



The Future of Member-Becoming- Directors

Association of Cooperative Educators 2017

William J. Nelson





William J. Nelson, LLC

Personal, Professional &
Organizational Transitions

Director Leadership for the Future

- I: Emerging issues & challenges**
- II: Taking a more active role as a director by helping shape the future**
- III: Tools and Rules for improving our ability to make a difference.**

Future Challenges & Opportunities for Cooperative Directors:

- I: Are co-ops relevant?**
- II: Creating relevance by shaping the future**
- III: Tools and Rules for improving our ability to make a difference.**

Emerging issues & challenges

“Boards that Lead: When to Take Charge, When to Partner, and When to Stay out of the Way”

**Ram Charan, Dennis Carey, and Michael Useem
Harvard Business Review Press, 2014**

What can you do to prepare yourself and your Board to meet the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities?

Emerging issues & Challenges facing us

- **Generations**
- **Sustainability**
- **Information management**
- **“Workforce” & “Earning a living”**
- **Governance**
- **Relevance**
- **Creating and maintaining partnerships**

“Workforce” & “Earning a Living”

- **Political role of “jobs” in an economy**
- **Security**
- **Sustainability**
- **Immigration and migration**
- ***The Gig Economy***
- **Education and training at all levels**
- **Implications for Board Service**

Emerging Governance Issues

- **Fiduciary rules, current and emerging**
- **Evolving business & non-profit structures**
- **Availability of capable and willing directors**
- **Transitions to new generations**

Are co-ops relevant?

- Today?
- In the future?
- **If they are, will yours's be viable?**
- **What can you do to prepare yourself and your Board to meet the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities?**

What determines relevancy?

- **Why was it (any organization) formed?**
- **Why does it still exist?**
- **Will it be needed in the future?**
- **Are there better alternatives?**
- **Can the co-op business model adapt to meet changing needs and opportunities?**

Challenges facing ag co-ops:

- **Business issues**

- **Competition and Consolidation**

- **Consumer driven**

- **Workforce**

- **Membership**

- **Financial strength/security of farmers**

- **They want and have choices**

- **Ability to provide high quality Directors**

Emerging Governance Issues?

- **Fiduciary rules, current and emerging**
- **Evolving business structures**
- **Availability of capable and willing directors**
- **Transitions to new generations**

II. Taking a more active role as a director by shaping the future.

- **Forecasting has changed**
- ***“Leaders Make the Future: Ten New Leadership Skills for an Uncertain World”***

Bob Johansen of the *Institute for the Future*

“Leaders Make the Future: Ten New Leadership Skills for an Uncertain World”

- 1. Maker Instinct**
- 2. Clarity**
- 3. Dilemma Flipping**
- 4. Immersion Learning Ability**
- 5. Bio-Empathy**

Bob Johansen, Institute for the Future, 2009

“Leaders Make the Future: Ten New Leadership Skills for an Uncertain World”

6. Constructive Depolarizing

7. Quiet Transparency

8. Rapid Prototyping

9. Smart Mob Organizing

10. Commons Creating

Bob Johansen, Institute for the Future, 2009

1. Maker Instinct

“Ability to exploit your inner drive to build and grow things, as well as connect with others in the making.”

- **“The Maker instinct is part job and part hobby.”**
- **“Makers don’t always know the answer, but they are working on it.”**

Bob Johansen, Institute for the Future, 2009

2. Clarity

“Clarity in leadership is the ability to:

- See through messes and contradictions.***
- See a future that others cannot yet see.***
- Find a viable direction to proceed.***
- See hope on the other side of trouble.”***

Bob Johansen, Institute for the Future, 2009

3. “Dilemma Flipping”

“Ability to turn dilemmas---which, unlike problems, cannot be solved---into advantages and opportunities.”

“Dealing with dilemmas requires an ability to sense, frame, and reframe the situation.”

“Dilemma Flipping”

Suggestions:

- 1. ‘Identify the dilemma (It is not the same as “a problem.”)’**
- 2. ‘Immerse yourself in it.’**
- 3. ‘Flip the dilemma in a more positive direction.’**

Bob Johansen, Institute for the Future, 2009

4. “Immersive Learning Ability”

“Ability to immerse yourself in unfamiliar environments, to learn from them in a first-person way.”

- **How well can you understand the experience of others?**
- **How good are you at recognizing patterns?**

“Immersive Learning Ability”

- **Can you transfer experience from one situation to another?**
- **But also recognize when it doesn't fit.**
- **A good tool: Case Studies**

Bob Johansen, Institute for the Future, 2009

5. “Bio-Empathy”

“Ability to see things from nature’s point of view; to understand, respect, and learn from nature’s patterns.”

- **‘Ability to see the big picture of ecological systems, and not just the components’**

Bob Johansen, Institute for the Future, 2009

“Bio-Empathy”

“Biology and the life sciences will become the critical driver of business performance”

“In the world of the future, food chains are giving way to webs.”

