

Week 1

Building a Constructive Partnership between the Chief Executive and the Board

Leadership Certificate of Nonprofit Education for Chief Executives

Welcome



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Certificate for Nonprofit Chief Executives Webinar Series Resources

Week 1

For content related questions please contact the BoardSource Knowledge Center: [we](#)

- [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 Andy Davis, Director of Education at
andy.davis@boardsource.org

Series Schedule and Topics

Week 1 – July 13

Building a
Constructive
Partnership

Week 2 – July 20

Structuring the Work
of the Board

Week 3 – July 27

Supporting and
Evaluating Board
Performance

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



1 Building a Constructive Partnership

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

I. Board Relationships in Context

Constructive Partnership

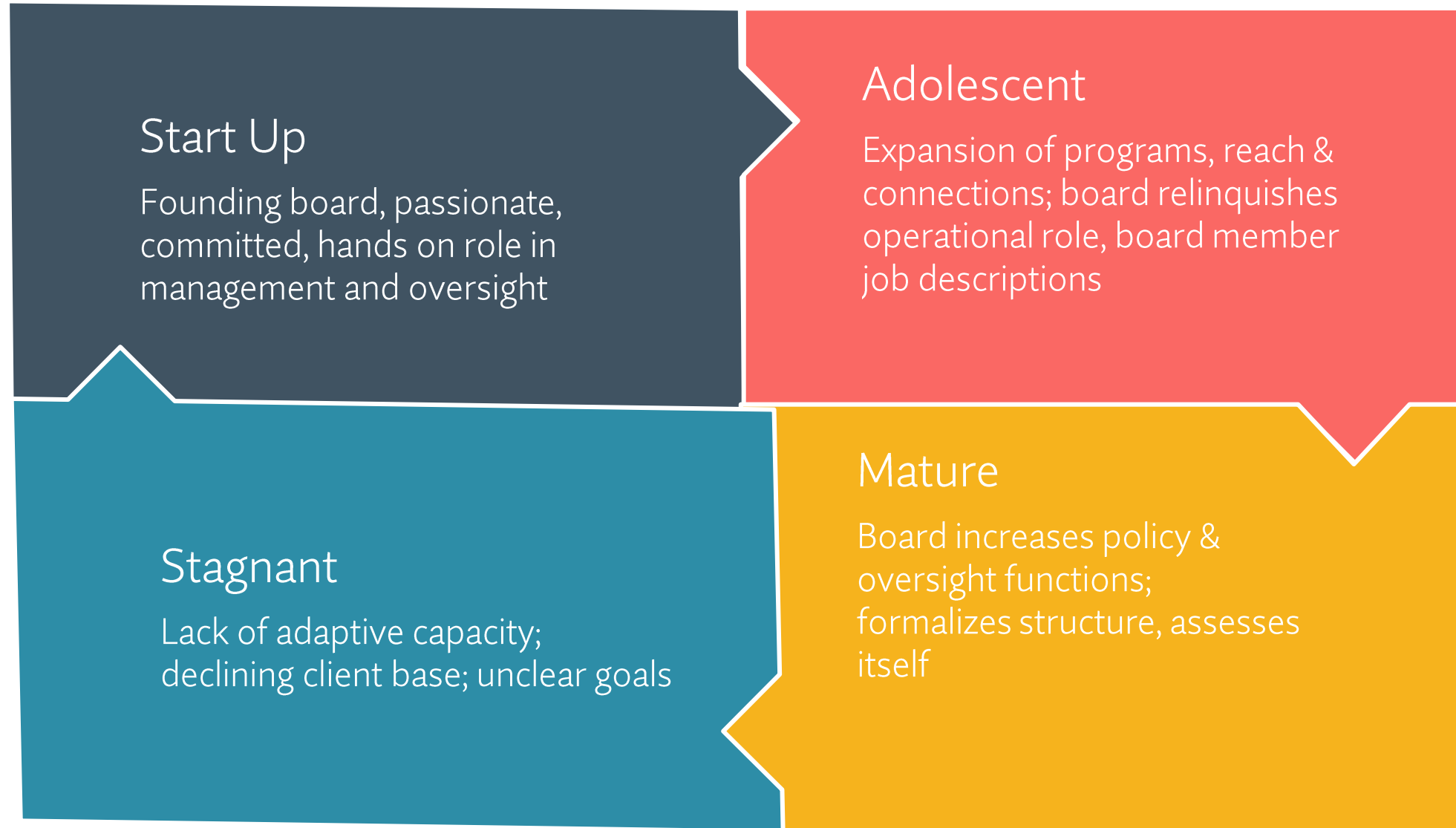


Well-led nonprofits tend to have high-performing boards, leadership succession plans, and strong partnerships between the chief executive and board members.”

