

## The ROI on Board Service

Bob Harris, CAE

“Leaders are made, they are not born,” said football coach Vince Lombardi. So where does one find a good source for leadership development? Association boardrooms are ideal schools for leadership.

Most volunteers join a board out of a sense of responsibility and passion. Few people consider that board service results in enhanced skills to support personal and career growth.

If the nominating committee comes up short on candidates, be certain they are conveying the indirect value of board service.

### President's Perspective

This was described by an outgoing president. “Board service has high rewards in a low cost environment with minimal risk,” he told the annual meeting. The experience is an opportunity for learning an array of leadership and business skills that will have long-term benefits.

He described the lessons he learned while serving, stating there are not many forums in which one can learn so many lifelong skills.

**Account Retention** – Focusing on recruitment and satisfaction of members.

**Budgeting** – Understanding budgeting and reporting; monitoring costs.

**Collaboration and Negotiation** – Identifying partnerships outside of the association to build strength through collaboration.

**Community Service** - Learning to position the association as a good corporate citizen.

**Customer Focus** – Serving members and attracting prospective members through customer service excellence.

Skills Learned and Enhanced	Worth
Account Retention	+
Budgeting	+
Collaboration and Negotiation	+
Community Service	+
Customer Focus	+
Evaluation	+
Forecasting	+
Governing Documents	+
Leadership	+
Lobbying	+
Marketing	+
Meeting Planning	+
Meeting Rules	+
Networking	+
Printing	+
Public Speaking	+
Revenue Generation	+
Roles Respect	+
Selflessness	+
Strategic Planning	+
Time Management	+
Training and Programming	+
Values and Principles	+
Website Enhancement	+
Writing	+
New Opportunities by Serving	+
First Hand Information Access	+
Investment of Time and Resources for Board Service	-
<b>THE LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>Life-Long Value</b>

**Evaluation** – Using tools to assess financial performance, committees and the performance of the board of directors.

**Forecasting** – Monitoring internal and external forces which have an impact on programming.

**Governing Documents** – Recognizing how articles of incorporation, bylaws and policies guide an organization.

**Leadership** - Recognizing the desirable behaviors genuine leaders and developing one's own style of leadership.

**Lobbying** - Understanding civics, how laws are made, coalition building and seeking opportunities to influence regulations.

**Marketing** – Using traditional and digital marketing initiatives, including improved use of social media.

**Meeting Planning** – Learning about negotiating with facilities and speakers, setting guarantees and estimating attendance while working to protect revenues.

*Communicate the value of volunteer service not only as it relates to the organization, but to the individual's opportunities to learn new skill.*

**Meeting Rules** – Understanding rules of order, agendas and consensus building.

**Networking** – Improving networking skills in a variety of settings.

**Printing** – Realizing the processes and deadlines necessary to keep projects within budget and on schedule.

**Public Speaking** – Enhancing speaking confidence through opportunities to represent the association.

**Revenue Generation** – Identifying new sources of revenue to sustain and organization.

**Roles Respect** – Respecting the distinctions of board governance and staff management; working as partners.

**Selflessness** – Deflecting credit to ensure that the entire leadership receives due recognition.

**Strategic Planning** – Planning strategically for the long-term, and making best use of resources.

**Time Management** – Learning to better manage time and set priorities between volunteer responsibilities, business and family.

**Training and Programming** – Identifying educational needs and finding ways to offer cost effective programming.

**Values and Principles** – Respecting the culture and principles within the organization.

**Website Enhancement** – Maintaining a vibrant website for members and consumers; monitoring analytics and increasing search engine optimization.

**Writing** – Improving written communication so messages are consistent, brief and effective.

The past president closed by telling members the commitment to lead have greater return on investment than it costs. “All the functions that the board completes within the year are similar to the business functions needed in your own work environment.”

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Note: Bob Harris, CAE, offers free governance tips and templates at [www.nonprofitcenter.com](http://www.nonprofitcenter.com).

**Page 4: Sample  
President's Message  
on Leadership.**

President's Message  
For Adaptation  
Bob Harris, CAE – bob@rchcae.com

## **The Benefits of Volunteering**

President's Message

To serve our membership and advance our mission it requires a board of directors. Our board and committees are made up of dedicated volunteers.

Volunteer service is an honor. I'll be honest, it does require an investment in time and energy to fulfill expectations. Our members have entrusted us to make decisions that advance and protect our *[industry-profession-community.]*

With today's busy schedules, it can be difficult to find people with enough time to serve. But without qualified volunteers we would be a weak *[association-chamber-organization.]*

The opportunity to serve is an honor. To facilitate success, our staff will provide resources and training. Directors have access to the documents they need to make good decisions.

You may not realize the underlying benefits of volunteering. What you learn can enhance personal and career skills in your *[work-career-practice.]*

Here's what volunteers said they learned:

Account Retention	Lobbying	Strategic Planning
Budgeting	Marketing	Time Management
Collaboration and	Meeting Planning	Training and
Negotiation	Meeting Rules	Programming
Community Service	Networking	Values and Principles
Customer Focus	Printing	Website Enhancement
Evaluation	Public Speaking	Writing
Forecasting	Revenue Generation	New Opportunities by
Governing Documents	Roles Respect	Serving
Leadership	Selflessness	First Hand Knowledge

Where else can you hone so many skills without investing in educational classes? The answer is right in your own *[association – chamber – nonprofit organization.]*

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