and new issues must be addressed (1993: 29).

The first stage of this life-cycle model is *entrepreneurship*, and the dominant value is individual innovation. This stage is characterized by organizational tasks such as creating, planning, identifying products or services, acquiring basic resources, and so on. Toward the end of this stage is the need to expand involvement in decision-making to create a shared sense of responsibility. If the organization ignores the pressure of this critical issue, it will remain unchanged until there is enough motivation to instigate change (1993: 29).

The second stage, the *team-building* phase, is distinguished by the dominant value of collective creativity. In this stage, the primary organizational tasks are expanding personnel, developing programs, and increasing resources, while the individuals involved may experience a sense of pride, collaboration, confusion about roles, and a desire for consensus. The critical issue that at the end of this stage is to maintain control of the operation, which results in the creation of policies, systems, and procedures to coordinate activities to prevent the organization from feeling overwhelmed (1993: 29-30).

The *bureaucratic* stage follows the *team-building* stage. The key tasks of this stage are defining and systematizing roles, relationships, and procedures. Order is created from policies, and is accompanied by control and predictability. Although the organizational values for this stage are productivity and efficiency, the socio-emotional tone is one of rationality and restraint. As a result of the strict control that is characteristic

of this stage, the organization may reduce its creativity and vitality. It is at the end of this stage that the organization must make critical choices that will determine whether the organization moves toward the final stage of development (1993: 30).

In the following stage, the organization choose one of three paths: *stagnation*, *death*, or *renewal*. In stagnation, the primary task of repetition of activities maintains the dominant value of the status quo. If leaders do not makes changes to the organization at this point, they risk heading toward the next path, *death*. *Death* is a result of the loss of creative energy. The primary task is closure, while the organization copes with failure and the dominant value of flight. The emotional characteristics are often anger, depression, guilt, and flight (1993: 30).

The last alternative to *death* is *renewal*, where the organization re-evaluates and re-defines it's mission and services. The characteristics of this hope, excitement, and activity are similar to the *entrepreneurial* stage. With experience and a reality that is based on confidence, revitalization becomes the dominant value (1993:31).

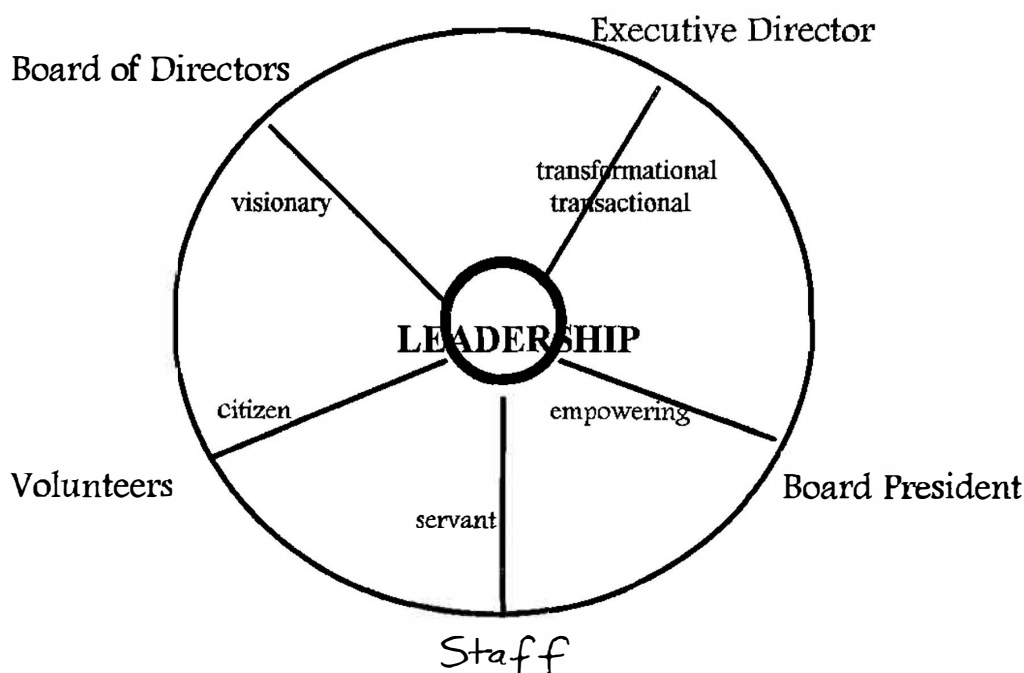
A NEW MODEL OF NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP

