

Leadership Certificate of Nonprofit Education for Chief Executives

BoardSource®



Jenifer Holland
Director of Consulting

Justin Wood
**Governance Programs
Manager**

Certificate for Nonprofit Chief Executives Webinar Series Resources

Week 1

For content related questions please contact the BoardSource Knowledge Center: webinarquestions@boardsource.org.

- [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](#)

- **Publications**

- [Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards](#)
- [ePolicy Sampler – Chief Executive \(Word Doc\)](#)
- [ePolicy Sampler – Communications \(Word Doc\)](#)
- [ePolicy Sampler – Mission-Related Issues \(Word Doc\)](#)

This is your private, unique online portal for the series.

Have questions?

Contact Andy Davis, Director of Training, BoardSource at andy.davis@boardsource.org

About the Series: Objectives

SESSION OBJECTIVES

- 1. Define “constructive partnership”** and name at least one strategy or tool that can help facilitate a balance in roles and responsibilities between the board and the Chief Executive.
- 2. List at least three of five areas** in which the Chief Executive and the Board Chair have the opportunity to **positively structure the board’s work**.
- 3. Describe the Chief Executive’s role in developing future board leadership** and identify 1-2 ways to do so.

About the Series: Schedule and Topics



SESSION 1 Thursday, March 9th

- Constructive Partnership

SESSION 2 Thursday, March 16th

- Structuring the Work of the Board

SESSION 3 Thursday, March 23rd

- Supporting and Evaluating Board Performance

Week One Agenda

1. Board Relationships in Context

2. Cultivate Relationships

3. Inform and Communicate

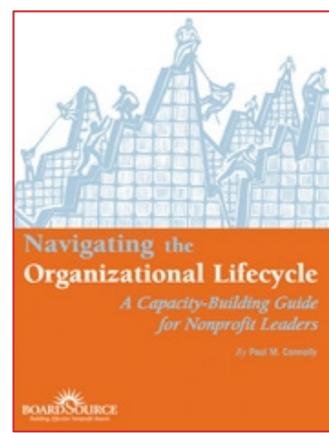
4. Facilitate a Balance in Roles and Responsibilities

1. Board's Relationships in Context

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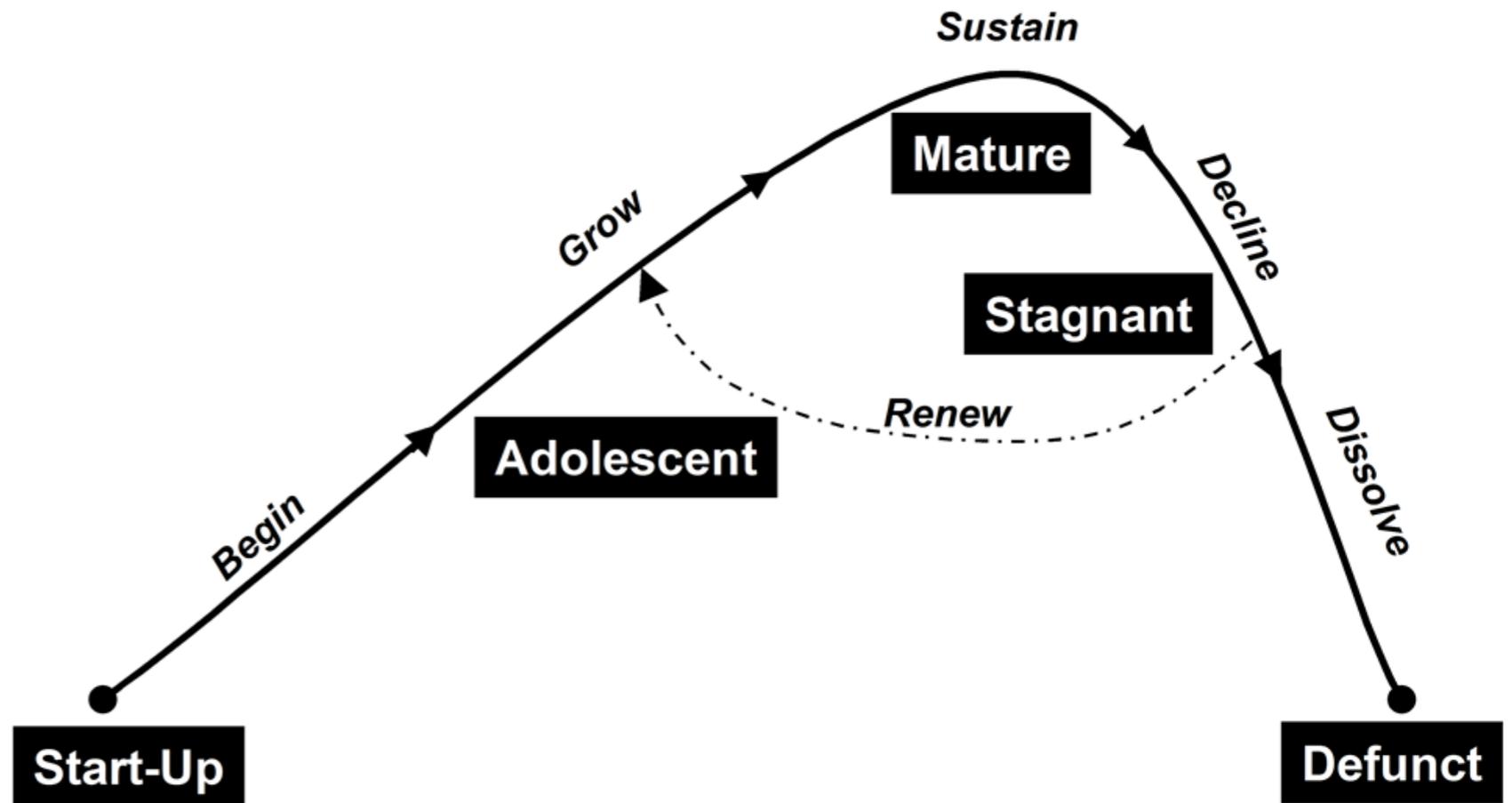
A Chance to Reflect...



