



ST. LOUIS | JUNE 20-23

OPERA CONFERENCE 2018

LIFTING MANY VOICES

MAINTAINING BOARD MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.

GENOVESE VANDERHOOF & ASSOCIATES

THEATRE PLANNERS / LIGHTING DESIGNERS
Schuler Shook

THE NATIONAL OPERA CENTER
AMERICA

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Board/Staff Relationships



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Qualities of a Good Board

Displays optimistic team spirit, respect and courtesy.

Unified in support of the mission and strategic direction.

Realistic in assessing the current situation.

Perceptive about challenges and opportunities.

Responsive to challenges and opportunities.

Decisions are made in the context of strategic priorities.

Sense of shared responsibility for the well-being of the institution.

Equity in relation to participation and generosity.

Open to individual and group learning.

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Qualities of a Good Board Member

Focuses on contributed benefit rather than derived benefit.

Puts aside personal preferences in deference to institutional needs and priorities.

Does not under-estimate the complexity of managing an opera company, despite the relatively small size of its budget.

Contributes actively to a good decision making process; maintains independence of thought and avoids "group think."

Makes a direct connection between group decisions and personal behavior.

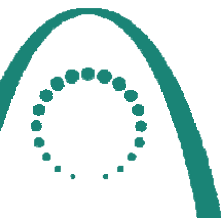
Understands why s/he was invited to serve and offers service that is consistent with those reasons.

Participates in the fund-raising process.

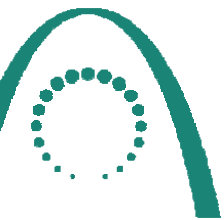
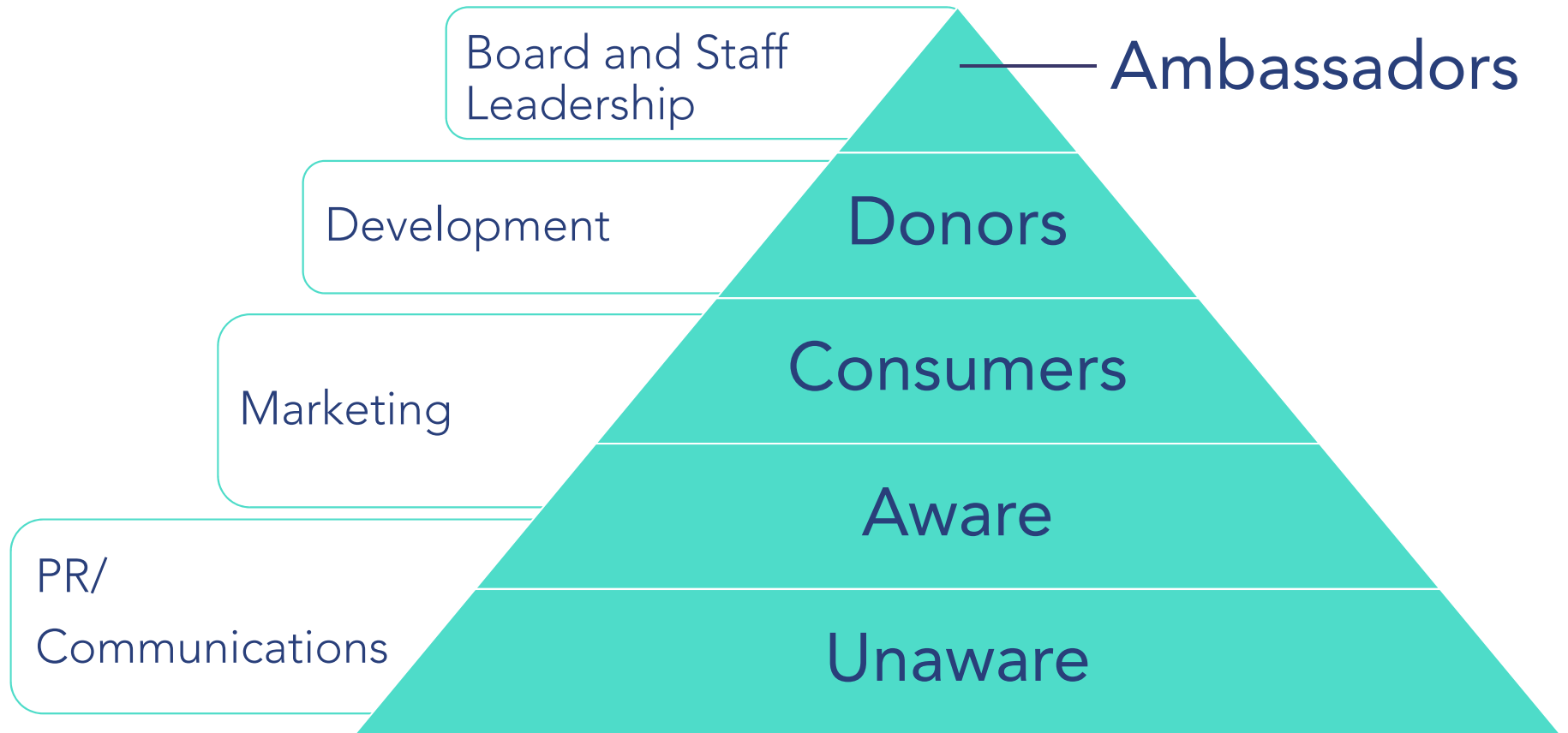
Makes significant annual contributions.

