Building Board Diversity

Presenter:
Tony Jenkins
Vice-President, Cultural Competence and Diversity Systems
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida
Florida Demographics

- Largest Haitian Market
- 3rd largest Hispanic Market
- 3rd largest Jewish Market
- 5th largest African-American Market
- 9th largest Asian Market
- Surpassed New York City as the top destination for Puerto Ricans
- 35% of the state is multi-cultural
Demographics

**National**
- Black, Hispanic & Asian - 30%

**Board Representation**
- Black, Hispanic & Asian - 14%

*Source: Booz Allen Hamilton*
Primary Problem

When looking for new board members, trustees tend to seek those from their immediate circles of influence, most of whom look like, think like and experience life just like they do.

Joe Watson, CEO, StrategicHire
If there is a Board that does not have any diversity, either they don’t want to have it or they haven’t looked at all.

*Ira D. Hall, Retired CEO of Utendahl Capital Management*
"Finding diverse board members is a recruiting process that requires both board members and management to get out of their comfort zones."

"It was not easy, and was sometimes frustrating, but it was definitely worth the effort. The organization has literally come alive again."

Ron Lutz, Board Vice-Chairman – Dallas Challenge
Goal

Non-profit board diversity is critical for ensuring that the perspectives of people utilizing programs and services are reflected in the planning and operations of the organization.
Board Responsibilities

• A good board needs a good mix of skills and outlooks to serve its stakeholders, who are its customers, investors, employees, suppliers and business partners.

• As stakeholders become more diverse, companies with board representation that mirrors this diversity are poised to respond to the market’s needs.
Defining Diversity

• The first step toward creating a diverse board is to define what type of “diversity” is needed.

• The word may conjure up a racial and ethnic mix, which is certainly a part of it, but diversity of thought, background, and experience is just as important.
Several Factors Hinder Board Diversity

- Increase in Women in the Workforce
- Not a Priority
- Time Demand
- Increasing Competition
- Comfort Zone
Local Programs to Increase Board Diversity

- African-American, Hispanic and Asian Business Directories
- Chambers of Commerce
- Nonprofit Board Training
- Small Business Owners
- Leadership Orlando, Jacksonville, Tampa…
Advantages of a Diverse Board

• Strengthens a charity’s connection to its constituency and makes the group more effective at carrying out its mission.

• Multiple perspectives will be represented that will build the organizations credibility.

• Better decision making, program development, and service to constituents.
Advantages of a Diverse Board

• The perspectives of people utilizing the services will be reflected in the planning and operations of the organization.

• Open up new donor opportunities
Strategies to Create Diverse and Successful Boards

- Clarify and articulate your board mission, policies and strategies.

- Take advantage of local programs to build relationships and networking opportunities.

- Maintain your own database of potential board members from diverse groups.
Strategies to Create Diverse and Successful Boards

• Utilize a tool and consider best practices from BoardSource – national organization dedicated to increasing the effectiveness of nonprofit organizations. *(Book; Diversity: Who Should Sit At Your Table)*

• Recruit from board-development or training programs. *(Volunteer Involvement Program – Atlanta; more than 720 people placed on over 400 nonprofit boards since 1992.)*