

Booster Clubs in an Accelerated Age

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It's interesting to investigate and discover why solutions were created to solve problems. For instance, I recently read that window boxes of geraniums were initiated for something very practical. Long ago, when air conditioning wasn't available, windows were opened to keep air flowing through homes. With open windows, bugs, in particular, mosquitoes could be unwelcome guests. Geraniums were discovered to repel mosquitoes; so, window boxes were constructed and geraniums were planted in them allowing windows to be opened so that a cool breeze could flow without these pests entering. Window boxes planted with geraniums are still displayed without practical function because of the advent of air conditioning yet they function offering beautiful decoration. Do we have some things in our booster organizations that have been done a certain way for a long period of time but haven't been examined to determine if they are still the most effective way to accomplish a task, or even needed at all?

Friedman suggests, "more people than ever now compete, connect, and collaborate on more things for less money with greater ease and equality than ever before." John E. Kelly offers the ideal that "in the 21st century knowing all the answers won't distinguish someone's intelligence; rather, the ability to ask all the right questions will be the mark of true genius." As volunteer groups and booster clubs move into an accelerated age of technological innovation and

progress, one of the right questions to ask is, "***What is the best organizational structure of my booster club in order to foster stronger connections and collaboration to compete effectively regarding provision of physical and fiscal support?***"

An investigation into the structure of booster clubs reveals that many are patterned after organizational structures in school parent organizations or church committees where "paid" personnel (faculty or ministers) are the responsible party for the completion of an action thus, not always requiring volunteers to be personally engaged with active ownership for a task. This type of organization serves a good purpose but may not be the best for your music team; it could be likened to a beautiful flower box that has lost its practical and useful edge.

Consider a booster club structure that utilizes active participation and ownership. The format functions well because most volunteers work better in teams rather than as individuals. ***The framework begins with the teacher operating as the vision-caster of the organization and the volunteers serving in a generation of roles based on a business model rather than a parent/school group model.*** The use of titles is a critical first step in establishing the we/us business model of booster organizations. Consider roles and titles that include descriptions of manager, management, director, and coordinator as those labels automatically imply active roles and ownership. And, the role of

each volunteer is that of director or managing others toward a common goal. A suggested list of roles and responsibilities, from *Boosters to the Rescue*, is found below (Vandewalker, 2016a).

- **Faculty Sponsor/Director of Bands** (Vision caster; typically an ex officio officer)
- **Co-Presidents** (Implementers of the director's vision)
- **Co-Treasurers/Secretary** (Protocols and Documentation; Financial and Procedural Manager)
- **Co-Vice Presidents of Project Management** (Senior project manager for all co-directors and project coordinators and establish operations calendar of all events)
- **Co-Director/Special Events** (Direct and provide supervision for: all planning and preparation, facility scheduling and calendaring, technology requests, and implementation of all special events hosted or provided by the booster club. These events may create revenue but are generally not significant fundraisers [i.e. banquets, concerts, performance venues, concert camp, summer events].)
- **Co-Director/Operations** (Direct and provide supervision for all operational needs [i.e., chaperones, equipment truck, guard support, percussion equipment repair, prop development, etc])
- **Co-Director/Public Relations** (Direct and provide supervision for all planning and preparation, facility scheduling and calendaring, technology requests, and

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implementation of all public relations, marketing, branding, and communications)

- **Co-Director/Revenue** (Receives and disburses all monies indicated in the budget)
- **Coordinators:** (replaces Members at Large to represent each major division of the program and special expertise)
 - **Guard Coordinator** (Guides and coordinates the color guard area)
 - **Percussion Coordinator** (Guides and coordinates the percussion area)
 - **Volunteer Coordinator** (Collects and Manages all data regarding Volunteer service)
 - **Communications Coordinator** (Website/E-mail/News/Social Media)
 - **Chaperone Coordinator** (Football games, rehearsals, mini-camps, contest, festivals, and other events requiring supervision, etc.)
 - **Travel Coordinator** (Local, Regional, National travel to competitions and performances, spring trips, etc.)
- **Project Team Leaders** (Lead organizer and manager for each event, project or fund raiser)

It is recommended that all positions be limited to one-year terms, with the ability to serve two consecutive terms. If the need arises for a person to serve a third term, the board of directors can vote to suspend the bylaws to accommodate the need (see Roberts Rules of Order). Note, with the co-director system indicated above, volunteers teaming or pairing roles for two consecutive terms allows for staging the years of service so that one of the co-officers has served in each capacity for one year while electing a new person to the other slot of the co-officer role. This rotation allows one volunteer to train and aid a new person for a year before they serve their second term. Additionally,

References:

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- Robert, H. M., Robert, S. C., & Honemann, D. H. (2011). *Robert's rules of order newly revised*. Da Capo Press.
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the use of co-officers allows the fulfillment of the role with greater success and less stress on each volunteer. ***Human nature creates a more willing response to take on additional responsibility if they know they have someone to help them!*** It is significantly easier to enlist volunteer help under this structure compared to that of the more traditional committee structure. The size of the organization should be the catalyst for how many “pieces of the puzzle” or different roles in the organizational chart are necessary. Customizable digital resources are available in *Strategic Plans for a Successful Booster Club* (Vandewalker, 2016b) providing clearly delineated role descriptions for how a growing, developing, or maximized program might facilitate an accelerated organizational chart.

This business-based booster structure takes pressure off directors to do what they do best—teach students how to make music and cast a vision for the program. Additionally, it allows volunteers to specifically know their roles and empowers them to take control of their area of expertise generating a positive, healthy and productive environment for the music program. In today's accelerated world, there is no need for decorative booster organizations. The need is for smart and effective volunteer organizations functioning as small businesses. The model described will serve you well in today's accelerated market place.

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