To improve upon the Bailey-Grochau model for the purposes of nonprofit development and leadership, the life-cycle stages of development and the concept of alignment as stated by Bailey and Grochau will be refined and altered. Although the life-cycle model describes three primary stages, we will only concern ourselves with the *entrepreneurship* and *team-building* stages of the model. These stages are most characteristic of the problems and challenges to boards when they are in their first years of development and action. It is in these stages that we will address the primary roles that

boards play in the organization, how they and the other leadership entities can cope with changes to the internal and external environments, and ways to insure that the organization is fulfilling its mission and goals as effectively and as productively as possible.

In order for a developing board to be effective, it is important to make alterations to the alignment concept as stated by Bailey and Grochau. Although their concept of “alignment” is extremely useful and explains the relationship that must exist among separate entities that exert leadership in the organization, it excludes some important aspects that are integral to the board development and leadership process. While it is suggested by Bailey and Grochau that there must be alignment among the organization, the board, and the executive director, I propose that there are five entities which require alignment within the nonprofit. Refer to the following model for a visual representation of “The ‘Wheel’ of Nonprofit Leadership”. Although it might seem simplistic, it is an appropriate representation of the leadership and alignment that must be present for nonprofits to be effective.

The “Wheel” of Nonprofit Leadership



Staff

The circular shape that has been used to represent a wheel is appropriate for many reasons. First, it is a symbol that is used to characterize a never-ending cycle. Second, in terms of the concept of alignment, it puts all five leadership entities of the nonprofit organization on the same, equal level. Third, each part of the wheel is as important and will not function properly if one part is missing or damaged. It is for these reasons that the 'wheel' is the perfect symbol to use for the model.

At the center of the model is leadership, located at the hub where all of the spokes meet. The spokes provide stability and reinforce the shape of the wheel. In the model, the spokes represent the different types of leadership that are to be exerted by each of the five nonprofit entities. Each has been assigned a type of leadership that makes the organization more effective, or in other words, sets the wheel in motion. It is through the use of this model that organizations can effectively navigate through the winds of change to be successful at accomplishing their mission and able to be flexible when the mission must be altered to meet the needs of the communities they serve.

The following five subsections will include descriptions of the five separate, but aligned entities of this model. For each section, the leadership entity is described by its role and the type of leadership that is to be exerted on the organization for maximum effectiveness.

The Board President:

The board president serves an important leadership and communication role in the nonprofit organization. This person serves as the chief elected officer of the organization, as he or she represents and interacts with the organization's constituencies. The board president also directs other members of the board and presides over board actions (Gelatt 1992: 190).

There are also specific duties that are required of the board president. Many of these duties vary in importance and intensity depending on the size and maturity of the organization. According to Gelatt the board director must:

1. Preside at all meetings of the board.
2. Keep all other board members and appropriate committees informed regarding the organization and its activities and conditions affecting it.
3. Coordinate the activities of the board in formulating or modifying policies and major programs of the organization.
4. Conduct or designate the undertaking of a periodic review of the organization.
5. Coordinate the evaluation of the performance of the executive director.
6. Participate as a spokesperson for the organization.
7. Schedule meetings of the board.
8. Work with other board members and staff and the executive director in identifying, selecting, and orienting capable board membership. (1992: 190)

It is important that the board president is aware of his or her responsibilities.

Often, board presidents are either overly involved in the day to day business of the organization or unaware of their specific duties. Proper orientation of a board president will prove to be beneficial to the organization in the long term. Role clarity and expectations are the two most important factors for board president orientation.

The board president must make the organization his/her primary nonprofit commitment. He/she plays an integral role in creating an effective board, motivating members, ensuring that board members meet commitments, and filling board vacancies. Ideally, the board president should have an established network of connections that are crucial to the effectiveness of the contact network. He/she must solicit gifts with the executive director and possibly other board members (Lant 1980: 21).

In the early stages of organizational development, the board president plays an important role. The entrepreneurial stage is the most important time for the board president to establish himself or herself. He or she has the ability to set the visionary tone for the board, as he or she works closely with the executive director. If the board president is a founder of the organization, it is a time where that person is finally seeing ideas reach fruition. It may be difficult for a founder to relinquish their grasp and control over the organization, especially as it flourishes under the direction of the executive director. Founders and board presidents must at some point begin to entrust the organization into the hands of others once it begins to develop and grow.

