

Sport Organizations Governance & Management

Swim Ontario 2010 AGM

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Purpose

- This workshop is about exploring governance and administrative models that will increase effectiveness and decrease conflicts where, and if, they exist.
- In this session we will not solve swim club issues and challenges; but discuss an effective process to identify and deal with those issues and challenges.
- Given the right people, sharing the workload, listening to and respecting each other, even a poorly thought out model will work.

Topics

- Learning from others – the experience of SNC & Provincial Sporting Organizations, resources available.
- Sport Club Governance – Best Practice
- Sport Club Administration - Challenges

LEARNING FROM OTHERS

SNC Pre Governance Reform

- Diminishing performance leading up to and including the 2004 Olympics.
- Several failed attempts prior to 2004 to breath life into the organization; always falling short of a governance review.
- Internal finger-pointing and a four-year period without a Director General
- Publicly articulated loss of confidence in Swim Canada; by athletes, coaches, clubs, funders and politicians

SNC Governance Reform

- In 2003 the Board sought an independent review, accepted responsibility for the problems and adopted the recommendations for change.
- Reduced the Board from 24, mostly representative, to 7 elected members.
- Reframed the Boards relationship with our PSOs, Coaches, National Team and staff.
- Revised all of the existing policies and procedures.
- Hired and enabled a CEO.
- Engaged stakeholders in an extensive strategic planning exercise.

Key Lessons Since Reform

- It takes constant self-examination and humility to change behaviour and nurture leadership.
- Engaging a mentor(s) helps Boards sustain the process of change. The Board has used the SNC Policy and Governance Committee for this purpose; where many of the members were part of the Reform engine.
- When trying to change a culture you have to re-define roles and practices. Sometimes you have to change people.
- Your greatest detractors can become your strongest supporters. Very few volunteers have been lost; they are just deployed in different ways.
- The main role of volunteers is to support and advise the CEO and staff in key strategic areas.

Lessons from PSO Reform

- Interviewed 4 provincial swimming organizations that had undergone reform
- The conclusions are consistent with the literature and experience of most high functioning organizations.
- BC, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and NB

Lessons from PSO Reform

Drivers of Change

- A leader or staff member, with influence, who recognizes the need
- Desire to improve performance
- Recognition that the organization is not improving its results
- Change in leadership or change in staff prompts a need for clarity and shared purpose
- Good governance attracts quality staff and volunteers. If it is hard to attract talent, then the governance model may be a factor
- Stakeholders do not see value in the investment that they make in the organization
- Funders expectations
- Services are dependent on volunteers and quality is not consistent from one volunteer to the next

Lessons from PSO Reform

Barriers to Change

- Rationalizing lack of performance/blaming the system, other factors
- Fear that new leaders will not be willing to step up to the plate
- Not getting buy-in from coaches and clubs; therefore not likely to trust the change
- Dependency on volunteers for operations, and therefore held ransom
- Staff, board members and clubs with influence, resist change that might result in a loss of control
- Fear of loss of regional and/or representative power

Lessons from PSO Reform

Recipe for Change

- Start with a review of performance. If performance is lacking; start with a review of governance.
- Recruit a third party to help you through the process of change. This can be a paid consultant, a volunteer or a resource from another organization.
- Engage stakeholders (coaches, clubs, community partners and government) in the review and development of organization structure. Their support is needed to make change work, and they have a view from the outside.
- Review Bylaws and revise based on current best practice. Clarify the role of the Board and the number and qualifications of Board members to undertake that role.
- Based on bylaws, review the membership of the Board and make the necessary changes. It is important that all Board members clearly understand their role.
- Based on the bylaws, review the role of the most senior staff position. Make it clear what they have control of and what the expectations for performance are. All other staff should report to this position and not to the Board or a volunteer. Ensure that there is a qualified person in place to assume this role.
- Based on the Bylaws, review or develop policy statements that relate to the direction and purpose of the organization.

