

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The board of directors is the governing body of a Sertoma club. It is composed of the elected officers (usually known as the Executive Committee) and directors. The immediate past president of the club typically presides at its meetings as chairman of the board.

It should be noted that a club's success depends upon the commitment of members and leadership, as well as how well the board functions. The board guides the club through the group-thinking process, which should reflect the opinions of all board members. This process works most effectively when each board member:

- States his/her opinion clearly and at the appropriate time.
- Considers the thoughts of all other board members.
- Is willing to modify and pool personal opinions.
- Seeks to keep the discussion moving in a productive fashion.

Board members must be sensitive to community needs. They should actively participate in the club's fundraising activities and its sponsorships. The most effective board members will also be familiar with the club's history, governing documents and budgetary responsibilities.

Responsibilities of the Board

The board is responsible for setting and maintaining club policy. It oversees general operations and business of the club through regular board meetings. While non-board members may attend these meetings and can even comment upon issues discussed by the board, it is only board members who may vote on matters presented for consideration.

The elected board of directors has a variety of responsibilities, including:

- Assisting the president in developing and maintaining the club's plan of action.
- Calling for an audit of the club's books for the previous administrative year.
- Developing, approving and monitoring the club budget.
- Formulating a growth plan for the year.
- Considering the eligibility of proposed members.
- Overseeing club policies.
- Strategic planning for the club.
- Working with and on committees as needed.
- Counseling the president when needed. Ensuring fiscal responsibility and general accountability in all areas.
- Proactively handling club issues.
- Encouraging member involvement.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Club officers (i.e., president, president elect, chairman of the board, secretary, treasurer, vice president(s) and sergeant-at-arms) usually form the executive committee. The actual structure should be defined in the club's bylaw.

The executive committee must work together in harmony and as a unified team. Committee members should meet regularly and at the call of the president. Generally, they will discuss and manage any urgent matters that surface between regular board meetings. The executive committee must be especially vigilant in its fiscal responsibilities and any personnel issues.

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

The immediate past president serves as chairman of the board in most clubs. As such, he/she presides over board meetings. The chairman should make sure the board meets regularly (preferably monthly). In the absence of the chairman of the board, the president will usually preside in his/her place.

The experience and knowledge gained by the chairman are valued resources for the new club president. The chairman of the board and the president will find a need to work closely together, especially when it comes to developing the agenda for board meetings. This unique partnership is important to the club as it offers unity and consistency in leadership and service.

CLUB PRESIDENT

The president is the executive head and presiding officer of the Sertoma club. The president's role is defined in the club's constitution and bylaws. Key roles for a president include:

- Develop and implement a plan of action.
- Have a planned, written and timed agenda for each club meeting.
- Be informed on parliamentary procedure.
- Delegate responsibilities to officers, directors and committee chairpersons.
- Select capable members as committee chairpersons.
- Work closely with the club secretary to ensure all reports are submitted in accordance with the Sertoma calendar.
- Ensure that the club meets its financial obligations promptly.
- Secure adequate representation of the club at National and Regional Conventions.

CLUB PRESIDENT ELECT

Members should choose the president elect at the club's annual election in March,

approximately 14 months prior to assuming the office of president of the following year. This gives the next leader a full year to prepare for the assignment ahead. The president elect's responsibilities are varied; they are typically outlined in the bylaws and at the discretion of the president. Regardless, their primary responsibility is to plan, prepare and get organized for a year of special leadership by learning as much as possible about the club and Sertoma.

CLUB VICE PRESIDENT(S)

Many clubs will have three or more vice presidents. They serve as assistants to the president in the administration of club affairs. Traditionally, each vice president serves as chair of one of the club's three major committees: programs, sponsorships and membership. As such, the vice presidents should work closely with the president to ensure the integrated work of the major committees.

Note: Sertoma's "President, President Elect & Vice President Manual" is available on the Club Resources page of the Member Center at sertoma.org.

CLUB SECRETARY

The secretary is the chief administrative officer of the Sertoma club. Much of the club's success will depend on the secretary. The secretary must plan carefully and act upon all items of business in an expeditious manner. *Note: Sertoma's "Secretary's Manual" is available on the Club Resources page of the Member Center at sertoma.org.*

CLUB TREASURER

The treasurer is one of the most important offices in a Sertoma club. This is the financial advisor of the club and serves as custodian of all club funds. The treasurer must keep complete and accurate financial records for the organization. *Note: Sertoma's "Treasurer's Manual" is available on the Club Resources page of the Member Center at sertoma.org.*

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

It is the responsibility of the sergeant-at-arms to tactfully and diplomatically preserve order and decorum at the club meetings, while promoting a friendly atmosphere. He/she may designate assistants to help carry out this mission.