Bob Johansen, Institute for the Future, 2009

6. “Constructive Depolarizing”

“Ability to calm tense situations where differences dominate and communication has broken down--- and bring people from divergent cultures toward constructive engagement.”

➤ **Increasing diversity and polarization**

Bob Johansen, Institute for the Future, 2009

“Constructive Depolarizing”

- **Increasing visible gap between the rich and poor**
- **Use of technology to organize is more available to everyone**

“In ten years it is clear that pretty much everything will have a cross-cultural aspect---our differences will be visible to everyone.”

Bob Johansen, Institute for the Future, 2009

Increasing gap between rich and poor:

**“Eight richest men own as much wealth
as 3.6 billion people”**

**(Headline for a recent article from the Mpls
Star Tribune from an OXFAM Report)**

7. “Quiet Transparency”

“Ability to be open and authentic about what matters to you---without advertising yourself.”

- **Environmental impacts, Carbon Footprints**
- **New tools for scrutinizing what we do**

Bob Johansen, Institute for the Future, 2009

“Quiet Transparency”

- **Use and ownership of data**
- **What do we mean by “Quiet” transparency?**
- **How does this apply to Governance?**

8. “Rapid Prototyping”

“Ability to create quick early versions of innovations, with the expectation that later success will require early failures.”

- **A unique issue for cooperatives?**
- **A management challenge**

Bob Johansen, Institute for the Future, 2009

“Rapid Prototyping”

- **How do Co-op Directors develop and manage their ability to help govern in a rapidly changing environment?**

- **Think Risk Management, with fiduciary responsibilities.**

Bob Johansen, Institute for the Future

9. “Smart Mob Organizing”

“Ability to create, engage with, and nurture purposeful business or social change networks through intelligent use of electronic and other media.”

“Smart mob organizing brings together large groups for a common business or social change purpose, making savvy use of available media as appropriate.”

“Smart Mob Organizing”

“Smart mobs and not-so-smart mobs will become much more common over the next decade.”

“Leaders will need to learn the skills of smart mob organizing and develop their own on-line presence and leadership styles.”

Bob Johansen, Institute for the Future, 2009

10. “Commons Creating”

“Ability to seed, nurture, and grow shared assets that can benefit other players---and sometimes allow competition at a higher level.”

“New commons are shared resources that create platforms for generating wealth and value.”

Bob Johansen, Institute for the Future, 2009

“Commons Creating”

“As we move into the next decade, expect a wide range of new commons structures.”

What will this mean for Cooperatives?

What will it mean for Directors?

Bob Johansen, Institute for the Future, 2009

III. Finding, creating, and shaping the next generation of Directors

- **Education**
- **Training**
- **Leadership**
- **Personal, Professional, Organizational**

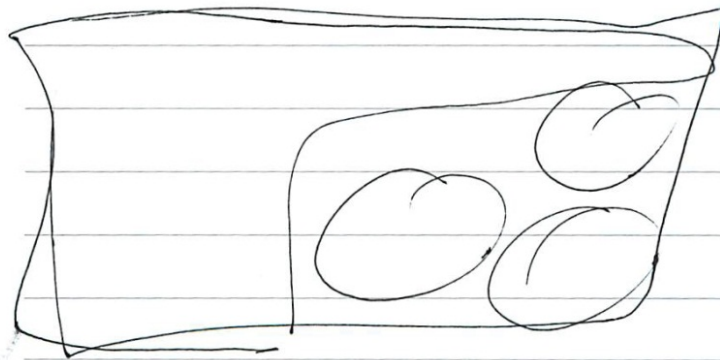
Finding and creating the next generation of cooperative directors

- Develop a personal development plan:
 - for yourself
 - for your Board
- Develop a succession plan for both
- Requires investing in the next generation
- Keep learning about the co-op business model
- Learn the economics of stewardship and & sustainability



