Typical Types of Board Committees

Sections of This Topic Include

About Committees
Developing Committees
Potential Standing Committees and Their Roles
Potential Ad Hoc Committees

Related Library Topics

Also See The Library’s Blogs Related To Board Committees

In addition to the articles on this current page, also see the following blogs that have posts related to Board Committees. Scan down the blog’s page to see various posts. Also see the section "Recent Blog Posts” in the sidebar of the blog or click on “next” near the bottom of a post in the blog. The blog also links to numerous free related resources.

Library’s Boards of Directors Blog
Library’s Nonprofit Capacity Building Blog

The following descriptions are intended to portray various functions that are often conducted by board committees. Note that the following list is not intended to suggest that all of these committees exist within one organization; it's ultimately up to the organization to determine which committees should exist and what they should do for that organization. Committees and their assignments are often specified in the ByLaws. Some of the following information has been adopted from materials by BoardSource, but applies to for-profit and nonprofit boards unless otherwise noted.

About Committees

1. Establish committees when it’s apparent that issues are too complex and/or numerous to be handled by the entire board.
2. For ongoing, major activities establish standing committees; for short-term activities, establish ad hoc committees that cease when the activities are completed. Standing committees should be included in the by-laws.
3. Committees recommend policy for approval by the entire board.
4. Committees make full use of board members' expertise, time and commitment, and ensure diversity of opinions on the board.
5. They do not supplant responsibility of each board member; they operate at the board level and not the staff level.
6. Committees may meet monthly (this is typical to new organizations, with working boards), every two months, or every three months; if meetings are not held monthly, attempt to have committees meet during the months between full board meetings.
7. Minutes should be recorded for all board meetings and for Executive Committee meetings if the ByLaws indicate the Executive Committee can make decisions in place of the board when needed.

Developing Committees

1. Ensure the committee has a specific charge or set of tasks to address, and ensure board members understand the committee’s charge
2. Have at least two board members on each committee, preferably three
3. Don’t have a member on more than two committees
4. In each board meeting, have each committee chair report the committee’s work since the last board meeting
5. Consider having non-board volunteers as members of the committee (mostly common to nonprofits)
6. Consider having a relevant staff member as a member of the committee as well
7. Committee chairs are often appointed by the board chair; consider asking committees members for a volunteer for committee chair
8. If committee work is regularly effective and the executive committee has a strong relationship

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with the chief executive, consider having board meetings every other month and committee meetings between the board meeting.

9. The chief executive should service ex officio to the board and any relevant committees (some organizations might consider placing the chief executive as a member of the board -- this decision should be made very carefully).

Potential Standing Committees

The following descriptions are intended to portray various functions often conducted by standing board committees, i.e., committees that exist year round. Note that the following list is not intended to suggest that all of these committees should exist; it's ultimately up to the organization to determine which committees should exist and what they should do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Standing Committees</th>
<th>Their Typical Roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board Development</td>
<td>Ensure effective board processes, structures and roles, including retreat planning, committee development, and board evaluation; sometimes includes role of nominating committee, such as keeping list of potential board members, orientation and training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Ensures sound evaluation of products/services/programs, including, e.g., outcomes, goals, data, analysis and resulting adjustments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>Oversees operations of the board; often acts on behalf of the board during on-demand activities that occur between meetings, and these acts are later presented for full board review; comprised of board chair, other officers and/or committee chairs (or sometimes just the officers, although this might be too small); often performs evaluation of chief executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Oversees development of the budget; ensures accurate tracking/monitoring/accountability for funds; ensures adequate financial controls; often led by the board treasurer; reviews major grants and associated terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>Oversees development and implementation of the Fundraising Plan; identifies and solicits funds from external sources of support, working with the Development Officer if available; sometimes called Development Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Oversees development and implementation of the Marketing Plan, including identifying potential markets, their needs, how to meet those needs with products/services/programs, and how to promote/sell the programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>Guides development, review and authorization of personnel policies and procedures; sometimes leads evaluation of the chief Executive; sometimes assists chief executive with leadership and management matters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Product / Program Development</td>
<td>Guides development of service delivery mechanisms; may include evaluation of the services; link between the board and the staff on program’s activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotions and Sales</td>
<td>Promotes organization’s services to the community, including generating fees for those services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>Represents the organization to the community; enhances the organization’s image, including communications with the press</td>
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</tbody>
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Potential Ad Hoc Committees

The following descriptions are intended to portray various functions often conducted by ad hoc board committees, i.e., committees that exist to accomplish a goal and then cease to exist. Note that the following list is not intended to suggest that all of these committees should exist; it's ultimately up to the organization to determine which committees should exist and what they should do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audit</th>
<th>Plans and supports audit of a major functions, e.g., finances, programs or organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campaign (nonprofit)</td>
<td>Plans and coordinates major fundraising event; sometimes a subcommittee of the Fundraising Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Develops and applies guidelines for ensuring ethical behavior and resolving ethical conflicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events (or Programs)</td>
<td>Plans and coordinates major events, such as fundraising (nonprofits), team-building or planning; sometimes a subcommittee of the Fundraising Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominations</td>
<td>Identifies needed board member skills, suggests potential members and orients new members; sometimes a subcommittee of the Board Development Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Conducts specific research and/or data gathering to make decisions about a current major function in the organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the Category of Boards of Directors:

To round out your knowledge of this Library topic, you may want to review some related topics, available from the link below. Each of the related topics includes free, online resources.

