



Louisiana Fire Sprinkler Association

Louisiana Chapter of AFSA, Inc.

Smooth Operators...A Board that Gets It.

In today's society getting people to commit to an organization, let alone commit to serve on a Committee or Board can be like taking a child to the doctor....the idea of doing it is much more anxiety related than the actual act. So, how do you create and engage a Board to perform for the organization?

For today's society, commitment is a dirty word. Long term is scary for a millennial and the generations after them. Let's say you get the commitment, a tentative one at best, but you overcame their skepticism and they are on Board.

Now, how do I engage a Board and its Members to perform? Here are the ways that my Board is engaged and making a difference:

1. Build one on one relationship with each Board Member
 - a. When new Board Members are elected send them a questionnaire, but better than that if possible, meet with them and ask questions
 - i. Why did they agree to serve?
 - ii. What do they expect to get?
 - iii. What are their expectations?
 - iv. What are their SWATS for service to the organization?
2. Ensure requests/needs are a strength of the Board Member
 - a. If they are uncomfortable, more likely to avoid
3. Communicate & Support the Board Members
 - a. The ED is the core for all projects, meetings, etc.
 - b. Knowing they have you to help is very valuable for them
4. Don't Overload Board Members
 - a. Board Members are running companies, time is valuable
 - i. Not saying yours isn't – it's just knowing positions we all play on the team
 - b. Most of the leg work may need to be done by you, but your primary need/purpose for them on the project is what counts
 - c. Some Board Members will work more than others. Could be time restraints or something else. That is where you utilize your skills of awareness and plan assignments for Board Members accordingly
5. Follow up
 - a. Again, everyone is working, but we must follow up to maintain schedules. You can call it checking in, maintaining project status, doesn't matter, but always keep in touch.
6. Be Available
 - a. When a Board Member is given a task, don't be hands off, not my problem

- i. You are support role on the team, what they need to complete the project will rely on your assistance.

7. Know your Role

- a. Everyone has their place. No Disrespect to Anyone. Everyone can not be a chief. I am not the Chief. The President is and they have their elected officials. I am the worker bee, behind the scenes. Their success is my success. Be comfortable in your role. Don't seek power, encourage it from your Board Members.

8. Feeling Needed

- a. Everyone wants to feel needed. Make sure Board members feel that. You walk a thin line here. Too much neediness and they will shut down, not enough and the feeling of irrelevance shows up.

9. Lemonade out of Lemons

- a. Things not working right at the moment. Change your attitude.
 - i. We cannot change who is elected to the Board. We hope and pray we get people with the drive and time to serve, but not always the case.
 - ii. You are the Key... take time to figure out how to change a "bad" Board Member into the best one ever. In the South, we call it divine intervention. Kill them kindness, figure out what makes them tick, and give them attention. and more than likely they will be the best Board Member ever.
 - iii. Why did they say yes about being on the Board?