

nonprofit
LEADERSHIP LAB

Because the World is Counting on Us.



2020 BOARD BIBLE

- for Nonprofit Professionals -

2020 BOARD BIBLE

- for Nonprofit Professionals -

TABLE OF CONTENTS

14 Attributes Chart	4
Five-Star Governance	5
Does the Board Have the Right to _____?	13
Annual Fundraising Plan	17
3 Ways to Keep Your Board Engaged <i>Between</i> Meetings	22
Nonprofit Board Committees: Charges and Responsibilities	26
Introduction	27
The Executive Committee	29
The Finance & Audit Committee	31
The Governance/Recruitment Committee	34
The Development Committee	36
Board Committee Report Template & Cheat Sheet	38
Checklist for Supporting Your Org through a Growth Spurt	46
Whose Job Is It Anyway? Board Chair or Executive Director?	50
Lesson 1: Introduction	51
Lesson 2: The Power of Shared Leadership	53
Lesson 3: Staff Hiring - Who Decides?	56
Lesson 4: Board Recruitment - Who Decides?	59
Lesson 5: The Annual Budget - Who Decides?	62
Lesson 6: Organizational Strategy - Who Decides?	66
Lesson 7: New Programs - Who Decides?	69
Lesson 8: Evaluation of the Executive Director. - Who Decides?	72
Lesson 9: Shared Leadership - What Gets in the Way?	75
Lesson 10: Setting Co-Pilots Up to Succeed	77
Bonus: Who Decides? Chart	80
Weekly Agenda for your CEO/Chair Meeting	81
How to Use the "Army of the Engaged" Worksheet	85
How to Grow Your "Army of the Engaged"	90
How to Run a Great Board Meeting	97
Lesson 1: How Much Does It Really Matter?	98
Lesson 2: The Formula that Ignites Your Board	99
Lesson 3: How Often Should a Board Meet?	102
Lesson 4: That 4-Letter Word... "PLAN"	104
Lesson 5: The 4 Things to Do Before the Meeting	108
Lesson 6: The Meeting Itself	112
Lesson 7: How to Sustain Momentum	116
Lesson 8: Begin with the End in Mind	119
Quarterly Board Meeting Sample	122
Quarterly Board Meeting Blank Template	123
Bi-Monthly Board Meeting Sample	124
Bi-Monthly Board Meeting Blank Template	125

How to Survive a Crisis	126
Crisis Management Matrix Sample	130
Crisis Management Matrix Blank Template	132
Building the Board of Your Dreams.....	134
Sample Board Composition Matrix	135
Top 10 Competencies & Attributes Lists	136
Lesson 1: The Board You Have Is the Board You Build	137
Lesson 2: An Exercise - The Rule of Thirds	138
Lesson 3: Who Should Be on the Board “Bus”?.....	141
Lesson 4: Why Diversity Matters	146
Lesson 5: A Recipe for Board Building - Part 1	149
Lesson 6: A Recipe for Board Building - Part 2	152
Lesson 7: Fishing Gear - Important Outreach Materials	156
Lesson 8: 5 Big Fat Red Flags in Board Recruitment	160
Lesson 9: 3 Keys to Board Member Retention	162
A Template for a Board Interview Process	166
Board Member Interview Checklist.....	171
Sample Board Member Application/Questionnaire	175
Board Member Self-Assessment Template	183
Annual Evaluation Template for the Executive Director	187
E.D. 360 Evaluation Overview.....	190
E.D. 360 Board Evaluation & E.D. Self-Evaluation Template	191
E.D. 360 Evaluation - Staff Member Input.....	197
E.D. 360 Evaluation - Funders / Donor Input.....	199
E.D. 360 Evaluation - Professional Colleague Input	201
Managing the Transition of a Founder or “Long & Strong” E.D.....	203
Chapter 1: What You Will Learn.....	204
Chapter 2: The Profile of an Exiting Staff Leader.....	207
Chapter 3: The Profile of a Board with a Founder at the Helm	211
Chapter 4: How to Manage the Exiting Staff Leader, Part 1	215
Chapter 5: How to Manage the Exiting Staff Leader, Part 2	219
Chapter 6: Fast Forward: What a New Executive Director May Find	224
Chapter 7: Practical Advice for the New Staff Leader	228
Chapter 8: Practical Advice for the Board of Your New Leader.....	233
Chapter 9: Key Takeaways	237
Exit Interviews for Staff & Board Template.....	241
How to Handle a “Bad Apple” Board Member	244
Sample Strategies/Scripts	248
Bonus: Next Steps for Working Boards	252
Lesson 1: The Roadmap.....	253
Lesson 2: Your First Steps.....	259
Lesson 3: Tips for Success.....	265
Slide Deck.....	273
Terms of Use/Copyright	286



The 14 Attributes of a Healthy Nonprofit



People



Money



Programs



Narrative



Strategy

MESSY			GROWING	HEALTHY	THRIVING
Board Diversity	Board has no diversity of skills nor reflects the community it serves	Ad hoc board recruitment. Reactive based on current needs. No overall plan.	Developed composition matrix for the ideal board. Works to achieve it.	Board diverse in skills and reflective of the community it serves	
Board Responsibilities	Board responsibilities are not defined. No orientation or onboarding process.	Primitive orientation process. Either no committees or committees without goals/clear charge.	Regular discussions and training regarding the role of the board. Onboarding process.	Board is clear on responsibilities, takes them seriously, and executes effectively	
Leader Relations	The board chair and ED actively sabotage each other.	ED feels compelled to do everything on her own and brings "completed" products to the board	Clear points of synergy around some aspects (board recruitment, some aspects of fundraising)	True partnership between board chair and ED	
Leadership Pipeline	Neither the Board nor staff has anybody prepared or groomed to take on leadership responsibilities when current leadership wants out.	Board recruitment based on current organizational needs. Jobs posted on standard nonprofit recruitment websites. Not enough resources to recruit a great candidate pool.	Board active in recruiting those with leadership skills. Committee chairs held accountable and supported. Entire org involved in recruiting. Willingness to pay for excellence.	Board and staff have strong leadership pipeline and bench strength	
Performance Reviews	No regular performance reviews or assessment for anybody (board or staff)	No board assessments. Very basic staff assessments.	Board has rudimentary assessment process in place.	Regular performance reviews / assessments	
Staff recruitment and retention	Hard to find good people. No recruitment process.	ED does all hiring. Rudimentary job descriptions. Limited outreach. Intentional appreciation of staff.	Hiring handled beyond ED level. HR compliance. Full job descriptions. Board and other stakeholders involved. Strong staff retention strategies in place	Seen as a workplace of choice	
Financial Stability	No financial stability. Trouble meeting payroll.	Can make payroll but cashflow is inconsistent. Basic financial tracking. No cash reserve. Informal budget process.	Smart, staff-driven budget process. Active board treasurer and finance committee. Cash reserve building.	Board and staff partnership. Solid cash reserve. Strong positive cash flow. Operating expenses - at least 1 month in the bank and 3 - 6 months available as unrestricted cash balances. Little debt. No long term AR or AP. Endowment (?) at least 3x the operating budget.	
Fundraising	Reliant on a single, unstable fundraising stream	Basic fundraising plan with dedicated staffer leading, typically focused on events	Board more involved and sophisticated about fundraising. Growing dev staff. Focus on bringing in larger donors (corporate, foundation, individual)	Fundraising streams are balanced, diverse, and sophisticated	
Mission-Centric Programs	Programs aren't clearly mission-centric	Many programs are mission-centric but some are not and there's no plan on fixing this or ability to "just say no"	Strategic discussions about how to best invest program dollars. Ability to say no to programs that aren't mission-centric but some are still running.	All programs are mission-centric	
Metrics	No attempt to evaluate program impact	Focus on "vanity metrics" and what's very easy to measure. No good infrastructure in place for measurement.	Plans and accountability in place to build out necessary measurement systems. Desired impact metrics identified. Basic dashboard created.	Can evaluate the impact of programs (quantitative and qualitative)	
Clear Brand	Inability to state organizational mission in a way that is clear, concise, and attractive to the right people.	Strong elevator pitch. Basic visual branding. Clarity on how to talk about the organization extends to staff.	All visual branding is integrated and cohesive. Organization has a clear voice. Ongoing board training on how to talk about the organization. Beginning to understand stakeholder segments in a deeper way.	Clear, strong, compelling, integrated, targeted, and highly visible external presence. Understood and communicated clearly by all stakeholders. Sophisticated and deep understanding of all stakeholder segments.	
Strategic Marketing / Stakeholders	Few people know the org exists. No idea how to grow stakeholders or engage with existing ones	Basic website, email list, social media. Audience growing but haphazard and not strategic.	Well designed and consistent website and media with a clear strategy and capacity to grow audience, authority, and stakeholder participation around the mission.	Integrated and scalable strategy for growing, segmenting and engaging stakeholders in the work.	
Public Champion	ED is rambling, unclear.	ED is wonky. "Laundry list". No storytelling.	ED is informative, interesting and clear, but not "sticky" or memorable	ED is visible, vocal, and effective public champion/voice for the org. Great storyteller.	
Strategic planning	No long-term strategy	Staff sets broad goals for next few years. Board not really involved. Motivation is to prove to funders there's a plan.	Solid, but limited plan developed jointly by staff and a board committee with no goals set for the board and no outside resources.	Thoughtful long-term strategy developed jointly by board and staff that sets inspiring vision	

