


Week 1
 Building a Constructive Partnership between
 the Chief Executive and the Board


Leadership Certificate of Nonprofit Education for Chief Executives

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Welcome



Justin Wood
 Governance Programs Manager



Emily Davis
 Senior Governance Consultant

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A Little About Me...

MNM
Regis University

Consulting Associate
BoardSource

Author
Fundraising and the Next Generation

Certified Charitable Advisor
21/64

BoardSource
Empowering Board Impact & Governance

Founder
YNPN San Diego, Global Shapers Boulder Hub

Executive Director
National Hemophilia Foundation Colorado

Board Member
Social Venture Partners, Association of Fundraising Professionals, YNPN

Facilitator
Certified in Essential Facilitation™

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Certificate for Nonprofit Chief Executives Webinar Series Resources

Week 1
 For content related questions please contact the BoardSource Knowledge Center...

- This week's slides (PDF)
- This week's recording

Recommended reading

- Week 1 Reader

Optional reading

- Topic Papers
 - Board Dynamics and Processes – FAQ
 - Boards that Micromanage
 - Chief Executive Job Description
 - Chief Executive Performance Evaluation
 - The Role of the Board Chair
 - John Carver's Policy Governance Model
- Publications
 - Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards
 - ePolicy Sampler – Chief Executive (Word Doc)
 - ePolicy Sampler – Communications (Word Doc)
 - ePolicy Sampler – Mission-Related Issues (Word Doc)
 - ePolicy Sampler – Ethics and Accountability (Word Doc)
 - The Source: Twelve Principles of Governance That Power Exceptional Boards

Have questions?
 Contact Justin Wood, Governance Program Manager at Justin.wood@boardsource.org

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Series Schedule and Topics

Week 1 – Sept. 9	Week 2 – Sept. 13	Week 3 – Sept. 20
Building a Constructive Partnership	Structuring the Work of the Board	Supporting and Evaluating Board Performance

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Objectives

WEEK ONE

Define “constructive partnership” and name at least one strategy that can help facilitate a balance in roles and responsibilities between the board and the Chief Executive

WEEK TWO

List at least three of the five areas in which the Chief Executive and the board chair have the opportunity to positively structure the board's work

WEEK THREE

Describe the Chief Executive’s role in developing future board leadership and identify one to two ways to do so

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Week 1 Agenda

Building a Constructive Partnership Between the Chief Executive and the Board

I. Board Relationships in Context

II. Cultivate Relationships

III. Inform and Communicate

IV. Facilitate a Balance in Roles and Responsibilities

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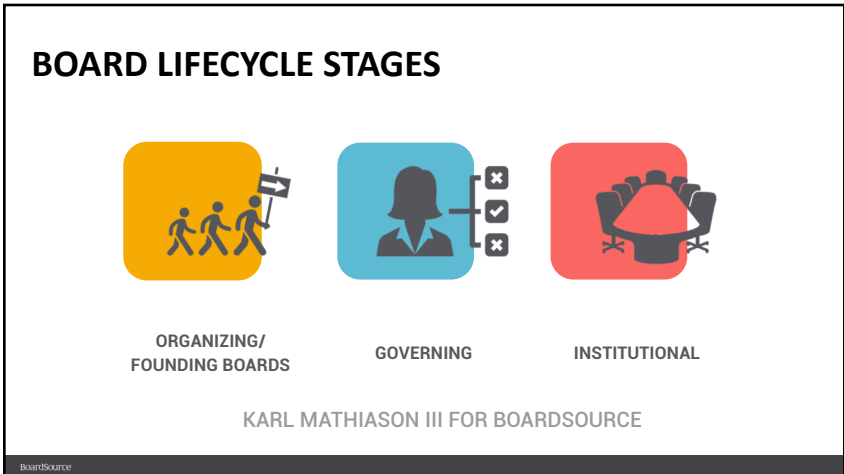
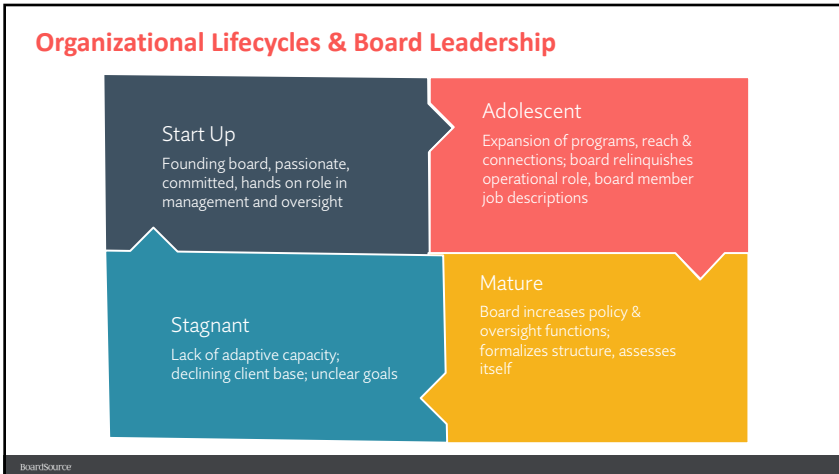
I. Board Relationships in Context