One particular organization, Project America, experienced this problem of a clash between the ideals of the executive director and the founder (and also board president) of the organization. Having hired a director due to a lack of time and energy that was available to spend on the organization, the founder had a difficult time letting go. As the director spent more time developing the mission of the organization and hiring staff, the founder constantly wanted to know how the organization was developing. Daily phone calls and seemingly countless numbers of e-mails began to disturb and annoy the executive

director. She began to ignore his efforts to meddle in her business, and their relationship suffered.

Her mission for the organization was not shared by the founder, or the board comprised of other founders. To her, their ideas were unrealistic and unattainable. She saw areas where the organization could truly contribute to society, and the staff shared in the same vision. She did not communicate these ideas with the board president, and found herself having to lie to save herself the trouble of dealing with his concerns. As a result, their relationship suffered, and it has been very difficult for the organization to grow and change. The board president/founder and the executive director do not see the organization in the same light, and their lack of effective communication has disrupted the alignment of the entire organization. Not only has the alignment between the executive director and the board president suffered, but as a result, all five entities of their nonprofit leadership are now un-aligned.

It is extremely important for the board president to be close and personal with the entire organization. He or she must share the same vision with the entire organization. More importantly, the board president must be able to empower the other members of the organization, the staff, volunteers, executive director, and the board. The board president's actions and must be consistent with the paradigm of empowering leadership.

The concept of empowerment is often difficult to explain and apply. William C. Byham suggests that empowerment is the notion that "constant improvement has to come from the individual, and that empowerment is the only way to get people to adopt constant improvement as a way of life in daily business. In other words... create a work system based on principles that enable people to take charge" (Wellins et al. 1991:xviii).

Empowering leaders have the ability to empower others to take responsibility over themselves and the outcomes that they produce through their hard work and dedication.

The board president of a nonprofit organization cannot be expected to constantly check up on every member of the organization, but he or she can create an environment or culture that facilitates others within the organization to take responsibility over their own tasks. By creating self-directed individuals and groups, the board president has the ability to improve the overall quality, productivity, and participation of the entire organization (Wellins et al. 1991). If the board, staff, volunteers, and the executive director are empowered by the board president, everyone involved takes on the responsibility of fulfilling the organization's mission or vision, as they constantly improve themselves and their environment. As a result of empowerment, the members of the organization feel that they have a sense of ownership and control over the organization, and as a result, get more accomplished, and enjoy the work more (Wellins et al. 1991:22).

How can a board president accomplish this in a nonprofit organization? Primarily, the board president can involve other members of the organization in creative ways. He or she can give special tasks to individuals and groups, or invite them to participate in ways that they had not previously considered. For example, to empower the volunteers, the board president can invite them to board meetings and give them the opportunity to participate in committees or special projects. The empowered leader expects that his or her followers can be leaders themselves if given the right opportunity to let their talents shine.

The Staff:

The staff is the second leadership entity of the nonprofit organization that will be discussed. They perpetuate the existence of the organization. Without them, the wheel would not be able rotate in any direction. With the staff, the organization can move in a constant motion toward a directed goal or mission. As the organization encounters bumps in the road, the staff has already prepared the wheel of the organization to withstand the force of impact. The environment in which the nonprofit organization exists is constantly changing; therefore, the organization must be flexible in order to effectively cope with change. Much of this flexibility and ability to predict change must come from the staff.

The staff is constantly responsible for a variety of tasks depending on the mission of the organization. For example, at Project America, while the executive director was primarily concerned with fundraising and the functions of the board of directors, the staff was responsible for almost everything else. In addition, these tasks often changed on a daily basis. One day, they could be writing press releases, and the next, be giving presentations to the local homeless shelter. The ability of these people to effectively cope with the changing nature of their tasks and the environment made them exceptional staff members.

Dr. Marc Swatez, a professor at the Jepson School of Leadership Studies, has suggested that the staff of many nonprofit organizations act as “servant leaders” to the organization. We must first understand the relationship between the terms “servant” and “leadership”, so that we can apply this concept of servant leadership to the staff of nonprofit organizations and how it applies to the ‘Wheel’ of Nonprofit Leadership Model.

