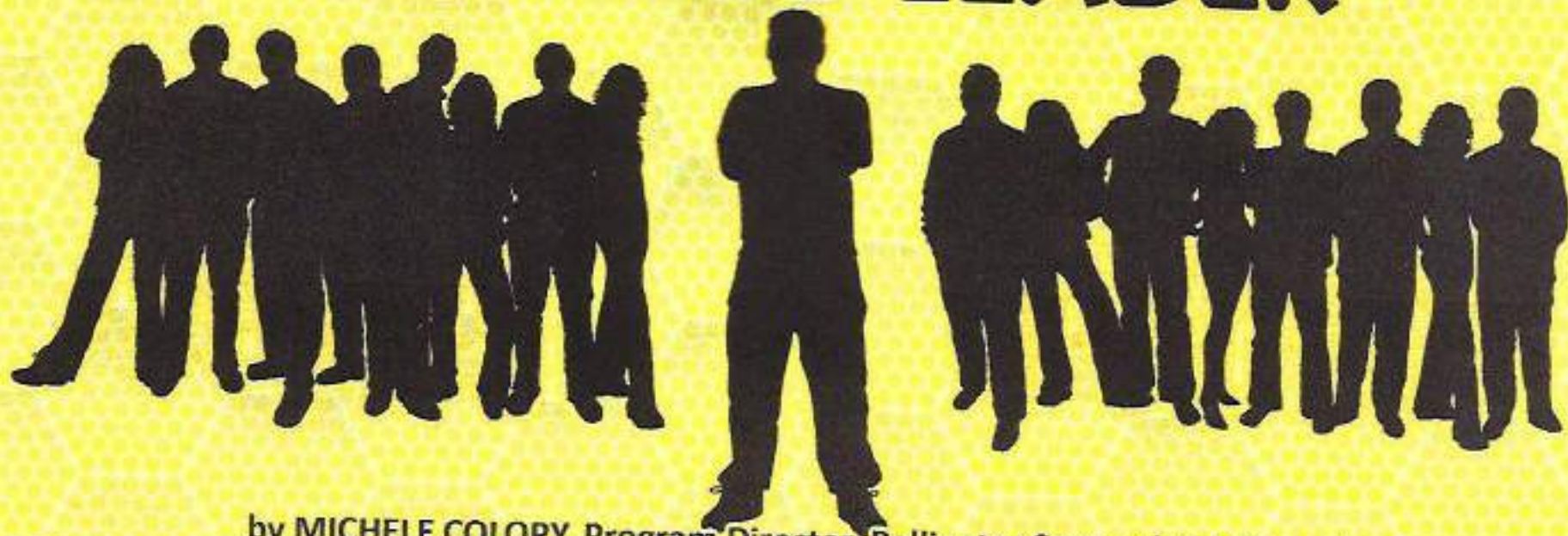


WHAT MAKES A GOOD BEE CLUB LEADER



by MICHELE COLOPY, Program Director, Pollinator Stewardship Council

What Makes a Good Bee Club Leader

The last quarter of the year is election time for some county, state, and national beekeeping associations. No matter when your association installs new leadership, finding those “brave and hardy souls” to lead is important for healthy, strong, and sustainable beekeeping across the U.S. All beekeeping associations need leaders who are forward looking, creative, passionate about the mission, enthusiastic, mature, honest, and competent.

Across more than twenty years working in nonprofits I have observed volunteer boards struggle and falter because of misconceptions of board responsibilities and tasks. Additionally, boards fail, organizations fail when they run the nonprofit “like a business,” where “everyone is like family.” Having grown-up in a “family-run” business, they bring with them the family discord, the family dysfunction, the sibling rivalries. This sometimes means non-family members are treated poorly or as second-cousins-twice-removed! (In summary, no business should be run like a “family!”)

“Good board members recognize that in many ways nonprofits are more similar to the govern-

ment sector than the business sector, in that each involves public service for the common good.”¹ Beekeeping associations serve their members, and the general public providing education and advocacy to their members, and the public about beekeeping. Effective leaders guide the bee club in establishing “a reputation as being socially and financially responsible corporations”² toward “a view of the future and the resources to make headway toward accomplishing that future.”³

Leaders do not simply appear.

How to find those “brave and hardy souls”

Leaders do not simply appear. Some who fancy themselves leaders, in reality often are not. They may be best suited to specific committee tasks, not leading the club, motivating other members, or attending to the detailed tasks of being a board officer. An announcement at the beginning of a club business meeting is an ineffective method to secure new board members. Everyone wants to know their skills are valued, respected, important to the group effort, and that the time serving

on a board will be productive. Recruiting new leaders means engaging in conversations with a prospective recruit for the board, acknowledging their contributions to the beekeeping association, and recognizing their skills and expertise.

Develop a Recruitment Plan

The Enterprise Foundation’s, “Building and Managing a Better Board,” offers a three step plan to recruit board members. **Step 1- Decide on Needs.** The board must determine the needs of the beekeeping association, what skills, knowledge, and experience are needed to replace departing board members, and meet the needs of the club.

Step 2- Find people! Look to your membership. A strong bee club welcomes all of its members, and all of its members will have a belief that they too could be a board member or committee person one day. For this belief to be reality, term limits for the board are important. Make it clear to the membership they are ultimately responsible for the success and growth of the bee club. In recruiting new board members to run for the board look for those members who will satisfy the needs of the bee club. It may behoove the bee club to require board mem-

I. Name & Bio	Rationale	Source of Recruitment
II. Board Contact	Venue	Strategy
III. Contact Date	Nomination Date	Date of Board Vote

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introduce themselves to the board and membership as a nominee for the board.

