



COMMUNITY BUILDER

January 20, 2023, Volume 15, Issue 2

Five Traits of Great Board Members

In our industry, we often discuss the roles of board members and the traits that contribute to a healthy board climate. Each individual must understand the requirements of the position held, the impact of personal behavior in making keen business decisions for an association, and how having traits that contribute to a healthy board environment is vital to succeeding financially and operationally. Many characteristics come to mind, but, in my experience, none are more critical than these five:



1. **Organization** – As a board member, preparing for a meeting where the board intends to discuss the association's business and make decisions is extremely important. Board members can do their due diligence to prepare for the upcoming discussions by reviewing the finances, proposals, vendors, and other items. Generally, board members who take the time to prepare ahead of time find that their meetings are more efficient and effective. I believe we can all agree it is always a great thing to leave a meeting feeling accomplished.
2. **Simplicity** – It is not uncommon to witness board members inadvertently making it difficult for themselves and the association's homeowners by trying to create an operational structure that differs from what is outlined in the governing documents. This is usually coming from a good place with the best intentions. However, by doing so, it can lead to confusion and inconsistency. Keeping the structure simple by following the provisions in the governing documents is the best practice.
3. **Respect** – There will be times when board members disagree, but the ability to remain professional and respectful to one another is of utmost importance. When board members are unwavering in this endeavor, they make great strides toward keeping the lines of communication open to discuss what is necessary for making decisions that are in the association's best interest. Additionally, boards who commit to mutual respect and understanding can better act as a

team and present their decisions and the direction of the community as a united front.

4. **Communication** – It is probably no surprise to see this included on the list; however, the ability to communicate effectively is paramount to the success of all boards of directors. Communication encompasses many things but primarily connecting with others by listening intently before speaking and writing clearly and concisely are valuable to working together as a board.
5. **Trust** – Without a foundation of trust, any team is destined to be dysfunctional. The board must commit to working as a team, which may involve uncomfortable conversations and stepping out of the comfort zone. And, by displaying an intentional effort to be honest, reliable, and open to others' input, an environment where everyone believes the team is acting in good faith and capable of making fair and objective decisions is created.

As a leader in the community association industry, Sentry Management values all of the positive traits that lead to being a great board member. We mirror these traits ourselves as we help guide board members to create a solid decision-making foundation and an environment of ongoing operational progress that benefits the homeowners and the association. Our goal is to nurture communities we are all proud to call home, and we help pave the path to that end by fostering these five positive traits in the boards we have the privilege to serve.

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Nicole Bennetson
Division President Sarasota
Sentry Management, Inc.

Nicole is the Division President of the Sentry Sarasota, Florida office. She began her career in association management in 2010 and joined the Sentry Management team in 2013 as a Community Association Manager.



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