High-Impact Governing: Building Successful Leadership Partnerships

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ORGANIZATIONAL LIFE CYCLE

- Start-up
- Adolescent
- Maturity
- Renaissance
- Senior
- Stagnancy
- Decline
- Shut Down

Attributes:
- Reputation/Quality/Consistency
- Security/Stability
- Growth/Identity
GOVERNANCE TRENDS

- **Oversight** – Focus on what has already occurred. Ensure that the organization has been doing what it set out to do. Ensure that assets have been managed correctly.

- **Strategic Thinking** – Focus on defining measures of success and setting goals for the future.

- **Generative Thinking** – Boards add philosophical considerations to the practical parts of their role.
  - Examining if the mission is responsive to the needs of the members.
  - Reflecting on whether programs and services are still relevant or require changes.
  - Not asking “what” we are going to do but “why” we do it.
GOVERNANCE IS A BALANCING ACT

Governance-Power-Authority-Accountability-Decision Making
GOVERNANCE ROLES

Board of Directors
- Leader
- Planner
- Monitor
- Evaluator
- Organizer
- Employer
- Motivator
- Fundraiser

Executive Director
- Leader
- Implementer
- Contributor
- Researcher
- Employee
- Liaison
- Employer

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GOVERNANCE vs MANAGEMENT

• The Board of Directors, led by the Chair, is responsible for the overall governance and direction setting of the organization.
• The staff, led by the Executive Director, is responsible for the day-to-day operations and implementation of plans, programs and services.
### OVERSIGHT vs MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOARD</th>
<th>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Governs the organization</td>
<td>• Directs the organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Oversees planning</td>
<td>• Oversees operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sets organization-wide priorities</td>
<td>• Sets staff priorities &amp; manages current projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Articulates the mission and evaluates impact</td>
<td>• Implements the mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Represents the organization in the community</td>
<td>• Represents the organization in the community</td>
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<td>• Directs &amp; approves plans</td>
<td>• Facilitates annual planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sets program direction</td>
<td>• Oversees implementation of programming</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Establishes policies</td>
<td>• Implements policies established by the Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supports the Executive Director</td>
<td>• Educates the Board with information &amp; ideas</td>
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<td>• Hires, fires, and evaluates the Executive Director</td>
<td>• Hires, fires, evaluates &amp; manages staff</td>
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<td>• Approves the budget</td>
<td>• Manages the budget</td>
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<td>• Provides governance leadership</td>
<td>• Provides administrative leadership &amp; support</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Identifies, nurtures &amp; recruits leadership</td>
<td>• Assists in identifying potential leadership &amp; volunteers</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ensures necessary resources</td>
<td>• Organizes fund development &amp; sustainability efforts</td>
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COMPONENTS OF A HIGH FUNCTIONING BOARD

• Strong Relationships
• Building the Team
  • Adequate resources
  • Competent
  • Clear roles & responsibilities
  • Intentional engagement
  • Regenerative
  • Diverse
• Transparency & Fluid Communication
• Fostering Positive, Productive, Collaborative Environment & Behaviors

• Formalized but Flexible Governance Structure
  • Documents (policies & procedures)
  • Institutional knowledge
  • Position descriptions
  • Accountability & reporting structure

• Highly Specific Individual & Collective Performance Measures
  • Clarity of goals & objectives
  • Tracking mechanisms in place
  • Celebrate success

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STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

Board of Directors

Board Officers/Executive Committee

Executive Director

Board Chair
SYMPTOMS OF A RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN

• Elephant in the room/Toxic environment
• Lack of trust
• Poor communications
• Lack of information
• Misunderstanding/Misappropriation of roles
  • Micromanagement
  • Ineffective division of labor
  • Operating in their comfort zone
• Lack of strategic alignment & direction
• Hesitancy by both parties to surface critical issues or challenges that require discussion & collaborative action
• Deliberate action by either the Board or the Executive Director that excludes the participation or perspective of the others
• Organizational turnover
  • Employee & volunteer morale issues
CONSTRUCTIVE PARTNERSHIP MODEL

• Mutual trust & respect is top priority
• Success is mutually exclusive
• Integrally dependent on each other
• Quid Pro Quo – Give & Take
• Frequent & direct contact

• Explicit & realistic lines for expectations, roles, authority & decision making
  • Define early in the relationship
• Candor
  • Issues are addressed head on
  • Communications - open & frequent
  • Feedback is encouraged & regular
• Flexibility in negotiating roles
  • Collaborative problem solving
• Responsive to the need of the other
  • Seeks additional information
  • Provide focused data, knowledge & information
RELATIONSHIP COMMITMENT
THE “SWEET SPOT”

• Focus is on the quality of the relationship - more than characteristics
• Passionate about the organization
  • Genuine about working in the best interest of the association
  • Want to do their job and know what to do
  • Mission & strategy always the priority
• Be allowed to manage free of interference/To be kept abreast
• Respect for the experience & wisdom each person brings to the table
• Adapt to each other’s styles
  • Learning about & accommodating for differences
• Loyalty
  • Unconditional support
• Act as a sounding board
  • Regular check-ins
  • Transparency
  • A commitment of no surprises

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Forbes.com 2016
STEPS TO SUCCESS

• Ensure complementary/aligned position descriptions
• Team building & fellowship is a must
  • Board interaction & engagement
• Thorough board orientation on governance related principles
• Updated strategic plan
• Executive/Board Chair work on board meetings together
• Continuous & constructive feedback
  • Clear and measurable goals
  • What can the board do to better assist you?
• Take the time to say, “You are doing a great job and thank you for what you do”. 
SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1) What are the top 4 things YOU need, to be the best possible Executive Director, Board Chair, Officer, Board Director?
2) What are the “sweet spots” (areas for alignment) for strengthening the partnership between your Board & Executive Director?
3) What are some unique/creative practices within your association that you would like to share with others?
Q&A SESSION
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