SWIM CLUB GOVERNANCE

Seven Sins of Board Dysfunction

- Practicing a Trade Without a License
- Squeaky Wheel
- Culture of Secrecy
- Peter Principle
- You Get What You Pay For
- Head in the Sand Mentality
- The Burden of Tradition

Clarify Roles

Governance

- Set direction
- Set policy
- Employ a Head Coach
- Set a budget
- Delegate responsibility
- Ensure accountability
- Manage risk
- Develop relationships

Operational

- Register swimmers
- Communicate to stakeholders
- Raise funds
- Hire staff
- Supervise staff
- Pay staff
- Negotiate pool rental
- Recruit and train officials

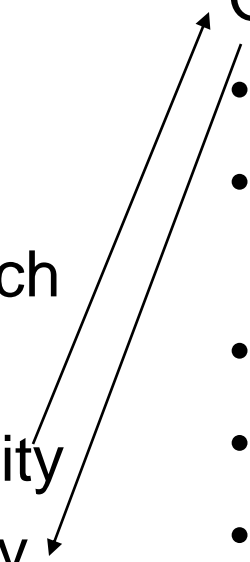
Separating Roles

Governance (Board)

- Set direction
- Set policy
- Employ a Head Coach
- Set a budget
- Delegate responsibility
- Ensure accountability
- Manage risk
- Develop relationships

Operational (Delegated)

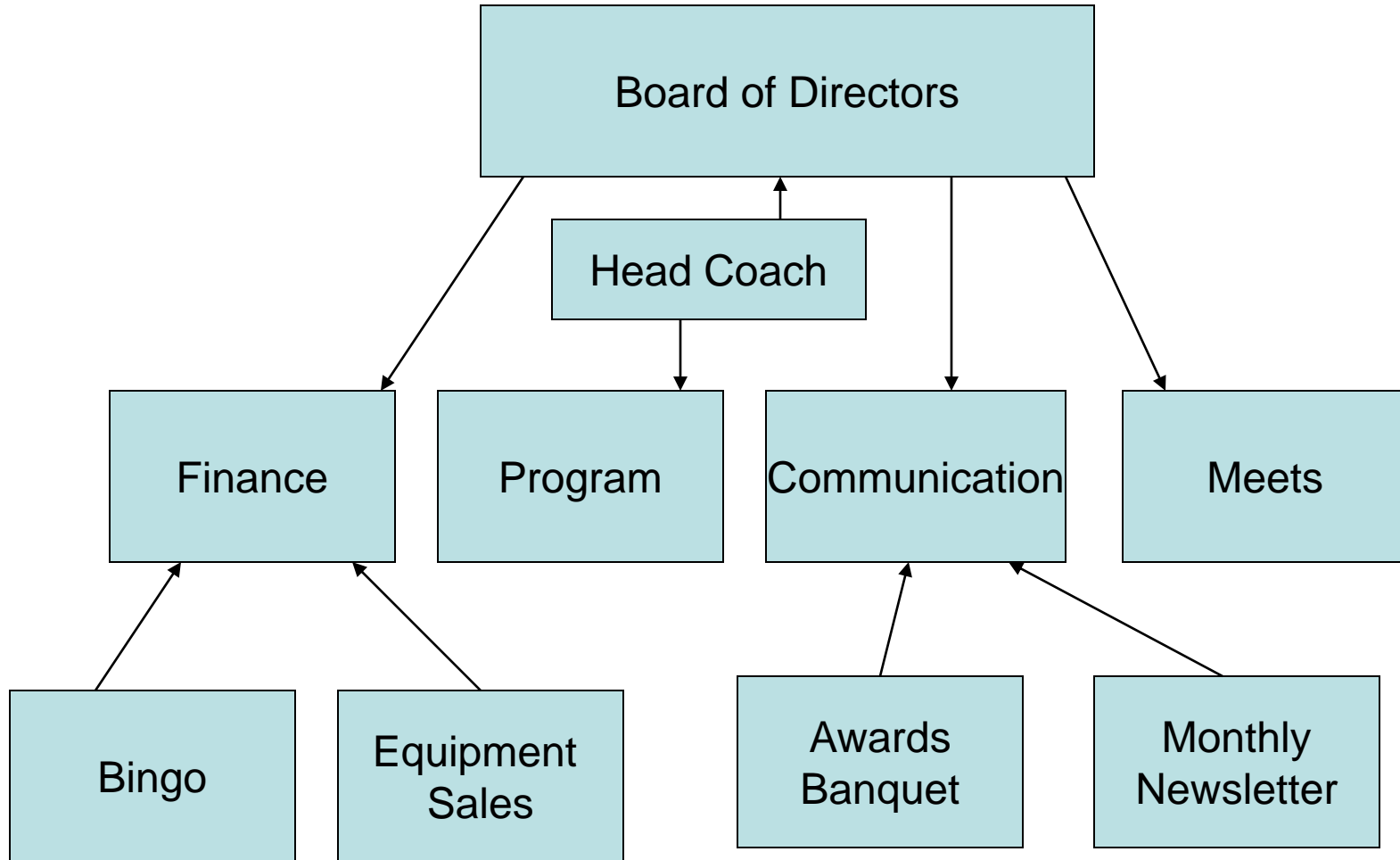
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An Effective Governance Model