FIVE-STAR BOARD GOVERNANCE

INTRO

We developed this downloadable document so that it could be used as a handout at a board meeting to have a very thoughtful conversation with the board about how they govern as an entity and consider changes to improve board performance.

Board members need to have real clarity about their roles and responsibilities so they know what success looks like. Who doesn't? As a result, we spend time (or should spend time) ensuring that all board members know their basic responsibilities.

But when it comes to words like "governance" and "oversight," it can be hard to know when you are getting it right. The list of responsibilities tells you **what** you are supposed to do but so many board members struggle with the **how**.

DEFINING TERMS

Open a book from Board Source and you will see three methods of governance – **how you go about fulfilling your duties**.

- 1. Fiduciary:** The focus is on whether or not the organization is doing the right things. Focus on facts, figures, financials, and risks.
- 2. Strategic:** The focus here is on closing the gap between where we are and where we want to be.
- 3. Generative:** The focus here is more creative and less solution-oriented. The Board functions as a thought partners with the Executive Director and senior staff. These discussions do not take the current reality at face value but rather challenge the organization to think differently and bigger. In a discussion of this sort, board members should work to suspend what they think they know. These conversations are freer and not bogged down with getting from point A to point B.

TIME FOR A QUIZ

Take a few minutes and consider how you approach your board service. Which of these best describes the way your board sees itself? For each, consider answering “sometimes,” “always,” or “never.”

Hint: There is no completely right answer.

Stay with me.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. We react to information provided to us allowing us to monitor the effectiveness of the organization. | ☐ Sometimes
☐ Always
☐ Never |
| 2. We work with staff to set goals across the organization. | ☐ Sometimes
☐ Always
☐ Never |
| 3. We look at budget, finances, and program goals. | ☐ Sometimes
☐ Always
☐ Never |
| 4. We think strategically about budget, finances, and program goals. | ☐ Sometimes
☐ Always
☐ Never |
| 5. We engage in strategy discussions at least annually. | ☐ Sometimes
☐ Always
☐ Never |
| 6. The big strategy stuff comes up once in a while. | ☐ Sometimes
☐ Always
☐ Never |

7. We are kind of like watchdogs in a way.
- ___ Sometimes
___ Always
___ Never
8. We often use tools like a SWOT analysis to help us think about what is going on now and where we want to go and then develop goals with an eye toward closing the gap.
- ___ Sometimes
___ Always
___ Never
9. We ask questions all the time like: How else might we look at this issue? What else should we be thinking about?
- ___ Sometimes
___ Always
___ Never
10. Our Executive Director welcomes our questions.
- ___ Sometimes
___ Always
___ Never
11. We don't take the current reality for granted and we don't assume.
- ___ Sometimes
___ Always
___ Never
12. Lots of "what ifs".
- ___ Sometimes
___ Always
___ Never
13. Our Executive Director sees the board as a valuable thought partner.
- ___ Sometimes
___ Always
___ Never
14. We see the Executive Director as a valuable thought partner.
- ___ Sometimes
___ Always
___ Never

Ready for the correct answer? Sorry, don't have just one. There are a series of answers:

1. Hopefully, you checked “always” or “often” on fiduciary responsibilities. Why? Because fiduciary governance is essential to the health of every organization. Full stop. That said, five-star governance is not found in **solely** fiduciary governance. Boards that are primarily reactive will miss something important – a challenge or more importantly an opportunity.
2. Perhaps you checked “often” for fiduciary and “sometimes” for strategy. It's possible your board operates largely as a watchdog, but you meet annually for a retreat to talk strategy and set goals. Pretty common, and yes, your board can and should operate in multiple forms of governance depending on the circumstance. Great!
3. But, ideally, what we're aiming for is a board that operates as thought partners for the organization. You need to be in this mode of **generative governance** at least some of the time.

A five-star board governs in **each** of these three ways throughout the course of a year.

BRINGING THIS ALL TO LIFE

The following table offers the board a conversation starter – some examples of how each form of governance might operate. It should also ensure that the conversation gets real and does not live in the abstract.

	Fiduciary	Strategic	Generative
FINANCIAL REVIEW	Finance committee reviews financial statements, pays close attention to variances. Treasurer reports out at board meeting. ED offers commentary.	Finance committee reviews prepared statements and engages in a discussion about the variances and the causes. Lots of analysis on the reasons behind the numbers. Treasurer reports out on how the organization will compensate or adjust based on variances. ED offers commentary	Finance committee leads a discussion at the board meeting to address negative variance in fundraising. How might we think about fundraising differently? Should we be looking at new strategies for visibility? What if we approached board recruitment differently? ED?
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ED AND BOARD	Finance Committee Chair (or Treasurer) and ED communicate openly about finances. No surprises at the board meetings.	During an ED report, the ED puts a challenge on the table – something keeping her up at night. The board offers the ED things to consider as they solve the problem. Possible solutions surface. ED feels the conversation was of value.	ED and Board Chair commit to twice-annual board meetings dedicated to free thinking, opportunities to do things very differently, how to scale through innovation.

	Fiduciary	Strategic	Generative
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ED AND BOARD CHAIR	ED and Chair meet fairly regularly. ED reports out to the Chair. The meeting sometimes doesn't feel very necessary. An email might have done the trick. Glad to have met.	ED sends agenda ahead of time. Topics discussed are higher level and offers the opportunity for the board chair to help problem solve – maybe a community issue or staffing/ volunteer challenge.	Meetings are strategic but they go further as it relates to how they lead the organization together and engage the board in innovative thinking. Typically, this would be in the design of a board meeting or retreat.
FUNDRAISING	Finance Committee monitors budget vs actuals. Board members and ED work to raise enough money to cover the budget. ED works on events, grants, etc. Board fulfills give/get.	Board has a Development Committee that is responsible for thinking about how the board can be a more effective engine for development, holding the board accountable and working to generate new ideas for raising money.	Board Development Committee facilitates a discussion with the board about potential revenue streams. Raising 'what if' questions is welcomed: What if we charged for this program? Or What if we stopped doing X? Would another org pick it up?

MOVING FORWARD: A FEW IDEAS

The bottom line is that you want to strive for fewer meetings that live only in the **fiduciary** space. Of course, monitoring progress and financials and other fiduciary roles are essential. But it is when you move into the strategic and generative realms of governance with greater regularity that organizations move from surviving to thriving.

The key is making small changes that begin to 'tip' the board towards a more engaged, strategic leadership model which can then evolve into healthy, generative governance that makes space for the big questions.

A few ideas on how to start moving toward a robust, generative governance model:

1. **Intentional Board Recruitment**

The very best conversations are had and the best ideas are generated when you have the right folks at the table. Bringing diverse skills, experience and attributes. Founders must pay close attention to this. A board of friends and colleagues of founders are way less likely to ask the tough questions.

2. **Strong Board Leadership**

Electing a strong board chair makes all the difference. How a board meeting plays out, what kind of relationship you build with the E.D. – these are the levers that move a board into a way of governing that is smart, strategic and maybe even innovative.