Robert K. Greenleaf, the author of the book, “The Servant as Leader”, was an author who strived to stimulate thought through building a better, more caring society (Greenleaf 1991: 38). The connection between the words servant and leader came to him after reading and contemplating Herman Hesse’s story, “Journey to the East.”

“In this story, we see a band of men on a mythical journey, probably also Hesse’s own journey. The central figure of the story is Leo who accompanies the party as the *servant* who does their menial chores, but who also sustains them with his spirit and his song. He is a person of extraordinary presence. All goes well until Leo disappears. Then the group falls into disarray and the journey is abandoned. They cannot make it without Leo. The narrator, one of the party, after some years of wandering finds Leo and is taken into the Order that had sponsored the journey. There he discovers that Leo, whom he had known first as *servant*, was in fact the titular head of the Order, its guiding spirit, a great and noble *leader*” (Greenleaf 1991: 1).

To Greenleaf, “Journey to the East” distinctly states that “*the great leader is seen as servant first*”, and Leo’s greatness is a result of his role as a servant to the group.

Actually, Greenleaf says that Leo was a leader the entire time, but he was a servant first because that is what he was “*deep down inside*” (2).

Greenleaf suggests that the servant, either leader or follower, “is always searching, listening, expecting that a better wheel for these times is in the making” (3). In other words, the servant is ready for what may lie ahead in the distance, without putting themselves in the center of authority or the decision-making process. Those people who are proven and trusted as servants will naturally be chosen as leaders (4). Therefore, the servant-leader is servant first. A person, like Leo, who wants to serve, can later aspire to lead (7). From a behind-the-scenes perspective, the servant has a different outlook on situations without his or her own best interests in mind. It is always the achievements and

empowerment of others that causes the servant-leader to be successful. Although the servant-leader has the ability to initiate, set goals, have a *sense for the unknowable* and be able to *see the unforeseeable* (14), the well-being of the ones they serve is the most important element of their lives.

In many ways, the best examples of servant-leaders are staff members in nonprofit organizations. Although they are never in the spotlight, the staff members are the glue that hold together the foundations of nonprofit organizations through times of turbulent change and crisis. Staff members often complete menial and meaningless tasks every day, but as a result, they can be the leaders that have the greatest knowledge and insight into the organization.

One of the jobs of staff members is to recruit and organize groups of volunteers for the nonprofit. Often, it is the volunteers who are in the spotlight, although it is the job of the staff to make sure that the volunteers are successful. It is the staff who recognizes the volunteers so that they will continue their service to the organization. If volunteers are not seen as vital entities of the organization, they lose sight of the importance of their time and effort being put into the organization with no rewards. Despite the many benefits of volunteering, and the good feeling that results out of helping others, it is a job which requires almost constant recognition and respect. Again, it is the staff that recognizes the volunteers and allows them to receive most of the credit and applause. But without guidance and support from the staff, the volunteers would be useless and would remain dedicated to the organization. In this case, staff members serve the organization by providing effective volunteers, for which they themselves are leaders in fulfilling the mission and goals of the organization.

The staff also completes tasks that are often seen as unimportant and monotonous, but effective staff members enjoy serving the organization. They know that they are integral to the day to day workings of the organization, and do not need recognition to remain happy or content in their position. They realize the extent of the contribution that they give to the organization, and wait for the right time to shift their service into high gear where their leadership qualities can be seen.

The entrepreneurship and team-building stages of development are critical periods where the staff must work in unison to lead the organization. The staff must develop a sense of identity, become known in the community, and acquire basic resources. The feelings of excitement, fear, and eventually pride, characterize these phases and allow for members of the organization to develop their role as servants and become leaders in the community (Bailey and Grochau 1993: 38).

This period is also characterized by trial and error. Staff members cannot expect things to run as smoothly as they would like during the first few years of operation. For example, while organizing a national day of community improvement, Project America had difficulty keeping track of phone conversations with other organizations that they wanted to participate in this day of service. One staff member created a data base with names, phone numbers, dates of phone calls, and descriptions of conversations. The other staff member used cue cards and notebook paper to keep track of her discussions. When one member was occupied or out of the office, the other member could not decipher the other's system of keeping track of organizations that were participating, who needed information, and who had already been sent information about their project. As a result,

the two staff members and the executive director collaborated and developed a system that worked for everyone involved.

