



**Nonprofit Board Chairs  
Leadership Certificate Series  
Webinar One**



© 2015. Not to be distributed or reproduced without express permission of BoardSource.



**Week One Agenda**

- I. Context for the Work of the Board
- II. The Board Chair's Role
- III. The Board Chair-Chief Executive Partnership
- IV. Communication and Facilitation Skills



© 2015 BoardSource 2

## I. Context for the Work of the Board




## Organizational Lifecycles and Board Leadership

Board Characteristics	Start-Up (to begin)	Adolescent (to grow)	Mature (to sustain)
1. Size, composition, and structure	Small, homogenous	Expanded	Formal nominating process; diversity of skills; committees and task forces
2. Role and activities	Hands-on role in both management and oversight	Formalized role with board member job descriptions	Reduces operational role; focus on policy & sustainability
3. Relationship with Chief Executive	May be just hiring the chief executive; informal performance review	Clarified planning function; formal evaluation & goal setting	Conducts formal evaluation; creates succession plan
4. Board Development		Discussion of board performance and how the board needs to improve	Board formally assesses itself and creates a board development plan

## Full Board Responsibilities

- 1. Establish Strategic Direction**
  - Determine mission and purpose
  - Ensure effective planning
- 2. Ensure Necessary Resources**
  - Ensure adequate financial resources
  - Select the chief executive
  - Build a competent board
  - Enhance the organization's public standing
- 3. Provide Oversight**
  - Monitor and strengthen programs and services
  - Protect assets and provide financial oversight
  - Ensure legal and ethical integrity
  - Support and evaluate the chief executive

 © 2015 BoardSource 5

## Legal Duties

### Duty of Care


- Using your best judgment
- Actively participating, paying attention
- Asking pertinent questions

### Duty of Loyalty

- Avoiding conflicts of interest
- Putting aside personal and professional interests

### Duty of Obedience

- Staying true to the organization's mission
- Obeying the law, both public and organizational

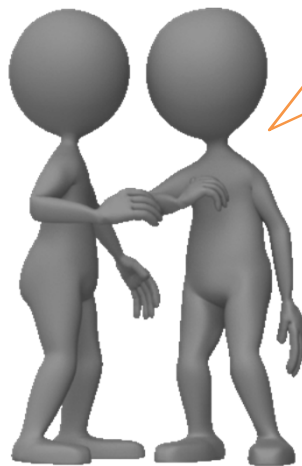
 © 2015 BoardSource 6

## II. The Board Chair's Role

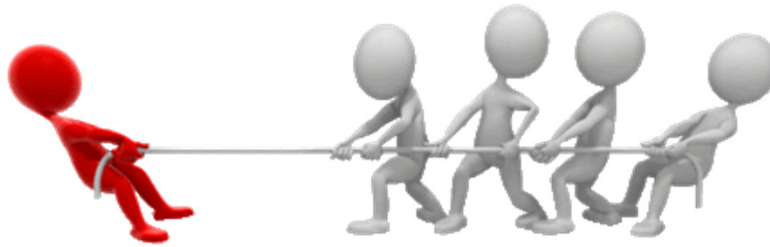


Just Between Us...

Why Were  
You Elected  
Chair?



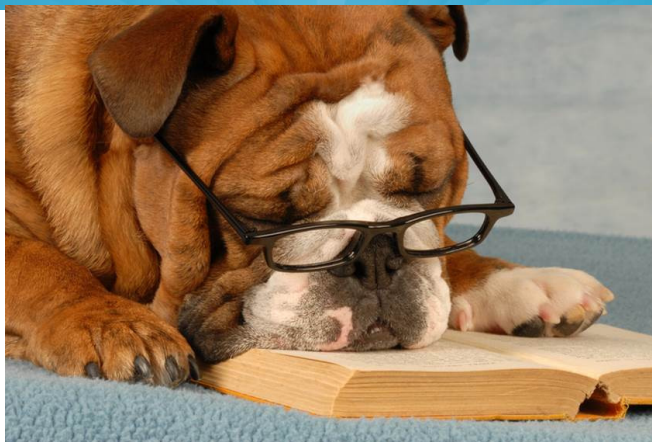
**A:** You're a Natural Leader



© 2015 BoardSource

9

**B:** You Had Some Free Time



© 2015 BoardSource

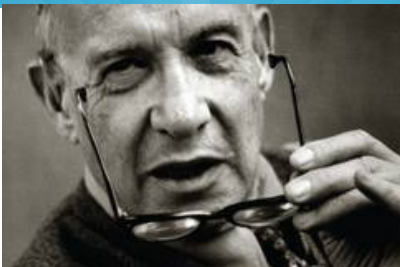
10

**C:** Your Excuse for Not Serving Wasn't As Good as the Others



**BOARDSOURCE**<sup>®</sup> © 2015 BoardSource 11

**D:** You're Passionate about the Mission and Want to Contribute to the Success of the Organization



*"Management is doing things right;  
Leadership is doing the right things."*  
Peter Drucker

