



BOARD
MANAGEMENT
RELATIONS
A Critical Factor in
Your Port's Success



AAPA Commissioners Seminar (2017)
Indianapolis, Indiana

Commissioners



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**Judy
Songy**
VICE PRESIDENT





Port of South Louisiana Rankings (U.S.)

- #1 Tonnage Port
- #1 Foreign Trade Zone (#124)
- #1 Grain Exporter
- A Top Energy Transfer Port

A Commissioner's Perspective

- Communication, communication, communication is to ports as location, location, location is to real estate

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First and foremost, communication is the key, just as in real estate. It is said "Location, Location, Location is the main focus for real estate." I say that there is another saying that is just as important with Ports. That saying is its Executive Directors and its governance board should say communication, Communication, communication and it should be the very focus to make your port a success.

A Commissioner's Perspective

- Put the interests of the port first

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Whether you hold an elective position or you are an appointed member of your commission, you must be able to put the interest of the port first. If you are in this role to promote yourself or your buddies or others, you are in the wrong place.

A Commissioner's Perspective

- Guide the ship – provide insight on short- and long-term goals

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You must be able to understand that your role is similar to that of a Board of Directors. You give guidance to the executive director as to what your short- and long-term goals are and you need to be willing to allow him/her to follow through on that guidance. Your executive director is able to obtain insight from each of his members to help him “guide the ship.”

A Commissioner's Perspective

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It is very important that the commission keep its dialogue open between the board and the executive director. Between board meetings, that communication is usually through the board's president and the executive director, which is why the election of that president/chairman of the board is so important. That role is usually a working role where the president communicates often with his/her board. When commissioners are considering who will be the leader, all should remember that this is not just a title, but a commitment that needs the follow-up/follow-thru to be an effective leader. (There are many qualified candidates that may be too busy to do this and when that is the case, he or she should decline such a position.)

A Commissioner's Perspective

- It's OK to disagree

- ***It's OK to disagree***

In fact it is through thoughtful communication that ideas get fleshed out, examined, and decisions made. This communication is, of course, a two-way street: the executive director must reciprocate in communication as well to be successful.

A Commissioner's Perspective

- Disagree > Remain civil + Find common ground or
> Majority rules

- ***Disagree >Remain civil + Find common ground OR >Majority rules***

It is also important to realize there are times when board members do not agree with one another. During those times, we must remain civil, agree to disagree and find common ground or agree to the age-old decree of the majority rules. In dealing with issues, it should not to become divisive but allow the board to learn from its diversity.

An Executive Director's Perspective

- Communication is key!

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As my Commissioner with 17 years of experience stated, "Communicate, Communicate, Communicate."

An Executive Director's Perspective

- Send agenda one week prior to commission meeting
- Discuss agenda items pre-board meeting

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Contact commissioners the day before every commission meeting to discuss the agenda items so any questions can be answered before the meeting. Sometimes, that involves sending the commissioners additional back-up for the agenda item.

An Executive Director's Perspective

- Provide bi-weekly updates
- Provide monthly report at board meetings

- ***Provide activity reports***

A bi-weekly report is sent to our commissioners and state Senators. This report highlights activities in the Port during the period. Also, we provide a director's report at every monthly commission meeting.

An Executive Director's Perspective

- Keep board members informed on newspaper, magazine, radio, and television mentions of Port of South Louisiana

- ***Keep board members informed on media coverage/mentions***

Newspaper and magazine articles pertaining to port-related matters are compiled and sent out each week to each commissioner. Articles distinctly related to our Port are often emailed to them the same day we are advised of publication.

An Executive Director's Perspective

- In emergency situations, disseminate information immediately and directly to board members

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Send a text alerting the commissioners when there is a maritime “emergency” or very important incident within our 3 parish (county) jurisdiction (which includes 54 miles of the Mississippi River). I would prefer that they hear about the incident from me and not the news media.

An Executive Director's Perspective

- ❑ Encourage participation – invite board members to attend seminars, conferences, social functions, etc.
- ❑ Invite commissioners to employee events and give them an opportunity to speak

- ***Encourage participation – invite board members to attend seminars, conferences, functions, etc.***

Invite them to attend seminars, conferences, and functions that help them understand the Port's role in our state. Our board members are also invited to attend events held with our employees.

An Executive Director's Perspective

- Highlight board members in our port publications

- ***Highlight board members***

In our quarterly publication, the PortLog, we have featured 1 commissioner per quarter in an in-depth article featuring their accomplishments.



**SUPPORT
YOUR
PORT!**



THANK YOU