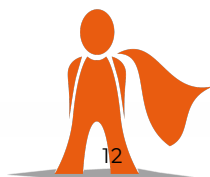
3. **Valued E.D.**

Executive Directors are generally pleasers and want the board to know that everything is under control. But this actually **disengages** board members. They know that nonprofits are messy but are not invited into a conversation about how to navigate challenges. It does not come naturally to an executive director to share “weaknesses” or “challenges.” A great conversation to have at a board meeting – to give the E.D. **permission** to share the challenges, see the benefit. Slowly but surely you all will get the hang of it.

4. **Dedicated Planning Time**

Please have a board retreat. What prevents generative governance most often is time. Lack of time. The “what if” conversations need space. My two very favorite questions that will put the entire organization right into the generative mode:

- *If your organization was erased from society's hard drive tomorrow, what gap would there be and who would fill it?*
- *\$5 million (or some game changing \$) falls into your lap. What would you do with it?*



**DOES THE
BOARD
HAVE
THE RIGHT
TO...?**

Checklist: Does the Board Have the Right to...?



You might be expecting a lot of clear YES or NO answers, so managing expectations feels wise. What a board *can* do and what a board *should* do are often quite different. Executive Directors often find themselves frustrated by boards that take certain actions or make certain decisions and I know they are anxious to hear about very clear ground rules. Board chairs too are desperate for clarity. But as you know, in my twin engine model of nonprofit leadership, there is quite a bit of ‘gray’ – it’s what comes with *shared* leadership.

Let’s see how it plays out in some of the most common questions I am asked.

So here goes:

DOES THE BOARD HAVE THE RIGHT TO...

Listen to staff complaints about the E.D.?

Let’s ask the questions that fall from this one. Should the board know if there are issues with the E.D.’s management of staff? Of course. Should staff have access to board members to go over the head of the E.D. to share concerns without sharing those concerns directly with the E.D.? No. Should the evaluation process of the E.D. incorporate the voices of the staff? Absolutely.

So the answer is that staff should be encouraged to take complaints to the E.D. and then assured that their voices will be heard as part of the annual review process.

NO end runs around the E.D. to the board.

Does the board have the right to reprimand (or yell at) the E.D. in the sight and/or hearing of the staff?

I so wish I didn't get asked this question. Civil behavior should be a core value in an organization that is working to help others. No one has the right to berate ANYONE in front of their supervisor. After a cool down period, the board chair should take on the role of sharing the concerns in a respectful manner.

Does the board have the right to publicly (or privately to stakeholders) contradict the ED's decision to fire someone?

It is the job of each and every board member to be a vocal and visible champion for the organization and the impact of its work. As an ambassador, you are expected to promote the effectiveness of the organization, hoping that people will want to come closer to it. Badmouthing the E.D. goes against a core responsibility. And I don't think a board has the right to publicly undermine the credibility and integrity of the staff leader.

Have an exec session without the E.D.?

Yes. The board always has this right. BUT.

I believe that Exec Sessions should be reserved for discussions about the annual evaluation / compensation of the E.D. Sometimes, board chairs need to hold the board firmly accountable in light of poor governance performance and there could be an argument the chair needs an exec session to read the team the riot act.

BUT far too often, board members use exec sessions to vent or complain about staff or other issues. Everyone should be mature enough to share concerns in the presence of the E.D.

Demand that an E.D. fire a staff member?

No. The role of the E.D. is clear on this. She is responsible for hiring and firing staff. The board chair can and should ask questions, share board feedback, etc. But the choice belongs to the E.D. It should not, however, end there. Hiring poorly or firing slowly should be noted and raised as an integral part of performance reviews.

Have a relationship with a staff member?

Here's an easy one. No. No and just for emphasis. No. Inappropriate and an abuse of power even if consensual.

Vote down term limits?

Yes. That would be a board vote and that motion could fail. But a vote like this should be worked and lobbied ahead of time by the chair and E.D. to make the case for the role it plays in building a leadership pipeline. AND there should be a plan for an orderly transition that insures no loss of institutional memory.

Decide not to pay the E.D.?

I hate writing this, but yes. The board is the fiduciary agent that approves the budget. And it can determine that expenses should be cut. Technically the board could be very specific about how it wants the staff to make those cuts. It is not at all best practice to be prescriptive and will lead to a demoralized staff and ultimately attrition. A strong finance committee collaborating with the staff finance person should be charged with a smart and compassionate way to reduce expenses.

Decide there should be no fundraising committee?

Yes. Boards decide what committees are needed. I have worked with clients who reject these committees because they say “we are all supposed to be fundraising and a committee makes it seem like they have to do it all.” Make the charge very clear for the fundraising committee and you won’t have that problem. Fundraising committees help introduce peer accountability into ensuring that boards fulfill this important piece of their role.

Eliminate the give/get policy?

Yes but WHY? There need to be goals to shoot for.

Insist that your largest donor be put on the board without going through the appropriate process?

No, there is a process for a reason. UNLESS the nominations committee votes unanimously that a particular candidate is ideal to join the board and there is some kind of real urgency. But beware of exceptions ESPECIALLY for big donors. Disproportionate power in a nonprofit almost always spells trouble.

Vote to accept money from a corporate sponsor whose values conflict with the mission of you organization?

It is an important board role. And an important policy decision ideal for a board retreat discussion. What are your values relative to your mission and, with that as a backdrop, how do the values of an organization align with funders? This is one of those decisions where a board could overrule staff on who to accept money from, but the collateral damage would be off the charts.

As you can see, a board can have a “BOSS” mindset and it would have a right to operate that way. But it is the shared good thinking of a board and staff that drive conversations and decisions that are stronger for the debate and discussion.

The board can exert power in a top down way but it does so at its own peril. Demotivating staff, attrition and decision making that may in fact be weaker without the full engaged voices of the folks in the trenches.

ANNUAL FUNDRAISING PLAN

ANNUAL FUNDRAISING PLAN

Board Member _____
Organization _____
Fiscal Year _____
Annual Give/Get if applicable _____

Each year, we ask board members to devote some serious time to the exercise of planning how s/he will reach the fundraising commitment that comes with board service to our organization.

What is its purpose?

- 1) It provides a board member with a way to take what can seem an overwhelming responsibility and break it down into manageable components.
- 2) It gives the executive director and development staff (if applicable) the opportunity to have a sense of who you know and where you see your own fundraising strengths
- 3) It can unearth mutual prospects across board members that can lead to different and more powerful strategies of engagement.
- 4) When compiled, it gives the organization a sense of the fundraising firepower of the board.
- 5) It provides your board fundraising committee with a mechanism for peer tracking and accountability.

Most importantly, it is a DISCUSSION GUIDE for a conversation with the chair of your development committee and/or your development director. What are you thinking? Can a conversation enrich this document? Can the conversation spark other ideas you have not considered (guarantee that the answer is yes).

Is it binding?

Of course not. First off, you can ask but a person can politely decline. You are simply documenting your plan of ASKING. Secondly, it is not a contract but rather a plan --- one you can refer to to stay on task, to motivate you and to use with fellow board members and/or staff to strategize, raise challenges, etc.

You ready?

Filling this out should take more than an hour. You should go back to it a few times. You should have your smart phone with you and you should be looking at more than your business contacts. If you are feeling stressful about it, I suggest that either you work out ahead of time or fill it out with a nice pinot noir in hand. Whatever works for you.

Go!

YOUR OWN PERSONAL GIVING

Leave blank pending discussion with ED

MAJOR DONORS

(those who you believe have the capacity to give \$1,000 or more)

Name_____Connection_____
Color Commentary_____

Name_____Connection_____
Color Commentary_____

Name_____Connection_____
Color Commentary_____

DONORS \$250 - \$1,000

Name_____Connection_____
Color Commentary_____

Name_____Connection_____
Color Commentary_____

Name_____Connection_____
Color Commentary_____

Thoughts about total dollars you might shoot for in this category? _____

LOWER END DONATIONS

Here we are asking you to consider how you might raise smaller dollar amounts from a wider group of people. Consider the circle of influence you have --- book clubs, parents of your kids' friends, relatives, etc. your dentist, your chiropractor, your lawyer, your kids' orthodontist (you sure donate enough to her/him!!!) Who shows up on YOUR annual list of vendors for your house / family?