Wake him up

We don't want him to miss this



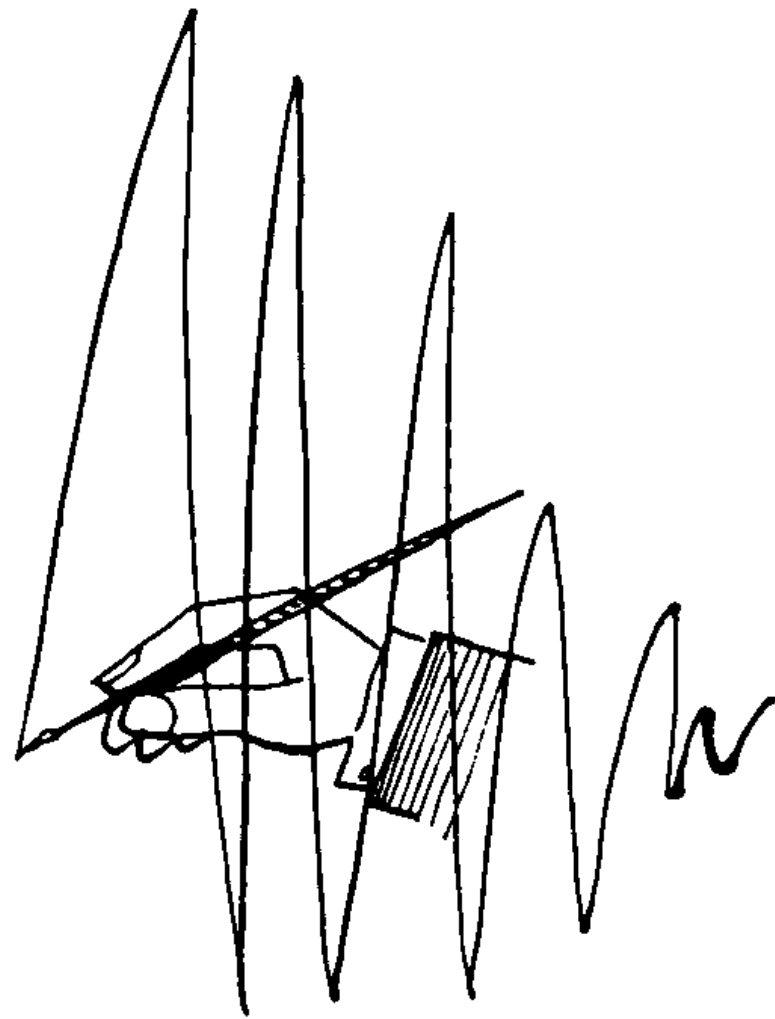
Legacy Attributes of Cooperative Leaders

(Ralph K. Morris Foundation)

- Courageous practical visionaries
- Creative disciplined leaders with management skills
- Politically skilled in macro and micro situations
- Invested personally and professionally in the next generation
- Knowledgeable of the cooperative business model

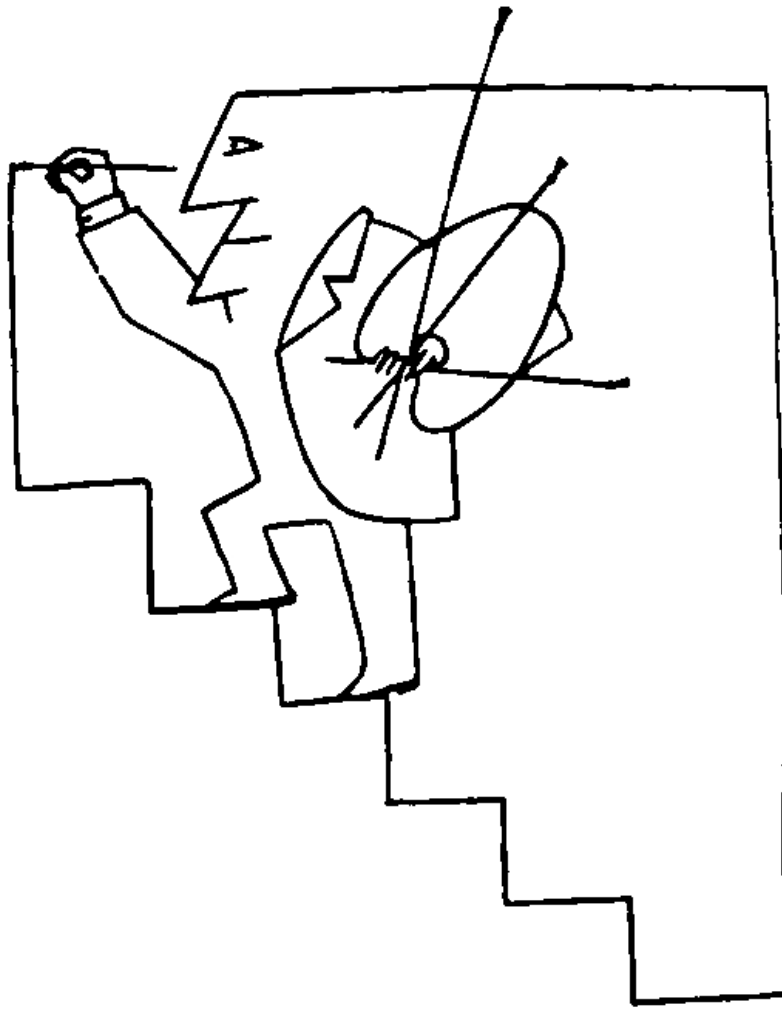
My rules:

- 1. Get involved in things you cannot do alone.**
- 2. Get involved in things that you cannot complete in your own lifetime.**



Saul Steinberg in My Search for Absolutes

Paul Tillich



Saul Steinberg in My Search for Absolutes

Paul Tillich



What problem are you trying to solve?

“If you expect to see the final results of your work, you haven’t asked a big enough question.”

~ I. F. Stone





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