The Volunteers:

Although staff members of nonprofit organizations are extremely important, so are volunteers. Volunteers donate their time and energy to contribute to the mission of the organization and the improvement of the environment in which they exist. Because volunteers do not have the satisfaction of a paycheck, they have to get more satisfaction out of their contribution. They have to be managed as an unpaid staff (Drucker 1990: xviii) by the professional staff. Even without pay, volunteers look for ways to improve the jobs that they perform. Woodrow Wilson said the following about volunteerism:

“Nothing but what you volunteer has the essence of life...The more you are stimulated to do such action the more clearly does it appear that you are a sovereign spirit, put into the world, not to wear harness, but to work eagerly without it” (Gelatt 1992:222).

Although they must be empowered by the board president and served by the staff, the leadership paradigm that describes the role of volunteers in the nonprofit organization is citizen leadership. Cheryl Mabey feels that citizen leaders have the ability to influence our society in many positive ways. They are characterized by action and the belief in their ability to make a difference (Mabey 1992).

Richard A. Couto describes the citizen leader in a similar, but different light. He defines citizen leaders as those who:

“...facilitate organized action to improve the conditions of people in low-income communities and to address other basic needs of society at the local level... In all cases, they exhibit the leadership which occurs when people take sustained action to bring about change that will bring them continued or increased well-being” (Couto 1992).

Volunteers are the only entity of the nonprofit organization that are present purely for the cause. They are not there to get paid in order to put food on the table, for they are motivated by a much deeper sense of purposeful action. In the wheel of nonprofit leadership, their spoke causes the actual drive behind the motion of the wheel. They are more than an unseen force. Volunteers are the “push” which sets nonprofits down the road to success and accomplishment.

The Executive Director:

The executive director of a nonprofit organization is the channel through which all communication travels. The executive director must be in constant contact with the board president, the board, the staff, and the volunteers. Among the responsibilities expected of the executive director, it is important that he/she is a leader for the nonprofit. Executive directors are leaders of nonprofit organizations who never say “I”, but always think “we”. They have two things to build on, the quality of the people in the organization and the new demands they make on them. They must immerse themselves in the values and mission of the organization (Drucker 1990: 18). These values and mission must become a part of their being if they are to effectively represent the organization in the community.

Executive directors who are leaders of nonprofits are visible in the community, for they have great expectations to fulfill (Drucker 1990: 19). They must be willing to

communicate with the constituents of the organization as well as the staff, volunteers, and board members who make their services possible. Executive directors must constantly be aware of how unimportant they are as individuals as compared to the tasks at hand (20). The most important “do” in leadership of nonprofits is for executive directors to keep their eyes on the task, not on themselves. The task is what matters, and the executive director is merely a servant (27) of the task.

The leadership of the executive director is first tested in the entrepreneurship phase of the organization. It is in this phase of development that the executive director is responsible for many activities. Some of these crucial activities include assisting in defining the mission of the organization, creating programs and services, hiring professional staff, representing the organization in the community, and maintaining constant contact and communication with the board. The executive director might feel energized and committed to the organization, but they must try to overcome being too possessive in maintaining control over others (Bailey and Grochau 1993: 38).

When the organization successfully moves into the team-building phase, the executive director is faced with different responsibilities. These include chairing meetings, focusing on the internal environment, supervising and increasing staff, developing role clarity, and improving their relationship with the board. Although the executive director might feel overburdened, proper direction and control over the organization must always be maintained (Bailey and Grochau 1993: 38).

In both of these phases, it is important that the executive director maintains proper alignment in the organization. Due to his/her role in communication, the executive director can be the person who makes or breaks the alignment that exists among all four

leadership corners. For example, the executive director's style and how much confidence he/she has in the professional and volunteer staff, has a major impact on how well staff feel their interests are being represented by the board (Geller 1990: 30). Often times, it is important to include the staff in ways that they will interact with the board. One way to include the staff is to encourage them to attend board meetings. If staff members have something important to present, they can be placed on the agenda. By sharing information with the board, the staff member's role in the organization can become more tangible to board members, while the staff member gains a greater understanding of the workings of the board by attending the meeting. In other situations, a staff member may be asked to serve as a nonvoting staff liaison to one or more board committees. The staff member is able to give input into the policy-making process and feel more a part of the organization (Geller 1990: 30-31).

