

News Release

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Survey Shines New Light on Nonprofit Board Engagement

Findings reveal highly engaged board members have a very different experience than their colleagues

(Los Angeles) A new national survey of more than 1,200 nonprofit board members, [Engaged and On Board 2015](#), makes clear that nonprofit leaders have significant opportunities to improve the engagement of their board members and highlights important strategies they can use to do so.

Conducted by 2B Communications, Engaged and Onboard 2015 offers a fresh look at board engagement through the lens of those board members who are highly involved.

In a wake-up call for the nonprofit sector, the survey finds less than half of board members are likely to actively recommend serving on their own board to friends or colleagues. The study also makes clear that highly engaged board members are having a very different experience than their less enthused colleagues. And by examining the differences in their views about the benefits of board membership and the culture and practices of their boards, the survey findings offer insight and guidance to nonprofit leaders as they work to heighten the engagement and effectiveness of their board members.

One of the most powerful findings for nonprofit leaders to consider is that there were no differences in the demographics of engaged and non-engaged respondents. "This finding reinforces what we've seen time and again: engagement to a large degree is situational. You can have people who are natural 'engagers' choose to sit on the sidelines when they are serving on a board that doesn't address their personal motivations or make healthy board practices a priority," says Elizabeth Bailey, co-founder and principal of 2B Communications.

2B Communications applied an established metric developed by the Bain Consulting Group to categorize survey respondents as highly engaged "Promoters," "Passives," who are generally satisfied but unlikely to actively recommend; and "Detractors," who are likely to be critical or negative about their board.

2B Communications is an independent consulting firm that specializes in serving the social-change sector.

A Sample of Key Findings

Key comparisons between highly engaged nonprofit board members and those who are less engaged:

- More than twice the number of highly engaged board members are likely to say they **gained new skills** through their board service (57% vs. 26%)
- Two-thirds of highly engaged members view their boards as "excellent" in terms of **clarity of board roles and responsibilities** compared to just over a third of less engaged members (66% vs 37%)
- More than half of highly engaged members have **participated in strategic planning** for their organization versus less than one third of their counterparts (56% vs. 32%)
- The majority of highly engaged board members serve on boards that have **excellent working relationships with staff** compared with only a quarter of less engaged members (58% vs 25%)
- Nearly three-quarters of highly engaged board members gave **top ratings to their board culture** compared with fewer than half of less engaged members (71% vs. 42%)

[View complete survey at 2bcommunications.com](#)