YOU AND YOUR ORGANIZATION

- How long has your organization been in existence?
- How large is your organization (FTE, budget size)
- How large is your board?
- How long have you served as CEO/ED for this organization?

ORGANIZATIONAL LIFECYCLES AND BOARD LEADERSHIP



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; community representation; diversity of skills; committees and task forces are developed
2. Role and activities	Hands-on role in both management and oversight	Formalized role with board member job descriptions	Clarifies role in relation to Executive Director; reduces operational role, increases policy and fundraising function
3. Relationship with Chief Executive	May just be hiring the Chief Executive; conducts an informal performance review	Clarified planning function and deliberate decision-making process; formal evaluation process and early succession planning discussions	Conducts a formal evaluation of the Executive Director and creates a 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

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.”

Chat Question: Challenges



▼ Chat ✕

from Webinar Administrator to All Participants:
What are your biggest challenges in working with your board of directors?

Send to: ▼

Board report card

	CEO	Chair
 Responsibility	A-	A-
 Mission	B+	B+
 Financial Oversight	B+	B+
 Legal/Ethical Oversight	B	B+
 CEO Support	B-	B
 Strategy	B-	B
 CEO Evaluation	B-	B
 Monitors Performance	C+	C+
 Community Relations	C	C+
 Board Composition	C	C
 Fundraising		