In addition to effective communication; keeping the strategic plan in plain view, proper assessment of the organization, and board retreats and workshops are helpful activities to enable the organization to effectively continue to fulfill its mission. The relationships among the other four leadership entities of the organization depend on the involvement of the executive director, and without good relationships through alignment, fulfilling the mission of the organization is more difficult and less attainable as time goes on.

If the executive director exhibits both transforming and transactional leadership, as is suggested in the Wheel of Nonprofit Leadership Model, the organization will have the ability to be truly successful. If the executive director falls too heavily to one side, either transforming or transactional, they risk being ineffective leaders of the organization.

James MacGregor Burns describes transactional leadership to occur “when one person takes the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of an exchange of valued things” (Burns 1993:57). In the nonprofit world, this exchange could be swapping volunteer services for donations, or inviting your town’s hot-shot lawyer to dinner in order to persuade him to take a seat on your board of directors. Either way, there is an exchange that is irrelevant of personal relationships. Transactional leadership might seem cold and unfeeling, but it is essential to the success of an executive director in terms of concrete accomplishments that perpetuate the existence of the organization.

On the other hand, transforming leadership is also an important quality of good executive directors. Burns describes transforming leadership to be the act of engaging others “in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (Burns 1993:57). Motivation and morality are essential to the day to day workings of nonprofit organizations due to the nature of their missions. Again, it is important that the executive director does not fall too heavily to this side of leadership. If a leader is too transforming, they will not accomplish tasks such as fundraising, because they are too busy raising followers to higher levels of morality and consciousness. The followers might be enlightened and engaged in the mission of the organization, but the organization will not have the concrete resources that will allow them to continue their service. It is important for the executive director of the nonprofit organization to be both transforming and transactional in their leadership of the organization.

The Board of Directors:

It has been suggested that there are four hallmarks of excellence in nonprofit organizations: a clear mission, strong leaders, a committed board, and stable revenues. A clear mission serves as the focal point of commitment for the board, the executive director, and the entire organization as the guidepost by which the organization judges its successes and makes changes over time. Strong leadership is necessary from individuals and the group to create a culture that enables the organization to fulfill its mission. A committed and effective board has a dynamic relationship with the executive director and provides a bridge with the community at large. They must also be able to constantly attract and accumulate sufficient financial and human resources (Knauff et al 1991: 1-2). Although the entire organization is responsible for the attainment of these “hallmarks of excellence”, the leadership and action necessary for their fulfillment must originate from the board of directors.

As was mentioned earlier, there are conflicts over what the exact responsibilities of the board should be. Every board is different. Each board is a group of individuals with different, changing concerns. Boards must be flexible in order to effectively meet the changing needs of the nonprofit and the environment in which it exists. But there are three responsibilities that nonprofits must fulfill, and that is to provide a mission, visionary leadership, and effective governance for the organization.

“The primary characteristic of the outstanding nonprofit is a clearly articulated, jointly held, commonly valued sense of mission” (Gelatt 1992: 1). The mission statement should try to capture the essence of the organization. It should clarify purpose and set the organization into motion (Gelatt 2-3). Not only should the board help create the mission,

but they should also oversee its implementation. Without it, organizations often fail to see what their true purpose is, and risk losing the passion that drives the success of many nonprofits. The board must make the mission visible and memorable, so that the entire organization is constantly aware of its meaning and stated purpose.

Board member manuals often prove to be beneficial resources to the attainment of board goals and the development of mission statements. Many of them contain practical, easy to use advice and direction for board members and executive directors. Planning is an important step in the success of any organization. It is the responsibility of the board to plan steps toward the achievement of goals. Another task that must be completed by the board is assessment of the organization and the changing environment in which it exists.

Five steps in this assessment could be the following:

1. Talk about what your organization's place has historically been in the community.
2. Determine the needs of the people you serve.
3. Sit down with your administrator and determine your organization's internal strengths and weaknesses.
4. Also with your administrator, make lists of external opportunities for and roadblocks to future success.
5. Review your organization's finances (Aspen 1994: 20-21).

Once the board has brainstormed answers to these questions, they are in a position to begin to write or revise the mission statement of the organization. The board should concentrate on the big picture of their organization. It is important to focus on the needs the profit fulfills in the community. Technical language should be avoided so that the mission statement is easily understood, not only by the board and staff, but by volunteers and the people who the nonprofit serves. The mission statement should challenge the organization to be active, effective servants of its constituency (Aspen 1994: 21).

