



## 10 Tips on How to be a Great Volunteer Board Member for an Association



*Note: These are also helpful to consider when bringing new people into your organization in any capacity.*

Many enthusiastic volunteers accept positions as part of a non-profit board, committee, or community effort such as local chambers of commerce, philanthropic groups, or professional associations.

The learning curve tends to be very high during the first year. They are thrilled that you stepped up, and you are excited to be involved.

Now what?

1. Define your job, and keep your role clear. If roles overlap too much, people assume that the other person is doing the job, and often that means that no one is doing that task.
2. Know where to go to get information on how to do your job well. Ask for resources and ask questions so you don't waste time. Read and know your association's constitution and/or bylaws. They are often just a few pages in length, concisely state your association's mission, and many times define the duties of your office or committee chairmanship (see # 1).
3. Get a good verbal (and, if possible, written) turnover from the person you are replacing. Ask them if it is okay to get advice from them during your term. They will appreciate that you want to do a good job and that you respect them enough to ask for their advice.
4. Prepare a turnover binder /package for the person coming after you. Make notes on:
  - a. What worked well
  - b. What can be improved

10. Realize that people generally get involved as a board member or as a committee member for emotional reasons. Committed people generally have an emotional as well as a social, financial, sports, business, or other bond (such as a Homeowner's Association) to the group, its people, or its mission. When people are part of a board, it is tempting to treat them as employees. Volunteers tend to need more guidance early on, more positive reassurance from the president as well as each other, and more communication to make sure they are fulfilling the mission and guidance of the president.

Please make comments on [my website!](#)

### Mary's Updates

## Would You Celebrate My Birthday Month with Me? Grab My Kindle Book for FREE!



My birthday is in May. Yipee!! And we are celebrating by making the Kindle version of **15 Ways to Grow Your Business in Every Economy FREE** between **May 16 and 19!** Yes, free, nada, zilch, gratis.

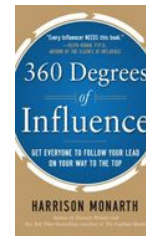
Mark your calendar now and visit [this page between May 16 and 19](#) to grab your copy. :)

### Mary's Book of the Month

- c. What resources you used
- d. Your “go-to” people
- e. Specific lists of people, emails, and phone numbers
- f. What you would do if you had the job another year

Easy way to do this: Have everyone get a color-coded binder at the beginning of their term with the names of the other board members in the clear plastic on the front so they always have points of contacts handy. Give every person a notebook in a matching color and encourage them to keep it handy for board meetings, notes, etc. (I keep mine in my car so I always have it with me.)

- 5. Create a folder on your computer for your association’s information, emails, reports, etc. This makes it easier to create a turnover binder at the end of your term.
- 6. Specifics Actions:
  - a. Respond quickly to the rest of the board. You don’t want to be the person holding up other people.
  - b. Recognize that time is the most precious gift anyone can give, and respect their time.
  - c. Have meetings for a reason, and conclude by assigning tasks and reiterating responsibilities.
  - d. Start meetings on time.
  - e. Conduct meetings by Skype or by phone conversion if you can, particularly when board members are separated by distance.
  - f. Give other people deadlines for when you need actions or information.
  - g. Don’t be late on deadlines to other people.
  - h. Remember that just because other people do something a different way than the way you would do it doesn’t mean it is wrong. If you are tempted to criticize, ask yourself first if you are willing to take over that job.
  - i. When someone criticizes the efforts of your volunteer board or committee, help to get them involved. Assign them a task. Respond “We’d love more help on that. What part of membership would you like to take on? Can we count on you to design our next



**360 Degrees of Influence: Get Everyone to Follow Your Lead on Your Way to the Top**

by Harrison Monarth

The best leaders influence those below, above and around them, including customers and partners. In *360 Degrees of Influence*, Monarth provides advice on how to gain the trust and respect of those around you, regardless of your position in the organizational hierarchy, and how to expand your influence well beyond your immediate environment.

Monarth maintains that success is contingent on being able to know what really motivates people by knowing what they really care about, or empathetic accuracy.

One interesting sections was about how the decisions we make or don’t make define our influence. Making decisions is risky, which explains why many people chose not to decide at all.

Being an effective influencer means being perceived as being socially intelligent. Just as with any opportunity, work to be prepared for either a planned or a chance encounter with a manager or an executive who can impact your project or your career.

**Twitter and Social Media**

Is Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn worth your time? Do you have a strategy? If people read your posts, tweets and updates, will they know what you do? Take a look at your last 10 posts. Read them out loud. Would YOU know what YOU do? If not, get a solid Social media strategy. Lost on how to start one? Head over to Gina Schrek’s Getting Geeky site [here](http://www.gettinggeeky.com) or to Terry Brock at <http://terrybrock.com/>.

**Pet Tip:**

I love taking my dogs with me when the weather is nice, but I leave them at home when attending a summer BBQ at someone else’s house. Some human food and drink may be poisonous to pets. Alcoholic beverages, often mixed with fruit and sweetened during summer months – and therefore more tempting for dogs and cats - can cause intoxication, depression, and comas in pets. Seemingly harmless foods,

marketing postcard?" (I interpret all complaints as a sign of volunteering.)

7. Actively look for opportunities to promote the group and the other members. Remember that you are there for the group, not to promote your own self-interests.
8. Use social media to communicate with the board and members. Most organizations do not fully utilize their Facebook pages or their websites, which is often the first place people look to find information on the organization, its events, or its members.
9. Over-communicate, and use more words rather than less. Remember that this is usually not what these board members do as a paid job, and that they may not understand what they are expected to do. As a board member, keep the rest of the board informed – of where you are in projects, when you are unavailable, and when you need coverage of your job. If you know you cannot do something, letting other people know sooner is better than later.

like macadamia nuts, raisins, grapes, onions, chocolate, and products with the sweetener xylitol, such as gum, can cause seizures, lethargy or even death. Please be careful as we all head to the picnic tables!



Thank You for Reading this Newsletter



Know anyone who is planning an event needing a speaker, or a business that needs a push forward? Please [contact me](#). I greatly appreciate your referrals!

*Mary C. Kelly*

Connect with Mary



---

*Would you like to use any of these articles in your newsletter or website? You can, as long as you include this at the end: With over twenty years of leadership experience and a diverse background leading teams in the U.S. and abroad, Dr. Mary Kelly makes leadership a reality for all levels of an organization. Register for her free newsletters at [www.ProductiveLeaders.com](http://www.ProductiveLeaders.com)*

---