

## **Eight Golden Rules for Boards of Directors**

Serving on a board of directors is not a job for the timid. Board members must interface with their membership, management team, association vendors and other members of the public pragmatically at all times.

Following are my personal “Eight Golden Rules” to assist you with achieving that goal:

1. Always be a straight shooter. People admire this trait in other human beings more than almost every other characteristic. Those who quibble or, at worst, lie about something are destined for failure. Effective and respected board members always practice this principle.
2. Praise in public; criticize in private. Never publicly ridicule nor scold someone. “Someone” is any of the many, many people that you interface with as a board member. People who rebuke in public are neither respected nor admired. When I was an officer in the military, I never, ever witnessed someone being admonished publicly (except in “boot camp”!).
3. Read, read, read . . . The world, and certainly the responsibilities of serving on a board of directors, require staying abreast of legal issues, state statutes, finance, insurance, risk management, etc. Unless you keep current on public events and issues, you will suffer in terms of a better understanding how to perform your job as a board member.
4. Emulate the quality traits you see in others. To do so is “OK plagiarism”!
5. What goes around really does come around. Treat others as you would like to be treated. An axiom to this is “never throw anyone under a bus as there will certainly be a bigger bus coming for you”. This rule complements rule # 1 but deserves its own place in the hierarchy of “golden practices”.
6. Never get in a hissing contest with a snake. Those few people in your community who may want to pick a fight are not worthy of your energy and time. When confronted, turn the other cheek as you cannot/will not win battles with those kinds of folks!
7. Don’t put something where you don’t normally put it. If you violate this edict, men, it’s in the back seat of your car, and, ladies it’s in your purse. Life is too short to be looking for stuff when you should know where it is in the first place.
8. Don’t borrow something of value from a friend or a team member. How many times have you violated this important universal rule and damaged or lost that item of value. Be honest! Too many times?

These tips will help you become a better person and, most importantly, a person of influence. Influential people are the most respected in any profession, and this is especially true for the profession of leading community associations as a board member.