

ROLE AND CULTURE OF ONA BOARD



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The ONA Board is a volunteer governing entity made up of digital media leaders. Your role is to help set high-level strategy for the organization, in close collaboration with the Executive Director, and provide financial oversight. Board members also perform fundraising as needed and often chair or join committees to help think through or implement initiatives and goals.

The Executive Committee – the President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary – directs and advises the Executive Director on financial, personnel, legal and communications decisions that impact the future of the organization, and occasionally brings larger decisions or matters for a vote to the full Board.

From the organization's inception in 1999, the Board's culture has reflected that of our digital community – agile, diverse and open to ideas. And, as it has evolved from an operating to governing board, it has become uniquely collaborative and supportive of leadership and staff. This chart serves as a quick visual guide to areas of focus for the Board and staff.

BoardSource: Ten Basic Board Responsibilities

1

Determine the organization's mission and purpose.

— A statement of mission and purpose should articulate the organization's goals, means, and primary constituents served. It is the board's responsibility to create the mission statement and review it periodically for accuracy and validity. Each board member should fully understand and support it.

2

Select the chief executive.

— Boards must reach consensus on the chief executive's job and undertake a careful search to find the most qualified individual for the position.

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3 Provide proper financial oversight.

The board, in order to remain accountable to its donors and the public, and to safeguard its tax-exempt status, must assist in developing the annual budget and ensuring that proper financial controls are in place.

4 Ensure adequate funding.

One of the board's foremost responsibilities is to provide adequate funding for the organization to fulfill its mission. The board should work in partnership with the chief executive and development staff, if any, to raise funds from the community.

5 Ensure legal and ethical integrity; maintain accountability.

The board is ultimately responsible for ensuring adherence to legal standards and ethical norms. Solid personnel policies, grievance procedures, and a clear delegation to the chief executive of hiring and managing employees will help ensure proper decorum in this area. The board must establish pertinent policies and adhere to provisions of the organization's bylaws and articles of incorporation.

6 Ensure effective organizational planning.

As stewards of the organization, boards must actively participate with the staff in an overall planning process and assist in implementing the plan's goals.

	Board of Directors	Committees	Staff
Overall Vision and Strategy	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tactics	No	Yes	Yes
Operations	No	No	Yes

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7

Recruit and orient new board members and assess board performance.

All boards have a responsibility to articulate and make known their needs in terms of member experience, skills, and many other considerations that define a balanced board composition. Boards must also orient new members to their responsibilities and the organization's history, needs, and challenges. By evaluating its performance in fulfilling its responsibilities, the board can recognize its achievements and reach consensus on which areas need to be improved.

8

Enhance the organization's public standing.

An organization's primary link to the community, including constituents, the public, and the media, is the board. Clearly articulating the organization's mission, accomplishments, and goals to the public, as well as garnering support from important members of the community, are important elements of a comprehensive public relations strategy.

9

Determine, monitor, and strengthen the organization's programs and services.

The board's role in this area is to determine which programs are the most consistent with the organization's mission and to monitor their effectiveness.

10

Support the chief executive and assess his/her performance.

The board should ensure that the chief executive has the moral and professional support he or she needs to further the goals of the organization. The chief executive, in partnership with the entire board, should decide upon a periodic evaluation of his or her performance.

Adapted from Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards by Richard T. Ingram (BoardSource, Revised edition 2003).