Name_____Name_____
Name_____Name_____

Name_____Name_____
Name_____Name_____
Name_____Name_____
Name_____Name_____

Thoughts about total dollars you might shoot for in this category? _____

CORPORATE CONNECTIONS

Here we'd like you to ride through your rolodex to look not only at your business contacts but personal ones as well. Who do you know who works for a company with a generous track record? Are there companies that come to mind? They might overlap with a company on someone else's list.

CORPORATION _____ CONTACT _____
Color Commentary (the connection) _____

CORPORATION _____ CONTACT _____
Color Commentary (the connection) _____

SPECIAL EVENTS

Event #1

Tickets / # of Tables / Ads _____

Event #2

Tickets / # of Tables / Ads _____

Event #3

Tickets / # of Tables / Ads _____

FOUNDATIONS

Here we are looking for you to consider anyone you know or anyone you are a degree or two of separation from who may have a contact at a foundation. In this situation, it would be helpful for the Development Director to come with a list of prospect foundations the organization is looking for help with.

FOUNDATION _____ **CONTACT** _____
Color Commentary (the connection) _____

FOUNDATION_____CONTACT_____

Color Commentary (the connection) _____

Anyone you know who might be willing to donate services to the organization in exchange for visibility? Gift bag items, legal services, HR services, public relations support, etc.???

In this space, add what you see as challenges, what support you need from staff and any general bumps in the road you hit while filling this out. It is not an expectation that it be filled out entirely and totaled up to some amazing number. The hope is that it leads you to a plan, prompts a conversation about your own personal giving and that it adds up to some kind of basic target for you to help keep you on track during the year.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Ways to Keep Your Board Engaged Between Meetings

Quick Win: 3 Ways to Keep Your Board Engaged Between Meetings



It's hard enough to keep board members engaged **during** board meetings, right? But it actually turns out that one of the very best ways to do that is to keep them engaged **between** meetings.

Why? Because when they are engaged between meetings they've kept your organization in their heads and hearts and may even have done some good work. They'll want to strut their stuff.

WHY ARE BOARD MEMBERS DISENGAGED BETWEEN MEETINGS?

Two main reasons:

1) It's All About Fundraising

I served on a board that met quarterly. Between board meetings, most of the communication to the board was fundraising-centric. Sell a ticket, help us meet a challenge grant, etc. Now I am a unique beast and enjoy fundraising but I could see the impact. If this is the primary way you engage between board meetings, you'll lose a lot of momentum and ultimately good people.

2) No Accountability

A high functioning board has a charge and annual goals (a great activity for the first board meeting of each year, by the way). And board members are held accountable when they are told they will be on the next meeting agenda. Type-A board members are accustomed to getting A's on their book reports, but you have to set it up so that there is a deadline for handing them in and presenting them to their 'classmates.'

THREE WAYS TO KEEP YOUR BOARD MEMBERS ENGAGED

1) Hold A Committee Accountable to Actually *Work* Between Meetings

A great board meeting is engaging, right? So board chair and Executive Director, listen up. Plan ahead and ask a committee to lead a discussion at the next board meeting. Perhaps the recruitment and nominations committee? Give them a sense of what success looks like.

Ask the committee to lead a discussion about the ideal skills and attributes your board should have. Talk about what skills currently exist on the board and what gaps you have. The discussion about attributes will be serious food for thought about what they bring to the table and how they bring it. Lastly, this kind of conversation helps board members target particular sectors, skills, etc. and they all will be much more effective at building a pipeline of prospects.

It doesn't have to be recruitment. It could be a joint presentation of the Development chair and the E.D. / Development Director on how to engage corporate sponsors. Or it could be one of my favorite topics – storytelling.

The key is that a) a specific request is made, b) the board member knows s/he is leading the effort, and c) the board member is told this will be on the next meeting agenda.

2) Narrow Your Communications and Make 'Em Count

Board members get too many emails from too many sources. That is at least one of the reasons that the most common board reaction to your communications is the sound of crickets.

So try this. Only one board email every other week. It should include the following:

- *A current story about the work board members can tell at a cocktail party or BBQ or they can send to friends who are currently donors as a stewardship exercise. It should be written so they can remember it and it should demonstrate impact. Ideally it should result in a goosebump or two.*
- *One fact about need. It's a good reminder to the board members about why they serve and they can work it into their story*
- *Call to Action. NOW you can ask them to do something. Give them three options. Tell them someone will follow up with them and then FOLLOW UP (remember, every engagement tool must include a level of accountability)*

3) Send Them Something to Read

Send a BRIEF article between board meetings and (this is the most important part) build some time into the agenda for the group to talk about their reactions / observations. The best article would be one that is what I call “inside baseball”. It gives them the inside track on what is happening in your sector.

But it's not enough to send it. There has to be accountability to read it. Maybe the discussion is just 15-20 minutes or if you meet quarterly, maybe it's a lunchtime discussion.

The reading could also be about boards and how they operate most effectively. Maybe you are thinking about a merger so you can send along a case study. Anything that ties to the sector or current issues facing the organization.

If you are thinking to yourself, *‘They don't read anything we send out,’* please think again. It's about *what* you send and about a board member's motivation and interest in reading.

NONPROFIT BOARD COMMITTEES

Charges & Responsibilities

INTRO

Note: The information that follows is comprehensive and covers the range of committees a mature board should have. For some, this may feel overly ambitious, but do not be daunted. It is important to see the destination even if you are very early on in the journey.

We will cover the following committees:

- Executive Committee
- Finance and Audit Committee
- Governance and Recruitment Committee
- Development Committee

Before diving into my thoughts on each committee, let me offer a few important points:

START SMALL AND WORK YOUR WAY UP

A young organization won't have as many committees as identified here because they quite often simply don't have a critical mass of board members.

You may want to start with an Executive Committee and a Finance Committee. Then perhaps move to a Recruitment "task force" that can be engaged for a 4-6 month period to jump start a board pipeline.

Once the board is bigger, this should be a standing committee. When a board is small, the Development committee can be the full board working in partnership with staff.

COMMITTEES ARE CRITICAL

If you want to build a high-functioning board, committees are absolutely critical. Certain important activities require a deeper dive than the full board can provide and a committee is the best way to create that opportunity.

Secondly, the work of a board is actually quite vast and it needs to be allocated so that issues get the attention they deserve and folks are not over-extended.

But the single most important reason to have committees is to build a leadership pipeline. Few board members will agree to go from being a board member with no leadership

responsibility to becoming your next chair. And besides, that is just plain risky. Committees give the organizational leadership the opportunity to test-drive folks in leadership positions (and vice versa). Strong committees led by strong chairs serve as the foundation of a board that understands the importance of grooming leadership.

A committee can be an excellent farm team. Small board? Board members spread too thin? Engage folks who are not on the board. That is fine (unless your by laws prohibit it for a reason I'm not sure I would understand).

But bring new folks to the org through committee service and see if there is a fit (on both sides). Great pipeline development!

YOU MUST HAVE A CHARGE

Many committees are helpless and hopeless (or useless) because there is no charge. As a board member, I will agree to be on a committee because it is part of my obligation, but then I begin attending meetings and it's not that clear what the committee is actually about.

Am I supposed to just review the financials and make sure we are on track? What kinds of questions should I be asking? If I am on the development committee, am I being asked to take more responsibility for fundraising? What does this committee actually do?

You can't succeed if you don't understand the charge. If it's unclear, there is a pretty good bet that meeting attendance will be poor. And that's no way to build a leadership pipeline.

DEFINE SUCCESS CLEARLY

People who join boards tend to be accomplished and successful. They get A's on their book reports.

One of the main reasons board members get apathetic is if they don't have a clear definition of success. Thus, I am a huge proponent of annual goals for each committee.

Fill in this blank: "On New Year's Eve, I will know that our work on this committee had value to this organization because we will have X, Y, Z, A, B and C."

In the quarter before the start of your fiscal year, the organization should ignite goal setting everywhere. Impact is what it is all about for board and staff but it needs to be clearly defined.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

OVERALL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Some boards, especially large boards whose members are geographically dispersed, choose to vest their Executive Committees with significant power to perform the board's work through regular Executive Committee meetings.

Other boards limit the Executive Committee's power by authorizing it to meet only as needed and to act only on urgent matters.

