

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

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# About Your Presenter



- BoardSource, Senior Governance Consultant
- Principal & Consultant, Sage Consulting Network, Inc.
- Previous- Director of Consulting and Training at a State Association of Nonprofits
- Clinical Psychologist- previous Healthcare Executive
- Performance Improvement Expert- LEAN Six Sigma -Green Belt

# 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

# I. Context for the Work of the Board



# The Who, What, and How of Board Performance



## PEOPLE (WHO) Board Composition & Structure

### Composition

- Size & Terms
- Composition/Diversity & Inclusion
- Recruitment & Elections

### Structures

- Committees
- Meetings



## WORK (WHAT) Board Responsibility

### Strategy & Programs

- Mission, Vision, Programs
- Strategic Planning
- Strategic Issues

### Ambassadorship

- Advocacy & Public Policy
- Fundraising

### Financial Oversight & Accountability

- Financial Oversight  
& Sustainability



## CULTURE (HOW) Leadership & Board Dynamics

### Board Development

- Role Clarity
- Orientation
- Assessment

### Board Dynamics

- Chair & Board Succession Planning
- Group Dynamics & Board Member Engagement

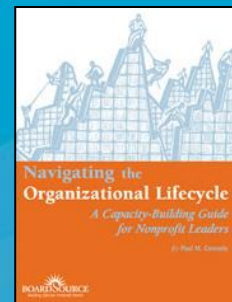
### CEO Relations

- Constructive Partnership
- Evaluation & Compensation
- CEO Succession Planning

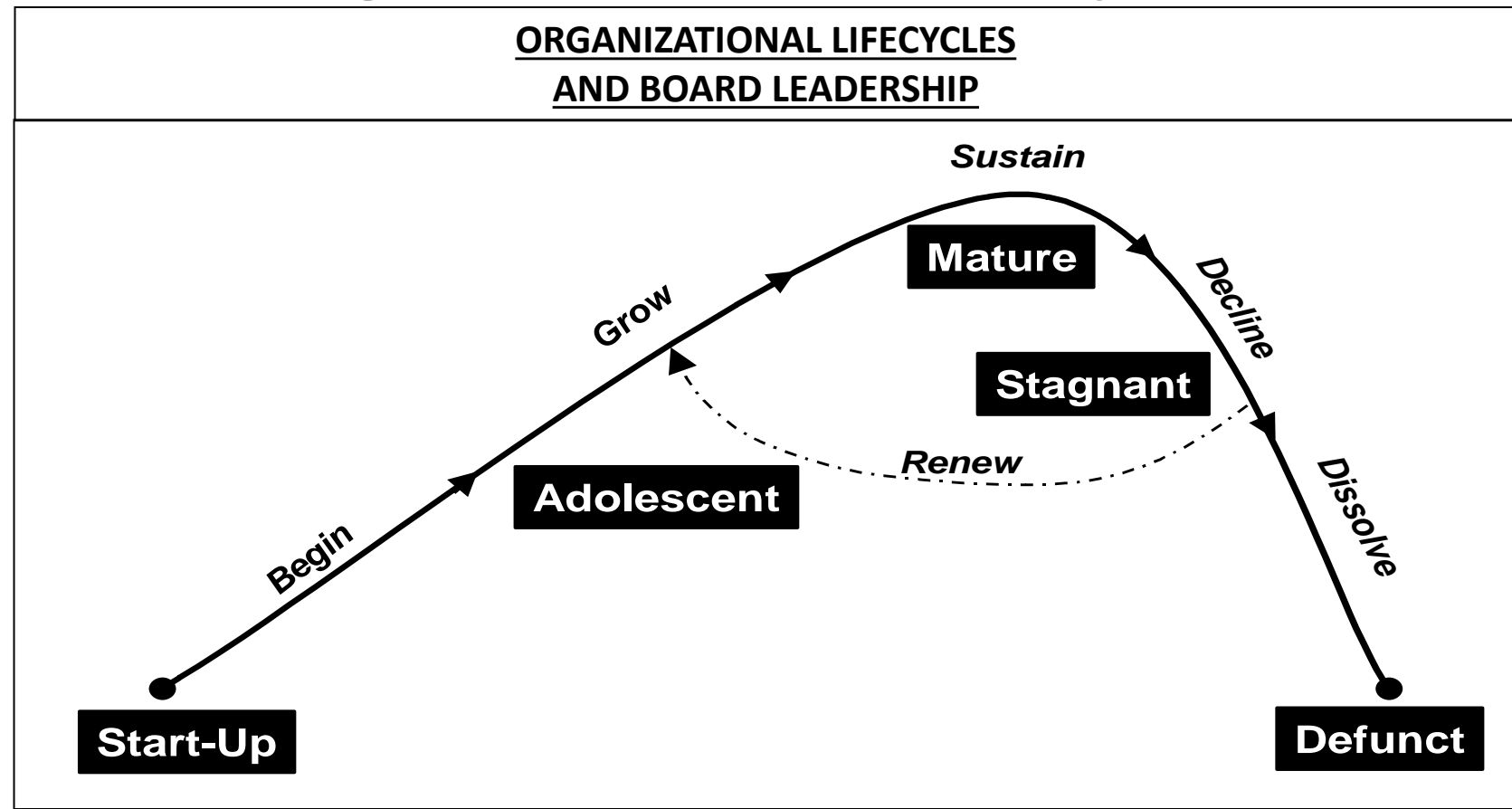
# Organizational Lifecycles and Board Leadership

