

■ by Ed McDowell

## The Five Hats of a Board Member

Being a board member of a camp or conference center often brings together many ways one participates. One of the most common challenges is confusion about where the authority of a board member begins and ends when there are so many layers of meaningful engagement.

Guard against flexing your “board position,” as this is a misuse of your role on the board.

Inspired by John Pearson’s often-requested article, “The Three Hats of a Board Member,” I’ve provided updated thoughts focused specifically on Christian camping board members and the issues being navigated today.

### The Governance Hat

Of the five hats, this is the only one with authority and is limited to when the board actually gathers to govern the camp. A Christian camp board member does not have individual authority. The only time you wear the governance hat is when the board is meeting together on behalf of the camp.

### The Camper Hat

Many Christian camp board members are also campers or conferees. When you are on the receiving end of the ministry of which you are a board member, you are wearing the camper hat (and other people may or may not know you serve on the board). Take it in and be blessed by the ministry. If you have a concern as a camper, address it as a camper (not as a board member).

### The Volunteer Hat

Volunteering covers a range of things from physical work at the camp, serving as a camp counselor or networking with others on behalf of the ministry. Take the attitude of joyful surrender as you volunteer. When networking on behalf of the camp, tell the story of what God is doing and invite others to join. Address issues and concerns by working through the camp’s chain of command with submission and respect. Guard against flexing your “board position,” as this is a misuse of your role on the board.



Photo courtesy of Camp Lebanon

## The unique roles of board members in Christian camping

### The Donor Hat

Every Christian camp board is encouraged to set the expectation that board members wear this hat of generosity. This can be done as monthly giving or one-time gifts. It is encouraged that Christian camping board members place giving to the camp among their top three giving priorities while serving on the board. Resist any temptation to use your giving as a means to change or control the camp's direction.

### The Parent/Grandparent Hat

Parents and grandparents want their kids and grandkids to be well and do well at camp. It is important for board members who have kids or grandkids at camp to address issues and concerns as a parent or grandparent, not as a board member. If you have concerns or ideas, take the time to thoughtfully raise them with the people responsible for your kids or grandkids at camp.



Most importantly, wear one hat at a time. I can still hear John Pearson making this clear with the camp board where I serve as CEO. We have consistently committed to wearing only one hat at a time. We have also been intentional about wearing the governance hat only when we are together to govern the ministry. This is serving us well to this day. ■

■ For more training and tools for your board, take advantage of all the free Thriving Boards resources available at [www.ccca.org/go/thriving\\_boards](http://www.ccca.org/go/thriving_boards).

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