

# 10 Things the Board Should Do to Support Association Strategy

1. Ensure that the association's priorities are clearly defined and agreed upon using a sound decision-making process. Recognize that strategy follows objectives. The concentration decision is arguably the board's most important contribution.
2. Participate in establishing performance measurements for priority goal or objective. Once the direction is set and the areas for concentration defined, the board must hold the CEO and itself accountable for follow-through and execution. Performance measurements are essential. Everybody needs to know how the association is doing in order to measure progress. Everybody needs to know how the association is keeping score.
3. Hold the CEO accountable for achieving established performance measures.
4. Participate in crafting strategy, but remember that once it is defined, the CEO owns it until it needs an overhaul.
5. Constructively challenge emerging strategy, asking difficult questions, both of themselves and of the CEO. One of the best ways for a director to contribute is to ask good questions.
6. Support strategy by approving budgets, necessary investments, and other resources allocations. A basic function of a board is to ensure that the organization has adequate operating resources. Unfunded mandates are irresponsible. Boards need to provide the resources required or scale back programs to match the resources.
7. Complete an annual assessment with the CEO and, if appropriate, senior staff of performance in the association's adoption of the five strategies for competitiveness along with gains made in the technology area.
8. Create a sense of urgency around the strategy implementation. A sense of urgency is often lacking in change or transformation efforts, but the road to relevance is a fast track. Every day of delay puts the association further behind.
9. Avoid activities or directives that divert the association from its strategic direction. Many boards are inclined to want to do it all instead of limiting activities. The competitive environment is very unkind to the association that doesn't exercise restraint and self-control.
10. Direct committees and task forces to align their work with the strategies. Committee chairs can have minds of their own. Since they don't have to worry about anything but their committee, they can be prone to resist direction, preferring to go their own way with their own ideas. Sometimes this can produce remarkable results. But in our experience, it rarely does. Boards must give committees tight charges consistent with the association's strategic direction. When possible, boards should use the task force model with a specific charge and a limited time for achieving the best results with today's volunteers. This tactic not only responds to the time pressures faced by members but also increases the chances of getting tightly focused proposals and suggestions