

STEADY  as she GOES

## THE ORGANIZATION: “STEADY--AS SHE GOES”

**Goal:** To emphasize the need for a leader to control the consistent effort of a group/committee/board gathering to stay on task relative to their organizational standards.

### Keywords and Phrases for Consideration:

Organization  
Group/Committee  
Standards  
Philosophy  
Mission/Purpose  
Goals (Short & Long Term)  
Leader  
Entropy  
“Steady--As She Goes”

Sing along with me this timeless song of 2006 that captured the hearts of many. And many of us know it as a seafaring term. Its message (generally) identifies the consistency and progression of life’s happenings that keep us on a treadmill toward success. The reminder as a leader—be constant and steady, regardless of what your employees or constituents put in your way. (And--a lot is “thrown” in your way to confuse and undermine success as a challenged leader of an organization!) In today’s busy and changing work world, it is easy to lose sight of the importance of leadership consistency, reliability, and organizational standards intended to keep the organization “Steady—As She Goes”—constant in the face of unexpected changes and diversity.

Organizational Standards or Rules of Conduct represent the “Steady—As She Goes” image for all organizational happenings. Standards provide the steadiness required for organizational success. However, how many meetings have you attended where the incidents from beginning to end are *laissez-faire*—without a pattern of following consistent standards that determine process, conversation, and decisions? Now is the time to know what your organization is about (the standards or the Rules of Conduct) and know (with leadership confidence) that the process and outcome of each group/committee/board gathering uphold these behavioral expectations. To do so provides the image of “Steady—As She Goes.”

Consistency and relevance of organizational standards help to curb ENTROPY: A UNIVERSAL MOVEMENT OF EVERYTHING TOWARD RANDOMNESS. A movement toward chaos is unacceptable! In this busy world, we do not have time to waste—however, we have time to make a conscious effort to make a positive difference. So, as intellectually astute leaders, let us start with the “Steady---As She Goes” motto for ourselves and our organization. The incorporation of consistent organizational standards will produce positive organizational success!

### The Organizational “Steady—As She Goes” Process:

1. Establish Board Organizational Standards as a group/committee/board process at the *first meeting*. That is the Organization’s Definition, Philosophy, Mission/Purpose, Long-Term Goals, and Short-Term Goals to meet the Long-Term Goals. Involve the entire committee/group/board members in a discussion and determination of the content and wording of a written statement for each standard. Starting each documented standard with an action verb, write the words on the board. Require a consensus of approval by the raise of hands that is shown to be a commitment to accept each definitive statement and subsequently use the information to guide each group/committee/board’s behaviors.
2. Be sure to include and reference current state and federal rules, state regulations, and processes required or recommended for group/committee/board meetings in the prepared printed standards.
3. Require each group/committee/board member to know (by heart) the Organization’s Standards. When called upon to recite any or all the standards, they are to individually be able to repeat the requested standard(s) to all individuals in attendance verbally.
4. Always develop and distribute a printed agenda at the beginning of each meeting with the approved standards and the schedule/agenda items for discussion that meet the expectations of the standards.
5. Surprise group/committee/board members by having a selected member recite an appropriate standard—especially when there seems to be a tendency or effort to move away from the standards set forth by the group/committee/board.
6. Record the approved Organizational Standards in each printed meeting minutes.
7. Some organizational groups/meetings encourage and remind board members or select members of the attendees to read or recite the organizational standards at the beginning of each meeting. A pre-warning to an exact committee/board person for such an assignment can occur, or a policy can be in place that allows the group leader the right to request a recitation of a standard(s) randomly. Such required recollection at each meeting of previously approved standards encourages everyone to stay on task as a positive contributor to the group’s standards. This effort by a leader’s direction helps keep Entropy at bay.

Why do all this? Because in the “heat” of a meeting, people (group/board members/attendees) tend to forget the basic reason for the meeting, and communication tends to become misdirected into personal attempts of control. There is a time and place for everything during the meeting, on the printed agenda, and in the minutes of a meeting—and it is related to the standards. The general atmosphere is controlled by a leader that keeps the schedule/agenda “Steady--As She Goes” and in keeping with the approved intention of the meeting as set forth by the organizational standards.

CONTROL OF APPROPRIATE AND TIMELY COMMENTS AT EVERY ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING SHOULD MAINTAIN THE NECESSARY ELEMENTS OF "STEADY--AS SHE GOES" APPROVED STANDARDS AS THE BASIS OF CONSISTENT ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS.

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