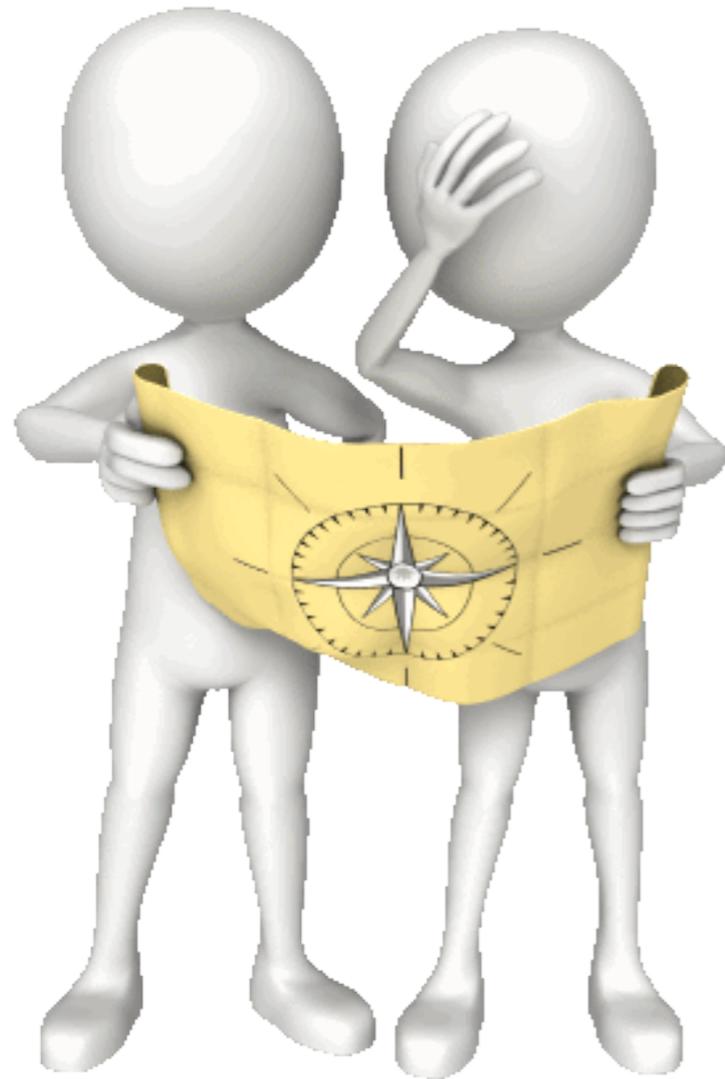
Boards earn a (B-) average

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

Developing Common Ground



“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

2. Cultivate Relationships

Build Habits and Interactions that Engage and Involve the Board

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Cultivating Relationships



Strategies for cultivating relationships:

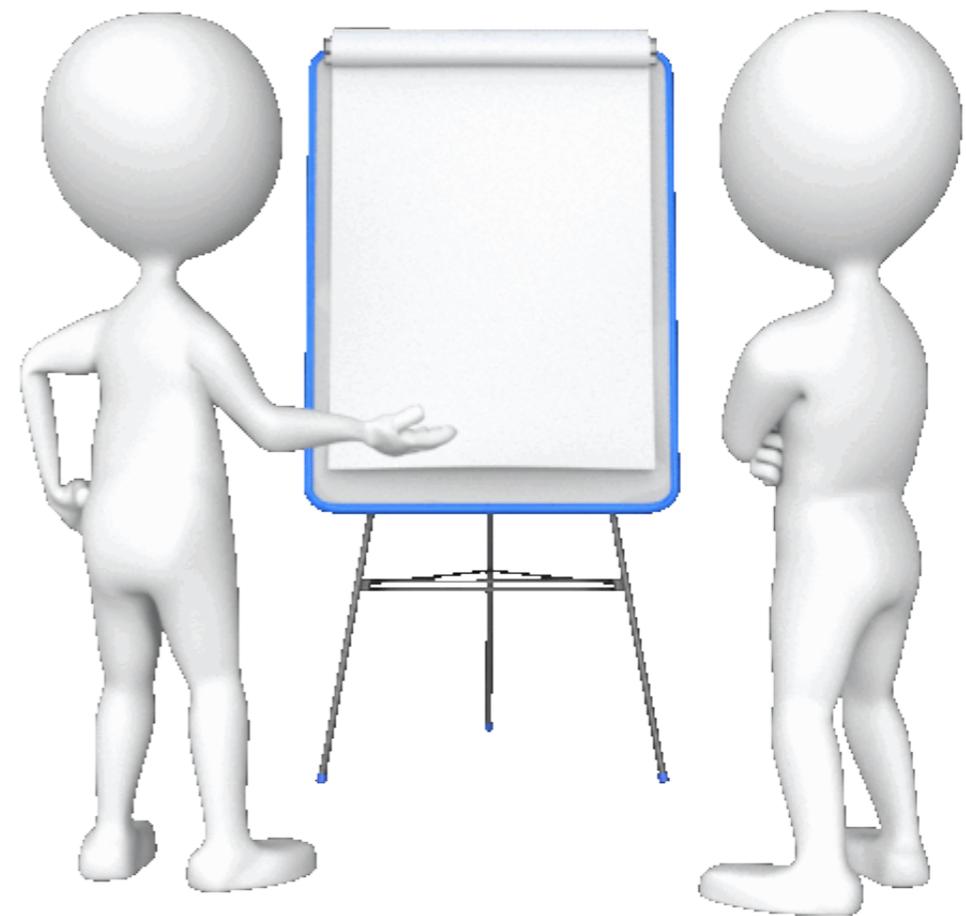
1. Practice self-management
2. Avoid self-defeating habits
3. Juggle roles and responsibilities
4. Create and maintain a relationship with the board chair
5. Build relationships with individual board members



Practice Self-Management

Selected strategies:

1. Ask questions
2. Build a support network
3. Stay open and approachable



Avoid Self-Defeating Habits

Selected Strategies – To Avoid Self

-Defeating Habits, **Don't**:

1. Do everything yourself
2. Drown the board in information
3. Avoid uncomfortable situations
4. Avoid sharing the bad news at the first sign of trouble



Tool: Board Chair – Chief Executive Questionnaire

I have served on boards where the relationship between [the board chair and the chief executive] is energizing and on others where it is tense and argumentative... When the chief executive experiences problems, the best course of action is to identify areas of difference.