Navigating the Organizational Lifecycle



Organizational Lifecycles & Board Leadership

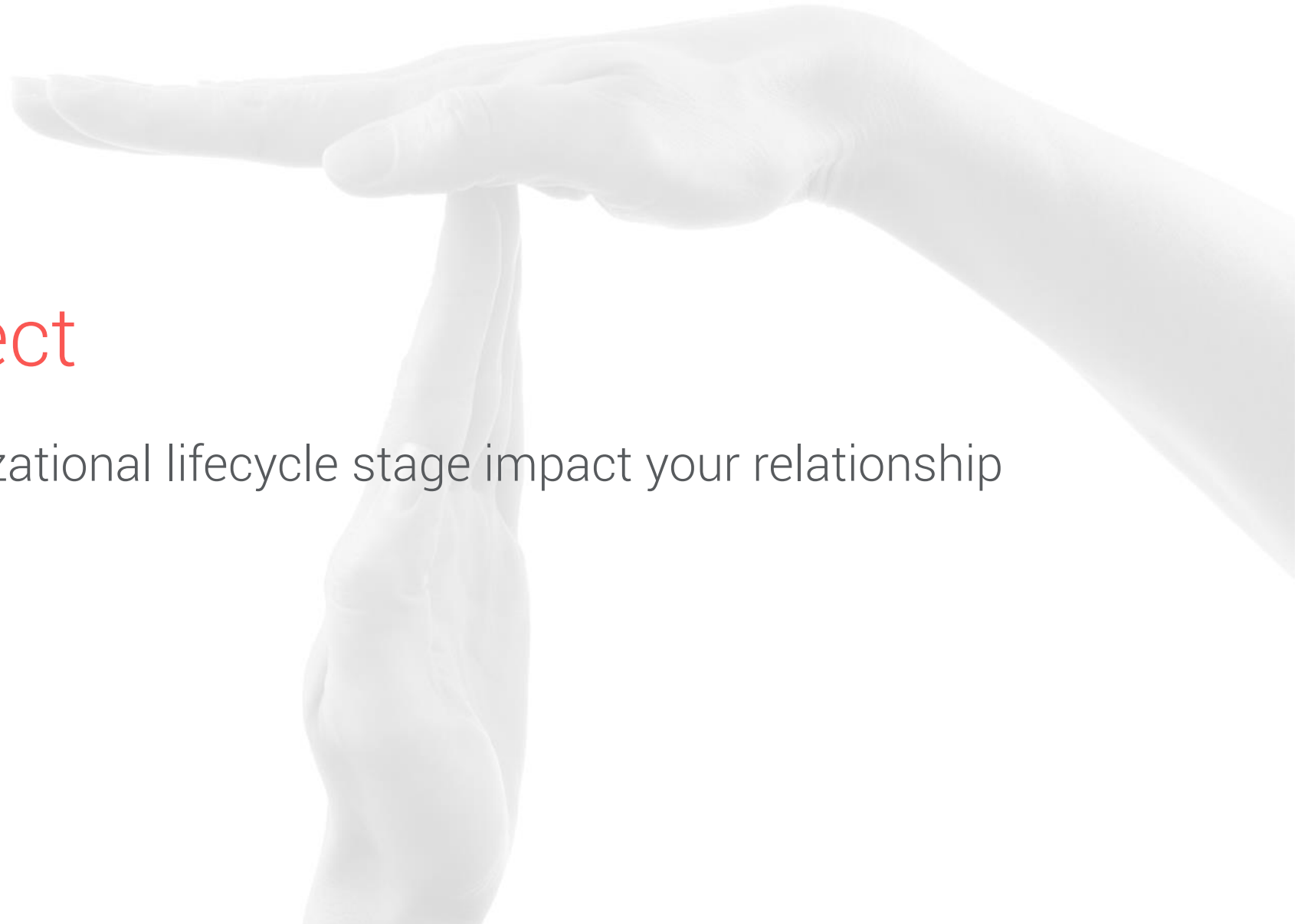


Poll Question: Which Lifecycle Stage Best Describes Your Organization?

A. Start Up	B. Adolescent	C. Mature	D. Stagnant
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Pause & Reflect

How does your organizational lifecycle stage impact your relationship with your board?



Constructive Partnership Defined

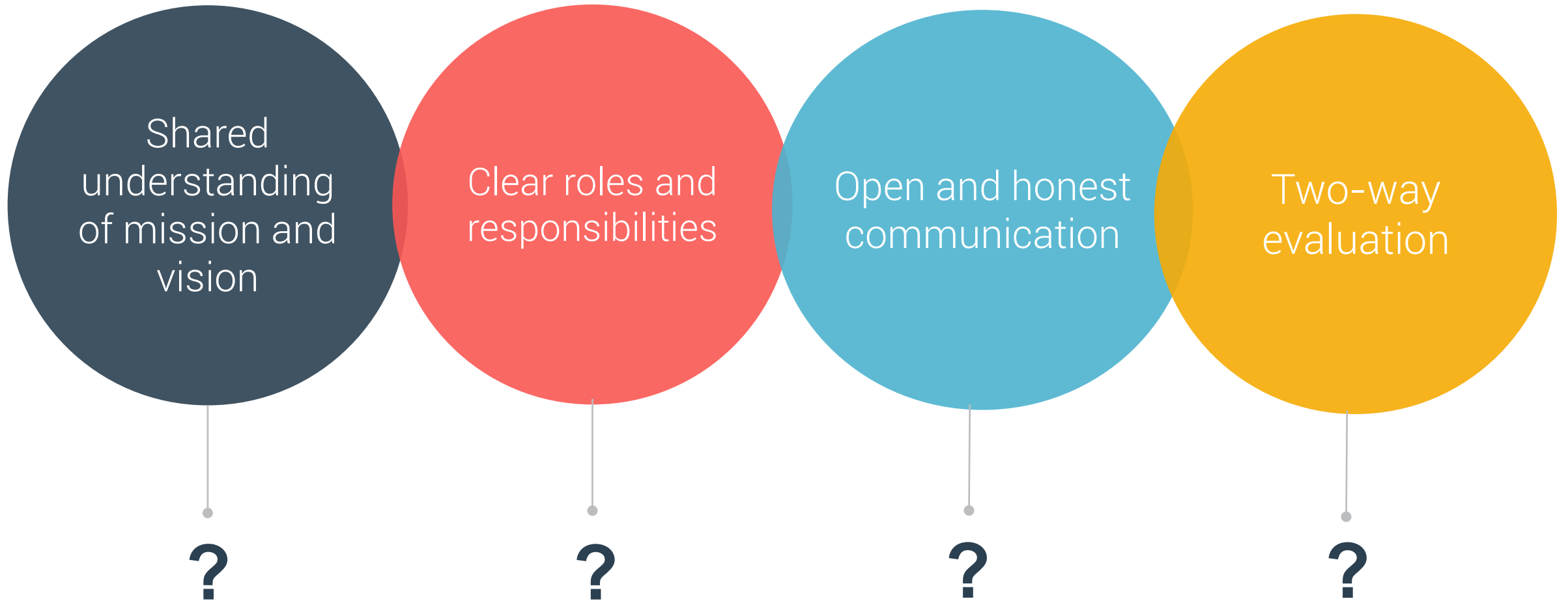


Exceptional boards govern in constructive partnership with the chief executive, recognizing that the effectiveness of the board and chief executive are interdependent. They build this partnership through trust, candor, respect, and honest communication.”