Some boards grant the Executive Committee no formal authority at all. The Executive Committee provides a mechanism for board leaders to engage, within the limits set by board policy and the bylaws, in decision-making, oversight, and communication on important organizational matters.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Exercising some or all powers of the board between regularly scheduled meetings.**
Not all boards will want to grant that power to the Executive Committee, but it needs to be discussed. If there is ever a risk of not gaining a full board quorum, this can be a useful power to grant the committee.
- Serving as a sounding board for management on **emerging issues, problems, and initiatives.**
- An opportunity for the staff leader to **share key accomplishments, upcoming plans and any challenges.**
- Overall responsibility for **leading the annual evaluation** of the organization's most senior staff leader.
- **Provide oversight** to other committees to ensure that each is fulfilling its charge and meeting its goals (this is often done through participation by committee chairs on the Executive Committee.)
- Provide input into the **agenda for each board meeting** (after board chair and CEO have drafted)

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

I like to think of the Executive Committee as the “kitchen cabinet” of the board – a diverse group of strong board members who can serve as thought partners with leadership between meetings.

The membership should absolutely include all officers - Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Often, organizations then add the chairs of any committee not represented by the officers.

On a small board, the officers serve as the Executive Committee.

This is what I would recommend and you can see why the selection of committee chairs is so vital. Committee chairs not only oversee the individual committees but also act as board leaders, supporting the chair or co-chairs in leading the board, supporting members and holding them accountable to fulfill their obligations. A strong Executive Committee is key to building a leadership pipeline.

MEETING SCHEDULE

I would recommend monthly meetings of the Executive Committee. The board needs to stay close to the work of the staff without micromanaging. If a board usually meets over the phone rather than in person, this is even more crucial.

Again, remember that the role of the board is to provide oversight (fiscal and strategic) to the organization. Regular touch points between the Executive Committee and the staff leadership allow for the board to fulfill this responsibility.

THE FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

OVERALL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The role of the Finance & Audit Committee is to provide financial oversight for the organization. Typical task areas for small and mid-sized groups include budgeting and financial planning, financial reporting, and the creation and monitoring of internal controls and accountability policies. In addition, this committee is responsible for the selection, oversight and driving the approval of the organization's annual audit (unless your state mandates that the Audit Committee stand as a separate committee – New York is one such state but there are others.)

This committee may also serve as in an ombudsmen role for the nonprofit, and if so, would be specifically charged with the responsibility to address complaints about financial mismanagement, and may be identified in the nonprofit's Whistleblower Policy as having the board-delegated authority to review complaints about fiscal mismanagement.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Budgeting and Financial Planning.** In addition to developing an annual budget, the committee should also set long-term financial goals. These might include, for example, the creation of a working capital or cash reserve fund or the creation of a fund for maintaining or replacing equipment. If the organization has a strategic plan, the finance committee will work with the staff to determine the financial implications of the plan and will plot them into a multi-year organizational budget that will financially support the implementation of the strategies.

Tasks include:

1. Develop an annual operating budget with staff
2. Approve the budget within the Finance Committee
3. Monitor adherence to the budget
4. Set long-range financial goals along with funding strategies to achieve them
5. Develop multi-year operating budgets that integrate strategic plan objectives and initiatives
6. Present all financial goals and proposals to the board of directors for approval

- **Reporting.** Effective Finance Committees require staff to provide highly contextual reports that clearly communicate the organization's financial and cash position, its adherence to the budget, its allocation of resources toward the accomplishment of its mission, and its support of any donor-imposed restrictions on contributions. Having a predetermined list of reporting expectations permits staff to allocate enough time to produce accurate, high-quality reports and not be caught off guard by ad hoc requests. In addition, these reports should help to focus the board's discussion about expected outcomes and potential strategies for overcoming setbacks or changes in the financial environment.

Tasks include:

1. Develop useful and readable report formats with staff
2. Work with staff to develop a list of desired reports, noting the level of detail, frequency, deadlines, and recipients of these reports
3. Work with staff to understand the implications of the reports
4. Present the financial reports to the full board

- **Internal Controls and Accountability Policies.** Finance Committees are often charged with ensuring compliance and/or developing other policies that further serve to protect the organization and manage its exposure to risk. These include establishing policies surrounding:

- Personnel policies
- Executive compensation packages (in the absence of a separate Human Resources committee)
- Long-term contracts or leases
- Loans or lines of credit
- Internet use and computer security
- Capital purchases
- Disposition of donated stock
- Insurance requirements and reviews
- Record retention
- Gift acceptance

Tasks include:

1. Create, approve, and update (as needed) policies that help ensure the assets of the organization are protected
2. Ensure policies and procedures for financial transactions are documented in a manual, which is reviewed annually and updated as needed
3. Ensure approved financial policies and procedures are being followed

- **Audit.** This is part of the Finance & Audit Committee's role unless state law mandates a separation.

Tasks include:

1. The appointment, compensation, and oversight of the independent auditors' work
2. Ask thoughtful and probing questions to management and the independent auditors to evaluate the audit process
3. Receive reports directly from the auditors (not the Executive Director) in connection with the audit's findings
4. Receive and consider actions to recommend to the full board as a result of recommendations from auditors about actions the nonprofit should take to improve its financial reports and management practices, as needed

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The board treasurer would typically chair a committee of 3-4. Unless prohibited in the by-laws, it is often helpful to have a non-financial member of the committee who can take a layperson's view of the financial landscape.

Unless an organization's bylaws expressly forbid it, it may be advantageous to include non-board members with financial expertise on the committee.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Monthly meetings are important to review the financial statements once they are closed for the month.

Quarterly meetings should be focused on Year-to-Date Actuals vs. budgets so that a report can be made to the full board about any necessary adjustments that may require a vote.

During audit season, the committee may need an additional meeting or two to fulfill the responsibilities associated with the completion of the audit.

THE GOVERNANCE / RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE

OVERALL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This committee is responsible for the health and functioning of the board. It recruits new members, conducts orientation, produces board materials, and evaluates the performance of the board itself. This committee, staffed by the Executive Director, is arguably the most important committee of the board. It is responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of the current board and for recruiting tomorrow's leaders.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Recruitment, Retention, and Moving Non-Performers Out.**

Tasks include:

1. Develop board member job descriptions
2. Create a board profile of the skills and expertise needed by the board and organization
3. Identify potential new board members and maintain information about each candidate
4. Cultivate and recruit new members from beyond the board's traditional circles
5. With the board chair, help to assess and maintain board members' individual commitment, support, and participation in governance duties
6. Observe and nurture potential leaders within the board
7. Evaluate board members' eligibility for re-election

- **Educate Board Members.**

Tasks include:

1. Orient new board members to ensure that they have adequate materials and understand their roles and responsibilities

2. Involve board members in "continuing education." The Governance Committee can update board members about new programs, legislative action, and so forth, and continue to improve their skills as board members
3. Establish an effective communications network to keep board members informed about activities through newsletters, board and committee minutes, media reports, phone calls, and thank you notes
4. Evaluate the board's performance
5. Annually lead the board in its self-assessment and develop recommendations to the board for self-improvement
6. Discuss with the chief executive staff (and perhaps other staff) her/his views of the board's performance and ways to strengthen the board in both its governing and supporting role

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

This committee is active year-round. The recruitment, orientation, on-boarding, education, and evaluation of board members is critical and labor intensive. This committee probably does more work outside of committee meetings than any other. Needs members with time and excellent follow-through skills. There are endless stories of recruits who are left "hanging" for months because a board member has been too busy to keep them up to speed on the process.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Monthly. You MUST keep on top of these activities, and especially with particular candidates in the pipeline.

THE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

OVERALL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Development Committee's job is not simply to raise money. Instead, it is responsible for overseeing the organization's overall fundraising and, in particular, the fundraising done by the board.

This last point is worth noting. The Development Committee should serve as a peer advocate for the rest of the board to ensure that each board member is fulfilling her / his responsibilities from a fundraising perspective. Far too often, this role is assumed to belong to the staff Development Director or the Executive Director. The power dynamics are all wrong and it can lead to real tension and often animosity.

For a fuller article I have written on Development Committees, see <http://www.joangarry.com/what-makes-a-great-board-fundraising-committee/>

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

- Work with staff to **establish a fundraising plan** that incorporates a series of appropriate vehicles, such as special events, direct mail, product sales, etc.
- **Work with fundraising staff** in their efforts to raise money
- Take the lead in certain types of **outreach efforts**, such as chairing a dinner/dance committee or hosting fundraising parties, etc.
- Be responsible for **involvement of all board members** in fundraising and to work with staff to ensure that all board members have the tools they need to meet their goals.
- Monitor fundraising efforts to be sure that **ethical practices** are in place, that **donors are acknowledged** appropriately, and that fundraising efforts are **cost-effective**.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Clearly you would look to your best fundraiser to chair this committee. Maybe that's not the person who raises the most money, but rather is the person who can articulate a passion and a need for support and is not uncomfortable asking.

