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## 7 important qualities of board members

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Recruiting new members to a nonprofit board can be a difficult task. The board must not only be composed of diverse individuals with a wide range of experiences and skill sets, but members also must have the correct qualities. Those are some pretty strict requirements.

Before you set out to recruit new board members, you must know the qualities that a qualified candidate needs to possess. None of these qualities is optional. The individual must have all of them to be considered. In his book "Making a Difference," Howard Berman lists the seven qualities you need to look for during the recruiting process:

- Integrity: Demonstrating a zero tolerance for unethical behavior, both for themselves and their colleagues.
- Independence: Having no unique business, financial or personal relationships — or hoped-for-relationships — that create even the perception of a conflict of interest.
- Mature Confidence: Speaking out and actively participating in board and committee deliberations.
- Corporate Manners: Recognizing the difference between productively participating in discussions and counter-productively dominating deliberations through the volume or length of comments. Must be able to work with other members to create workable compromises.
- A Sense of Context: Making relevant, informed comments focused on the specific aspect of the issue being considered. Must be able to stay on topic.
- Courage: Willingness to do the right thing/make the right decision even if it is difficult or unpopular (i.e., no fence sitting).
- Commitment: Understanding that being an effective board member requires the time, the heart, and the standards to make the enterprise successful.

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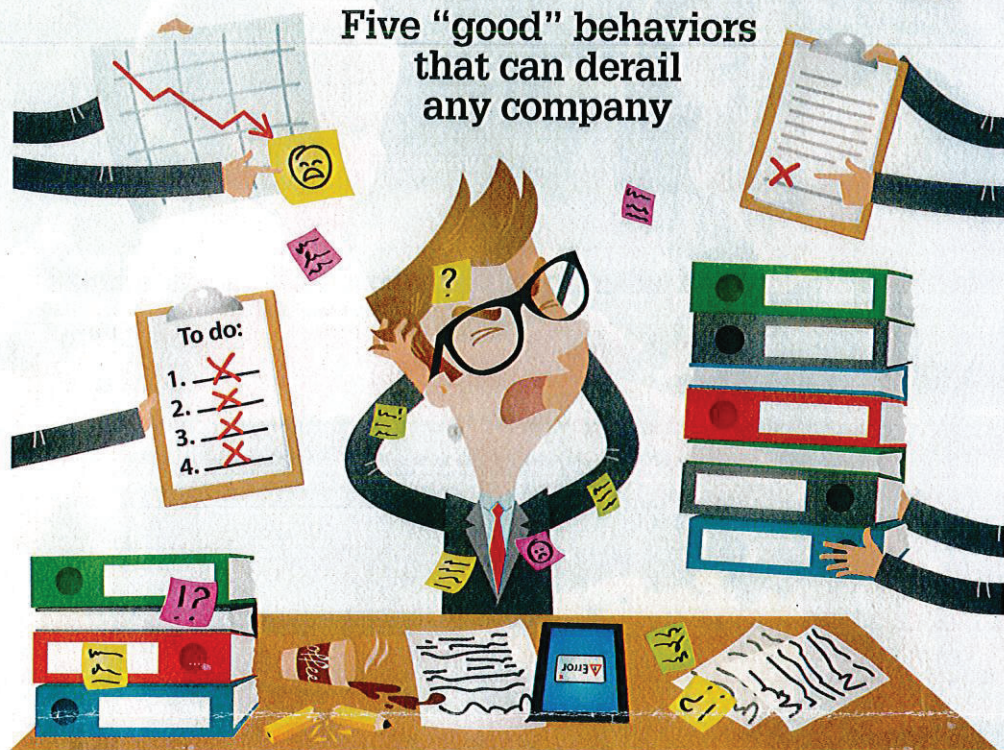
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# Self-sabotage

Five “good” behaviors  
that can derail  
any company



By Robert M. Galford  
and Cary Greene

YOU WORK HARD, and your employees do. But if you're like a lot of small-business owners, you've probably gone home at the end of an extra-long workday more than once asking, "Why aren't we getting more done?" If that's so, it may be because you—and your employees—have become your own worst enemy. Without realizing it, you're all probably engaging in at least a few “good” behaviors that have gone bad.

Here's why we think that might be the case: A few years ago, we came across a declassified U.S. government document called the *Simple Sabotage Field Manual*. Written during World War II by the Office of Strategic Services (a U.S. intelligence agency that was the predecessor of the CIA), the manual was designed to help individuals working behind enemy lines disrupt enemy institutions.

One section of the manual was devoted entirely to making organizations inefficient and ineffective—and the tactics it offered were all good behaviors taken to an extreme. The Allies used these tactics to commit sabotage deliberately. But as we read the manual, we realized that those same tactics are being used unwittingly by a lot of people in organizations today, and their workplaces are suffering as a result.

Here are five sabotage tactics that you and your employees might be engaging in without meaning to, along with antidotes for each. Four of them are straight out of the original manual. The fifth is a tactic we're sure would have been included in the manual if the technology had existed at the time:

- Saboteurs never permit short-cuts to be taken in order to expedite decisions. When small businesses start to grow, owners often find they need to establish formal rules and procedures so things will be done correctly even if they're unable to supervise in person. That's smart policy. But those rules invite sabotage—instantly—when they prevent employees' personal judgment from overriding processes that, for whatever reason, are not working in the moment.

Review your rules. Look first for rules that may be out of date entirely. But also look closely for rules that shouldn't always be followed to a tee. You may need to build some leeway into your processes to create a more effective workplace.

- Saboteurs attempt to make the committees as large as possible—never less than five. The bigger the committee, the more complicated decision-making will be. Keep these groups as lean as possible, and make sure the

people on a committee understand exactly why they're there and what they're supposed to do.

- Saboteurs refer back to matters decided upon at the last meeting and attempt to reopen the question of the advisability of that decision. When you're faced with this situation, ask for new facts. What has changed since the decision was made? If nothing has, then beware; the person asking to reopen the decision may simply be unhappy that they were overruled to begin with.

- Saboteurs advocate caution. Be “reasonable” and urge your fellow-conferees to be “reasonable” and avoid haste, which might result in embarrassments or difficulties later on. Yes, it's true that haste

makes waste. But too much caution means no action, and, often, missed opportunities. Again, ask for facts. Why, exactly, does someone want to put off taking action?

- Saboteurs send updates as frequently as possible, continually increasing the distribution list to anyone even peripherally involved. This is the new “rule”—the one that wasn't possible back in the day when “cc” meant “carbon copy.” Too often, these days, people think that informing everyone is a good way to keep everyone in the know. But if your mailbox is flooded, aren't you more likely to skip the ones on which you're only ccd?

Tell your employees: If you want me or anyone else to know something, send a direct email. Make sure the subject line is up to date and says exactly what the email is about. And if it's really important? Pick up the phone.

You can win the war against unwitting sabotage—so long as you recognize when you have a battle on your hands. **C**

*Costco members Robert M. Galford and Cary Greene are co-authors, with Bob Frisch, of Simple Sabotage: A Modern Field Manual for Detecting and Rooting Out Everyday Behaviors That Undermine Your Workplace (HarperOne, 2015; not available at Costco.).*