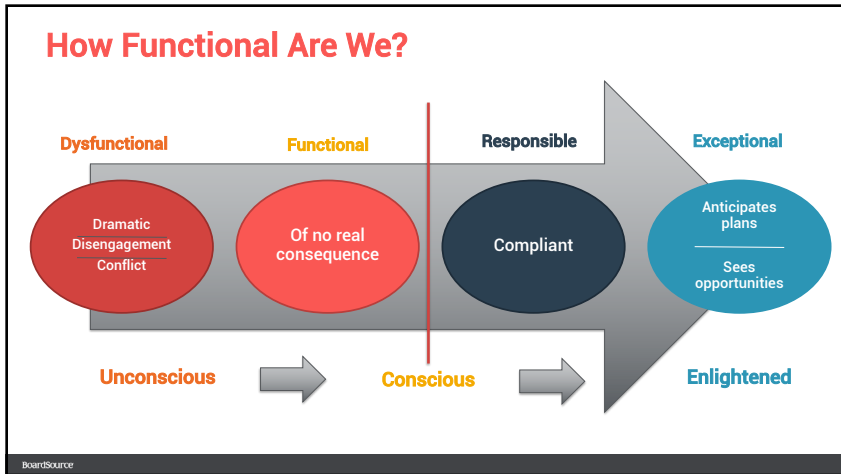


Constructive Partnership

Well-led nonprofits tend to have high-performing boards, leadership succession plans, and strong partnerships between the chief executive and board members.”

Navigating the Organizational Lifecycle

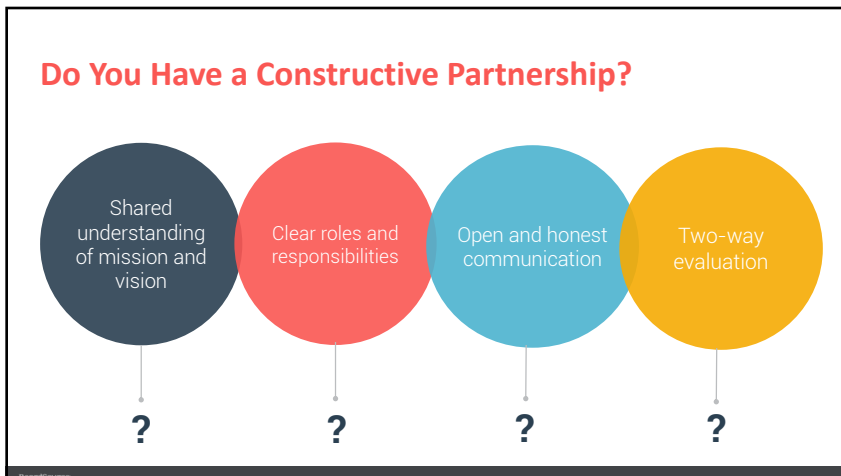




Constructive Partnership Defined

“Exceptional boards govern in constructive partnership with the chief executive, recognizing that the effectiveness of the board and chief executive are interdependent. They build this partnership through trust, candor, respect, and honest communication.”


