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A grey silhouette of a city skyline, including various buildings and a prominent tower, positioned behind the title text.

# How to Be an Effective Board Member

Kevin A. McGrail  
kmcgrail@apache.org



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# Introduction

- #1 Learn from Other's Mistakes
- #2 Business is like a Marriage
- #3 Agendas
- #4 Use Mailing Lists (Correctly/Flame Wars/DNFTEC)
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- #8 Transparency, Succession & Ink
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- #11 Promote Diversity
- #12 JFDI
- #13 Watch For Volunteer Burnout
- #14 Communication is Key





## DISCLAIMERS

Rule #1: This talk is a blend of issues & solutions from my overall experience. It is not specific to the ASF.

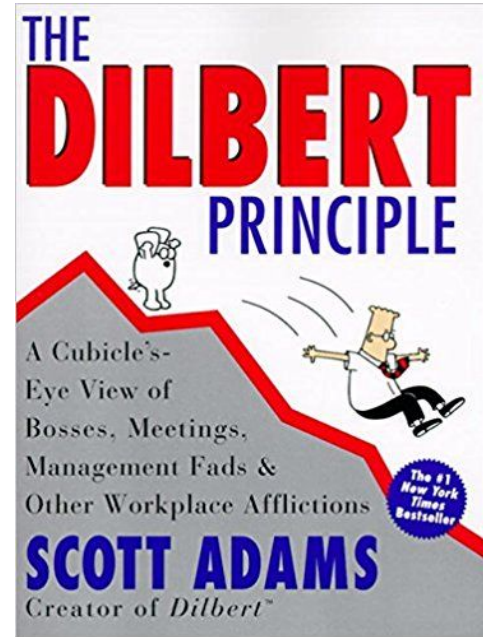
Rule #2: DO NOT FEED KAM AFTER MIDNIGHT!

## #1 Learn from Mistakes

I've been a founder, officer, chair, director, co-founder, business partner and formal advisor to NPOs, NGOs, Private firms & Publicly Traded Firms.

I've made one perhaps two mistakes.

***Try and learn from others' mistakes!***





## #2 Business is like a Marriage

Unfortunately, lots of them fail

***Pick your partners carefully***

Expect the need for tie breakers



## #3 Agendas

### **No agenda-less meetings**

Pick a set date and time

Keep & Review Minutes

Assign, Record & Review Action Items



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## #4 Use Mailing Lists (correctly)

***Mailing Lists / Forums / Groups are great for  
planning and records***

Can be a “cold” method with no feedback

Can be inefficient

## #4 Use Mailing Lists (Flame Wars)

“According to recent research published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, I’ve only a **50/50 chance of ascertaining the tone of any email** message. The study also shows that ***people think they’ve correctly interpreted the tone of emails they receive 90 percent*** of the time.”

Source: Stephen Leahy, Wired Magazine

<https://www.wired.com/2006/02/the-secret-cause-of-flame-wars/>





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## #4 Use Mailing Lists (DNFTEC)

**DO NOT FEED**

**THE ENERGY CREATURE**

Source: Tim Freeman, 28 May 1996

<http://www.cryonet.org/cgi-bin/dsp.cgi?msg=6284>



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## #5 Streamline your Meetings!

***Whimsy.Apache.org*** - Front-end for SVN backed Agenda/Chair Tool. 1 of ~350 Projects of apache.org. How we run the ASF. Looking for other orgs to use it.

Use Shared Agendas

Keep Shared Notes / Minutes



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# Quiz Break

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# Quiz Break





## Quiz Break

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## #6 Promote Good Corporate Oversight

Corporate Veils and D&O Insurance[1]

Public Information about officer/director/employees

COID / Recusals

[1] <https://s.apache.org/mHll>



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## #7 Debate is Important

Agree to disagree without being disagreeable.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr

Pick your Battles

## #8 Transparency, Succession & Ink

***Think for the future and share everything*** (especially for your Successor). [1]

Write policies for yourself & successor! The faintest ink...

Online tools like Dropbox, O365 & Google Team Drives are **Great** Tools that promote Collaboration & Redundancy.

[1] <https://s.apache.org/KurF>



## #9 Good Chairs are Important

Elect a Strong Chair.

Set discussion limits.

Avoid parliamentarian tricks.

Rule by consensus can be painful. Votes & Agree to Disagree.



## #10 Promote Inclusion

Merit has no basis on Age, Sex, Religion, Ethnicity, Race, Country of Origin, Sexual Preference, Social Status, Income Level, Lineage, and/or Physical / Cultural Traits\*.

\* NOTE: We do take into serious account whether you are a Cat or Dog person.

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## #11 Promote Diversity

“Would you want everyone on that raft to have the same strengths and weaknesses? Survivor vs. Marines

Many hands make light work!



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## Example: Professional Livestock Artist

Feb 1891 Ambassador Dodd refused to Paint the VT

President's Cow The Garden of Beasts by Erik Larson





## #12 JFDI

Step-up and volunteer!

People with ideas they want others to implement suck.

Delegation with oversight and budget limits is best.

Identify a lead for major projects.



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## #13 Watch For Volunteer Burnout

Volunteerism is a real sickness

Consecutive Term limits can help

Avoid burnout by sharing/delegating

Admit problems early

More at <https://s.apache.org/8Blu>



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## #14 Communication is Key

Never assume the other side has the same knowledge you have

Speak slowly (Do what I say not what I do!)

<https://medium.com/@mollyclare/taming-the-steamroller-how-to-communicate-compassionately-with-non-native-english-speakers-d95d8d1845a0>

<https://dict.leo.org/englisch-deutsch/endowment>

## #14 Communication is Key

Watch for regional confusions!

Example 1: Tabling items

Example 2: Whip Vote

Example 3: Endowment: what is it/

Example 4: Ich bin ein Berliner (Pfannkuchen?)





# Thank You!

[kmcgrail@apache.org](mailto:kmcgrail@apache.org)

[www.linkedin.com/in/kmcgrail](http://www.linkedin.com/in/kmcgrail)

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