As the mission develops into a concrete statement, the board should formulate and review achievable goals that support the mission of the organization. The achievement of these goals should all fall under jurisdiction of the board, not the professional staff.

Once the board has planned, written a mission statement, and assessed goals for the organization, they must not forget the work that has gone into strategic planning. It should be a constant reminder of the work and goals of the nonprofit board, not merely a procedure to be forgotten in the months to follow. A board president in Tyler, Texas, builds her monthly board meeting agenda around her organization's strategic plan. "I address our plan through each agenda item. This alone keeps the board in tune with the objectives of the plan month after month," she says. "Therefore, we don't spend 90% of our time discussing organizational matters that don't help us meet our goals. It keeps the plan in front of us and helps us maintain the proper focus in our policy-making role" (Aspen 1994: 24).

In many cases, a long-term vision is the driving force behind the mission. To maintain direction and the attainment of goals that lead to the vision, is one of the responsibilities of the board. As is suggested by the Wheel of Nonprofit Leadership, visionary leadership should be the driving force that motivates others to share in the mission of the organization. This visionary leadership must originate from the board. A vision might be the product of a single person, but its realization requires the leadership of many.

Marshall Sashkin suggests that there are three aspects to visionary leadership. "The first consists of constructing a vision, creating an ideal image of the organization and its culture. The second involves defining an organizational philosophy that succinctly

states the vision and developing programs and policies that put the philosophy into practice within the organization's unique context and culture. The third aspect centers on the leader's own practices, the specific actions in which leaders engage on a one-to-one basis in order to create and support their visions" (1993: 226). An effective board involves itself in all three of these aspects of visionary leadership, but only if they truly believe in what they are trying to accomplish through their vision. A board will not be able to empower followers to carry out their vision unless they desire and can use their power in positive ways (1993: 228). This type of leadership might not be present in all boards, but elements of it must occur if board members want to motivate others to make the mission of an organization a reality.

Alvin Zander believes in a different kind of board leadership that emphasizes the performance of acts, by any member of the board, that help the board reach its goals. This leadership consists of actions that help setting the goals of the group, moving the group towards its goals, improving the interaction between members of the board, building cohesiveness, and making resources available to the group. All of these actions either contribute to the achievement of a specific group goal or the strengthening of the group itself. Boards perform better when leadership actions are provided at a time when they are needed, regardless of the person it is that provides them (1993: 63).

The third responsibility of board leadership is effective governance. John Carver suggests setting up four categories of policies to improve governance as a "framework within which to organize the thoughts, activities, structure, and relationship of governing boards" (1990: 19). These four categories are ends, executive limitations, board-executive relationship, and board-process. With this system of policy governance, the board is to

create “explicit, current, literal, centrally available, brief, encompassing policies” (1990: 42). He also suggests that boards that govern by policy in this way, do not concern themselves with “low-level” issues that should be the responsibility of the staff (1990: 162) (Stephens 1991: 229).

It is at critical periods in the life of the nonprofit that leadership such as this is important to the survival of the organization. Between the entrepreneurship and team-building phases, it is effective board leadership which allows the organization to make essential changes, while still adhering closely to the strategic plan and the mission. If the board were to sit back and do nothing, they would be useless to the organization. It is important that the time and talents of board members are used effectively. There is nothing worse than a group of talented and capable individuals, whose valuable resources are going to waste. Some people suggest that boards are little more than a collection of high-powered individuals engaged in low-level activities. In cases such as these, it is important that board members bring themselves fully to the task of governance and leadership (Taylor et al 1996: 36).

Boards also have moral obligations that are required of them, and in this case, ethical leadership must be exhibited by all members of the organization. A nonprofit board of directors must make every attempt to ensure that organization program money is spent efficiently and that as many constituents as possible are helped by the organization. Due to the tax-exemption status of nonprofit organizations, constituents and the general public have the right to expect board members to behave competently and with diligence. A board is accountable to the organization, its clients and its constituents, as well as the general public. (Duca: 1986: 5)

Boards must also have some characteristics of Greenleaf's servant-leader. One of the most important tasks of board leadership is to anticipate crisis, like Greenleaf's concept of the servant-leader. Board leadership must make sure that the organization is placed ahead of the storm and not directly in harm's way. This requires not only innovation, but constant renewal of the organization. The organization must be built tough so that it can withstand crisis (Drucker 1990: 9). When crisis does effect the organization, it is the role of the board to pool the necessary resources together to enable the organization to withstand crisis and become stronger. But visionary leadership is the key to the maintenance and attainment of the organization's mission, vision, and goals, is the essential leadership paradigm that must be exhibited by the board of directors.