The Source, Twelve Principles of Governance that Power Exceptional Boards



The Human Factor: What is the Balance?

“Great organizations have board chairs and chief executives who lead and take responsibility on one hand and embrace inclusiveness, delegate, and empower others to have a voice on the other hand – all in the context of serving the organization.”

What Factors Affect the Balance Between You and Your Board Chair?




Experience, knowledge, background	Personal leadership style	Needs of the organization	Organizational culture
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Potential Sources of Conflict

1. Poor data/info/communication
2. Varied working styles/personalities
3. Unclear expectations
4. Different values or priorities
5. Change or transitions in the leadership or organizational direction



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Strategies for Developing Common Ground

 Have an open dialogue	 Provide the right information at the right time	 Deal with issues quickly; no surprises!	 Collaborate
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2 Cultivate Relationships

Build Habits and Interactions that Engage and Involve the Board



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Cultivating a Positive Relationship with Your Board

- Practice self-management and avoid self-defeating habits
- Balance roles and responsibilities
- Create and maintain a good relationship with the board chair
- Build relationships with individual board members

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Practice Self-Management & Avoid Self-Defeating Habits

Self-Management Strategies

- Ask questions
- Build a support network
- Stay open and approachable
- Find the balance between being too laid back/personal and being too rigid/professional

Avoid Self-Defeating Habits

- Don't do everything yourself
- Don't drown the board in information
- Don't avoid uncomfortable situations
- Don't avoid sharing bad news at the first sign of trouble

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Calibrating Roles: Some Pitfalls

Joe	Julie	Kyle	Pablo	Connie
Friendly, laid back new board chair willing to have CEO do most governance tasks	Successful at fundraising CEO who doesn't assert herself in challenging or confrontational situations	CEO makes firm decisions without consulting others and alienates staff with rigid personality	Eager new board chair wants to take over performance evaluations of all staff members	Always creates the board meeting agendas because board chairs are too busy

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Clearly Articulate Board Chair and CEO Roles

Roles of the Board Chair

- Maintain a mutually supportive relationship
- Ensure effective board development
- Support board in policy and oversight
- Chair and facilitate board meetings
- Align board actions with organization's priorities

Roles of the Chief Executive

- Develop staff
- Establish operational plans
- Manage resources
- Represent the organization
- Identify internal/external issues
- Support board governance functions
- Collaborate with chair on board meeting prep

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CEO and Chair Worksheet

SAMPLE WORKSHEET BOARD CHAIR-CEO QUESTIONNAIRE

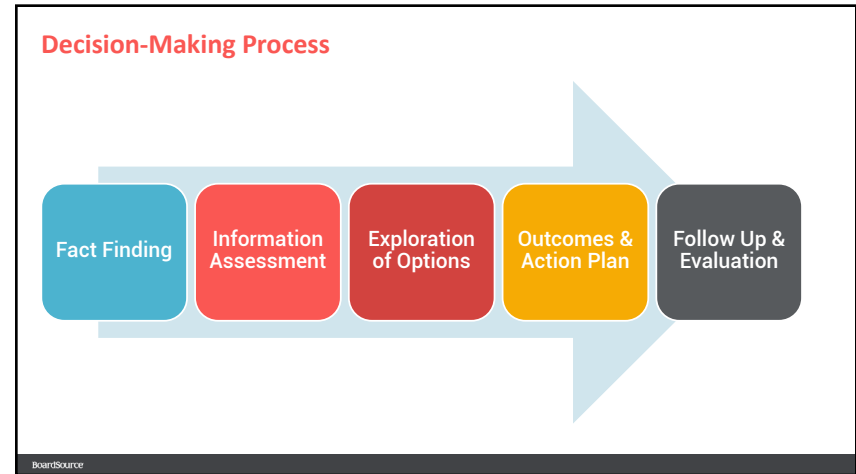
This tool is designed to benefit Board Chairs and CEOs by giving them the opportunity to carve out time for an intentional discussion about leadership and communications styles. Ideally, each individual would complete this sheet on his/her own and then the Board Chair and CEO would set aside time for a phone or in-person appointment to discuss the results.

