



Professional Association for SQL Server

In-Face Board of Directors Meeting
Hollywood, FL

Monday, March 22nd

Board of Directors Meeting (9:00am – 5:00pm)

Attendees: Wayne Snyder, Rushabh Mehta, Bill Graziano, Rick Heiges, Douglas McDowell, Andy Warren, Thomas LaRock, Lynda Rab, Jeremiah Peschka, Brian Moran, Neil Buchwalter, Christoph Stotz, Judy Christianson, Craig Ellis, Hannes Bezuidenhout, Blythe Morrow

Not Attending: Richard Bolesta, Roni Karassik, Kristina Kerr

AGENDA

1. Breakfast and Board Welcome -*Rushabh*
2. Discussion of European Director Participation -*Rushabh*
3. Transparency – NDA vs. Disclosure, Executive Committee Communication -*Bill*
4. Discussion of PASS's three FY 2010 organizational goals - *All*
5. Building two-way communication with PASS and the SQL Server Community -*Thomas*
6. Business Plan/Accountability/Project Plan –*Bill*
7. SQLSaturday – *Andy*
8. Spring Conference 2011 (*under NDA*) - *All*

Presentations included

- SQLSaturday update

MEETING MINUTES

Welcome and Opening Remarks

- Rushabh welcomed the Board to the March Board Meeting and opened the floor to Christoph Stotz

Discussion of European Director Participation

- Christoph was asked by the Executive to not attend the Board Meeting due to budgetary restrictions. The Board expressed their dissent at this decision and encouraged Christoph to attend.
- Rushabh Mehta- Admitted he should have set the right expectations with Christoph in regards to his attendance at the Board Meeting. He proposed to rectify this issue in two ways: review how the Executive Committee makes decisions and work with Christoph to build growth in Europe, clarifying his role on the PASS Board.
- Douglas McDowell– can we clarify Christoph’s position in terms of the strategic direction for PASS?
- Christoph Stotz– Asked the Executive to identify his HQ counterpart and to guide him with any deliverables he needs to execute on for PASS in Europe. Also, if the Board is upset with his performance thus far, he would like that communicated. If they feel he is not adding value to the PASS organization then they have the right to ask him to step off the Board.
- Wayne Snyder outlined the history of our European Director. The Board wanted to grow the organization internationally, and tried it in Croatia but did not have the traction. Christoph replaced a voting Board member and was tasked to grow PASS in Europe. The Board realized it would take 4 or 5 years to do and gave him the option of becoming a voting member of the Board via election or an appointee with no vote. He opted to not have a vote and maintain longevity on the Board.
- Wayne – Does the Executive Committee have the power to remove someone from the Board if they are non-voting?
- Andy Warren – The president has the power to remove the appointed Director.
- Lynda Rab expressed her disappointment that the Board was not involved in a decision to exclude a Board member from the meeting.
- Brian Moran –This seems to be systematic of a bigger issue that the junior members of the Board feel the Executive Committee needs to start bringing the Board into more decisions.

Transparency

Executive Committee Communication

- Rushabh – Started his presidency wanting to open transparency between the Executive Committee and the Board-at-large. He admitted that his efforts have not been successful. Taking minutes of the Executive Committee conference calls proved too time intensive, and so he suggested inviting all Board members to the calls. Also the Executive Committee would like to do more diligence in bringing discussions to the Board. The Board will be included in all issues except discussion of Board member performance.
- Douglas – It may not be wise to add more time to attending the meetings. Can we have an agenda with discussion points sent via email?
- Bill Graziano – The Executive Committee will publish the calls and allow Board members to attend. If we have an agenda, we will publish those, and try to send something out post mortem.
- Brian – The Executive Committee should be able to make decisions quickly. If a decision is made, then the Executive Committee can communicate it to the Board.
- Douglas – If the Board needs to discuss to every decision, we have enough diverse people that there will be disagreements on most things. Should we really gridlock the organization or spend our time on the items that matter and can move us forward?
- Andy – The idea is not to hang the Executive Committee out to dry. We are here to build confidence from within the Board.
- Douglas – Can Hannes build a list of what the Executive Committee can decide as it is reflected in the bylaws? That will give us an idea of what the Board has empowered the Executive Committee to execute on.
- **The Board decided on the following items the Executive Committee will execute on to build Board transparency:**
 - **Board is invited to all Executive Committee calls.**
 - **The Executive Committee will copy the Board on all communication.**
 - **If the Executive Committee sends a decision out, and one Board member has an issue, Rushabh will attempt to engage the entire Board.**

