



Board Succession Planning Considerations & Best Practices

**Part of the monthly AAF COG Webinar Presentation Series
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Welcome



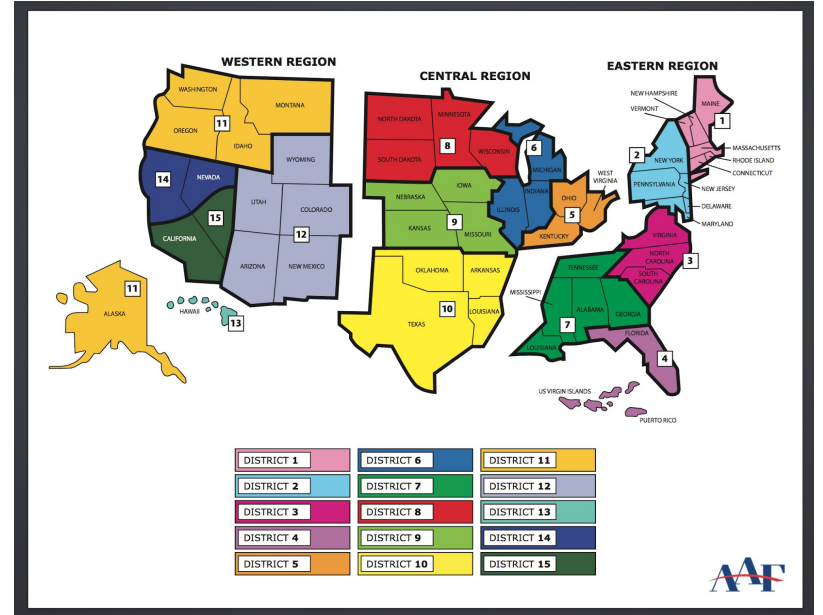
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Overview

The strength of an organization starts with a solid foundation: their board of directors.

At each level of AA (local clubs, districts, regions) there are a variety of structures in place. This can be confusing and perplexing..

This presentation and discussion is meant to prompt every club and district board into reviewing their succession planning, modeling new structures after successful organizations and preparing for the years ahead.



Problems to solve

1

CLEARLY DEFINED ROLES

Working, volunteer boards require more effort than ever in their recruitment and retention efforts - especially in leadership positions. Clear articulations of roles and transition plans for executive boards are critical.

2

NO ACTIVE RECRUITING

Many boards are not actively recruiting or grooming the next set of leaders, which leaves them unprepared for hardships, vacancies, etc. which are becoming more common than ever.

3

A BALANCE OF TALENT

Not considering a proper balance of experience / institutional knowledge - or having true transitions - time for knowledge transfer, can create chaotic “start-up boards” who recreate the wheel without the proper backgrounding.

4

TERM LIMITS

Lack of term limits can create stagnant boards, and the impression that new ideas and fresh perspectives are not welcomed. This makes new board seats hard to fill with people who have the energy and ideas to move the organization forward.



Recruitment & Retention

01

As you already may know, getting and keeping members is the most critical function of your AAF club. Recruitment, Retention and Involvement are key!

You are urged to set Objectives drawn from membership statistics and the strategies to achieve these objectives should come in the form of activities and tasks. This will provide the committee with the necessary tools to achieve membership goals in recruitment, retention and involvement.

The membership committee should establish at least one goal for membership recruitment, retention and involvement.

Formal goals provide committee members with direction and serve as the foundation for measuring success.

Specific strategies to achieve objectives should also be defined.

Case example:

AAF Hawaii considers the membership committee one of the most important committees of the club.



Recruitment & Retention - Club Example

AAF Hawaii

01

For AAF Hawaii, the membership committee is perhaps the most important committee of the club.

They felt they needed to engage members to exist and thrive! Their goals for the year included:

1. Recruit five new members.
2. Retain all existing members.
3. Engage members with main focuses: 1) board involvement; 2) meaningful member engagement at events.

They were able to meet and exceed those goals for the year. It literally took years of strategic planning and hard work, but thanks to the committed board members who persevered, they were able to get the club where they are today. During “Ad Month”, they held 17 events drawing over 275 participants. While they saw their “regulars” at each of these events, they saw a lot of new faces and prospective members at these events, too. And in some cases, these events helped solidify a prospect’s decision to become an AAF Hawaii member.



Disruption Preparation

02

Resilient boards are prepared for challenges with:

- thorough, thoughtful plans in place to cover gaps in leadership
- clear transition plans for executive board members
- cross training as frequently as possible for additional institutional knowledge
- active recruitment efforts for board replacements



Leadership Transition Plans

03

Successful boards/committees and successful leaders don't start over every year:

- boards should ensure a good mix of experienced and new board members
- training & mentorship of new board members by prior board members and open, frequent communication
- board leaders should rise from the board so they are grounded in the policies & procedures
- leadership transition plans for the executive board should allow first hand mentorship and transfer of knowledge

Case examples:

AAF Baton Rouge & AAF District 7



Leadership Transition Plans - Club Example

AAF Baton Rouge

03

From the list of members who have served at least two years as committee chairs, the Executive Board selects a person deemed to have exceptional presidential qualities. This person then joins the club's Executive Board as the American Advertising Awards co-chair and moves up through VP positions to become president. Knowing 4 years in advance who the president will be. Routinely send every board member and committee chair to all District conferences to learn leadership skills in preparation for potential future leadership responsibilities.

