

# BOARD WITH CARE

## Perspectives on Nonprofit Governance



# Welcome

**W**ELCOME TO THE *NONPROFIT QUARTERLY*'S COLLECTION OF OUR READERS' favorite articles on governance. *NPQ* is well known for the quality of its work on this topic—mostly because of the thoughtfulness of writers that have graced us with their contributions. In our estimation, governance is one of the more important topics a nonprofit can explore because governance systems seldom are built to fit each organization and situation as well as they could. Instead, as David Renz comments in his excellent typology, we often “borrow” governance structures, by-laws and all from other organizations. This can cause all kinds of problems, including a misaligned capital structure, the stagnation of program offerings, and a lack of realized accountability to people who are being served.

Articles from this collection have been shared broadly among boards and are what we consider to be “classics.” We begin the collection with Bill Ryan’s article “Problem Boards or Board Problem?” that questions whether the prevalence of malfunctioning boards might be something of an indicator that we are asking the wrong questions. Judy Milleson’s “Who Owns Your Nonprofit” is one of our personal favorites, taking on the concept of the self-perpetuating board. The next two articles, by Gus Newport and Aideen McGinley, are wonderful reflections on what part constituent participation should play in governance. Newport’s article “Why are we Replacing the Furniture When Half the Neighborhood is Missing?” has made its way online around the country from one to another practitioner. It is strong and hopeful and specific.

“Youth Leadership Development: A Space, a Voice and Some Power” is a good segue from the last article in that it is written by the first youth member of the board that Newport referenced in his article. It is a first person account of how participation in that board built him and the neighborhood’s resiliency. This is followed by two more practical articles about the overuse of Robert’s Rules and about director’s and officers insurance.

David Renz weighs in on the typology of boards. We had trouble believing that there wasn’t an article already in existence but we knew we all needed at least a first draft to work from!

We conclude with an article printed first in *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* called “Gateway to 21st Century Governance: Are We Ready?” by myself. It sums up many of the ideas contained in the other articles.

**Ruth McCambridge**  
Editor in Chief

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