NDA vs. Disclosure

- Andy – Transparency is a difficult concept because we're afraid of failure, but we should tell the story about what we do. A lot happens with PASS that stays internal.
 - The PASS Board meeting minutes should be more transparent unless discussion is an executive session.
 - The Board should invite community members to attend Board meetings, and allow them to blog about discussion.

- Discussions between Board members are private unless they all agree they can make it public. Communication in Board meetings should be public unless stated they are NDA.
- Bill – Can Hannes revisit the NDA document to ensure it's reflective of the organization?
- Thomas LaRock – It's important Board members have their own opinions because they are elected officials of the community. However, we need to make sure their opinions don't undermine the decisions of the Board.
- Brian – Suggested the Board create a disclaimer on personal blogs that the opinions of Board members are not the official messaging of PASS.
- Jeremiah Peschka – We need to show our community that we are a strong organization. That is how we will build and strengthen our brand. If this Board goes out to the community as a fractured entity, we look weak and lose a lot of our organizational strength.
- Jeremiah – Our community does not respond well to marketing information. Well-crafted Board minutes will have a better reaction.

Discussion of PASS's 2011 Fiscal Goals

- Lynda – PASS should have goals that revolve around remaining independent from Microsoft, and are focused on the SQL Server Community. Even though PASS uses Microsoft technology and evangelizes their products, we are independent of their organization.
- Brian- Is the issue community perception of PASS's involvement in Microsoft, or do we actually feel we are being used as a tool of Microsoft? Also, where did the previous PASS organizational goals come from? How much Microsoft input goes into our goals?
- Rushabh – In Denver the PASS Board decided they wanted to strengthen ties with Microsoft and had dinner with Microsoft Executives to build bridges. As a result of that meeting, Microsoft asked PASS to present what they had done and where they would like to grow as organization. PASS then requested funding to attain the goals PASS itself had developed. As a result, PASS was given a liaison at Microsoft whose professional goals are tied to PASS's success.
- Judy Christianson – Microsoft does not want to tell us what to do. They have come to us over the last three years and asked how they can help us grow our community.
- Christoph – Our goals should be more than just growth in Chapters, membership and revenue.
- Douglas – Growth can be a goal, but how you execute on those goals can change. For example, growing Chapters is important, but executing on that can be by focusing on the value proposition we can bring on Chapter members. Everything is about approach in the portfolios.
- Andy – We should have a goal for SQLSaturday growth with a focus on attendees and registration numbers. We should also target Code Camps in sponsorship.
- Bill – Can we include hours of technical content delivered to the Chapters instead of growth?
- Douglas – We keep talking about community, but we seem to be myopic to the English-speaking world. We have our work cut out for us in non-English speaking communities.

- Andy – There are cultural differences that we may not understand. International growth will lag behind the US naturally.
- Brian – Membership must be an organizational goal.
 - We think of membership and community as different things. Should we get rid of membership and only focus on community?
 - Is our membership only the number of email addresses we have? Does it have monetary value?
 - Perhaps there needs to be more thought on our membership definition.
- Andy – Strengthening financial reserves and financial health of the organization.
- **Goal: Increasing community satisfaction**
 - **Action:** Jeremiah to survey the community in the next couple of days on community satisfaction.
 - **Action:** Follow up survey six months later with focus groups.
- **Goal: PASS to have the Spring event in FY2011**
 - Develop a strategy for events between a SQLSaturday and a Summit.
 - Have a Spring event and review how it works with the Summit. Success for the Spring event is execution of the event and building processes around it.
- **Goal: Track and monitor training hours**
 - Event reach – Attendee number x sessions.
 - **Action:** Bill to work with Lynda on a plan of execution.
- **How do these align with the goals we told Microsoft we drive towards in January?**
- Summit attendance to 4000, membership to 75,000, technical education hours delivered.