Great board members continue to learn

Anyone can learn to be a better leader. As beekeeping association boards and members seek and vote for new leaders, it is every association member's responsibility to ensure the bee club is in good hands. The National Council of Nonprofits presents these characteristics of board members in a chart.

Current board leaders can always tweak their own skills, knowledge, and most importantly recognize when they or the organization need outside help. All board members, current and newly elected, must understand their duty of care, duty of loyalty, and duty of obedience to the mission of the bee club. These are the minimum requirements of "OK" board members. To strengthen the nonprofit, skills need to be developed to help the beekeeping association achieve its mission. Great board members "serve, strengthen, and transform the entire community"⁴. When running for a bee club board position or a committee, a great board member wants to serve the common good first.

A competent board knows when it needs help from experts

Where to find board guidance

The National Council of Nonprofits has a listing of nonprofit councils in each state whose purpose is to provide guidance and support to nonprofits, no matter their revenue levels, and often for free or at a greatly reduced rate (<https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/find-your-state-association>). Beekeeping associations can seek "outside" assistance to guide them in strategic planning, board training, accounting, conference planning, and grant writing. A competent board knows when it needs help from experts, as no board will have all the experts it may need at any given time. Whether it is a bee club of fifty members, a state beekeeping association of eight hundred members, or a national beekeeping association, nonprofit development,

bers serve on a committee first before running for a board position. Working on a committee is a great way to determine how someone works in a group, how they assist others, are they open to new ideas, are they welcoming of new ideas, and do they show good judgment. In this process the board or nominating committee can begin to formulate a list of prospective candidates.

Step 3- Make the Plan! As candidates for open board positions are determined, the personal contact by the nominating committee is key to ensuring the needs of the beekeeping association will be met by the skills and experience of the prospective candidate. The nominating committee should interview each candidate and compile a list of skills, ideas, passion, and commitment the candidate will provide.

Prospective candidates should have the opportunity to introduce themselves to the membership, and share with the membership why they want to serve on the board, the skills they bring to the board, their beekeeping experience, and the vision they have for the bee club.

The Enterprise Foundation offers a Board Recruitment Planning Form, for those who like the simplicity of forms. The planning form has three parts: determine your prospective board members, why they would be good for the board, and their contact with the board. The second part of the plan defines who on the current board or nominating committee will contact the prospective board member, and the approach taken to encourage them to run for the board. The third part of the recruitment plan is to schedule time for the prospect to

Characteristics	Weak Members	OK Members	Good Members	Great Members
What they say	"I'll look you up on my return!"	"What do I have to do?"	"How may I help?"	"Thanks for the opportunity."
What they add	dead weight	basic	dedication	passion
What they take	valuable gift	instructions	role seriously	time to care
How they look	"cool"	regular	eager	unassuming
What they read	TV Guide	Time magazine	books	Robert Greenleaf
Whom they serve	themselves	their obligations	the nonprofit	the community

Make A Difference, Originally presented September 22, 2009 at the Nonprofit Risk Management Center's 2009 Risk Management and Finance Summit for Nonprofits, National Council of Nonprofits. Robert Greenleaf is the founder of the modern Servant leadership movement.

guidance, and tools are available, for free or contract service, in nonprofit beekeeping associations. Most importantly, if a bee club leader or the board members have a question, seek the answer from your state nonprofit association. Great leaders ask questions in order to find solutions.

A great board welcomes diversity in leaders, membership, ideas, and solutions.

Respecting organizational history

When new board members are elected, it is helpful to hold a meeting of the previous board members with the newly elected board members to share history, the "how to's" of tasks, contacts, etc. Board officers especially should have a booklet of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for their position. Hold a combined board meeting a month after your beekeeping association elections. The previous board members should act in an advisory and information role only at this meeting, letting the new board leaders take the lead. At this meeting of the old and new boards, it is also a good time to discuss the responsibilities of each board member to the nonprofit as they are all here to serve the members, not themselves, their own bee business, or queen-producing collaborative, or even their beekeeping management style. All of the board members were elected to represent and serve the membership of the beekeeping association.

An effective beekeeping association board "needs to be able to identify issues, assess what is working and what is not, and be truthful enough to state when mistakes are made."⁵ If disputes arise, this may be the time to bring in a facilitator for board training or strategic

planning. Again, state councils of nonprofits may be able to provide a facilitator.

A great board welcomes diversity in leaders, membership, ideas, and solutions. A great board is the example of responsibility, a strong work ethic, and most importantly a "spirit of appreciation."⁶ "Showing appreciation for the efforts of [co-volunteers] is a quality necessary to the functioning of a successful team. Encourage your [fellow volunteers] to express their thankfulness to their fellow team members on a consistent basis. Lead the way as [board members], giving both verbal and tangible rewards to a hardworking team."⁷

It is up to the membership to ensure the people they elect are servant-leaders for the beekeeping association. "The primary mission of leadership in a non-profit is to focus laser-like attention throughout the organization on the greater good that the organization is capable of providing, and then to marshal the energy and resources necessary to make it happen."⁸

Resources for Board Leaders

^{1,2,3,4} How to Be a Great Nonprofit Board Member, National Council of Nonprofits, 2009, <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/sites/default/files/documents/How%20to%20be%20a%20Great%20Board%20Member.pdf>

^{5,6,7} What Are the Top 10 Qualities to Build a Successful Work Team? by Lisa Mooney, *Small Business Chron* <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/top-10-qualities-build-successful-work-team-25444.html>

⁸ Leaders Who Make A Difference: Essential Strategies for Meeting the Nonprofit

Challenge, Bert Nanus and Stephen M. Dobbs, Jossey Bass, 1999 http://www.leadershipforattorneys.org/articles/3-ERubenstein_LeadersWhoMakeADifference.pdf



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