- Board Chair

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.

1. I think we need to check in with each other
 - a. Several times a month _____
 - b. Once a week _____
 - c. More than once a week _____
 - d. Whenever one of us has a question or information that needs to be shared _____

2. My order of preference for our communications is:
 - a. Face-to-face meetings _____ Telephone _____
 - b. E-mail _____ Other _____

3. What I value in a working relationship is:

4. Something that generally bothers me in a working relationship is:

5. Something that I find challenging in my position at this point is:

6. What you could do that would be most helpful to me in fulfilling my role is:

7. What I can offer as a contribution to our working relationship is:

8. In my opinion, other important elements to building a positive working relationship are:

Chat:

Build the Relationship with the Board Chair

▼ Chat

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from Webinar Administrator to Host (privately):

What tools or approaches do you use to build your relationship with your board chair?



3. Inform and Communicate

Prepare Board Members for Success

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Evaluate Information to Support the Board

What kinds of information does the board need?

Information that is...

1. Foundational (agendas, minutes, responsibilities)
2. Mission-specific
3. Action-oriented
4. An early indicator for future opportunities or risks



TOOLS: Maintaining a Focus on Mission

1. MAKE MISSION MATTER *Is passion for the mission central?*

1

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

2

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

3

Infuse meetings with a mission focus by inviting guest speakers, showing relevant video clips, or having board members share a "mission moment."

4

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

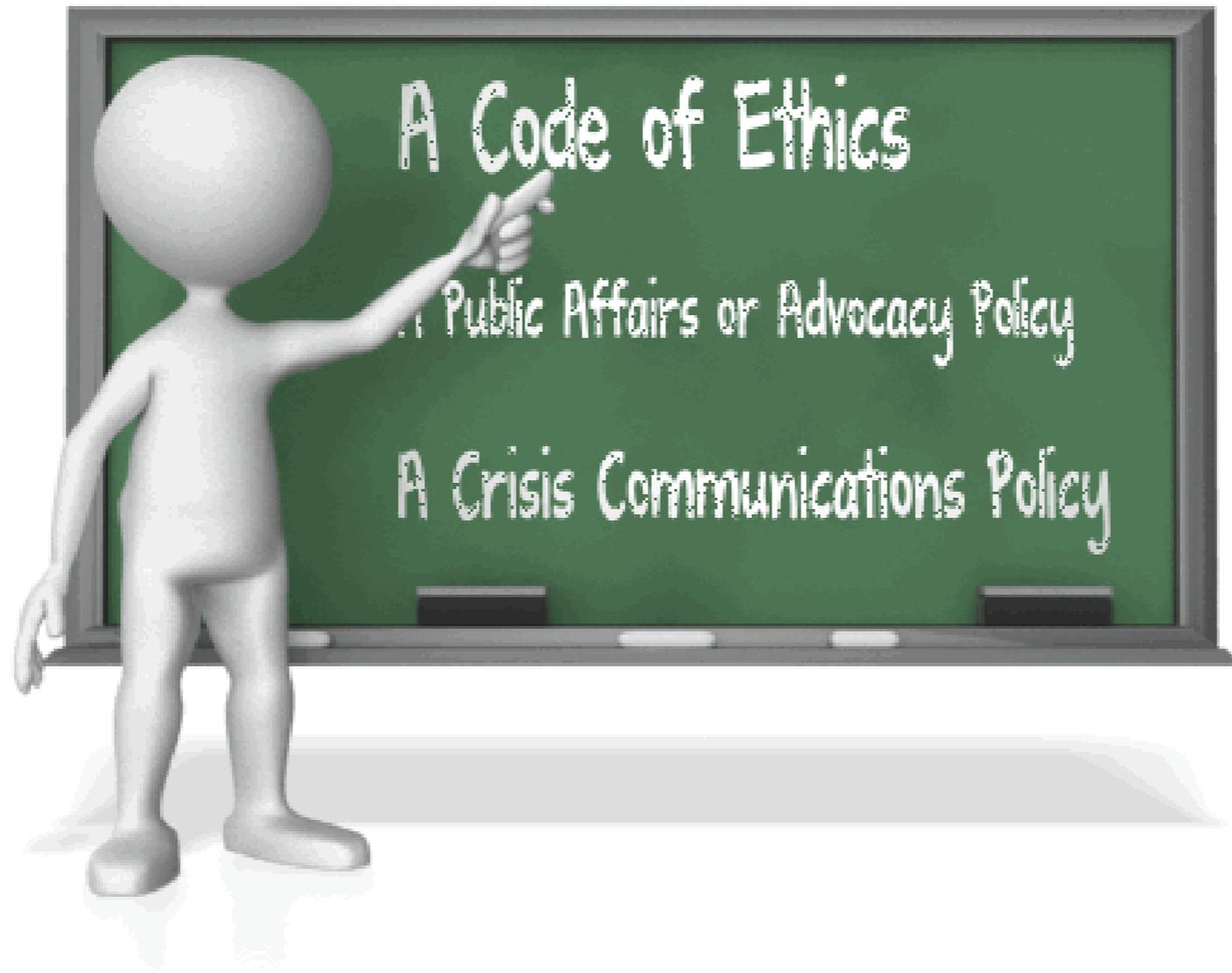
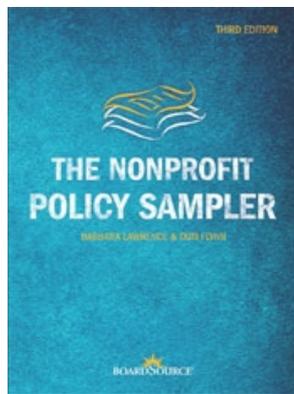
To access free, five-minute video submissions for BoardSource's Prudential Leadership Awards for Exceptional Nonprofit Boards, visit [this link](#).