Two-way Communication methods for the community

PASS Insiders

- Thomas – Suggested PASS implement a PASS Customer Advisor Board where we include a small cohort of volunteers, speakers, and MVPs. This program would be entirely feedback-driven.
- Lynda - Can we not just reach out to our volunteers? Can we call our volunteers “influencers” or “insiders”? Why would we create another exclusive group when we have a volunteer list we can pull from? We have volunteers who do a lot for the organization. They should be the people who we go to for feedback.

Discussion Forums

- Thomas – Implementation of PASS Forums on sqlpass.org – to engage the community.
- Bill - PASS currently does not have a centralized place for feedback except as comment on community blogs. This means we don’t have one central person to interact with the community.

- Rushabh - PASS should target the forums to three topics: community, Summit or governance.
- Andy - Community members should be able to form a new topic.
- Jeremiah - The forums will need moderating and to have PASS members jump start it.
- Wayne – Will all Board members’ comments on the blog be official because it’s on the site?
- Hannes – The Board has the right to appoint members to speak on behalf of PASS. All officers have the right to speak on behalf of PASS.
- **Action:** Jeremiah, Tom, and Hannes to draw up proposal and come back to the Board

Business Plan

- The PASS Board of Directors reviewed the PASS Business Plan.
 - Brian Moran - In terms of our focus and PASS community reach, we should think about adding those who work on ISV to our community because it is a strong focus of MSFT and a direct compete with Oracle.
 - Brian – We should be focusing on MSFT employees who are community-focused and in the field to help grow our organization.
- The PASS Board reviewed the Accountability Plan.
 - Andy – We want to hold Directors accountable, but we should not punish those who fail to do work. Instead implement a system to reassign tasks.
 - Bill – Who is tracking Board progress?
 - Hannes – We built a set of procedures to guide those ideas. Board members should be held in review by the Executive Committee. The task here is to determine the fall-out for those who do not complete what they say they will.
 - Andy - We need to engage the elections process in this conversation. Instead of putting people on the ballot because they’re popular, they should go on there because of the work they’ve done. This accountability plan provides a paper trail for the nominations committee to not put their name on the ballot again.
 - Andy – Likes the idea of HQ monitoring tasks, but when something falls behind, HQ should go to the Executive Committee for follow up.
 - Brian – Can it be as simple as if you miss (N) number of unapproved absences in one year, the Board has the ability to remove a Director?
 - Wayne – The trouble is to put the strain on the Executive Committee to call out a Board member. We need to provide clear a paper trail for these calls.
 - Andy – This should stay as an informal process for the time being. If a Board member is unresponsive, the Executive Committee will call the Board Member to try to figure out what is going on. If the Executive is being unresponsive, then PASSHQ can go out to the entire Board for an answer.
 - The Accountability Plan is split into two parts: ethics, and Board performance.

SQLSaturday

- Andy Warren presented on SQLSaturday (please see presentation attached).
 - Even if the money managed for event leaders was held in trust, the IRS may come back and hold PASS accountable if event leaders do not pay their taxes. This is because we own the PASS brand and SQLSaturdays are PASS events.
 - Two goals for the SQLSaturday portfolio: membership drive and a fundraiser for Chapters.
 - Community Connection budget process: work in sponsor levels in HQ so PASS can financially sponsor these events.
 - Sponsor and facilitate SQLSaturdays to not compete on the same weekend.
 - Branding for the event – continuity of PASS branding SQLSaturday while remembering that we can't 100% brand SQLSaturday as a PASS event due to liability. Board to defer to marketing.
- **The Board was in agreement to move forward with the execution points of the presentation and revisit after 5 events executed successfully.**
- **Decision to have messaging out to the community by next Friday (April 2) from both Andy and the PASS organization.**

End Day One: PASS Board of Directors