- Focuses the work of the Board, as a group, on governance level activities.
- Delegates operational tasks to individuals and/or committees
 - Push the work down, involve more people
 - Give authority and accountability to smaller groups or individuals
 - Avoid letting the Board get drawn into discussion and decisions that a smaller group can handle

ABC Swim Club (Example)



Issue # 1

The equipment manager has lost his enthusiasm and focus; probably for some very good reason. Parents are complaining about lack of availability, bills are not issued, cheques are collecting somewhere, stock is low.

Whose problem is this?

What can they do?

Issue # 2

A group of swimmers, as happens from time to time, got carried away with tossing water bottles in a change room (not their changeroom of course) and the host club has a bill for a broken mirror to pay and feelings to be addressed. Two of the swimmers involved have parents on the Board.

Whose problem is it?

What can they do?

The Board Meeting

Identify the agenda items from your last Board meeting.

- Separate out the items that were related to governance versus operations.
- Move the operational items to committee work.
- Do not do committee work at the Board meeting; too many voices, poor use of time and a distraction from the real business of the Board.

Sample Board Agenda

1. Head Coaches Report
2. Finance Committee Report
3. Program Committee Report
4. Communication Committee Report
5. Meets Committee Report
6. Next Meeting

Any business from these reports should be related to policy; not committee work.

Finance Committee Report

1. Highlights of last committee meeting:
 - Status of revenues and expenses
 - Report of poinsettia sales
 - Information on changes to bingo license
 - Report on problems and actions related to equipment manager.
2. Revised policy on late payment of meet fees for Board approval.
3. Receive input from Board on any new issues and take issues away.
4. Priorities for next meeting.

Role of the Board Chair

1. Running effective Board meetings.
2. Recruiting leaders.
3. Supporting leaders through advice and encouragement.
4. Dealing with ineffective leaders.
5. Representation.

Biggest mistake – taking on any other job!

The Head Coach and Board Meetings

- There seems to be some debate about the appropriateness of the Head Coaches presence at Board meetings
- Head Coach is the person, after the Board Chair, who should be the most informed of the clubs activities.
- If it is not appropriate for the Head Coach to attend Board meetings, then the Board is spending time on the wrong items of business.
- Only agenda item for which the Head Coach should be excused is for the report and acceptance of the Head Coach's annual performance review – a performance review that should be shared with the Head Coach

Making a Change

Put the Structure, Roles and Action in Writing

- Constitution
- Roles and Responsibilities
- History and Training
- Take and distribute minutes

Pick a Strong and Ruthless Leader

- Delegation
- Ensuring accountability
- Thick Skin

Club Resources

- Club Excellence www.clubexcellence.com
- USA Swimming www.usaswimming.org
- Swim Canada www.swimming.ca
- Centre for Sport and Law – multiple resources <http://www.sportlaw.ca/>
- Sport Alliance of Ontario – “Good Policy; Good Governance”
<http://www.sportalliance.com/Content/Sport%20Safety/Sport%20Governance%20Book.asp>

CLUB ADMINISTRATION

Program Versus Administration

- It is important to separate out what the Head Coach is responsible for, what he/she needs to be involved in, and what he/she should never be burdened with.

Administration Assignments

- There are many options and a combination often works best:
 - Administrative Staff do it all
 - Administrative staff oversee it all
 - Administrative volunteers do it all
 - Board members oversee it all
- Success depends on good leadership and messaging to members

Organizing People

- Meetings, meetings, meetings:
 - During Saturday morning practice
 - Before the Board meeting
 - Teleconference
 - Other suggestions
- Recruiting and motivating
- Rome was not built in a day, and not everyone is going to play!

Learning from Others

- Challenges and solutions:

Shamelessly Steal

- Soccer Ontario
 - Club Excellence Program
 - Aurora Youth Soccer Club
 - Pickering Soccer Club

Summary