Folks on this committee should understand that being a champion for fellow board members AND holding them accountable is a key responsibility for committee members.



Board Committee Report Template

(Editable Cheat Sheet)



Lots of Lab members have requested guidelines or a template for board committee reports. We are pleased to present you with this exclusive Lab resource and editable template for a **Board Committee Report**. This resource will help you address the following concerns:

- How to maximize the impact of your organization's Board Committees
- How to give the rest of the board a window into your Committee's work, without inviting them to press "snooze" because you have it all under control
- How to maintain continuity from year to year, even if the make-up of the Committee changes
- How to encourage every board member to actually read each Committee Report

Board Committees play an important role in monitoring financials, tackling specific questions, and overseeing progress. Committees also exist to support the entire board's fulfillment of its obligations. Board Committee Reports are a vehicle for communicating important information AND encouraging reflective engagement from the rest of the board. Using this template is a simple practice that will help tip your board towards a more strategic leadership model that makes the most of every board member's capacities and passions.

What follows are some tips for effective Board Committee Reports and an editable template which we encourage you to customize.

PREREQUISITE TO USING THIS TEMPLATE:

We strongly recommend reviewing two additional pieces of Lab content before using this template:

1. The "[Board Committees: Charges and Responsibilities](#)" guide presents the roles and responsibilities for each committee as well as advice for setting up and ensuring each committee is empowered to be effective.
2. The "[Five-Star Governance Template](#)" advises you how to ensure your board and committees are doing more than just monitoring the staff.

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- At the top of each Report, remind the Committee and the entire Board about the roles and current objectives of that Committee. Maintain a sense of "what success looks like" and what questions the Committee members are wrestling with. Meeting minutes alone are not sufficient for keeping

members focused or prompting discussion. By starting each Report with a reminder of the Committee's objectives and driving questions, you'll give context to all other details - and help keep momentum over time, even when Committee membership changes.

- **Present opportunities for the full board to contribute to the work of each Committee.**

Here are a few examples of how you could engage the board during the meeting:

- The Finance Committee should be giving every board member the information and analysis they need to fulfill their duties of fiduciary oversight. The Finance Committee Report is an opportunity to share analysis, invite further questions, and raise related questions that the entire Board should be considering.
 - The Development Committee exists to develop a culture of enthusiastic fundraising on the board. Use the Development Committee Report as a tool for celebrating the engagement of the entire board in fundraising, and to make it easier for every board member to get involved.
 - The Nominating / Recruitment Committee is taking the lead on cultivating and interviewing potential new board members, but the work of considering prospects and serving as an ambassador for the organization is shared by ALL board members. Use the Nominating / Recruitment Committee Report as an opportunity to remind the full board about the characteristics, skills, and networks you're seeking in new members and present ways that everyone can contribute to board development.
- **Each Committee Report should be the start of a conversation that the Committee would facilitate with the full board.**
Ideally, these conversations are strategic or generative in ways that encourage the entire board to contribute their creativity and their own skills and experiences to the questions at hand: How might we approach fundraising differently? What are the implications of shifting from X type of program to Y type of program? What other corporate sectors might be interested in our work? Where might we "fish" for new potential board members or sponsors?
 - **If you have a staff member assigned to each Committee, ensure that staff member contributes to the writing/editing of the Committee Report.**
Use the Reports (and the Committee Meetings themselves, of course) as an opportunity to strengthen the partnership between board and staff. Staff have critical knowledge that comes with full-time immersion in the organization's

finances or development, but board members have a powerful role to play in offering fresh perspectives, new skill sets, additional experience, and diverse networks of expertise.

Continue to next page
for 'editable' worksheet



COMMITTEE REPORT TO THE BOARD FROM [] COMMITTEE

Submitted _____ for Period _____
month, year period covered by report, if longer than 1 month

COMMITTEE CHAIR: _____

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: _____

Objectives for Committee This Year	Status Update
1	
2	
3	

Questions Committee Hopes to Address This Year	Status Update
1	
2	
3	

Date(s) of Committee Meetings this period: []

Summary of Recent Meetings, Activities, and Accomplishments:

- [_____]
- [_____]
- [_____]
- [_____]

Upcoming Activities, Events:

- [_____]
- [_____]
- [_____]

Formal Motions for the Board's Consideration:

- [_____]

Other Conclusions and/or Recommendations From the Committee:

- [_____]
- [_____]
- [_____]

[SPECIFIC TO FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT]

Overview of Variances From Budget / Other Notable Changes:

- [_____]
- [_____]

Recommendations for financial adjustments:

- [_____]
- [_____]

Recommendations for Related Topics To Discuss at Next Board Meeting:

- [_____]
- [_____]
- [_____]

[SPECIFIC TO DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT]

Highlights - Recent Board Engagement in Fundraising:

- [_____]
- [_____]
- [_____]

Upcoming Development Events and Opportunities for Board Involvement:

- [_____]
- [_____]
- [_____]]

Recommendations for Related Topics To Discuss at Next Board Meeting:

- [_____]
- [_____]
- [_____]

[SPECIFIC TO NOMINATING / RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE REPORT]

Highlights - Recent Board Engagement in Prospecting & Recruitment Activities:

- [_____]
- [_____]
- [_____]

Upcoming Prospecting & Recruitment Opportunities for Board Involvement:

- [_____]
- [_____]
- [_____]

Recommendations for Related Topics To Discuss at Next Board Meeting:

- [_____]
- [_____]
- [_____]

Checklist for Supporting Your Organization through a Sudden GROWTH SPURT

Quick Win: A Board Members' Checklist for Supporting Your Organization Through a GROWTH SPURT



You've had a sudden growth spurt... now what?

No, this Quick Win is not an instructional guide for creating a “growth spurt.” There's no easy set of directions for that!

It's for organizations that have been operating on a relatively small scale for some time and suddenly experience rapid GROWTH.

- Maybe you just received a single grant award that DOUBLED your organization's budget.
- Maybe your issue area has been dominating national news, and more and more people are turning to YOU with donations and volunteer offers or requests for support.
- Maybe your ambitious strategic plan suddenly worked! You went from selling 100 performance tickets to 500 tickets each week.

As a Board Member, how do you support your organization through these moments? What are your responsibilities?

For the purposes of this checklist, we assume that you already have at least one (1) paid staff member, an Executive Director.

Finances

- It's time to form a Finance & Audit Committee. Check out [this Lab resource](#) for the charges and responsibilities of a Finance Committee.
 - A strong auditing firm will be your best friend. If your organization doesn't already have an auditor, it's time to find one. You can also review [this checklist](#) to help you prepare for your first audit.
 - You'll want to consult your auditor about financial management and bookkeeping best practices. Many states have a budget threshold above which you are required to complete an audit of your financial statements. If you don't already have an accounting manual, your auditor can advise on creating one.
-

Security

- Ask your auditing firm for guidance or a referral on information security and IT risk management. This includes policies for password management, client confidentiality, electronic and physical document storage, etc.
 - If you don't have one yet, be sure to set up an incident response plan which should be proportional to your organization's needs and include the following: assignment of responsibilities; assessment of legal obligations and required notifications; re-securing of the system; management of public and client relations. Post-crisis, re-evaluate incident response plan and system security. In the Lab, you can also find a [Crisis Management checklist](#).
-

Board Development

- During moments of growth, you will suddenly be reaching larger audiences than before. It's an excellent opportunity to assess the health of the board. You can use Joan's [Board Assessment Tool](#) and then [create a specific action plan](#) based on the assessment.
 - This is also the ideal time to add new board members. As always, it's important that you proactively consider what skills, characteristics, and capacities you need in new board members. If you haven't already, it's time to form a Nominating Committee on your board to reflect on what the ideal new board members would look like... and to plan for how other board prospects will be vetted and communicated with. We recommend this Lab resource: [Board Member Interview Process](#).
-

Savings for the Future

Did you just receive a huge new grant? Are you raising far more in donations than you projected at the beginning of the year? We know that you likely have a wish list of things you're itching to spend the \$\$ on. But remember, it is the board's responsibility to oversee the responsible management of the organization's finances, and these moments of sudden cash influx are when it's most important.