**BOARDSOURCE**<sup>®</sup> © 2015 BoardSource 12

## It Helps to Know the Job



© 2015 BoardSource

13

## The Board Chair's Key Duties

### Board Members

- Ensure everyone carries out roles and responsibilities

### Community

- Cultivate relationships
- Serve as ambassador and advocate for the organization

### Meetings

- Promote meaningful dialogue

### Board Committees

- Ensure ongoing communication
- Appoint chairs



© 2015 BoardSource

14

## Chief Executive's Roles

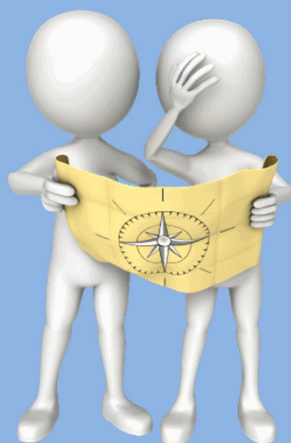
- Manage the organization by planning, coordinating, and implementing the mission in accordance with board policies
- Represent the organization in the community
- Support the board with strategic information, ideas, perspectives, and connections



© 2015 BoardSource

15

## III. The Board Chair-Chief Executive Partnership





## 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."*

*-Board Chair*



© 2015 BoardSource

17

## Constructive Partnership



***Constructive partnership*** is achieved when exceptional boards become allies with the Chief Executive in pursuit of mission; constructive partnership is characterized by mutual trust, forthrightness, and healthy formal and informal communication



© 2015 BoardSource

18

## Partnership Challenges

- Gender
- Age
- Ethnic, cultural, religious background
- Tenure of chief executive
- Personality type
- Assertiveness or lack thereof
- Degree of confidence in oneself and in the other person
- Fear of making waves or hurting feelings
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Feeling uncertain or intimidated



© 2015 BoardSource

19

## Creating a Positive Relationship

1. **Communicate** openly and often, good news and bad
2. Address concerns and sensitive issues
3. Keep egos in check
4. Be considerate and **respectful**
5. Clarify **expectations** about roles and responsibilities
6. Acknowledge each other's contributions to the work and partnership




© 2015 BoardSource

20

- Common expectations
- Cooperative planning
- Open & honest communication
- Respect
- Mutual evaluation

Result in a clear and common understanding of

- Where we are going
- Why we are going there
- How we will get there
- How we will know we have arrived

 © 2015 BoardSource 21

## IV. Communication and Facilitation Skills



## Culture of Inquiry

Dimensions = Information + Nature of Debate

### *Considerations:*

- Group Think -- Are decisions simply ratified by the board?  
Are all voices heard?
- Is there a two-way appreciation of challenging questions?
- How much real candor is there between the CEO and board members?



© 2015 BoardSource

23

## Running Great Board Meetings

### Questions:

- 2 things that characterize a great board meeting?
- 2 things that detract from an effective board meeting?



© 2015 BoardSource

24

## Board Chair's Role

- Meeting climate
- Meeting agenda
- Board member engagement



© 2015 BoardSource

25

## Constructive Board Meetings

- Invite participation.
- Focus agendas on strategic issues.
- Develop effective communication processes.
- Set aside time for discussion.
- Use committees constructively.
- Solicit feedback.



© 2015 BoardSource

26

## Engaging Board Members

- Cultivate one-on-one relationships.
- Strengthen board communications.
- Hold periodic board retreats.
- Schedule comprehensive board assessments, which includes board feedback and action items.
- Delegate leadership responsibilities to board members.
- Be available.



© 2015 BoardSource

27



© 2015 BoardSource

28

# Contact Us

## **BoardSource**

750 9<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 650

Washington, DC 20001-4590

Phone (202) 349-2500

Web site: [www.boardsource.org](http://www.boardsource.org)

General email: [mail@boardsource.org](mailto:mail@boardsource.org)



© 2015 BoardSource

29