The Source, Twelve Principles of Governance that Power Exceptional Boards



Do You Have a Constructive 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.”

Chat Question

What are your biggest challenges to working with your board of directors?

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



Experience,
knowledge,
background

Personal leadership
style

Needs of the
organization

Organizational
culture

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

Strategies for Developing Common Ground



Have an open
dialogue



Provide the right
information at the
right time



Deal with issues
quickly; no
surprises!



Collaborate

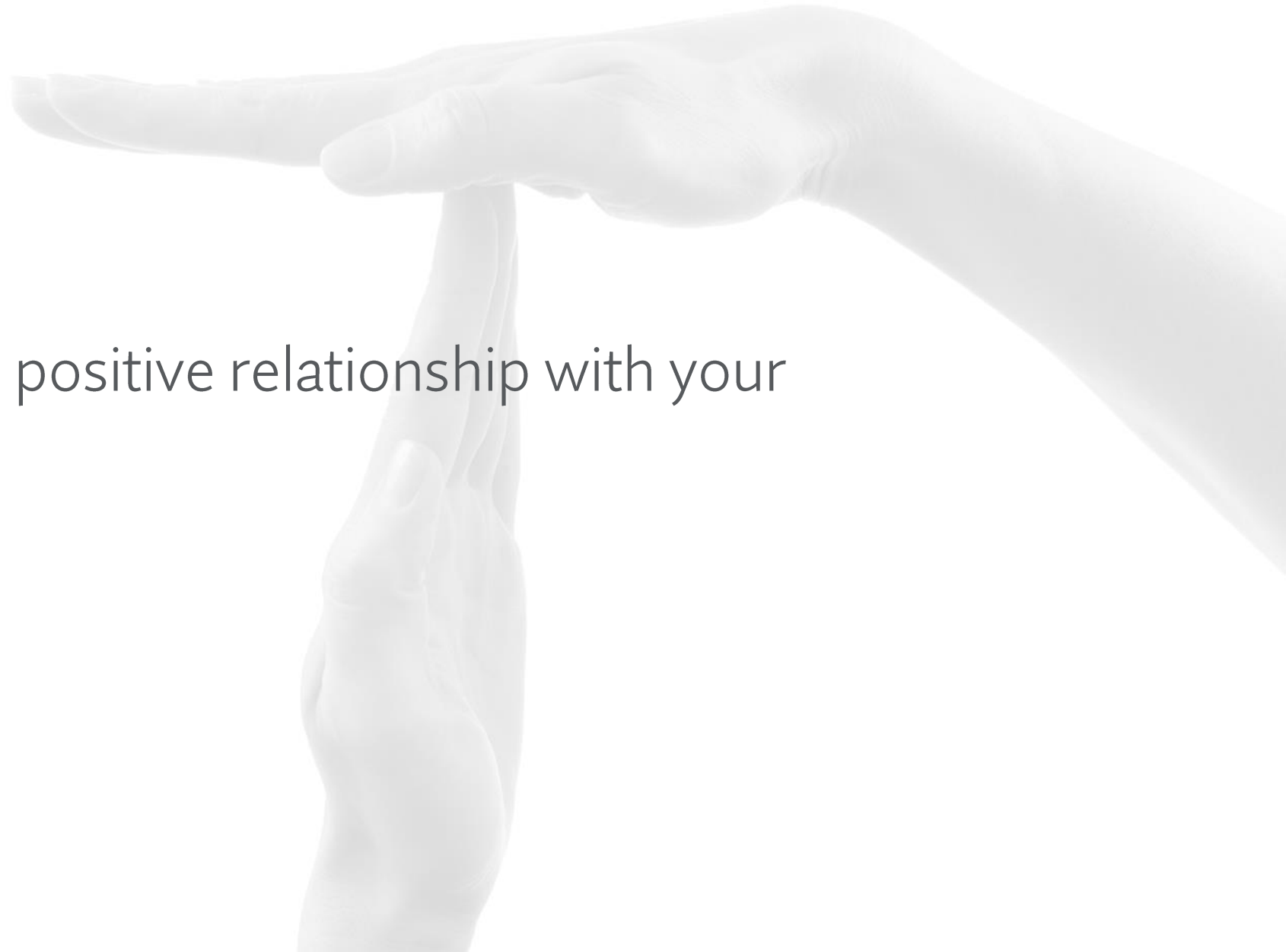


2 Cultivate Relationships

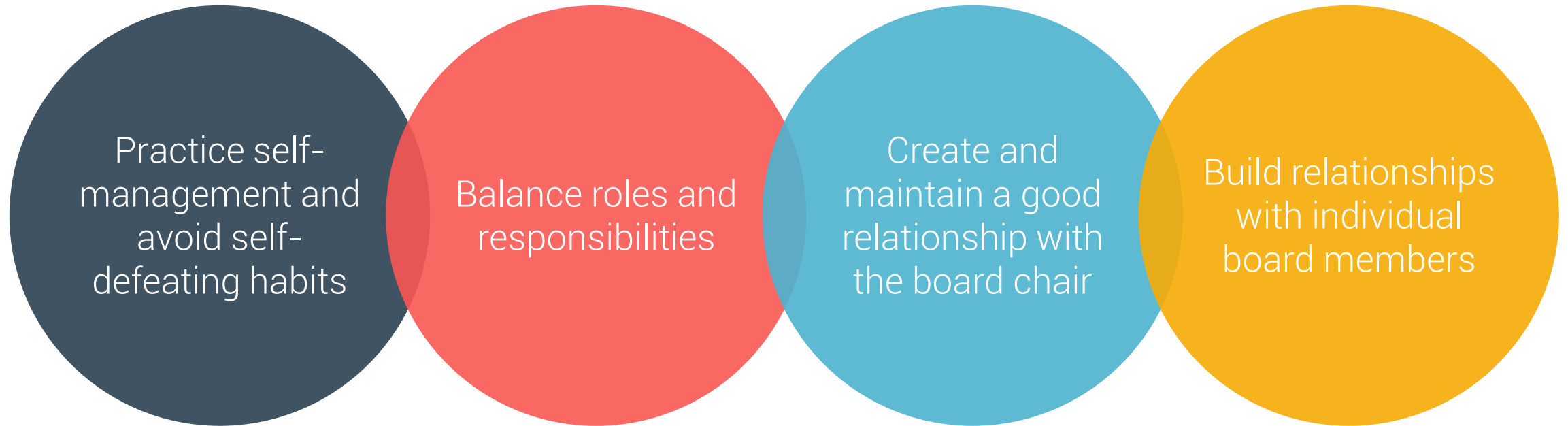
Build Habits and Interactions that Engage and Involve the Board

