

Expanding your Foundation's Board -- Five Key Questions You Need to Ask.

Consider the following situation: you and your wife established a family foundation as part of your estate planning process and now, 10 years after establishing the entity, you are considering expanding the board to include your adult children. There seems to be a great benefit in sharing this experience with your children and giving them the opportunity to work with each other on something that is bigger than any one of them – making the world a better place. It could be a great time for your family to come together as, no doubt, each of the younger family members has been busy establishing their own careers and family units.

But where do you start? Here are the key questions to ask before you move forward:

- a) **Purpose:** Will you set a clear mission for the foundation or are you willing for the new members to add different funding priorities
- b) **Control:** As issues surface, are you willing to be only one vote at the table after the Board expands?
- c) **Inclusiveness:** What will be the rules for inclusion on the board – only the children? Such exclusivity might send the wrong message to spouses. If you include the spouses, will everyone have one vote and is that fair to the unmarried members? Once seated at the Board table, will spouses continue on the board after a divorce, should that occur?
- d) **Management:** Will there be criteria for eligibility for the Board positions – training and/or active participation requirements; or will membership be a right of birth?
- e) **Transparency:** Will all decisions for the foundation be brought before the expanded Board or will some areas be reserved for founder-only decision-making.

Involving the next generation in your family's philanthropy can be wonderfully rewarding. There are many strategies and solutions for the issues raised above. For assistance in these matters and issues related to family philanthropy, please contact Susan Grinel, Ph.D. by e-mail: susan@susangrinel.com or phone: 310-838-5131. Susan is dedicated to helping her clients meet their philanthropic goals.