

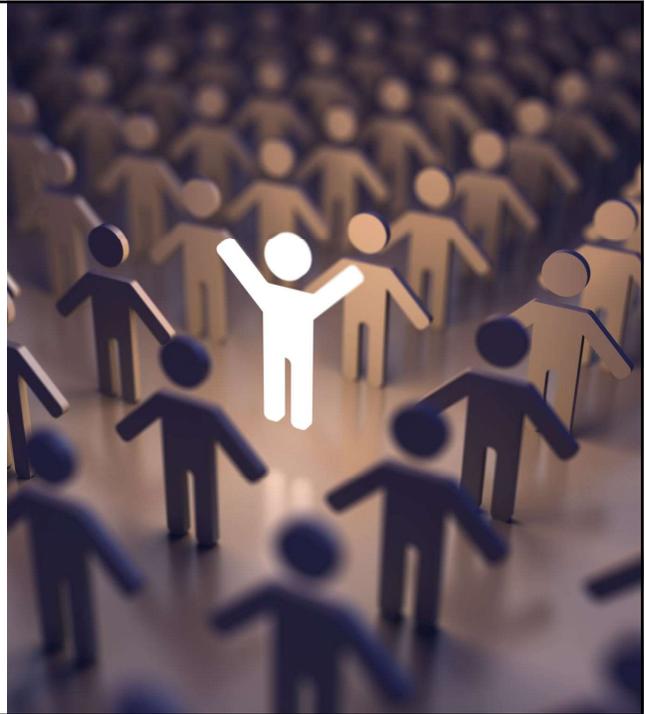
Best Practices for Board Succession In Today's "Too Busy" World!

Edit Kranner, Consortia Consulting, Inc.
ICA Meeting
Tuesday, March 26, 2024

1

The Premise

- Over the next 5-10 years the volunteer Boards of ICA's member companies will experience substantial turnover.
- What can you do today to better position your Board for the coming changes?



2

Discussion Topics



Why do Boards avoid talking about their own succession?



Why are Board members getting harder to find?



Putting your Board in the best position for tomorrow.



Overcoming obstacles to attracting new Board members.

3

Why Boards don't talk about Succession



Telcos provide a good platform for Board longevity

It's a Good Gig!



Boards prefer to talk about Operational succession vs. Board succession

It just feels awkward to talk about older Board members



It's hard to start the discussion and not feel obligated to act



Finding new Board members is not easy, so we ignore it!

4



Being on the Telco Board is a Good Gig!

- Most rural telcos have been financially stable, making Board involvement relatively low stress.
- Board involvement provides opportunities for travel and education.
- Many Boards provide financial benefits for involvement (insurance, service discounts, meeting fees, etc.)
- Meeting frequency commitment is generally low (monthly)
- An opportunity to serve the community

5



The Succession topic is a bit awkward

- If you are the oldest Board member you might feel targeted when the subject comes up...
- If you are the youngest Board member you might feel like you are about to be abandoned...
- And the succession topic often comes up when the Board is trying to address other Board issues (attendance, commitment, preparation, etc.)

6



Once it comes up...things get “real”

- Discussing Succession opens up the possibility that action will be required
- It can force the Board to leave its comfort zone
- It puts questions on the table that just don't have very definitive answers...
 - Should we have an age limit?
 - Should there be term limits?
 - Who will replace the exiting Board member(s)?

7

Why Board members are becoming harder to find...

Our business is complex, has a long learning curve, and is very “technical”...prospects are intimidated

Young people are too busy and won't commit to “volunteer” scheduled meetings

There are fewer and fewer people to ask in many rural telco service areas (population decline)

Politics, reputations, and relationships impact Board invitations

Small communities have many other community obligations

Liability risk concerns

8

Let's face it...our business is technical and complex!

Things that can make joining a telephone board that can make joining the Board seem overwhelming...

1. **Rapidly evolving technology** – new Board members often report that technology discussions are like attending a foreign language class!
2. **Ever-increasing state and federal programs and requirements** – the “learning curve” never ends and can be frustrating!
3. **Increasing competitive pressure** – our business is no longer the stable old telephone company!



9

Young families have excessive demands on their time!

- Today children are commonly involved in multiple activities. This means parents that have very full “kid support” schedules.
- Families are far more likely to be focused on day-to-day living and less focused on “community support”.
- While younger generations are open to volunteer work, they are less likely to commit to frequent, recurring meetings.
- Volunteer commitments that require travel away from home are also very tough commitments for parents with children.



10

Many Boards have a makeup that makes diversity challenging

- It is not uncommon for telco Boards to have a majority of older, male members.
- Younger adults, females and ethnically diverse prospects may avoid these opportunities because they are intimidated or feel they will not be accepted.
- This circumstance can limit the prospects for Board change and replacement.



11



Serving on Boards can create Liability Risk!

- Board prospects can be concerned about putting themselves in a position of legal risk.
- It is important that your Board be governed according to the bylaws and that all Board members fully participate in the governing processes and responsibilities.

12

Positioning Your Board for Future Success

Discuss and determine the right “balance” of member representation

Seek skillsets on your Board that add value to the mission and goals of the organization...where are your “gaps”?

Recognize changing lifestyles and adapt your practices to make the Board commitment more appealing

Invest in a great onboarding process for new Board members...

13

Adapting Board Participation to Today’s Changing Lifestyles

- Meeting frequency/length
- Access to online meeting attendance
- Online education opportunities
- Board perks...free/discounted broadband access



14

What are your Board “Gaps”?

- Youth perspective
- Business community awareness
- Advanced financial or technical skills
- Marketing skills in a competitive marketplace



15

Attracting Strong Board Members

Target prospects that would add great value, energy and perspective to the Board room

Meet with desired prospects now...find out what they “need” to be interested in serving

Explain the importance of the Cooperative and how it impacts the community

Have an **onboarding plan** ready that fits the new Board members’ needs/challenges

Proudly sell the benefits of Board service...fees, insurance, travel, education

Have a vision for the **Board of the Future** that you can communicate to prospects

16

How to Target New Board Members



KNOW YOUR "GAPS"!



HAVE A LIST OF COMMUNITY
MOVERS AND SHAKERS



LOOK FOR PROSPECTS IN OTHER
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

17

Successful Onboarding of New Board Members



18

Closing...don't wait!

The time to START is now!

Have open and honest communication about succession

Consider an outside facilitator to ask the "tough" questions

Start your target list

Create on an onboarding process that is worthy of your organization!