- To become a thriving organization, you need a cash reserve. Ideally, you have one month of operating expenses in the bank at all times AND three to six months available as unrestricted cash balance in a savings account.
 - Take this moment in time to set aside some cash in a savings account, and consider creating a standard for the future about adding a line for "savings" into each year's operating budget. This is something you can address when you plan out your budget.
-

Impact

Help your organization keep an eye on the prize: Impact that aligns with your mission. Consider what sudden growth means in this context.

- Ensure that at your next board meeting you reflect on what sudden growth means for the organization, in the context of its mission.
 - Perhaps this is an opportunity to grow public awareness of your work in a way that furthers your mission. Review this masterclass in the Lab for helpful tips on how to get press on the cheap.
 - Perhaps this is an opportunity to re-confirm your mission or set some boundaries around what new projects you will or will not take on. Review the "Is This New Program A Good Idea?" resource for some guidance about making these tough decisions.
-

Effective Governance

Finally, these growth spurts are moments to put into practice the roles of board members vs. the roles of staff. Your role as a board member is support the strategy and finances of the organization, and to help ensure the Executive Director has what s/he needs to succeed.

To that end, here are two additional Lab resources for your perusal:

- Five-Star Governance Template, to remind you about how to best fulfill your roles as board members
- Masterclass on "Whose Job is it anyway? Board Chair or Executive Director?"

Good luck during this pivotal moment in time for your organization!

**WHOSE JOB IS IT,,
ANYWAY:
BOARD CHAIR?
OR
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR?**

Whose Job Is It Anyway? Board Chair or Executive Director?

Lesson 1: Introduction

Welcome to the Leadership Lab's class on the relationship between the ED and the Board Chair. I'm actually calling this class ED... Board Chair... Who Makes the Call?

You know you'd think decision-making in an organization would be pretty straightforward, wouldn't you? You would. But I do say that non-profits are messy, and this is fundamentally the heart and soul of the mess, because decision-making is a little messy in a non-profit. To illustrate my point, before I get into riding you through what you're going to learn in this course, I'm going to offer you a quiz. Who decides in a non-profit? Who's the decision-maker in your non-profit organization? Are you ready? Okay.

A. You know I've always wanted to be a game show host.

A. Board Chair always makes the final call. I mean, come on. Look at the org chart.

B. The ED makes the call. Come on. The Board Chair doesn't live and breathe this work every day. Doesn't know the sectors as well as I do as the ED. And she travels a lot. She's not as accessible to me as I need. So, I should just decide.

Number three, oh, C. Maybe I wouldn't make such a good game show host.

C. Both people decide. That sounds messy.

D. Neither of them decide. That sounds kind of irresponsible. I think we should just chuck that one.

And then last, but not least. I have no idea, and I have recently applied online for a gig at CVS. By the way, the online process of applying for a job at CVS is brutal. It took us an hour. Not that I'm shopping. I like my job very much.

All right. So what's the answer? The truth? It totally depends. Not the answer you wanted to hear, is it? So my job is to help you to see the power of shared leadership, and the benefit of working your way through this mess. I'm going to offer my thoughts on where decisions rest. But I'm not just going to tell you, cause that's actually not enough. I actually have to bring some examples into play and show you how it could, should work. There are gnarly situations, and I'm going to try to answer as many questions as I can. But I guarantee you I will not answer every question you have in this course. I wish that were true, but it is why we have live Q & A's in the lab, and I look forward to answering all the questions that you have. And so I hope you're taking some notes.

Here's how this class is going to roll out. I'm going to begin by talking about my theory of shared leadership in the non-profit sector. What it looks like, why it matters, and why it's important. That becomes the framework for the rest of the class. We're then going to take six categories of decisions, six categories of decisions, and we're going to tease them out. Who's the primary decider? Where does the other person fit in? When is the decision really quite shared? And some examples of how that can work and how it cannot work so well.

After those, we're then going to have ... I'm going to offer you a few thoughts about how this relationship, and how this decision-making can really go off the rails. And then lastly, I want you to be able to take away something that you, as an ED and a Board Chair, could use together to preempt some of the challenges that get created.

Two last things. This relationship, the one between the Executive Director and the Board Chair, is the most important relationship in your organization. I believe it is the single biggest indicator of whether your non-profit is healthy. Do you have strong shared leadership at the top? That's one thing I want to leave you with here. The second thing is, I feel very strongly about this, because I have seen it go off the rails so many times, that I found myself practicing without a license and became a Certified Mediator as a result. Because the tensions and the conflicts between the ED and Board Chair were so substantive, that there I was, I really felt like I was practicing without a license. And it kind of annoyed me. Here there was tension at the top, when there were literally lives to save and societal problems to address.

And so I feel like, if I can crack this nut with you or help you to crack it just a little bit better, you are much more likely to have a thriving non-profit, and that's what our work is all about here in the lab. So remember, we're going to theory, we're going to six categories of decision-making, how it goes off the rails, and something you can put into place that will help you preempt some of the challenges that can be created as a result of shared leadership.

I look forward to the journey with you today. Sit back, grab a piece of paper, a cold beverage, and we'll see you in the next video.

Lesson 2: The Power of Shared Leadership

Welcome back to video number two in this master class we are calling ED... board chair... Who makes the call? I want to begin, before we dive into decision making, I want to dive into what I consider to be sort of a fundamental theory that drives a lot of my thinking about how a non-profit can be most effective and can move from messy to growing to healthy to thriving. It is what I call the power of shared leadership.

You think to yourself, okay, shared leadership. I'm not sure I get that. Just a few minutes ago, I finished a meeting with a brand new CEO. She's just been hired to run a \$30 million organization. She is pumped. My favorite piece of the conversation I had with her, I said "Why'd you want the job?" She'd worked at the organization for 17 years, and she said "When I was interviewing, I fell in love with the organization all over again." Awesome, right?

We were talking a little bit about her first board meeting. We were talking about the fact that her founder is stepping away. She's taking over for her founder. That the board was somewhat disengaged. What I realized is that if I had the board chair come in here now and sit down and talk to me, and I said "Do you consider yourself to be the leader of this organization?" That board chair would say to me "No. We just hired Justine. She's going to crush it. She's our new leader." I'm here to tell you that that's not the case.

I mean, Justine may in fact totally crush it. But she won't crush it, unless her board share, either that one, or another one, steps into a leadership role with Justine. That's how it works. I am not going to attempt to draw this on the board. I have a theory that a thriving non-profit is like a twin engine jet. A twin engine jet.

Now, everybody knows what a twin engine jet is right? But before I tell you what a twin engine jet looks like in a non-profit space, I want to tell you what I think a lot of people think leadership looks like in a non-profit. I think a lot of people think that leadership in a non-profit looks like this. There's a board. The board oversees the executive director, who oversees staff if you're lucky enough to have one, and volunteers, etc. I think that's how a lot of people look at it, and I believe that most org charts will show it this way. I think that's not even the half of it.

Then, I think there are some executive directors who see it this way. I'm in charge. I'm in charge of the staff. I'd like the board ... Let's see. Can you see that all right? Yeah. I'd like the board to be over here somewhere, leaving me alone and raising money. Could you just stay out of my way? I'll just tell you what I need money for. You bring me the money. I build the organization. But, basically, I behave like I'm in charge. That model doesn't work either. No.

That's why it's a twin engine jet. In a twin engine jet ... Should I try to draw one? All right. I'll just ... I'm going to just try to draw one. This is a jet. That's the back of the jet. This is engine one. This is engine two. That's the cockpit. You know what? I don't think I should draw that. Could you just assume there's a plane.

Let's try it again. There's a plane. There's an engine over here. An engine over here. The plane has a point like that. Is this any better? I don't know. Okay. There are two people in the cockpit. All right? That's the model we're looking for. By the way, these have to be equal in size. In the drawing. They have to be equal in function and power. This is your board chair. This is your executive director.