1. American Advertising Awards co-chair
 2. VP: American Advertising Awards chair
 3. VP/President Elect: also chairs a major club committee
 4. President: leader, district board
 5. Immediate Past President: club achievement and chair of a club committee as needed
- A 6th person is selected by President to serve as Ex-Officio Exec Board member/advisor



Leadership Transition Plans - Example

District 7

03

From a pool of former club presidents and district-level committee chairs, a group of regional directors is selected to oversee 3-4 clubs each and serve as liaisons to the district Executive Committee. This is a 2-year term.

Former regional directors may be nominated and voted in to the secretary/treasurer role each year as the newest member of the Executive Committee. The Board EC consists of 6 positions, serving one-year terms in each role before moving up the following year, eventually serving as Governor. Know 5 years in advance who governor will be.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Secretary/Treasurer: Database, Comm & Finances | 4. Governor Elect: ADDYs, Gov't Relations, Regional Directors |
| 2. Lt. Gov. Club Services: Club resources/Achievement | 5. Governor: Leadership, COG/AAF Board |
| 3. Lt. Gov. Education: NSAC, Students, Awards | 6. Immediate Past Governor, Board chair |

A former Governor serves as the District Historian and Advisor to the Governor. The Eastern Region Representative and any AAF National-Level positions are also District Executive Committee members.



Leadership Transition Plans - Titles, Roles and Responsibilities

03

It's all in a name. Someone named President Elect is mentally and literally preparing to become club president. However, a Vice President may still be leaving options open and not taking the steps to take over leadership, though that may be the unspoken expectation. Don't leave it unspoken. Give that person the title and responsibility of assuming the reigns next year.

Same goes for Vice President roles if you have more than one. What does a First Vice President do? What is the Second Vice President in charge of? But there's no question what the Vice President of Education Initiatives role includes. Be specific

This applies at the District level as well. First Lt. Governor is vague; Lt. Governor of Club Operations is more clear.

Include these titles, roles and responsibilities in your By-Laws. Put the path to the top spot in writing. Are members of your Executive Committee aware that they're then expected to become club president in a specified number of years? They should be.



Leadership Transition Plans - Executive Director

03

The title Executive Director is often misunderstood. This person is neither an executive of the club nor a director on the board. What they actually do is take care of the day-to-day operations of the club and help in a support role for the executive committee, board, committee chairs and members. This person should not be in “charge” of anything.

An Executive Director can certainly help the treasurer with accounts, statements and reports. But this person is NOT the club treasurer. Likewise, you should be tapping your membership to become as involved as possible. Allowing an Executive Director to run committees, handle all communication, or serve as the “face” of the club does a disservice to your members and future leaders who want – and need – to be involved at every level. Members may be discouraged from becoming board members because they’ve done little more than attend meetings up to that point. Get members involved! Then they’re prepared when asked to take on higher leadership roles, eventually becoming president.

Let your Executive Director be an assistant and an integral support person for your club, but not a leader.



Term Limits

04

Experienced boards are critical, but new energy is required for your evolution:

- term limits ensure a personal voice doesn't become the organization's voice
- many boards are seen as "self selecting" which takes away from the credibility of the organization, its members' voices in selecting leaders, etc.
- boards who are the strongest generally strike the perfect balance of experience and new energy - with proper transfer of knowledge



Board Transition & Training - Final Thoughts

Leadership Retreats - District 8's Executive Board retreat has always served as new member onboarding, historical review as well as future planning. Typically done in person, it also serves as a community building opportunity for new and old board members. During AAF Hawaii's retreat, they create and review their fiscal year budget at their kick-off retreat so committees know what they were working with for the year. Each Board member was required to keep a close eye on finances and to keep transparency with the board about all expenses.

Google Drives - District 8 uses Google Drives to store and have all committee members have immediate access all the most recent club materials at any point in time. This serves as a central repository for all updated operating procedures, minutes, agendas, reports and financials.

Slack - AAF Hawaii's use of Slack vastly improved their internal board communications. The Club went from slogging through (and/or losing and missing) emails to having all of the most current information at our fingertips, sorted by committee channels. Everything is in one central, easy searchable place.



Things To Do

- Define leadership roles and responsibilities clearly
- Actively recruit and groom future leaders
- Maintain a balance of diverse talents
- Provide term limits to allow for fresh ideas

Thank you.

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Paul Lam, Western Region Chair