Recognizes that staff effectiveness depends on Board effectiveness.

Gets one person every month to do something for the opera company that that person would not otherwise do.



The Awareness Pyramid



Building a Stronger Board

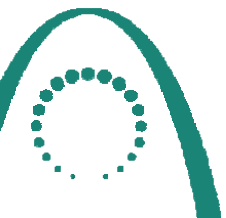
What skills and qualities do we need on this Board?

What sectors/spheres of influence do we need to access?

What do we currently have?

What are our current connections?

How do we reach beyond our current connections?



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Board Member Retention and Engagement

Articulate a compelling vision and strategic clarity.

Demonstrate community value.

Engineer purposefulness and accomplishment.

Offer education/enrichment.

Include the art form.

Focus on the future.

Make it fun.

Don't waste valuable time.



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BOARD COMMITTEES

Knowing is not doing, only doing is doing.

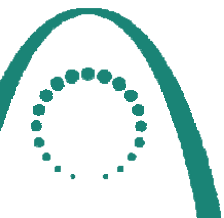
Can/should non-Board members serve on Board Committees?

What Committees are essential?

How many Committees are necessary?

How often should Committees meet?

What is the role of the Executive Committee?



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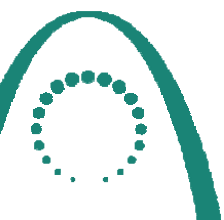
BOARD COMMITTEES

Any cautions?

Committee service can be mistaken for authentic engagement.

Committee meetings can lead to Board member fatigue.

Committee meetings take up valuable staff time.



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Board Size and Composition

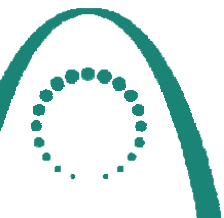
Large enough to encompass needed skills, community connections and spheres of influence.

Large enough to be diverse: age, race, gender, sexual orientation, geography, affluence, interests, personality, religion, etc.

Small enough to maintain bonds of mutual obligation.

Small enough to engineer purposefulness on an individual basis.

Small enough to solicit each member, annually, on an individual basis.



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Term Limits/Rotation

Board membership must evolve as company needs evolve.

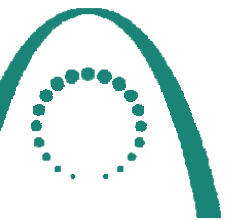
New members challenge inherited assumptions and group think.

New Board members have fresh energy to address enduring challenges.

The Board cannot continue to grow larger.

Ineffective Board members hurt morale.

Dedicated donor Board members will not desert the company.



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