By completing the statements below and sharing them with your Board Chair (and vice-versa), the two of you together will take steps toward developing or strengthening an effective leadership team for your organization. The more up front and clear you can be, the more likely it will be that your leadership experience will be something you enjoy and appreciate.

- I think we need to check in with each other
 - Several times a month _____
 - Once a week _____
 - More than once a week _____
 - Whenever one of us has a question or information that needs to be shared _____
- My order of preference for our communications is:
 - Face-to-face meetings _____ Telephone _____
 - Email _____ Other _____
- What I value in a working relationship is: _____
- Something that generally bothers me in a working relationship is: _____
- Something that I find challenging in my position at this point is: _____
- What you could do that would be most helpful to me in fulfilling my role is: _____
- What I can offer as a contribution to our working relationship is: _____
- In my opinion, other important elements to building a positive working relationship are: _____



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Orienting a New Board Chair

- Discuss how you can build trust
- Talk about your strengths and weaknesses
- Remain flexible and play to each other's strengths
- Consider having a board chair orientation retreat with you, the outgoing board chair and the new board chair to discuss:

Biggest issues facing the organization


Goals for the board chair's term

How to best work together – preferences, habits, style

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3 Inform and Communicate

Prepare Board Members for Success



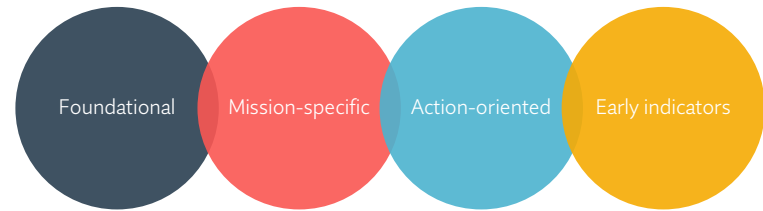
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Two-Way Communication

“Board members often don’t know what they don’t know...board members don’t deal with the organization’s issues on a daily basis, and we may forget details that are important to the decision-making process. We look to the chief executive to provide key information... including information about unknowns and uncertainties.”
 (Board Chair)

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What Kind of Information Does Your Board Need?



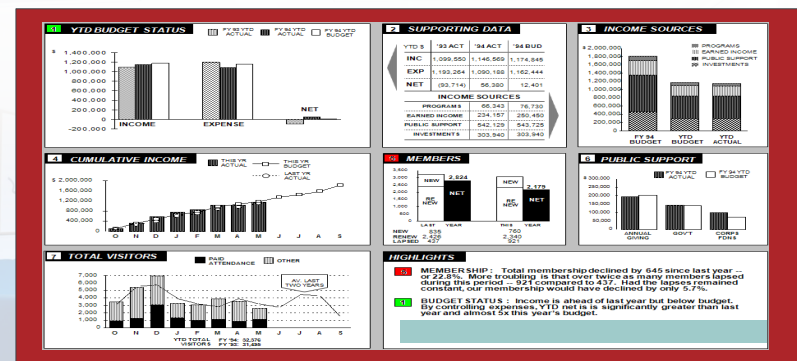
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Board Information – When is the Right Time?

Meeting Preparation Materials	Minutes	Communications to Encourage Board Engagement	Bad News and Handling Crises
Varies: within a few weeks of the meeting	Within a few weeks following the meeting	Should be ongoing, not just prior to or following the meeting	The sooner the better

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Sample Dashboard



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Dashboards: Why and How

Value of a Dashboard

- Saves time
- Tracks progress
- Sheds light on system dynamics
- Points up potential problems
- Reveals patterns
- Expands comfort zones
- Develops a shared knowledge base
- Focuses information
- Reinforces board oversight

Dashboard Metrics: Approaches

- Outcomes
- Mission as spine
- Strategic initiatives or drivers of success
- Risk factors
- Services and resources

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Strategies for Focusing on Mission



Collect stories of organizational impact from staff and volunteers. Share them.



