

Section V 2

Toastmasters International
ORGANIZATION GUIDES

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THE ROLE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Role of a Board Member

A Board of Directors functions as a body in its deliberations and policy-level decisions. But each member is elected as an individual. Each Board member must accept the mission of the organization and make certain that the mission is reflected in the decisions that they make.

Decisions made by the Board should also reflect the concern for and knowledge of an organization's total needs. Attending Board meetings is only part of Board members' responsibilities. An individual must become well-informed about the work of the Board and should be prepared to ask discerning questions. Before decisions are reached, all points of view must be fully explored. A Board member, regardless of personal point of view, is responsible to support the decisions of the Board in public. No Board member has any right or authority to act upon his/her own in the name of the organization unless delegated specific authority by the Board of Directors.

In carrying out its responsibilities, the Board of Directors functions in nine major areas:

1. Leadership...helping achieve the Mission and goals of Toastmasters International;
2. Fulfilling obligations;
3. Policy-making;
4. Hiring and relating to the Executive Director;
5. Budget and financial management;
6. Liaison with district leaders;
7. Linkage to the members of the organization;
8. Recommending improvements in programs and activities; and
9. Ensuring that policies of the organization are carried out.

When carrying out these functions the Board makes decisions reserved exclusively to it and assumes the legal responsibility for its actions.

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The Role of the Executive Director

The Executive Director plays a major role in our organization. He/She is hired to manage a staff, the budget and the day-to-day operations of the organization. A key role of the Executive Director is to ensure that the staff operates effectively and efficiently. Only the Executive Director may direct the actions of the staff.

The Executive Director functions in five major areas:

1. Planning - The Executive Director makes short-term plans to fulfill the current year's budget and objectives.
2. Organizing - The Executive Director sets the staff organization structure to help manage policy and deliver service.
3. Staffing - The Executive Director is responsible for all staffing activities including performance, hiring and firing.
4. Directing and Leading – The Executive Director motivates staff. He/She should inspire them, give them direction and communicate well with them.
5. Controlling - The Executive Director measures and corrects the activities of the staff and controls the spending of the budget.

Setting Policy

A Board directs the organization through policy and allows the Executive Director to carry out the policy. It is very important that the Executive Director be given the opportunity to manage the day-to-day operations of the organization.

There are three steps in policy making:

1. The Board makes policy decisions.
 - Board policies determine what the organization will do. For example, approving the Budget is setting a policy.
2. The Board directs the Executive Director to implement policy.
 - The Executive Director implements policy and determines what individual staff will do for the organization in carrying out policy. For example, spending within the approved budget is implementation of the policy.
3. The Board monitors implementation of the policy.
 - The Board must monitor implementation and the outcome of policy. For example, examining financial statements is monitoring policy.

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The Board has the ultimate responsibility for setting policy. However, the Executive Director and delegated staff should be encouraged to provide input into policy direction.

The Differing Roles of the Board and Executive Director

Governing an organization must be a team effort between the Executive Director and Board. Each has responsibilities to help the team succeed.

Some examples of the differing roles are:

Board Responsibilities

- handles issues that affect the whole organization
- sets policy for the organization
- requests to have staff conduct research and recommends alternatives
- sets financial policies and monitors financial outcomes
- approves the budget
- sets values of the organization

Executive Director Responsibilities

- handles specific issues that affect members and clubs
- manages how policy is implemented
- conducts research and surveys in order to recommend alternatives
- carries out the day-to-day activities of the organization within the set financial policy
- makes staffing and spending decisions based on the budget
- ensures the organization is managed according to those values

The Board of Directors and the World Headquarters staff, as a team, can achieve the goals and mission of the organization. Working together, the Board and staff can "make effective communication a worldwide reality."

Reference: Bylaws of Toastmasters International, Article V, Section 4
Bylaws of Toastmasters International, Article VI, Section 6
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