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





# Organizational Lifecycles



# Full Board Responsibilities

## 1. Establish Strategic Direction

- Determine mission and purpose
- Ensure effective planning

## 2. Ensure Necessary Resources

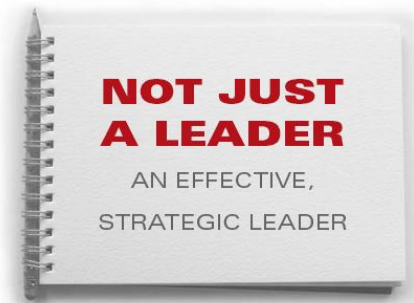
- Ensure adequate financial resources
- Select the chief executive
- Build a competent board
- Enhance the organization's public standing

## 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



# Strategic Leadership



1. Where should our organization be headed and what should it become over the long run?
2. What should our organization be now and in the near future?
3. How well is our organization performing -- programmatically, financially, and administratively?

# 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

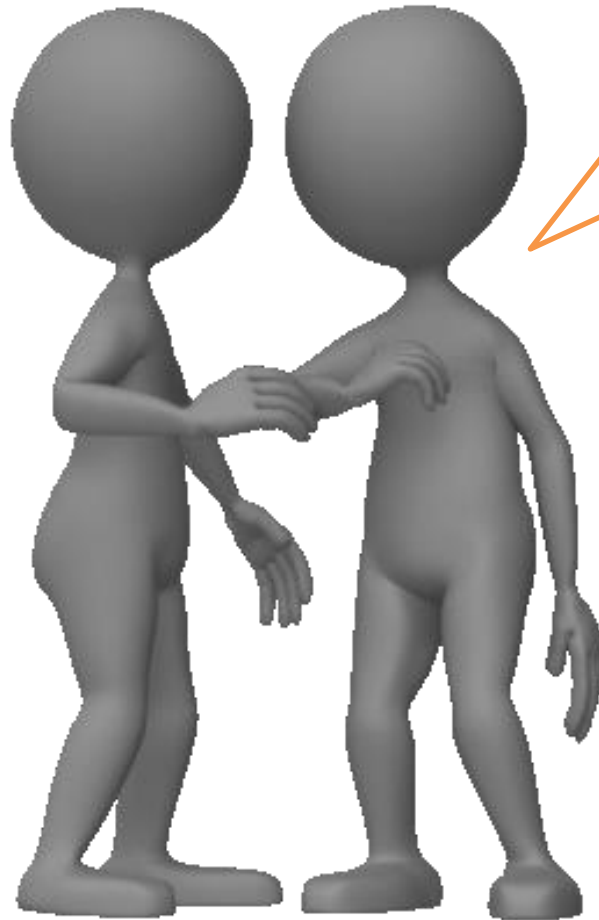
- Staying true to the organization's mission
- Obeying the law, both public and organizational