Chat Question

How do you cultivate a positive relationship with your board?



Cultivating a Positive Relationship with Your Board



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

Calibrating Roles: Some Pitfalls



Joe

Friendly, laid back new board chair willing to have CEO do most governance tasks

Julie

Successful at fundraising CEO who doesn't assert herself in challenging or confrontational situations

Kyle

CEO makes firm decisions without consulting others and alienates staff with rigid personality

Pablo

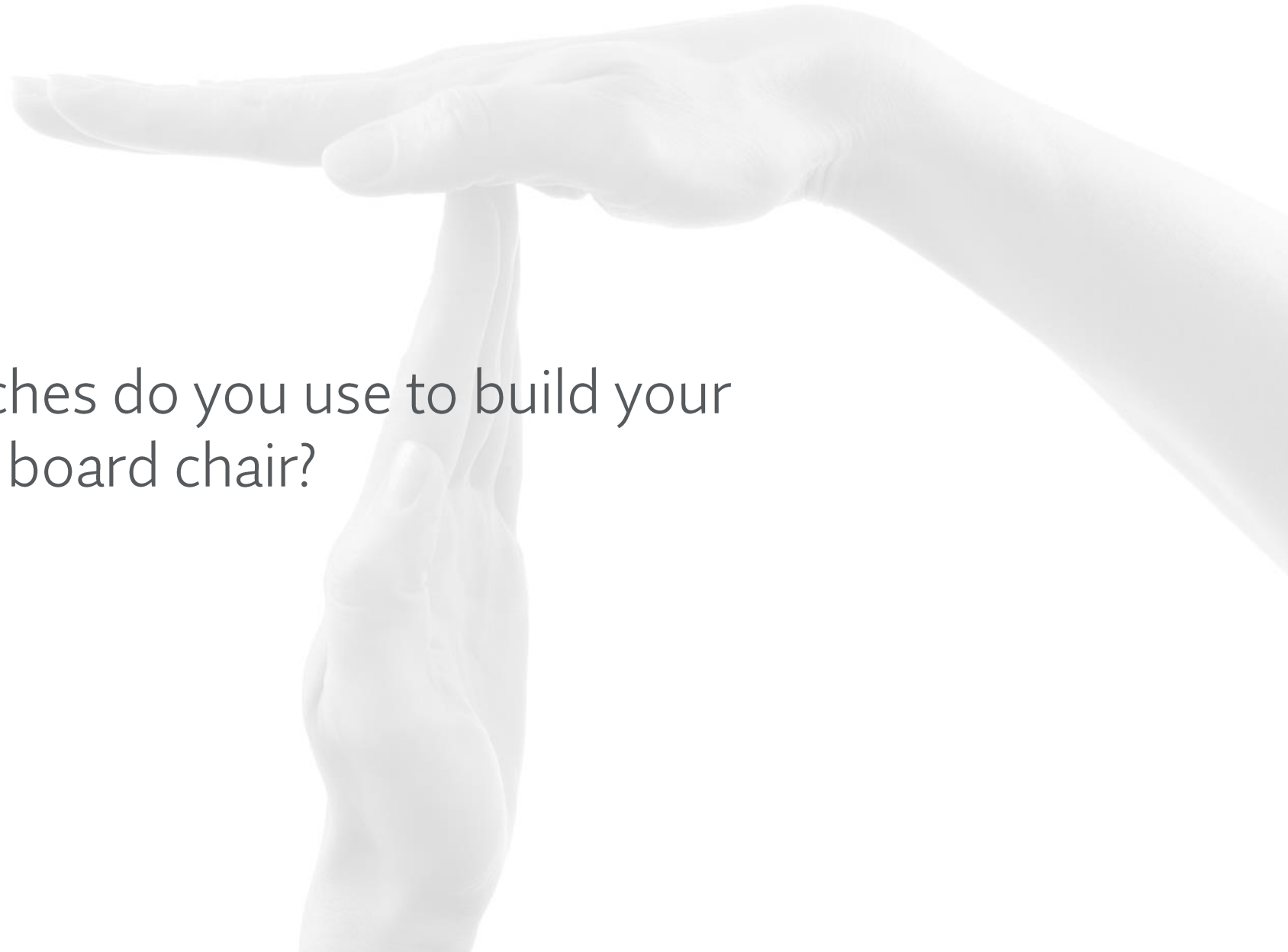
Eager new board chair wants to take over performance evaluations of all staff members

Connie

Always creates the board meeting agendas because board chairs are too busy

Chat Question

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



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

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 _____
 - E-mail _____ 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:



