



# Managing a Volunteer Board: Embracing Your Role as a *Trusted Business Advisor*

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Presentation to the Council of Science Editors (CSE)  
May 23, 2017



# Overview

- ▶ How did I get here?
- ▶ What does IEEE's governance structure look like?
- ▶ What types of committees and boards have I supported/do I currently support?
- ▶ What advice do I have for someone who has been tasked with managing the activities of a volunteer board?



# A Journey to Board Management

- ▶ 12 years in editorial or production roles with commercial publishers, followed by...
- ▶ 12 years (so far) in the non-profit space
- ▶ Began supporting an editorial board as part of my duties overseeing an eBooks product line
- ▶ Changed jobs, then was assigned to support different committees
- ▶ Managing the activities of a volunteer board now makes up at least 75% of my job

# IEEE's Board Governance Structure

- ▶ The IEEE Board of Directors oversees the governing bodies of five operational units:
  - *Educational Activities Board*
  - *Member and Geographic Activities Board*
  - *Publication Services and Products Board (PSPB)*
  - *Standards Association Board*
  - *Technical Activities Board*

# Evolution of Support for Committees and Boards

- ▶ IEEE Press Editorial Board
- ▶ Conference Quality Committee
- ▶ Conference Publications Committee
- ▶ Products & Services Committee
- ▶ Publication Services & Products Board (PSPB)
  - *PSPB Strategic Program Committee*
  - *PSPB Document Working Group*
  - *PSPB Nominations & Appointments Committee*

# Two rules of working for a professional association:

## Rule # 1:

You work for the volunteer members.  
It is not the other way around.

## Rule # 2:

If you have any questions, refer back to Rule # 1.

## However...

- ▶ Even though the volunteers are in charge, you still have a voice, and you owe it to the volunteers (and to yourself) to have a **strong** voice
- ▶ Volunteer board members will accept you as a **partner** if you can contribute valuable knowledge in areas where they need the advice of a subject matter expert

## What are the strengths of a “Trusted Business Advisor”?

- ▶ Being in touch
  - You communicate regularly with the volunteers (i.e., your clients)
- ▶ Being in tune
  - You are aligned with the volunteers on their stated priorities
- ▶ Being responsive
  - You are available when they need you
- ▶ Being knowledgeable
  - Your subject matter expertise is vital toward helping the volunteers make the right decisions for the business



# Balancing Policy Development and Administrative Tasks

- ▶ Become an authority on “who does what” on staff
- ▶ Know your industry
  - Become familiar with the outside forces that affect the business
- ▶ Stay well-organized
  - Keep good records, and you will save yourself lots of tedious work
- ▶ If help is available, take advantage of it

## In summary...

- ▶ Know who is in charge... but know also how important your contributions are to their ultimate success
- ▶ Embrace the glamorous/fun side of the job *along with* the grinding/administrative side – you need to be adept at both!