Also, scan the Recommended Books listed below. They have been selected for their relevance and highly practical nature.

## Related Library Topics

### Recommended Books

**For-Profit ("Corporate") Boards of Directors**

**Nonprofit Boards of Directors**

### For-Profit ("Corporate") Boards of Directors

**Field Guide to Leadership and Supervision in Business**
by Carter McNamara, published by Authenticity Consulting, LLC. Provides step-by-step, highly practical guidelines to recruit, utilize and evaluate the best employees for your business. Includes guidelines to effectively lead yourself (as Board member or employee), other individuals, groups and organizations. Includes guidelines to avoid burnout – a very common problem among employees of small businesses. Many materials in this Library are adapted from this book.

NOTE: This is one of the few books that’s all about leadership AND how to effectively work with a corporate (for-profit) Board.

The following books are recommended because of their highly practical nature and often because they include a wide range of information about this Library topic. To get more information about each book, just click on the image of the book. Also, a “bubble” of information might be displayed. You can click on the title of the book in that bubble to get more information, too.

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**Building Better Boards**
by Jay W. Lashk, Div.
Best Price $9.95
or Buy New $31.94

**People of Directors and the Private**
by Roger H. Ford
Best Price $18.95
or Buy New $102.95

**Boards That Deliver**
by Ram Charan
Best Price $1.95
or Buy New $18.37

**Boards at Work**
by Ram Charan
Best Price $0.01
or Buy New $20.37

**Corporate Boards**
by Jay A. Conger, Edw.
Best Price $0.01
or Buy New $22.71

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**The Board Book**
by Susan F. Shultz
Best Price $25.00
or Buy New $31.18

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Nonprofit Boards of Directors

Field Guide to Developing, Operating and Restoring Your Nonprofit Board
by Carter McNamara, published by Authenticity Consulting, LLC. Provides step-by-step, highly practical guidelines to organize, operate and sustain high-quality nonprofit Boards -- and to fix a broken Board! Includes variety of Board models you can choose from, roles and responsibilities, how to get the best members, how to train and organize them, goals for standard committees, ensuring high-quality meetings, evaluating Boards, how to evaluate and/or replace the Executive Director, and much more! Includes many sample Board policies you can download! Written by the developer of the Free Management Library. Many materials in this Library's topic about Boards are adapted from this book. 30-day, money-back, guarantee!

Field Guide to Leadership and Supervision With Nonprofit Staff
by Carter McNamara, published by Authenticity Consulting, LLC. Provides step-by-step, highly practical guidelines to recruit, utilize and evaluate the best staff members for your nonprofit. Includes guidelines to effectively lead yourself (as Board member or staff member), other individuals, groups and organizations. Includes guidelines to avoid burnout -- a very common problem among nonprofit staff. Written by the developer of the Free Management Library. Many materials in this Library are adapted from this book.

This is one of the few books that's all about leadership AND how to effectively work with a nonprofit Board.

Field Guide to Consulting and Organizational Development With Nonprofits
by Carter McNamara, published by Authenticity Consulting, LLC. Provides complete, step-by-step guidelines to identify complex issues in nonprofit organizations and successfully resolve each of them. This book is also helpful to organizations that are doing fine now, but want to evolve to the next level of performance. This is one of the truly comprehensive, yet practical, books about this complex subject! Includes online forms that can be downloaded. Written by the developer of the Free Management Library. Many materials in this Library's topic about guiding change are adapted from this comprehensive book. 30-day, money-back, guarantee!

Field Guide to Nonprofit Strategic Planning and Facilitation
by Carter McNamara, published by Authenticity Consulting, LLC. Step-by-step guidelines to customize and facilitate planners to implement the best strategic planning process to suit the particular nature and needs of their nonprofit. This is one of the few books, if any, that explains how to actually facilitate planning. Includes many online forms that can be downloaded and used by planners. Written by the developer of the Free Management Library. Many materials in this Library's topic about strategic planning are adapted from this book. 30-day, money-back, guarantee!
For Nonprofits, Also See

Strategic Planning -- Recommended Books

Social Entrepreneurship (Nonprofit) -- Recommended Books

Capacity Building (Nonprofit) -- Recommended Books

Fundraising -- Recommended Books

Program Management -- Recommended Books

Leading -- Recommended Books

Training and Development -- Recommended Books

Volunteers -- Recommended Books