Board Information: When is the “right” time?

TYPE OF COMMUNICATION	TIMEFRAME
Meeting preparation materials	Varies: within a few weeks of the meeting
Minutes	Within a few weeks following the meeting
Communications to encourage board engagement	Should be ongoing – not only just prior to – or during - meetings
Bad news and handling crises	The sooner the better



Is your organization prepared to address organizational priorities?



4. Facilitating a Balance in Roles and Responsibilities

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Board Responsibilities

1. Establish Strategic Direction

- Determine mission and purpose
- Ensure effective planning

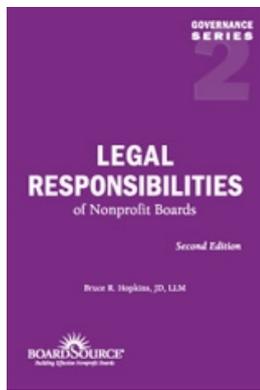
2. Ensure the Necessary Resources

- 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

Legal Obligations of Individual Board Members



Duty of...

- reasonable Care in the decision-making process;
 - *my best judgment*
- Loyalty to the organization (conflicts-of-interest policy);
 - *organization first*
- Obedience to organization's central purposes;
 - *mission first*

Internal Law of the Organization

- Articles of Incorporation & Bylaws
- Internal Policy Statements & Procedures
- Contracts with Third Parties
- Federal & State Laws (registering, reporting, etc.)
- D & O Liability Insurance

What Support Should a Board Expect From its Chief Executive?

- Strategic information/expertise
- Positive attitude toward partnership
- Identification of issues for board attention
- Staffing for committees/task forces
- Administrative support of board meetings
- Maintenance of essential documents
- **No surprises** Do what you say you're going to do; mutual accountability

What Support Should a Chief Executive expect from Board?

