

Building A High-Performing Board & Keeping Them Engaged!

High-performing boards don't happen by chance. They are built through intentional recruitment, clear expectations, ongoing development, and a shared commitment to the organization's mission.

Building a high-performing board is only half the equation. Keeping members engaged, motivated, and invested in your mission is equally important. Board members want to know that their time, expertise, and connections make a difference.

A board seat is a responsibility, not an honorary title. As a leader of an organization, your responsibility is to engage them to successfully meet your goals and milestones.

A high-performing board combines expertise, integrity, accountability, strong relationships, and a shared commitment to the mission. Recruit the right people, set clear expectations, give members meaningful work, recognize their contributions, and keep them connected to the impact they help create. When board members feel valued, engaged, and connected to the mission, they are more likely to contribute with enthusiasm and purpose! Our motto: It takes a village!

The How:

1. Your "WOW" Factor
2. Recruit for Skills, Expertise & Connections
3. Do Your Homework: Look Beyond the Résumé
4. Set Clear Expectations & Make Members Feel Valued
5. Equip Your Board to Be Strong Ambassadors
6. Keep Engagement Strong Between Meetings
7. Leadership Sets the Tone: Lead by Example

Scan to check out our upcoming events

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ST. GEORGE THEATRE

1. Your "WOW" Factor

- Clearly communicate your mission and community impact. People gravitate to success, especially in your neighborhood, your world.
- Demonstrate the difference you make and the lives you change.
- Give people a compelling reason to invest in your mission: show funders how their money is being spent.
- Your WOW factor is the impact you make in your community.

2. Recruit for Skills, Expertise & Connections

Assess your board's strengths and gaps before recruiting.
Look beyond titles to identify professional expertise, credibility, and valuable networks. For the SGT we focus on:

- Banking, finance, and investment: Financial expertise, business relationships, and potential donor connections.
- Construction, HVAC, architecture, and engineering: Professional knowledge and guidance to support our historic restoration efforts.
- Fundraising, sponsorships, and corporate relationships: Connections that expand fundraising opportunities and champion our mission.

Pro bono professional services have provided invaluable expertise while helping reduce restoration costs.
Our Chairman reinforces the distinction between governance and operations. Our board does not get involved with the day-to-day operation that include; overseeing capital improvement projects, designing programming across the board, marketing, budgets, and production.

3. Do Your Homework: Look Beyond the Résumé

Look for six essential qualities: Character, Competence, Credibility, Collaboration, Courage, and Commitment. Recruit individuals who lead by example, follow through, work well with others, ask thoughtful questions, and put the mission first.

4. Set Clear Expectations & Make Members Feel Valued

For the SGT, board members focus on governance, oversight, fundraising, advocacy, and ambassadorship, not daily operations. Establish clear expectations for attendance, financial support or give/get commitments, donor cultivation, networking, and participation.
Our board operates through these committees: Executive, Finance, House & Grounds, Nominating, Fundraising & Development Committees.
Board members serve on one or more committees, allowing them to contribute their expertise, experience, and connections in meaningful ways. All board members are invited to participate in Fundraising & Development Committee meetings, providing additional opportunities to strengthen donor relationships, and support fundraising initiatives.

5. Equip Your Board to Be Strong Ambassadors

Board members need more than enthusiasm; they need the tools and confidence to tell your story and build relationships.

- Elevator pitch: Provide a written, two-minute explanation of your mission and impact.
- Everyday conversations: Teach members how to share your story naturally at social and business gatherings.
- Strategic seating: Arrange tables to connect guests and encourage conversation.
- Seven-Touch Approach: Build donor relationships through meaningful, consistent follow-up.
- Turn connections into support: Give board members the tools to turn conversations into connections and support.

Bring the experience to the boardroom: At the St. George Theatre, we share photos, videos, marketing highlights, events, and community impact at board meetings. Members cannot attend everything, so it is our responsibility to bring the experience to them. Informed, connected members become more enthusiastic and effective ambassadors.

6. Keep Engagement Strong Between Meetings

- Make meetings worthwhile: Share materials in advance and encourage discussion.
- Assign meaningful work: Give members specific responsibilities, clear deadlines, & opportunities to use their expertise.
- Communicate consistently: Share successes, challenges, organizational updates, and upcoming opportunities.
- Recognize contributions: Thank members personally, celebrate milestones, and acknowledge their impact.
- Build relationships: Create opportunities for members to connect, collaborate, and enjoy working together.

7. Leadership Sets the Tone

- Executive Directors and CEOs must lead by example. At the St. George Theatre, co-founders Doreen and Luanne work tirelessly in the community to champion the mission and build relationships.
- Strong leadership inspires dedicated staff, volunteers, and board members.
- Set expectations, encourage accountability, and create a culture of teamwork and shared purpose.