Participate in some of the organization's operations or services (tours, educational sessions).



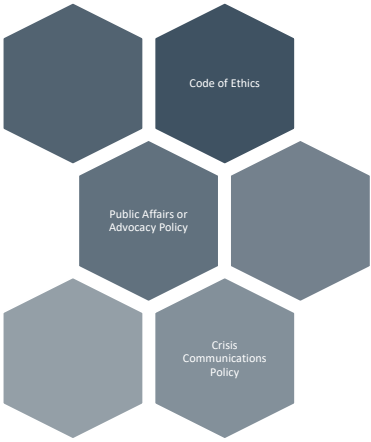
Infuse meetings with a mission focus (guest speakers, video clips, or sharing "mission moments").



Review the strategic plan for relevance and refresh, if necessary.

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Using Policies to Address Organizational Priorities



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4 Facilitating a Balance of Roles and Responsibilities



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Board Responsibilities

Set Strategic Direction	Ensure Adequate Resources	Provide Oversight
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine mission and purpose and advocate for them Ensure effective planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure adequate financial resources Select the chief executive Build a competent board Enhance the organization's public standing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure legal and ethical integrity Protect assets and provide oversight Support and evaluate the chief executive Monitor and strengthen programs and services

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Legal Obligations of Individual Board Members



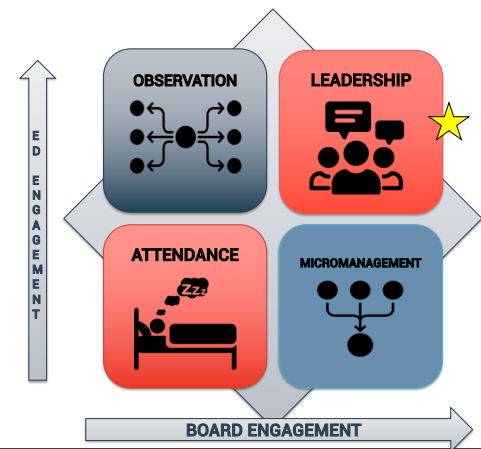
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Shared Leadership



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Which Quadrant Describes Your Current Relationship?



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Tools for Clarifying Board Responsibilities

-  Bylaws
-  Expectations statement or job description
-  Board self-assessment (full board)
-  Individual board member self-assessment


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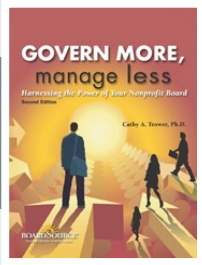
Tools for Clarifying Chief Executive Responsibilities

-  Written job description
-  Formal and informal check-ins with board chair
-  Written performance evaluation

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What Should the Chief Executive Expect from the Board?

-  Timely and clear decisions
-  Informed and prepared directors
-  Mutual accountability
-  No micromanaging
-  A board that speaks with one voice



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What Should the Board Expect from the Chief Executive?

Expectations →

- Positive attitude
- Identification of issues
- Strategic information
- Recommendations for action before meetings
- No surprises! Accept accountability

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Board Responsibilities

1. Exceptional boards govern in *constructive partnership* with the CEO, becoming allies together in pursuit of the mission, and building a relationship based on trust and forthrightness.
2. CEOs can encourage a constructive partnership with their boards – starting with the Board Chair – by cultivating relationships, evaluating strategies to inform the board, and facilitating a balance in roles and responsibilities.

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Up Next

Week 2

Structuring the Work of the Board

BoardSource 750 9th St NW Ste 650 Washington, DC 20001
Phone: 202-349-2500 | Fax: 202-349-2599
www.boardsource.org

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