

From: marion hammer < >
Date: February 27, 2024 at 5:31:08 AM MST
To: Marion HAMMER < >
Subject: EVP Search

FYI

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From: William Bachenberg < >
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 at 11:24:53 PM EST
Subject: EVP Search

Dear Board Members,

I have read the appointment of a search committee and believe the formation of a search committee is the “cart before the horse.” I believe we need to do a lot of soul searching on the future of the organization and this process MUST not be rushed.

As a “board outsider” I’m extremely disappointed to say the least with the current search process, it defies many business best practices. While these are fine board members, here we go again with the same mistakes of the past, looking inward for solutions instead of looking outside the organization for greater experience and expertise.

Being on the board for 20 plus years I have seen (and experienced) the alienation of many strong business leaders who were members of the board because leadership did not listen to us or leverage our business skills. Hence, most of those board member business leaders have not run for re-election. Every re-election I ask myself why run again since the organization has marginalized (no excluded me) in utilizing my 45+ years of business, technology and non-profit experience. I question why have a board of directors that management does not leverage? The only reason I keep running is a few board members convince me to stick it out because change is coming. Well change has been now “force” upon the organization and I’m not a quitter.

First, the organization needs to reflect on the past to plan for the future. This requires evaluating the whole organization and then what a new organizational structure looks like for the future. Our current organizational structure has been flawed for years after we grew past 50 million dollars, yet no one would listen or acknowledge it. I had to completely reinvent my technology company four times over a 32 year span to survive or I would have joined the tens of thousands of technology companies that failed over those years. As with any organization, it is extremely hard to make large changes. I had first-hand experience with having to make massive changes and us humans are not that acceptable to change.

I believe we are rudderless in many areas due to the current financial difficulties and loss of great staff. For the organization to survive, now is the time to re-evaluate and update our core mission(s) along with defining a new organizational structure for the future. A well thought out written strategic and business plan for rebuilding the organization is mandatory at this time. How can we develop comprehensive job descriptions without know what we are hiring for? The new strategic plan needs to be done with open minds, with internal and external resources, and experienced individuals. Hard decisions need to be made leaving self-interests at home on which programs survive for the good of the organization, the membership and the Second Amendment. Many hard decisions are coming our way and we need a strong plan to guide us. Next would be the review our Bylaws what might need to be considered/updated with any organizational changes and leadership duties. This strategic planning also aids with evaluating building/office space needs if we are still planning on moving or right sizing the current headquarters building.

Second, this brings up what position(s) are we hiring for: Chief Executive Officer(EVP)? Chief Operating Officer? National Spokesperson? Who else? All of the proceeding? We need an updated organization chart that supports our strategic plan, not the other way around. I believe at a minimum it will show we need a person that who is called a Chief Operating Officer in the business world (you can call that person the EVP if you want). That person needs to be a proven business professional that runs the day-to-day activities of the organization. This does not have to be a “gun” person, we need a seasoned business professional!!! I also believe we need to hire a National Spokesperson to be the face of the NRA and will have no distractions of running the day-to-day operations. A couple of years back Don Trump Jr contacted me if NRA was looking for a National Spokesperson, he saw the need. He did preface, “I don’t want to deal with any of the operational bullshit.” I’m not sure what he would say today, but when the time is right I can ask him if he might be interested if requested by the board.

Once we identify the positions we need to fill, we need to develop their job descriptions. What are the salary ranges? Where will they be based? Travel? What criteria will be used to evaluate and rank the candidates? Then we can only begin a real search. Then what search firm will we use? I also do not believe that the additional hires beyond the COO/EVP should be solely left to a new leader at this time. The board of directors must be involved in hiring them too. The board finally needs to take charge and lead!!!

Third, it appears we have not learned from history that elevating/using board members for important positions/activities has not yielded great results. Why is the search committee only composed of board members? Do any of these individuals managed large multi-million dollar organizations? Probably one. Do any of these individuals have extensive experience in interviewing and hiring senior leadership positions? Do these individuals have peers that can assist with the search? We had a few past board members with extensive business experience, why were they not appointed to the search committee for their experience? There are many allied very large organizations that have extensive experience with executive searches and hiring executive leadership. Why are they not part of the process? Our allied partners should also be part of the process of rebuilding our organization in order to begin rebuilding trust with this segment.

Forth, We need experienced business leadership advising the organization. I’m tired of hearing over the years we are a non-profit. **NO WE ARE NOT!!!** We are a business that must have income and must have profit to survive. We need to act like a business. Now is the time to

create a small group of “business professionals” made up of a few board members and outside business leaders to help guide senior leadership back to fiscal soundness and the prestige the NRA once earned. Call it an Executive Advisory Council if you want.

I don't have all the answers, no one does, but this should start the conversation for the future of the NRA. Now is the time to consider these observations, challenge them, build on them and improve on them.

One of my favorite sayings “If you don't have time to do it right the first time, you don't have time to do it a second time.” As I said earlier we have the cart before the horse with appointing a search committee with no direction.

We are sitting on the edge of a razor blade, NRA can become ten times more effect than we ever were or fade to be a minor league player. Or worse, disappear altogether if we do not act with sound business solutions and practices.

Let's put our differences to rest, let's all work to build a strategic plan for the organization's future and then staff for greatness.

The free world is watching, we can't let our members, America's gun owners and manufacturers down at this critical time. LET'S GET THIS RIGHT, the stakes are too high and there will be no second chance.

Respectfully,

Bill Bachenberg