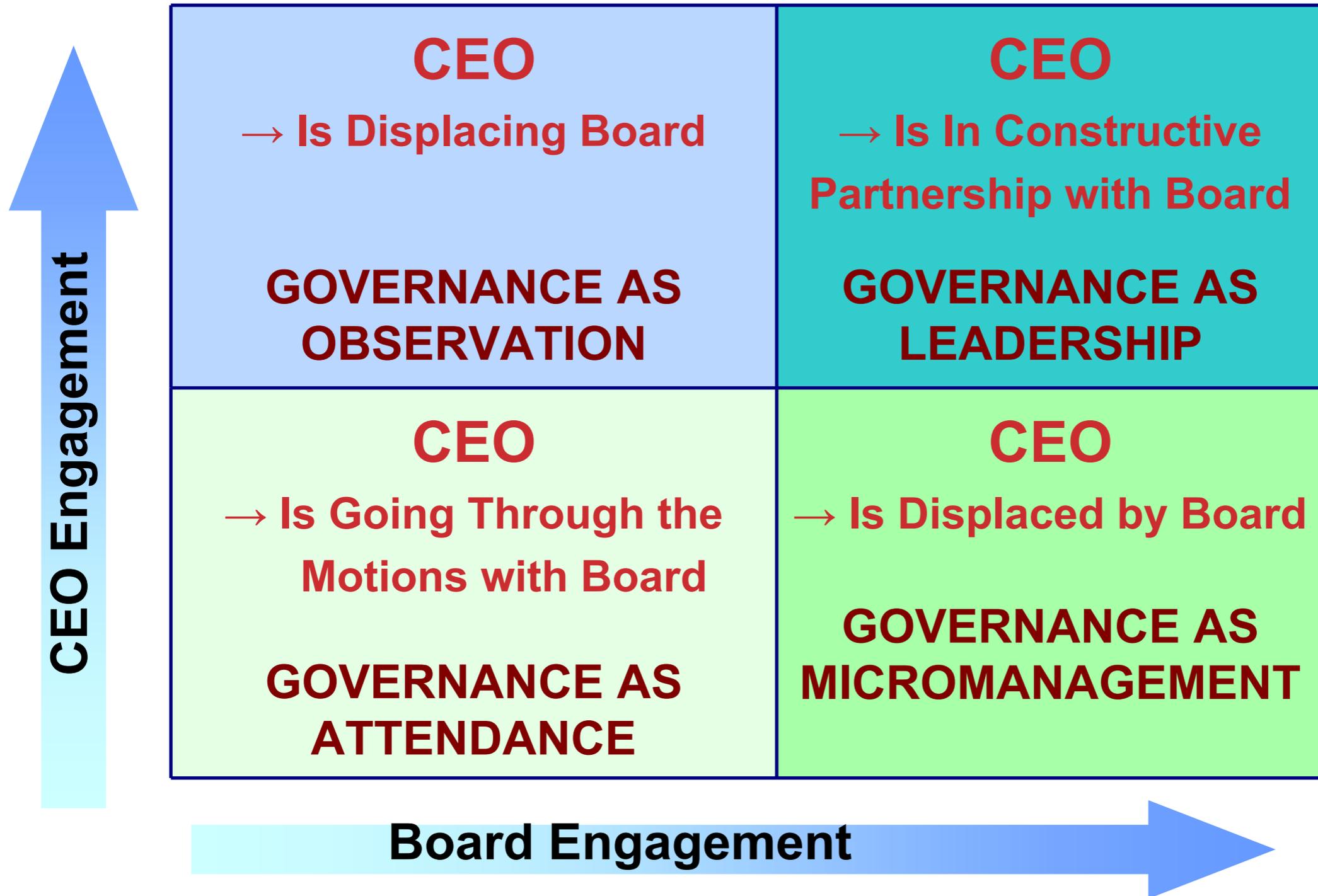
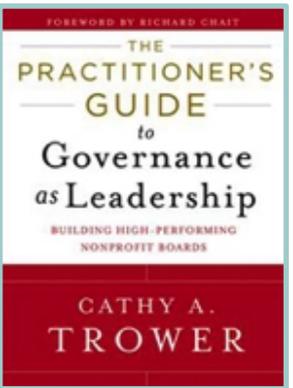
- Focus on mission and constituents
- Timely and clear decisions
- Directors who keep informed/prepared
- Appropriate governance culture (attitudes & values)
- No micromanaging
- A board that speaks with one voice
- **No surprises** Do what you say you're going to do; mutual accountability

Tools – for clarifying roles and responsibilities

Tools to Clarify Board Responsibilities	Tools to Clarify Chief Executive Responsibilities
Bylaws	Written job description
Expectations statement or job description	Formal and informal check-ins with Board Chair
Board self-assessment (full board)	Written performance evaluation
Individual board member self-assessment	



Which quadrant describes your current relationship?





Recap

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.

See You Next Week!

Contact Us

BoardSource

750 9th Street, NW, Suite 650
Washington, DC 20001-4590
Phone (202) 349-2500

Web site: www.boardsource.org
General email: mail@boardsource.org