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

3

Inform and Communicate

Prepare Board Members for Success

Two-Way Communication

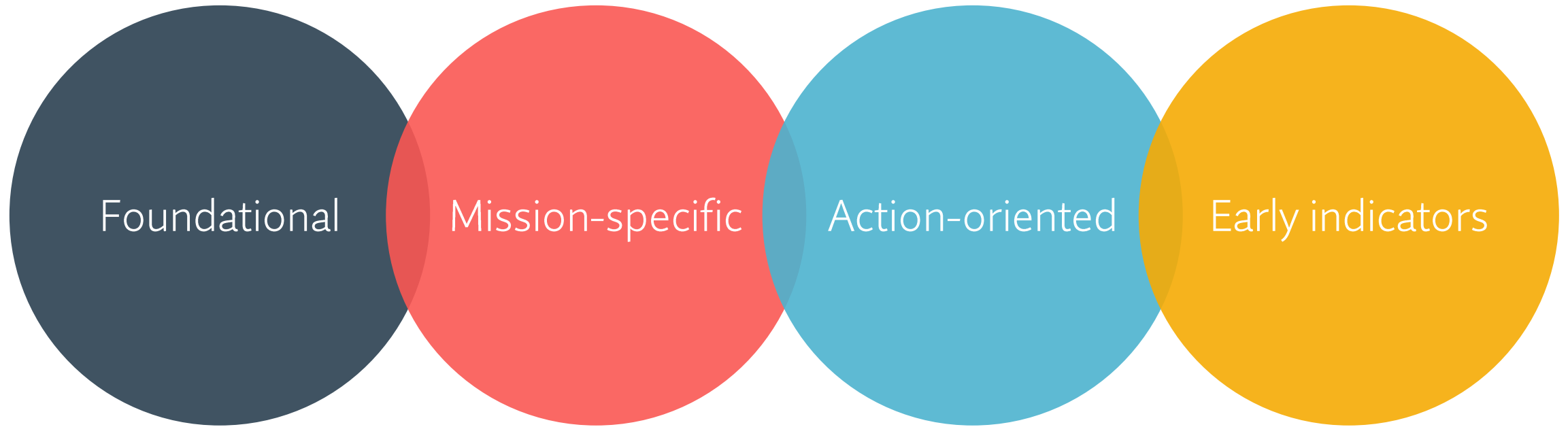


“Board members often don’t know what they don’t know...board members don’t deal with the organization’s issues on a daily basis, and we may forget details that are important to the decision-making process. We look to the chief executive to provide key information... including information about unknowns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

(Board Chair)



What Kind of Information Does Your Board Need?



Board Information – When is the Right Time?



Meeting Preparation Materials

Varies: within a few weeks of the meeting

Minutes

Within a few weeks following the meeting

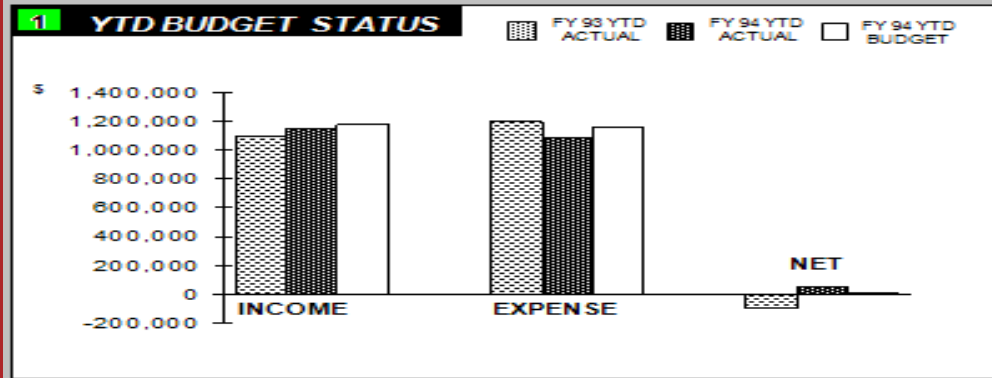
Communications to Encourage Board Engagement

Should be ongoing, not just prior to or following the meeting

Bad News and Handling Crises

The sooner the better

Sample Dashboard

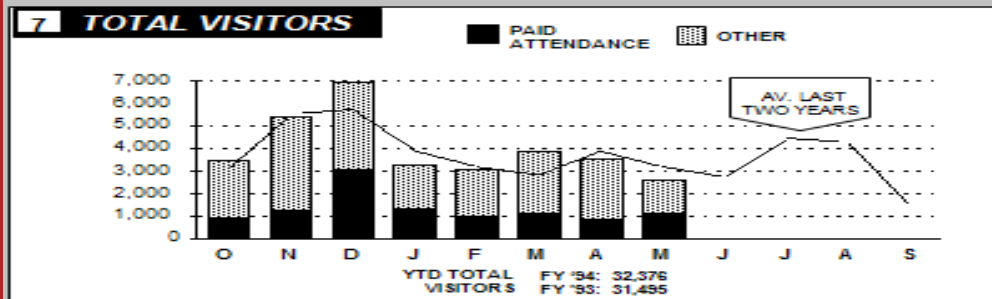
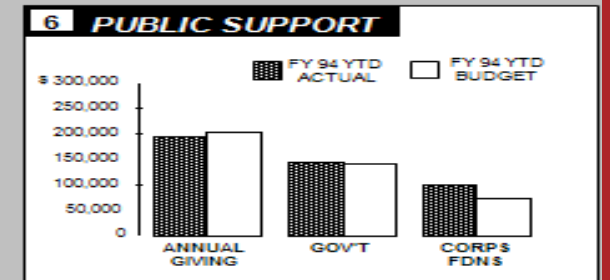
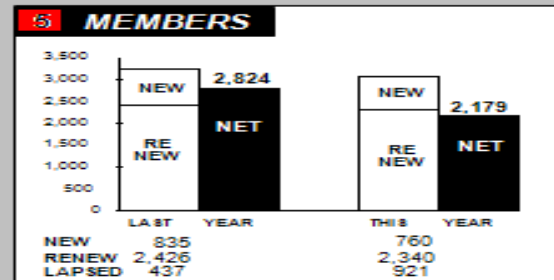
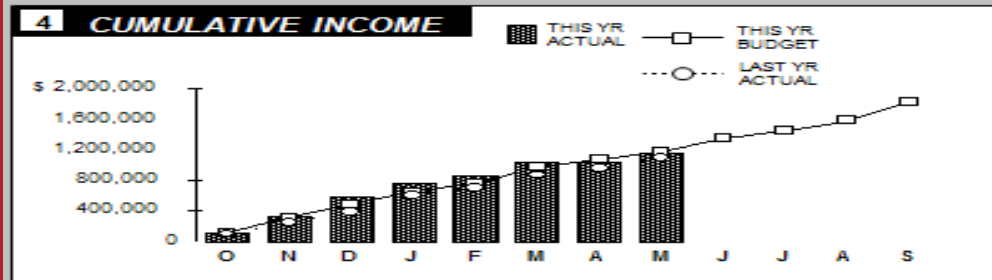
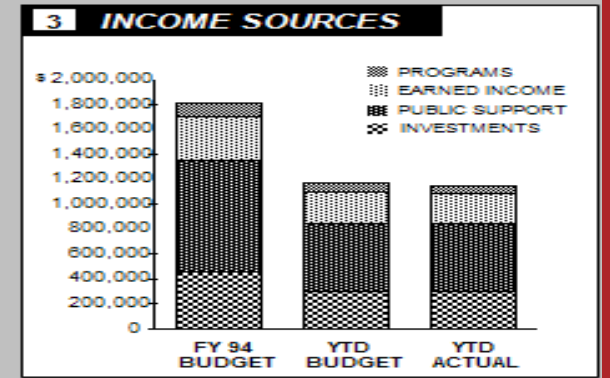


