THE MOST IMPORTANT SKILL FOR A MISSION AGENCY BOARD

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The best way to confront a rapidly changing world in which the realities of mission are shifting faster than we can keep up with is to slow down, assess the situation, read our Bibles and pray together.
Category: Observations

Please excuse me while I have a little rant.

I'm fed up with sitting through badly run meetings; meetings that don't run to time, meetings that don't have a clear purpose, meetings that spend ages looking at minutiae without ever getting to grips with the real issues, meetings don't have a process that will lead to the desired outcome and so the list goes on. I've sat in too many meetings like these and if the truth be told, I've probably led a few of them myself.

To be honest, there is no excuse for badly run meetings. There are plenty of resources and courses available that can help to sharpen up skills. Techniques such as World Cafe and Focussed Conversation are not difficult to learn and once mastered they can be adapted to all sorts of situations.

However, important though these things are, I'm not convinced that they are the most key skills for mission agency boards today. In our current situation, where the most important issues facing us are theological and missiological the board's most important task is to reflect prayerfully on the situation with a Bible open in front of them. Discerning the Lord's will for an organisation in a changing context is a meditative and reflective process. In my experience, boards are not very comfortable in this sort of activity (I'll admit, that I would rather *do stuff* than reflect, too).

Carving out space and time for prayerful reflection is in itself a skill. Some of the things which are traditionally central to a board's processes need to be dealt with quickly and expeditiously. Other items can probably be delegated to a committee. After all, there is no point in being an efficient and well-run charity if you are not fulfilling your calling in today's world.

Ironically, the best way to confront a rapidly changing world in which the realities of mission are shifting faster than we can keep up with is to slow down, assess the situation, read our Bibles and pray together. By the way, this doesn't just mean having a devotional at the start of the meeting before getting down to business.

If you are on a mission agency board you might find my book Mission Agencies in Crisis? and my discussion guide for boards, The Way Forward helpful.