

Heartland Veterinary Conference

The Do's & Don'ts of Volunteer Leadership

J. Clarke Price, FASAE, CAE

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What we'll cover today

- The top issues facing volunteer leaders today
- The optimal volunteer/staff relationship
- The importance of the strategic planning process & the plan itself
- Do's & don'ts to keep in mind



The Top Issues Facing Volunteer Leaders Today

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The top issues facing volunteer leaders today

- Fuzzy direction
- Competition for valuable time
- Lack of volunteer engagement
- Limited resources
- The challenge of reacting to a changing environment
- Risk tolerance



The top issues facing volunteer leaders today

Fuzzy direction from above

- Is the assignment clear?
- Is the budget understood?
- Do committees understand how they fit into the grand plan?
- Has the importance of driving the strategic plan been emphasized?
- Is the reporting pipeline understood?



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MEETINGS

NONE OF US IS AS DUMB AS ALL OF US.

The top issues facing volunteer leaders today

Competition for valuable time & attention

- You're competing against:
 - Family
 - Work
 - Personal interests
- Don't forget those handheld devices that suck up everyone's attention!



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The top issues facing volunteer leaders today

Lack of volunteer engagement

- Everyone is busy & stressed
- The challenge of capturing the imagination
- Do conference call meetings work?
 - What are they really doing on the call?
- *“I’ll only work on what’s important to me”*
- The dreaded multi-tasker



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- Do conference call meetings work?
 - What are they really doing on the call?
- *“I’ll only work on what’s important to me”*
- The dreaded multi-tasker





MULTITASKING

THE ART OF DOING TWICE AS MUCH AS YOU SHOULD
HALF AS WELL AS YOU COULD.

The top issues facing volunteer leaders today

Limited resources

- We're in a time of pressure on:
 - Budgets
 - Manpower
 - Precious time
- The challenge of getting the job done!
- Leaders have to make sure the task isn't impossible!



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The top issues facing volunteer leaders today

- The challenge of reacting to a changing environment
- How do you evaluate changes?
- Who owns keeping their finger on the pulse of the changing environment?
- How long do you have to evaluate new challenges & reprioritize?
- The challenge of reacting to change in a timely & meaningful way



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The top issues facing volunteer leaders today

Risk tolerance is changing

- The challenge of the leader who says *“no surprises on my watch”*
- The challenge of the *“it absolutely, positively has to be right”* mindset!
- Managing the need for innovation in an era of low risk tolerance is critical



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The top issues facing volunteer leaders today

It's always better to try a swan dive & deliver a colossal belly flop than to step timidly off the board while holding your nose.

» Tom Peters



The Optimal Volunteer/Staff Relationship

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The optimal volunteer/staff relationship

- Who's in charge?
- The challenge of “member led & staff driven”
- The importance of trust
- Tips when you're working with staff
 - Candor
 - Set expectations on your preferences
 - Ask for their opinion & advice



The optimal volunteer/staff relationship

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The Importance of the Strategic Planning Process & the Plan

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“What if we don’t change at all ...
and something magical just happens?”

The strategic planning process & the plan

- The plan should guide current activities & priorities
- The plan should be a living document that recognizes the changing environment
- What's the right horizon for your plan?
- Who develops the plan?
 - The Board vs. a dedicated committee
 - How do committees influence the plan?



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The strategic planning process & the plan

- Developing the plan vs. getting into the weeds of how it gets done
- Who owns management of the plan?
- Dealing with extraneous priorities that impact advancing the plan
- The plan should guide the budget
- Deadline targets should be realistic
- The plan's scope should be reasonable



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Do's & Don'ts To Keep In Mind

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Do's & don'ts to keep in mind

- DO be consistent
- DO have a plan of priorities & action
- DO maintain open communication up & down the line
- DO engage the leaders below you in key decisions
- DO ask questions
- DO work to cultivate leaders to follow you



Do's & don'ts to keep in mind

- DO constantly assess your effectiveness as a leader
- DO commit yourself to make a difference
- DO come to meetings prepared
 - Read the advance materials
 - Think about the issues
 - Form opinions (but be prepared to change your mind)



Do's & don'ts to keep in mind

- DON'T waste time
- DON'T avoid controversy & risk
- DON'T drive your own agenda
 - Facilitate & channel discussion without dominating the conversation
 - Listen more than you talk!
- DON'T minimize resistance to change
- DON'T be unprepared!



Do's & don'ts to keep in mind

- DON'T hesitate to percolate ideas up the line
- DON'T shortcut the strategic plan
- DON'T hesitate to be a change agent
- DON'T forget to have fun as a leader!
 - There are challenges, but there's personal growth too!



Do's & don'ts to keep in mind

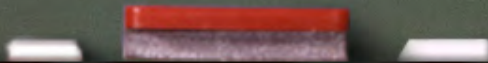
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My Gift to You!



My Gift to You!

Community Chest

**GET OUT
OF JAIL, FREE**



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Questions, Comments, Observations

J. Clarke Price, FASAE, CAE

clarke@clarkeprice.com



