



Find the answer here | nonprofitrisk.org



Dueling it Out: Addressing Common Board Conflicts with Confidence

Presented by:

Melanie Herman <i>Executive Director</i> melanie@nonprofitrisk.org	Emily Wilson <i>Staff Intern</i> emily2@nonprofitrisk.org
---	--



Find the answer here | nonprofitrisk.org

Agenda


- Conflict Basics
- Common Conflict Scenarios
- Costly Consequences
- Tips
- Questions & Additional Resources



Find the answer here | nonprofitrisk.org

Conflict Basics



 Nonprofit Risk Management Center
Find the answer here | nonprofitrisk.org


Conflict Basics

- Consensus isn't always the best path for your mission
 - The Duty of Dissent: 'too much harmony can be lethal'
- Conflict brings dynamism to the board room
- Ground rules are essential to productive conflict

 Nonprofit Risk Management Center
Find the answer here | nonprofitrisk.org

Conflict Scenarios




 Nonprofit Risk Management Center
Find the answer here | nonprofitrisk.org

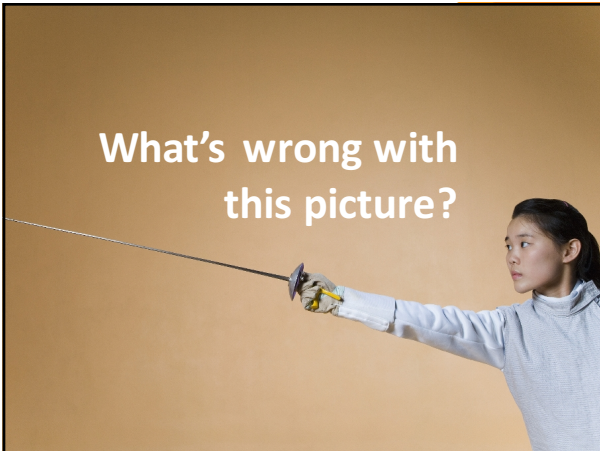
Conflict Scenario #1


To the moon... Or not.

Betty Board Member is jazzed up about next week's board meeting. She's been talking to several fellow board members about a bold new idea: broadening the mission of the nonprofit to serve families across the state (instead of within the county where the organization is located).


Find the answer here | nonprofitrisk.org


- But there are rumors that another group is resolved to fence the mission in, keeping all programs within reach. To fortify her brilliant idea, Betty starts calling her friends on the board. She wants to line up the votes around her 'moonshot' idea before the meeting.




Find the answer here | nonprofitrisk.org


Conflict Scenario #2 Disrespectful Dan

- The board meeting of Do Good Nonprofit is well underway when discussion about next year's budget starts to get a little heated. Naïve Nellie suggests that instead of using vacant office space for storage, perhaps the DG should try leasing the space to another nonprofit. Doing so could be a source of new revenue for DG.

 Nonprofit Risk Management Center
Find the answer here | nonprofitrisk.org


- While other board members seem to be pondering the idea, Disrespectful Dan interjects, "That's the dumbest idea I've heard in a long time. If we get that Family Foundation grant we've applied for we will need that space for the new hires!" After a short, awkward silence, Board Chair Timid Teresa says, "Why don't we move on and take a look at the travel expense line item. Are we in agreement that it looks about right?"

What's wrong with this picture?




Who's culpable?

- Dan
- Nellie
- Teresa
- Everyone else on the board

 Nonprofit Risk Management Center
Find the answer here | nonprofitrisk.org

Conflict Scenario #3
I've Got This

- The departure of a long-time staff member at Noble Nonprofit means that the organization will be able to hire a new team member. Ellen ED meets with her team to discuss the nonprofit's staffing needs. To her surprise, Barry Board Chair sends an email to the entire board and staff offering his firm's executive search services on a pro bono basis to help find a new Director of Marketing.


Find the answer here | nonprofitrisk.org

- Barry's email explains: "That's what we need and my team can find the best person for the job."
- Within minutes of sending the email, members of the board write back expressing thanks. "Wow, such a great offer... please proceed!" says the Treasurer. "We have every confidence you'll find a great new person to work with Ellen," adds the Personnel Committee Chair.



What's wrong with this picture?

Costly Consequences





Find the answer here | nonprofitrisk.org

Conflict's Price Tag

- Productivity losses
- Untimely Departures
- Missing perspectives
- Lost opportunity to learn




Find the answer here | nonprofitrisk.org

Risk Tips




Find the answer here | nonprofitrisk.org

Risk Tip #1

Develop ground rules

- Board orientation
- Code of Conduct
- Role Clarity
- "Ouch" technique




Nonprofit Risk Management Center
Find the answer here | nonprofitrisk.org

Risk Tip #2

Anticipate conflict

- Accountability
- Coaching or feedback
- Willingness (and flexibility) to remove a member




Nonprofit Risk Management Center
Find the answer here | nonprofitrisk.org

Your Scenarios, Tips and Questions

Melanie L. Herman, *Executive Director*
Melanie@nonprofitrisk.org

Emily Wilson, *Staff Intern*
Emily2@nonprofitrisk.org
703.777.3504



Nonprofit Risk Management Center
Find the answer here | nonprofitrisk.org

Additional Resources

- Enforcing Board Member Responsibilities - www.nonprofitrisk.org/library/articles/Enforcing_Board_Member_Responsibilities.shtml
- Dysfunctional Characters Often Sit at the Board Table, www.nonprofitrisk.org/library/articles/Dysfunctional_Characters_Often_Sit_at_the_Board_Table.shtml
- Let's Work Together - The Sweet Sounds of a Board-CEO Partnership - www.nonprofitrisk.org/library/articles/Lets_Work_Together.shtml
