The Power of Aligning Your Board’s Legacy Around Mission
Who’s in the room?

Your Role
- Board Member
- Chief Executive
- Staff Member
- Consultant
- Other

Type of Organization
- Association
- Foundation
- Charity

Annual Budget
- < $500,000
- $500,000 – $2 million
- $2.1 million – $25 million
- > $25 million
Within our respective topics, we will each:

- Cover “Board Blind Spots” and “CEO Traps”
- Allow for short interludes where you talk with each other.
Principle 2: Mission Driven

Exceptional boards shape and uphold the mission, articulate a compelling vision, and ensure congruence between decisions and core values.
Start With Why
Think Through Strategy
Did We Succeed?
Mission: The Why

• A brief expression of the organization’s purpose

• Why do we exist?
  • What, at the most basic level, do we do?

• A verb, target population, and an outcome that implies something to measure
The Power of Mission

Wayfind
ATTORNEYS SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

Because Community Matters.

We are a nonprofit with a mission to improve the quality of life in Washington by providing free business legal services for nonprofits and microenterprises.
The Power of Mission

ARTSFUND MISSION
ArtsFund strengthens the community by supporting the arts through leadership, advocacy, and grant making.
The Power of Mission

WASHINGTON NONPROFITS

We make sure nonprofits have what they need to succeed.
Board’s Legacy

- For what do we, as a board, want to be remembered?
- What will the board that meets 5 years from today say we did that matters most?

The board’s mission is to ensure the long-term viability of this organization to provide best in class services by focusing on long-term funding sources and by enhancing public recognition. This requires us to position the organization strategically to best respond to the critical needs of children and families.

(Community service organization)

Our mission is to initiate, create, implement, and maintain an evolving strategic planning and thinking process to strengthen collaboration with our partners and build brand awareness, while incorporating advances in technology, without losing compassion for our patients and their families.

(Hospital auxiliary)
Process Example: The University of Akron

Board Mission
The Board of Trustees supports the fulfillment of the University’s mission by ensuring:

• An effective leadership team;
• The development and implementation of a strategic plan that anticipates the changing needs of its constituencies and delivers on its promises;
• Financial integrity and sustainability;
• Transparency; and,
• Effective advocacy for the University.

Challenge assumptions and the status quo.
• Ask tough questions
• Ask meaningful questions
• Challenge one another and the administration respectfully
• Be thoughtful
• Insist on accurate information and seek to understand it

Be engaged and work together as a team.
• Meet regularly
• Be prepared; read materials
• Understand the University and higher education
• Trust one another and the administration
• Maintain respect
• Communicate openly
• Participate meaningfully
• Be courteous
• Maintain cohesiveness
# Technical Issues v. Adaptive Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical Issues</th>
<th>Adaptive Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easy to spot</td>
<td>Difficult to identify (easy to deny)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Know-how” exists; have answers</td>
<td>There is no “right” answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be solved by management</td>
<td>Require different lenses/multiple stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solutions can be implemented quickly,</td>
<td>Solutions take time, not by edict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by edict</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are responsive to technical</td>
<td>People often resist even acknowledging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>solutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solutions have simple boundaries</td>
<td>Cut across boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be fixed solo</td>
<td>Require collaboration and learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Technical “fixes” to an adaptive challenge will make it worse.
- Recognize that there is tremendous pressure on the CEO to solve problems and decisively – to treat adaptive challenges as if they were technical problems.
- Resist the temptation to seek authoritative and absolute “right” answers. If any are found, they are almost certainly solutions to technical problems, not adaptive challenges.
# Examples & Discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical Issues</th>
<th>Adaptive Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>Donor cultivation and engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff salaries</td>
<td>Workplace culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website hits declining</td>
<td>Messaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient safety</td>
<td>Patient experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spotty attendance at board meetings</td>
<td>Engaging the board in meaningful work</td>
</tr>
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**Quick Discussion**

What adaptive challenges is your organization facing?

Boards add REAL value on adaptive challenges.
**Board Blind Spots**

- Losing sight of the mission
- Not translating the mission into the board's work
- Not finding the common frame
- Asserting opinions without understanding the big picture
- Rushing to treatment—"the right answer"
- Forcing "expertise" on adaptive challenges
Bringing prepackaged solutions to the board to rubberstamp
Not bringing adaptive challenges to the board

Not spending time discussing what’s messy and ambiguous
Not wanting to be vulnerable

Thinking you have all the answers
Overactive ego investment in having all the “right” answers
Strategy & Plans: Navigating the Route
“You’ve got to be careful if you don’t know where you are going ‘cause you might not get there!”

Yogi Berra
# Creating a Better Roadmap

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old School</th>
<th>New School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-10-year strategic plans</td>
<td>2-3-year strategic frameworks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very detailed including goals, strategies,</td>
<td>High level and highly focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>objectives, tasks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic plans that can be used as doorstops</td>
<td>1-2-page graphic strategic frameworks to tell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>your story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly detailed and sits on a shelf</td>
<td>Concisely tells your stakeholders who you are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard to adapt when the unexpected happens</td>
<td>and where you’re going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is more operational in nature and engages</td>
<td>Allows nimbleness when the unexpected occurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the board at that level</td>
<td>(shortfalls, regulatory change, crises)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Requires the board to engage in high level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>thinking both during the planning and in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>oversight</td>
</tr>
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**BoardSource**
Empowering Boards. Inspiring Leadership.
Strategic “Plan” Examples

2014–2016 Strategic Plan

VISION
Great leaders in every school committed to the success of each student.

MISSION
NASSP connects and engages school leaders through advocacy, research, education, and student programs.

GOAL: Strengthen school leadership practices through the design and delivery of high quality professional learning experiences.

GOAL: Connect school leaders to exchange knowledge with NASSP and with one another.