2 SUPPORTING DATA

YTD \$	'93 ACT	'94 ACT	'94 BUD
INC	1,099,550	1,146,569	1,174,845
EXP	1,193,264	1,090,188	1,162,444
NET	(93,714)	56,380	12,401

INCOME SOURCES

	'93 ACT	'94 ACT
PROGRAMS	66,343	76,730
EARNED INCOME	234,157	250,450
PUBLIC SUPPORT	542,129	543,725
INVESTMENTS	303,940	303,940



HIGHLIGHTS

- MEMBERSHIP:** Total membership declined by 645 since last year -- or 22.8%. More troubling is that over twice as many members lapsed during this period -- 921 compared to 437. Had the lapses remained constant, our membership would have declined by only 5.7%.
- BUDGET STATUS:** Income is ahead of last year but below budget. By controlling expenses, YTD net is significantly greater than last year and almost 5x this year's budget.

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

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.

Poll Question:

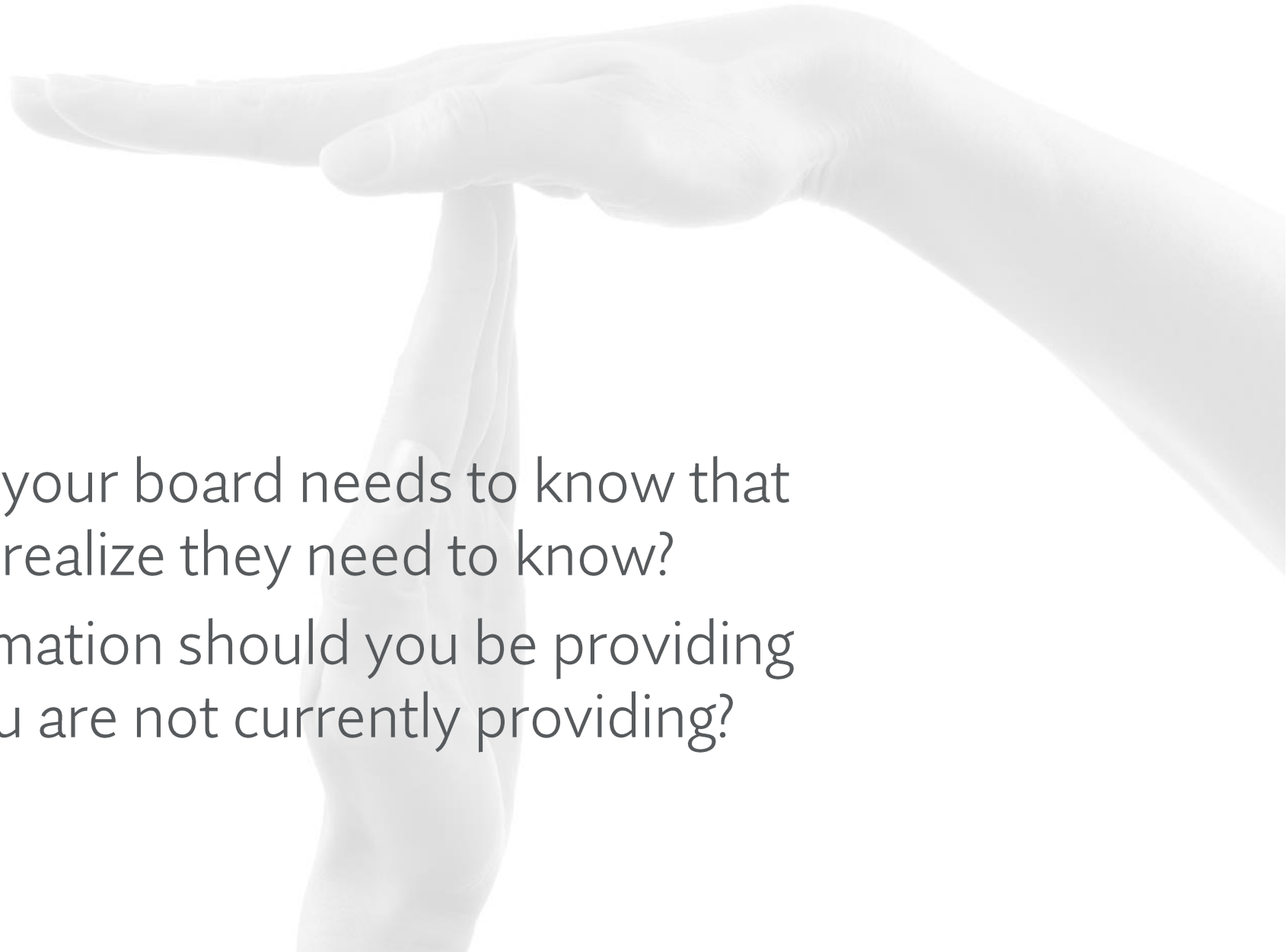
Which of these policies does your organization have in place?