The sergeant-at-arms also has custody of the recognition badges worn by the members and must see to it that each member is given a badge. At club meetings, this position is responsible for properly greeting, introducing and recognizing special visitors, guests and dignitaries. He or she is also often responsible for club property (e.g., club banner, gavel, gong, etc.). *Note: If a club does not have a sergeant-at-arms, these responsibilities are often administered by the club secretary.*

SERTOMA CLUB & BOARD MEETINGS

CLUB MEETINGS

Meetings depend greatly upon the morale, tone and quality of programs, as well as the presiding ability of the president. Clubs should do everything possible to see that the interest of the membership is maintained during meetings by providing engaging, relevant programming and education.

Fellowship should also be encouraged. New members should be recognized and warmly acknowledged. It's equally important to recognize and engage guests as they may become potential Sertomans. All speakers should be treated graciously.

Club officers have different roles at club meetings. For instance, the president will typically preside over the meeting. The secretary is responsible for keeping the meeting on track. The two of them will work together to put together the meeting agenda. The sergeant-at-arms needs to ensure guests are welcomed and introduced. All members of the board should be present at each club meeting whenever possible.

GUESTS AND PROSPECTS

It is important for the president and other officers to pay special attention to everyone who attends meetings. Make time to welcome visitors, guests and prospective members before the meeting starts. Your warm welcome will add a great deal to the prevailing spirit. Extend the hand of friendship. Remember the importance of an individual's name.

During the meeting, make sure you dedicate a few minutes to properly introducing guests. Have them stand for recognition and lead members in a round of applause. The week following a guest's visit, the vice president of membership should follow-up with a "thanks for coming" note (handwritten when possible), along with a copy of the club newsletter in which his or her name appears. This is an excellent opportunity to send along a membership brochure and invite them to become a Sertoman!

In other words, treat guests and visitors as you would like to be treated if you were in their shoes. Most clubs provide the guest and first-time prospective member with a complimentary meal. Bottom line: make this visit to your club a memorable event.

BOARD MEETINGS

It is the president's responsibility to see that board meetings are held regularly and at times stated by the club bylaws. Practically all business and general operations of the club should be handled at the board meetings, not at club meetings.

Regular meetings of the board of directors are vital to the successful functioning of a Sertoma club. Meetings should be held at a stated time and place and should allow ample time for careful consideration of the business at hand. It is not recommended that board meetings be held just prior to club meetings, as they might overrun the allotted time. However, boards may meet after club meetings to make things easier for directors and officers.

There may also be times when a special meeting needs to be called. They should be carefully utilized and never replace regular board meetings.

In planning for a board meeting, it is essential that the chairman of the board and the club president work together closely. Although the chairman will preside at the meeting, it is important that the club president's programs be given full consideration by the entire board. Committee chairs, if members other than those already serving on the board, should be invited to attend meetings of the board of directors when appropriate, especially when matters pertaining to their committees are to be considered.

EFFECTIVE BOARD MEETING TIPS

- Select a good site for the meeting. The room should be comfortable and well-lit.
- The agenda should be planned well in advance and sent out at least seven business days prior to the meeting. Suggestions from board members and committee chairs should be encouraged.
- A good agenda permits business, reports and questions to be handled in an orderly fashion, but make sure that the agenda is not overcrowded. Study it carefully. Design the time schedule to permit orderly discussion within a reasonable time limitation. It is better to leave two items completely out of a 10-item agenda than to handle all 10 items poorly.
- Isolate your meeting from interruption. This will give everyone a chance to handle pressing matters without destroying the continuity of thought. Consider a "no phones" rule to keep everyone attentive and on task.
- Start the meeting promptly. Adhere to the planned agenda and end on time. Punctuality in a meeting is a mark of mutual respect between attendees and those conducting the meeting.
- If a meal is served in conjunction with the meeting, see that it is served at the stipulated hour; regardless, be sure to call the meeting to order at the agreed upon time.
- Pertinent discussion is an important part of a productive board meeting. One of the most difficult jobs in running a good meeting is to keep it businesslike, adhering to the agenda, and cutting off discussions that do not bear on the item under consideration.
- Seek specific conclusions and objectives. Meetings called for the purpose of general

discussions that do not end in specific goals or clearly defined objectives are a waste of time.

- Everyone should leave the meeting with a particular sense of where each is going, what has been provided to get there, and what is expected.
- Make certain that the secretary keeps accurate minutes and that they are approved prior to the meeting. Be sure that controversial items are carefully entered and that all conclusions and action decisions are clearly spelled out.