



— HELP LEAD A NONPROFIT TO SUCCESS

ELIZABETH BAILEY, BE/OREGON STATE, IS CO-FOUNDER AND PRINCIPAL OF 2B COMMUNICATIONS, A CONSULTING FIRM WORKING TO HELP ORGANIZATIONS DO MORE GOOD IN THE WORLD. SHE HAS DEVELOPED AND LED BOARD LEADERSHIP, RESEARCH, STRATEGIC GROWTH PLANNING, BRANDING, AND COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS FOR HUNDREDS OF NONPROFITS AND ASSOCIATIONS. BAILEY RECENTLY CO-AUTHORED *STEP UP! HOW TO BE AN EXCELLENT NONPROFIT BOARD MEMBER*. MORE INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT 2BCOMMUNICATIONS.COM.

BY LISA GEBKEN THIBAUT, EI/WESTMINSTER

As Thetas, we're well-versed in the importance of community service and our responsibility to be both doers and leaders. As we gain experience and expertise in our volunteer roles, serving on a nonprofit board can be an opportunity to put our values into action at a higher level. It can also be an opportunity to gain skills; meet engaged, knowledgeable people; and make a significant difference in whether a nonprofit is just another worthy cause or a powerful force for good.

While the five tips below specifically address successful experience at the board level, they can also enhance volunteering at a less visible level, as well as prove useful in career leadership positions.

Make sure the fit is right. Don't just automatically say "Yes" (for a change!). Before you commit, do some research about the organization and get a clear picture of what the expectations are for board members. If possible, meet and talk with other board members and make sure it is a cause and a group you can fully support.

Dive into the strategic planning process. Contrary to what you might have heard, planning is not an empty exercise. It's actually the best chance you have to help the organization take stock of where it is, address challenges that might be holding it back, and identify the

opportunities that can take it to new heights. And if your organization doesn't have a strategic plan, help put one in place!

Master the art of the elevator speech. Being an ambassador is a core board-member responsibility. And owning your own authentic elevator speech is a powerful tool. So instead of reciting a memorized laundry list of services, go deep and personal. Tell people something amazing you have witnessed or learned to illustrate the magnitude of the problem your nonprofit is addressing and real-life examples of the innovative ways it's changing the game.

Model meaningful giving. Being a great board member is far more than writing a check. Yet there's no denying that donations are the lifeblood of a nonprofit. Making your organization a top charitable priority and giving to your capacity is the best way you can motivate others to do the same.

Stand as one. No matter how lively the debates and heated the discussions are in a board meeting, once a decision is made, it's everybody's job to embrace it and do all they can to move the organization forward on a positive and productive path. ◇



Elizabeth Bailey, BE/Oregon State

Do you know (or know another Theta who knows) how to do something better?

If so, please contact Lisa Thibault, website specialist, lthibault@kappaalphatheta.org. We'd love to hear from you!