## II. The Board Chair's Role

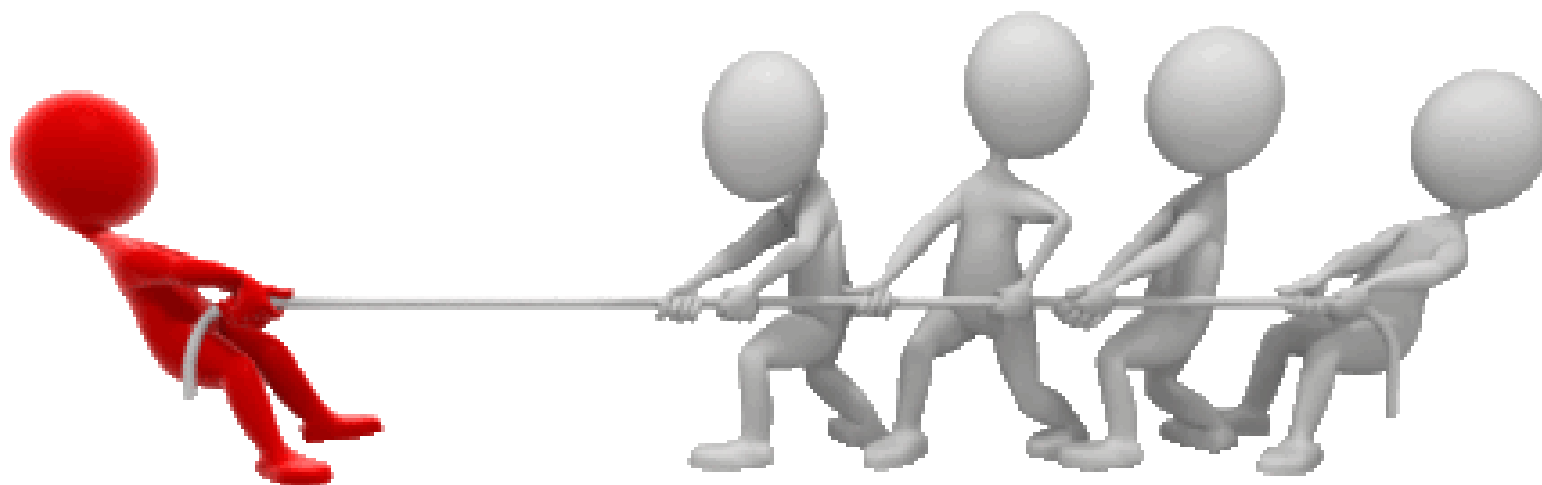


# Just Between Us...

Why Were  
You Elected  
Chair?



# A: You're a Natural Leader



B:

# You Had Some Free Time



C:

# Your Excuse for Not Serving Wasn't As Good as the Others





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

# It Helps to Know the Job



# 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

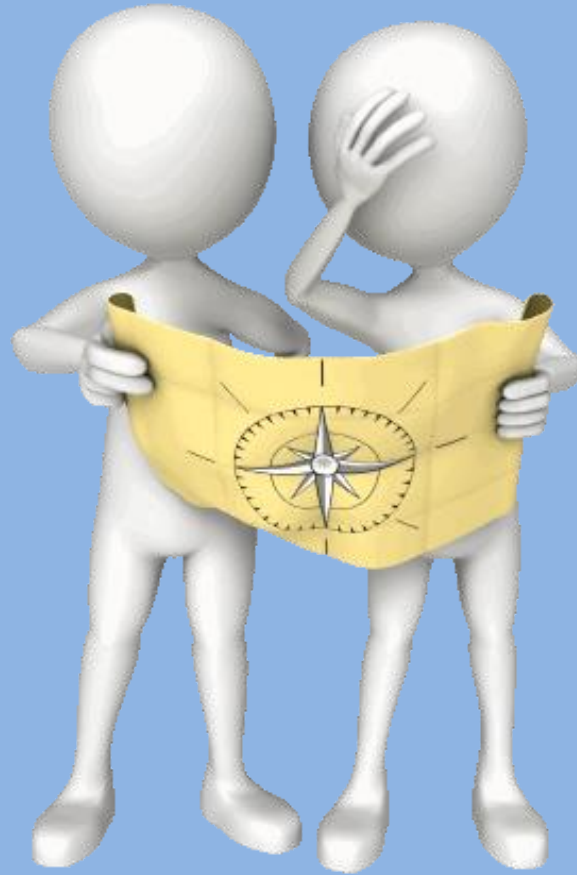
## Board Committees

- Ensure ongoing communication
- Appoint chairs

# 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

# 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*



# 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



# 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

# Creating a Positive Relationship

1. Communicate openly and often, good news and bad
2. Address concerns and sensitive issues- timely
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

# The 9 biggest challenges for chief executives in working with their board of directors:

1. Fundraising

2. Increasing the diversity of the board

3. Monitoring legislative and regulatory issues that may impact the organization

4. Community building and outreach

5. Evaluating the chief executive

6. Monitoring organizational performance and impact

7. Thinking strategically as a board

8. Understanding the board's roles and responsibilities

9. Adopting and following a strategic plan



## 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?

# Running Great Board Meetings

## Questions:

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

# Board Chair's Role – Intentional Practices

- Meeting culture
- Meeting agenda
- Board member engagement
  - Attending meeting, committees, task force, work groups, ambassadors, volunteers
  - Accountability
- Collaboration with Executive about staff role and engagement



# Constructive Board Meetings

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

# 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.



# Contact Us

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