A.
Code of Ethics

B.
Public Affairs or
Advocacy Policy

C.
Crisis
Communications
Policy

D.
Employee
Manual



Pause & Reflect

1. What do you think your board needs to know that they may not even realize they need to know?
2. What data or information should you be providing your board that you are not currently providing?

4

Facilitating a Balance of Roles and Responsibilities

Shared Leadership

Board Leads

- Share values through policies that put mission into action
- Hire, support, and assess CEO
- Oversee financial due diligence
- Recruit and retain new board members

Board/CEO Share Leadership

- Development of strategic and fundraising plans
- Board meeting preparation
- Board candidate identification

CEO Leads

- Develop/Propose policy questions
- Hire, support, supervise, motivate staff
- Develop and implement programs

Board Responsibilities

Set Strategic Direction

- Determine mission and purpose and advocate for them
- Ensure effective planning

Ensure Adequate Resources

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

Provide Oversight

- Ensure legal and ethical integrity
- Protect assets and provide oversight
- Support and evaluate the chief executive
- Monitor and strengthen programs and services

Legal Obligations of Individual Board Members

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.

Tools for Clarifying Board Responsibilities



Bylaws



Expectations statement or job description



Board self-assessment (full board)



Individual board member self-assessment

Tools for Clarifying Chief Executive Responsibilities



Written job description

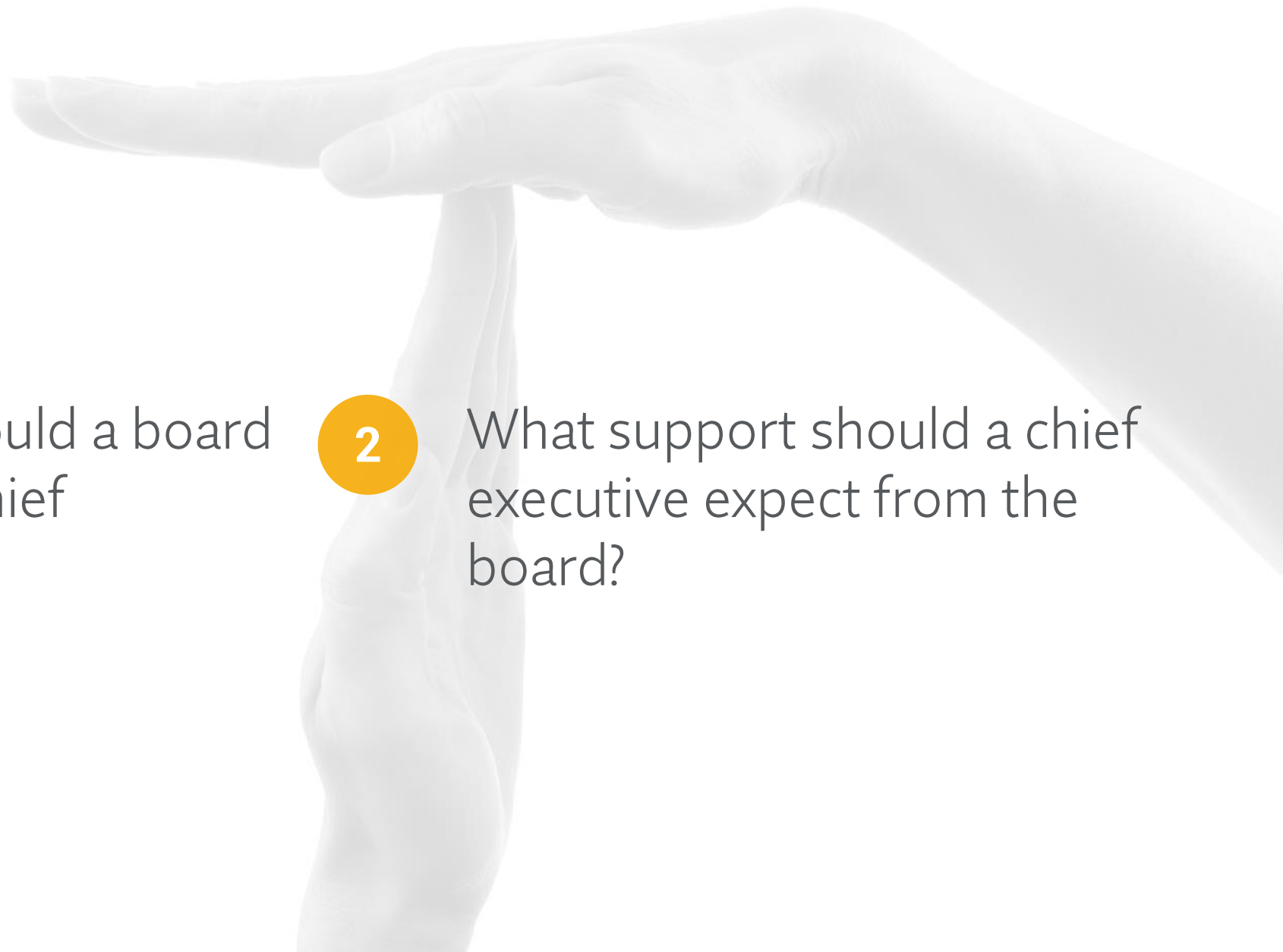


Formal and informal check-ins
with board chair



Written performance evaluation

Chat Questions



1

What support should a board expect from its Chief Executive?

2

What support should a chief executive expect from the board?

What Should the Chief Executive Expect from the Board?