GOAL: Promote NASSP student programs to enhance student leadership and create positive school climate.

GOAL: Advocate on behalf of all school leaders to ensure the success of each student.

GOAL: Ensure a unique member experience with NASSP and student programs.

GOAL: Monitor and enhance organizational vitality.

STUDENT PROGRAMS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CONNECTING

ADVOCACY

MEMBERSHIP

ORGANIZATIONAL VITALITY
**Our Mission:** Josephine is a caregiving community for all generations.

**Our Vision:** To be the community of choice where no one is left uncared for.

**Ensure Sustainability**

**Objectives:**
- Broaden our funding base to ensure long term sustainability for our future while honoring our past.
- Develop and leverage partnership opportunities.
- Promote Josephine’s full continuum of care to the broader community.

**GOAL:** Continue to operate efficiently with a viable business model.

**Promote Well Being**

**Objectives:**
- Maintain quality care for all, including those who cannot pay for their own care.
- Educate our community on health issues and resources.
- Create additional programs and services that meet current and future trends of the evolving needs of our community.

**GOAL:** Provide and grow quality services and care to all in our community.

**Build, Move, and Recycle**

**Objectives:**
- Develop a plan and timeline for the build and move.
- Build a state of the art facility in Stanwood for all existing programs.
- Develop a plan to recycle the existing facility in response to the needs of our community.

**GOAL:** Move existing programs out of the flood plain within 10 years.

**Josephine, rooted in God’s love, believes in:**

- Excellence of Care
- A Pioneering Spirit and Courage
- Responsible Stewardship
Strategic “Plan” Examples

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

OUR MISSION: To save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease.

OUR VISION: A world free of lung disease.

Strategic Imperatives

Defeat lung cancer

Improve the air we breathe so it will not cause or worsen lung disease

Reduce the burden of lung disease on individuals and their families

Eliminate tobacco use and tobacco-related diseases

Monitor and enhance organizational effectiveness

Areas of Focus | Goals

Reduce lung cancer deaths

Attain strong air pollution health standards

Serve as the premier resource for lung health

Cut adult and youth smoking rates

Increase and diversify revenue

Build and expand LUNG FORCE

Eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke

Improve quality of life for COPD and asthma patients

Increase research funding

Increase volunteer engagement

Guiding Principles

Advocacy, education, research, awareness and engagement are equally critical to achieving our mission.

We believe in evidence-based and data-driven decision making and measurable impact.

Building a diverse, active and engaged pool of volunteers is integral to the success of our mission.

We must overcome health disparities to ensure universal lung health.

We are driven by innovation, transparency, initiative and ethical practices.
Rotating Drivers

The roadmap supersedes new leadership.
# The Board’s Technical & Adaptive Work around Strategy & Plans

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Technical Work</th>
<th>Adaptive Work</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop and adopt the strategic plan</td>
<td>Strategize with the CEO when challenges arise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an ambassador for the plan</td>
<td>Work in constructive partnership with CEO to achieve the plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise resources to support the plan</td>
<td>Understand progress made and adapt the plan if/when needed</td>
</tr>
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*Empowering Boards. Inspiring Leadership.*
Board Blind Spots

- Setting impossible goals
- Failing to be bold
- Thinking its job is done
CEO Traps

- Failing to lead the board through the process
- Inviting the board to cross the line into operations by engaging the board in management issues
- Neglecting to engage the board on the roadblocks encountered along the way
Metrics & Measures of Success
Concepts

Outputs

Measures

Metrics

Performance Indicators

Benchmarks

Outcomes
### Asking Better Questions

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<tr>
<td>• How much money do we have in reserves?</td>
<td>• How do/should we use the operating reserves?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How many beds are filled?</td>
<td>• How many women move into more permanent housing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How many international societies do we partner with?</td>
<td>• How many of contributors are from outside the US? Subscribers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How many clients use our assistive technology services?</td>
<td>• How does assistive technology help our clients? Fit in with other programs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How many students did our educational grants support?</td>
<td>• How did our investment in education change school performance?</td>
</tr>
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A Dashboard...

**IS**
- A tool to focus board attention
- A summary of key performance indicators
- A snapshot in time
- About the quality of information
- The starting point

**IS NOT**
- A report card on management
- A substitute for reports and analysis
- A longitudinal study
- About the quantity of information
- The end point
Dashboard Examples

Dashboard Examples
Dashboard Examples

For more information visit the Indianapolis Museum of Art blog series on Museums & Transparency:
Quick Discussion

What 2 - 3 indicators will help your board measure progress toward your mission?
The Board’s Technical & Adaptive Work around Metrics & Measures of Success

**Technical Work**
- Monitor delivery of programs, products & services
- Review finances: YTD against budget, year-over-year, etc.
- Track progress against plans, e.g., strategic plan, annual goals

**Adaptive Work**
- Evaluate quality, progress & success
- Ensure resources are allocated well: money, people, reputation
- Assess organization’s sustainability & adjust accordingly
Board Blind Spots

n = 1
I heard...
I would be interested in...

TMI
Please sir, may I have some more?

Tracking
Rather than sense-making
CEO Traps

Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.

Over-reporting data and underreporting results

Not putting information into context
Shared Pitfalls
Dashboard Rules of the Road

Design
- Keep it simple
- Work with readily available data
- Consider meaningful comparisons (historical, benchmarks, budget)
- Understand the differences between outputs, outcomes, and impact

Presentation
- Mix and match charts, numbers, and text
- Use color
- Work together (board and management) toward a standardized format
- Use metrics to tell a story
Q & A

1. What are you perplexed about?
2. What really resonates with you?
3. What idea will you take back to your board?
Thank you!

“The main thing is to keep the Main Thing the main thing.”
~ Stephen Covey