Many people think that once they land the board of their dreams, their work is done. Magic will happen after that. As soon as you make the introductions the board will begin to hit its stride. While that may happen on occasion, most often it takes ongoing work and development to keep them gelling and efficient in the way they respond to each other and help the chamber.

Here are 10 ways to keep a cohesive and innovative board for your chamber:

1. **Be selective.** Some chambers feel like they must reward a “board” position for political reasons. Avoid this, if possible. Select for problem solving ability, attitude, and desire to help the chamber innovate or reach new members.

2. **Keep enthusiasm up.** Your role is part coach and part drill sergeant here. You must keep them motivated and focused.

3. **Uncover and play up talents in the group.** Your board members are most likely successful business people. What made them that way? Make sure other board members know what each board member is bringing to the table.

4. **Be specific about expectations and help them understand the contextual elements of a chamber board.** Just because these people sit on other boards does not mean they know what needs to be done on a chamber board. Make sure their duties are stipulated through a signed agreement.

5. **Develop big picture thinking.** Help them know the day-in-and-day-out at a 37,000 foot level. They need to understand it. They don’t need to get directly involved in it. You want them for the big picture stuff, their eyes focused on the horizon, not your front door.
6. **Keep them involved with themes and trends you see facing the chamber and ask for their experience in the matter.** They may not be able to help you with social media adoption with your staff but they can give input about how they helped staff overcome an initial dislike of a change in direction, which could be applied to the situation.

7. **Foster a collaborative environment.** Nothing will get done without teamwork on your board. You need cohesion. Get to the bottom of personal issues among board members as soon as you are aware of them and create other opportunities to improve teamwork. This means an annual board retreat but also shorter, more frequent times together.

8. **Be thankful.** Your board should always know how much they mean to you. If they do, they’re more likely to contribute at top levels.

9. **Help educate them.** Every board member should understand the chamber, have a rudimentary understanding of the industry or membership organizations, their roles, responsibilities and performance. This most likely involves you teaching them and ensuring they understand.

10. **Review and redirect.** Like any business, there are times when you need a course correction. Know where you want to go and chart your progress against that goal. If you’re not getting there, if you’re off track, get the board together to talk about getting back on track.

**A bonus:** if you have someone who is creating a toxic environment, don’t wait for it to get better. Take quick, succinct action to remedy the situation.

**With these steps your board will be more efficient and cohesive.**