In order to use this model of leadership and alignment effectively, members of nonprofit organizations can create opportunities to facilitate these relationships if they do not already exist. Whether the individual who wants to improve the alignment in an organization is the executive director, a board member, or a concerned staff member, it is important that this person takes the initiative to foster an aligned relationship among all five leadership entities of the organization.

CONCLUSION

It is the sole responsibility of the board to set a vision for the long-term, govern and realize the organization's mission in the short term, and be able to effectively and

successfully lead the organization through critical periods of change and renewal.

Alignment among the five leadership spokes of the organization enables the board to govern the organization more effectively through its development and realization of goals.

It has been suggested that the most important of the five leadership spokes of the nonprofit wheel is the board of directors. It is their ultimate responsibility to ensure that people are hired who exhibit the leadership types that have been discussed. If they are working with an established organization, it is important that the board uses their visionary leadership to create a productive environment.

The individuals who interact with nonprofit organizations must be leaders of integrity. They must possess a sincere dedication to the missions of nonprofit organizations, which will enable nonprofits to continue their service to society. It is these individuals whose commitment to leadership and excellence will continue to help people and causes that need direction in nonprofit organizations across the country. My greatest hope is that organizations will read this material and develop highly functional boards and leaders that will carry their missions into the 21st century.

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3310 Grove Avenue, Apartment #5
Richmond, Virginia 23221

April 11, 1997

Ms. Maureen R. Reidy
Director of Firm Development
Kaiser Associates, Incorporated
1595 Springhill Road, Suite 700
Vienna, Virginia 22182

Dear Ms. Reidy:

Enclosed please find a copy of my resume to be considered for an associate consultant position with Kaiser Associates, Inc. As a senior at the University of Richmond, I have begun to actively search for employment. The Career Development Center at the University of Richmond helped me locate this opportunity with your organization.

For the past four years, I have been pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree as a political science major and a leadership studies major at the Jepson School. Although these majors are time consuming, I believe I have acquired the information and experience necessary to develop excellent communication skills.

My leadership studies education and my experience last summer with Project America, a locally-based nonprofit organization that is dedicated to an annual national day of community improvement (please see enclosed article), gave me the incentive to pursue opportunities in consulting and public relations. Not only did I assist in coordinating 30,000 volunteers, but I wrote press releases, secured and appeared in local television announcements, and gave written and oral presentations to potential partner organizations.

Hopefully, these accomplishments coupled with my academic achievements will gain your notice. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to learn more about Kaiser and Associates, Inc. and the associate consultant position. If you need to contact me, I can be reached at 804/342-5803.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Megan Patricia Fleischman

Enclosures

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April 14, 1997

To: Jepson Faculty and Teaching Assistants
From: Richard A. Couto

Re: April 16th Visit of Academy of Leadership Staff

Here are the details of the visit of the Academy of Leadership Members. They are Georgia Sorenson, director; Jim Burns, senior scholar; Nance Lucas, associate director; Kathy Whitmire, director of National Resource Center for Public Leadership; Zachary Greene, senior scholar; and Lois Vietri, senior scholar.

7:30 am Breakfast in the Faculty Lounge

Check with Judy if you will be coming.

8:30 Teaching assistants join breakfast

9:00 Teaching assistants discuss bell hooks reading and semester experience.

9:30 Classes

Foundations (Hickman)

Leading Groups (Howe)

Vietri visits with Gabara about International Education

Delaney picks up Whitmire at airport. USAIR flight from Charlotte.

10:30 Classes

Foundations (Hickman)

Leading Groups (Howe)

11:30 Classes

Service Learning (Couto)

Leadership and Art (Howe and Johnson)

12:30 Homeroom

Presentation of Academy programs by Academy personnel.

1:30 Discussion of South African work

2:00 John departs. Discussion of follow-up to steps discussed.

2:30 Jim joins Barry Westin's history class to discuss vol. 3 of the American history book. They are half-way through it. Room 103 Jepson.

3:00 Departure