Timely and clear decisions



Informed and prepared directors



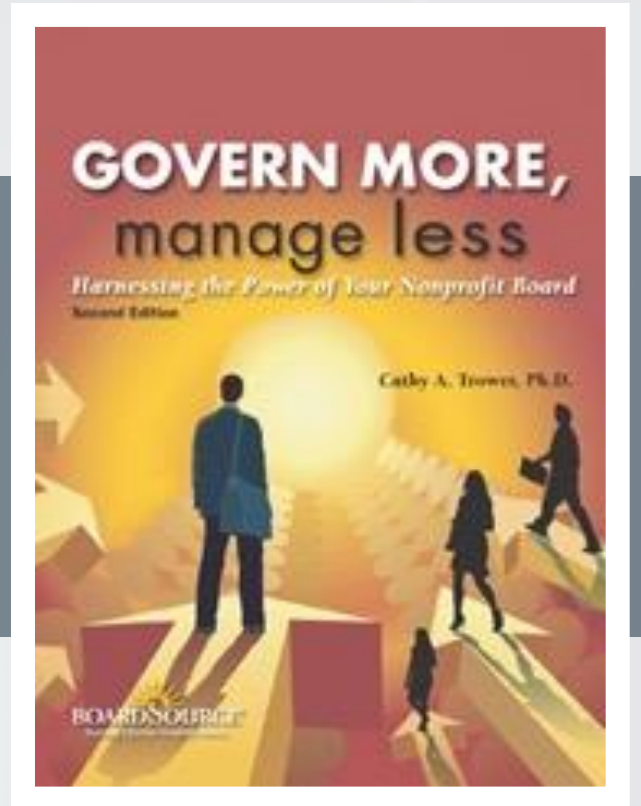
Mutual accountability



No micromanaging



A board that speaks with one voice



What Should the Board Expect from the Chief Executive?

Expectations

Positive attitude about the partnership

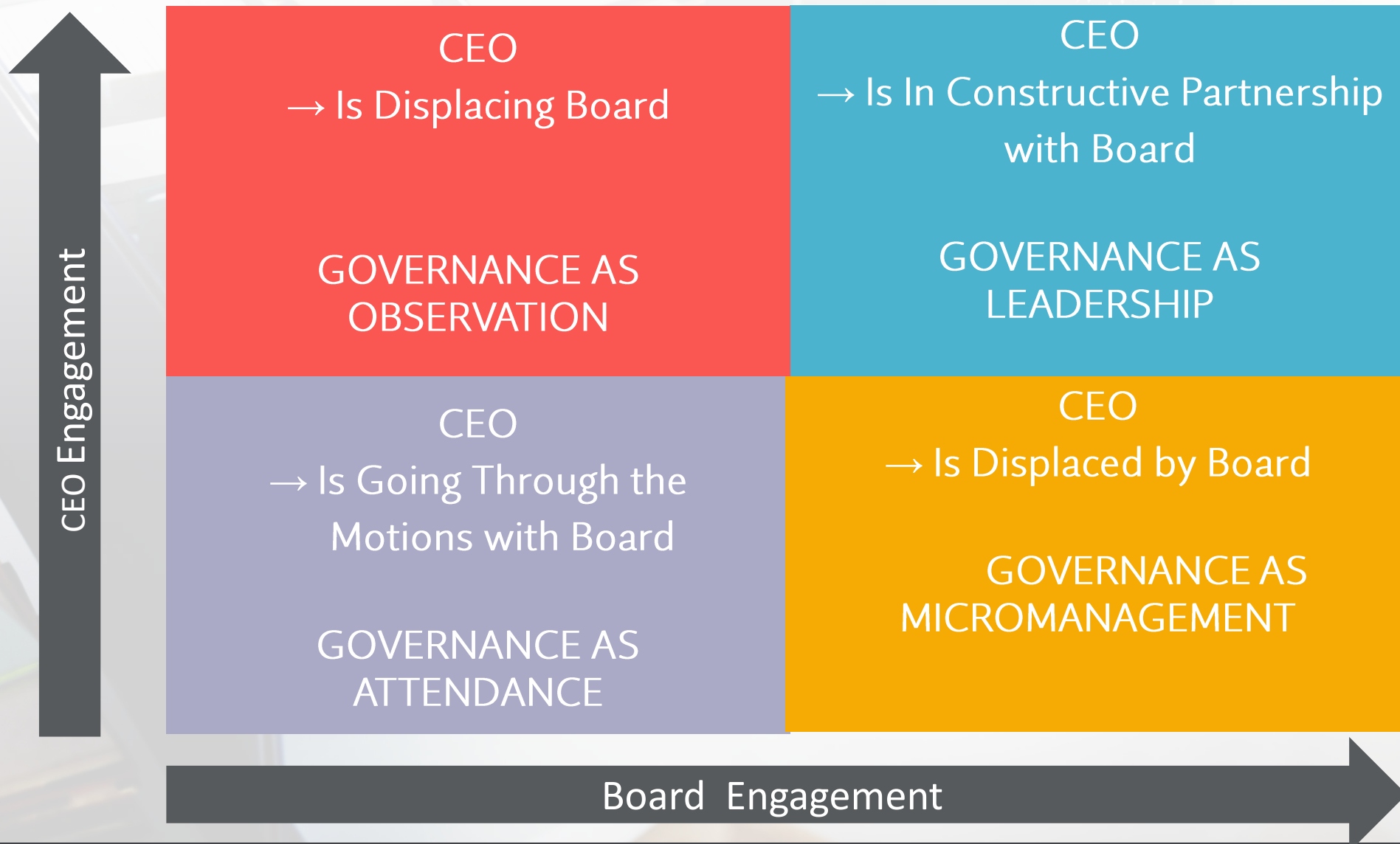
Identification of issues for board attention

Strategic information provided

Recommendations for action before the meeting

No surprises! Accept accountability

Which Quadrant Describes Your Current Relationship?



Week 1: 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.

Up Next

Week 2

Structuring the Work of the Board

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