This is shared leadership. In order for a jet to fly at maximum capacity, to make a smooth ride to a clear destination, each of these must work in tandem in order to make sure that the plane flies. It's really that simple. Now, does that mean that the board chair can't supervise the executive director? Of course not? But what it does mean is that equal attention must be paid to both engines. You must build a strong board. You must build a strong staff. The two people who run the

organization together have to be intentionally, carefully selected. You can't have a board chair who is in the restroom at the time the vote happened.

The person wants to be in the cockpit, because they love this plane. Because they believe they have something to offer. They believe that they can build a smart, thoughtful, trusting relationship here in the cockpit. I'm going to erase this picture before I draw something else that could be perceived as problematic, and say that's shared leadership. You, as the board chair, you as the executive director, must see yourselves as together in the cockpit.

When I next meet with Justine, I'm going to make sure that she has that kind of conversation with her board chair, because she will not be effective if that board chair just sits back and says "I feel like a million bucks. We hired a rockstar. Go to it Justine." It ain't how it works. It's not how you get a board to operate at it's fullest throttle.

That's the power of shared leadership. The twin engine jet. Hire a fantastic executive director that you believe in, who has the skills, competencies and attributes that will make them successful. Be intentional about who you put in that cockpit with her, or with him. Make sure that person is in love with that organization and has the right mix of skills and attributes to share leadership with the executive director. That's what it looks like.

One of the things I talk about all the time is that my favorite example of a great leader is Kermit the Frog. Why do I talk about Kermit? I talk about him because he has the right attributes of vision. He's a team player. He's thoughtful. He talks things out with people. He cares about the people on his plane. He has a vision for where it ought to go. But that role doesn't belong solely to the executive director. The board chair has to be there too. I'm not suggesting that Kermit put Piggy in the cockpit. That could make for a very bumpy ride.

The board isn't over there. The board is not over here. Together, the board engine and the staff engine work in tandem to make a non-profit function at its best. Am I suggesting that it's easy? I am not suggesting that's easy. Let's dig in. What we're going to do now is we're going to take category by category. I'm going to tell you a little bit about what I think that shared leadership looks like against categories of decision making. We're going to start with people. We're going to start with staff.

Then we're going to talk about people. We're going to talk about board. Let's take those two, and we'll go from there. We'll see you in the next video where we're going to talk about ED board share. Who makes the call when it comes to staff decisions?

Lesson 3: Staff Hiring - Who Decides?

Welcome back to video three in our expert seminar on decision making in a nonprofit. Who makes the call? Does the ED decide? Does the board chair decide? When is that mixed together in some ways? As I like to say, it's part of what makes a nonprofit messy, but it's also part of its treasure as well. I really believe that, that a shared leadership model enriches all. The decisions that get made are better as a result. You would not want one person in the cockpit of the plane you were flying in. Maybe I can just say it that way.

So in the first lesson, which we just saw, that was ... We're now in video three, so we started with an intro, and then lesson one was all about a nonprofit like a twin-engine jet. I drew some highly unflattering drawings of twin-engine jets, but the model here is both engines, board and staff, must be high functioning and work together to ensure a thriving nonprofit.

Okay, so what does decision making look like? Get to it, Joan. So what we're going to do in these next six lessons is take six different categories of decision making, and I'm going to tell you what I think about where the decisions lie. You may be wondering what's behind me. Well, amazon.com sells tape that looks like roads, like lanes. I was very excited about this. I was hoping they'd be a little wider, and they come right off my whiteboard, so I don't have to worry about that, either. This is the ED lane. This is the board lane, the board chair lane, and this is the area I would call the gray. Where is the decision not so clearly resting in either place?

So we're going to start with people. As I like to say, get the right people on the bus, build your village people. So what about staff? And here I'm going to leave the executive director out for a few minutes, because that's going to be a separate lesson. So, you have the opportunity to hire staff. You're the executive director. Does the board have a role in deciding who you hire? I'm starting with the easy one. The answer is no. The answer is no.

So, if you're hiring a development director, if you are hiring a volunteer coordinator, that is your job, as the paid executive director, to hire that person, to evaluate them, to supervise them, to retain them, to fire them. That is your purview. It lives right here in your lane. That's your lane.

Okay, so the board chair who might be watching this is saying, "Really? I'm not sure I'm buying that, Joan." Well, listen up board chair. Here is your role. You don't have a decision to make, but you have a role. You have a voice. And I want to write those words down, because they're really important, voice role. Those are different words from decision.

If I'm your executive director, and I want to hire a development director, I can hire Cindy Pereira. I can. And I can do that without you asking. I can't do it if I'm going to pay her twice what's in the budget, but in terms of making a decision about that person, it is mine to make. That is one of my key job descriptions, job responsibilities as part of my job description.

Okay, so what's the role of the board in the hiring, managing, and evaluating of staff? They do have a role to play. The board chair has a very important role. I see the board chair and the executive director as thought partners. So, try this. "You're going to hire her?" Not the role of the board chair. "Would you like some of my thoughts about what you might want to be looking for in a development director? Would you like to kick the tires around on what we might need, based on some conversations I've had with board members, that might be useful for you?" That works.

Executive director might say, "You know, Scott, as my board chair, I really value your opinion, and I'm struggling. I have to hire a volunteer coordinator and I can't decide whether I should hire ... Should I hire Bob or should I hire Marcel? Here are the pros and cons? Can I talk that through with you?" Smart. Or you could just say, "I don't know what to do, but I sure am not giving that much power to my board chair." Not so smart, right? Talk it through.

Here's the second role. So, one role is guidance if asked. Right? The second one, bite your tongue. Now, what do I mean by that? Here's what I mean by that. So I'm your ED. I hired that volunteer coordinator and she's a hot mess. You can't tell me to fire the hot mess. You can't ... "Can't." It is my job to determine that the person's a

hot mess, to make a decision, to manage that person out, to fire that person. I might go to you for guidance, but it is my decision to fire the hot mess. It is your role to bite your tongue. You might think that I'm firing too slowly. You might think that I hired badly.

I don't want you to just bite your tongue, though. You can't tell me to fire the hot mess, because it's my job. You might not be able to see this down below, I'm not sure, is that you ... Here, let me just move this. There you go. You have to save the feedback. So bite your tongue, but capture the feedback. Put it in my file as the executive director, so that at my annual review, my annual review, you can say to me, "You know, how do you think you handled the Marcel situation?" "I think I handled it great." Board chair, "I was really actually believe there were many, many signals to indicate that Marcel should have gone, and in fact, I think it was a costly mistake." That's a completely legitimate ... When we get to supervising the executive director, you'll see that that comes back into play, but I have to have feedback in a file.

But if I make the executive director ... If I push that executive director to move Marcel out, I haven't given the executive director a long enough road to prove his or her merits or challenges. Can't do the job for her. I can't dictate that. Does that make sense? I hope it does. There isn't a lot of gray here. There isn't a lot of gray here.

The other role of the board chair in this situation is to hold the rest of the board at bay. Right? An executive session where you talk about staff at your board meeting, and the executive director is there, and the entire board is fed up with Marcel ... Now, it may, as an executive director, cause me to move Marcel out more quickly, but again, staff is my purview as the executive director, and there really isn't a lot of gray, but I must be held accountable during my annual review, for how I managed to hire, evaluate, supervise, and fire staff. I hope that makes sense.

Now, there's one last thing I want to say. There will be a time. No, there might be a time when a hire is so bad, so problematic, and I as the executive director am not doing anything, that that board chair and that ED, if they have a good relationship, the board chair could sit down and say, "I know this is your purview, and you can hold onto Marcel, but I need to tell you that I think there is high vulnerability to the organization if you do so. Can we talk about that?"

The only other place where I, as an executive director, may ask for advice about a hire, is a development director, because that development director is going to be the quarterback of my fundraising efforts, and most of my development director's team is on the board, so I might want them to do a sniff test on my development director.

I told you it's messy, but wrapping up, the ED is responsible for hiring, managing, supervising, evaluating staff, and making the call about who gets hired and who gets fired. The board chair can provide guidance if asked. They need to bite their tongue and save their feedback for an annual review, call to question if there is something that is putting the organization at risk, and managing the board so that the ED has the run room she needs to supervise and manage the staff, because that is what she has been paid to do.

So, that's actually the easy one. Next, we're going to take a look at people, but this time, we're going to look at the people on the board bus, and this, interestingly enough, is not as clear cut. See you in the next video.

Lesson 4: Board Recruitment - Who Decides?

So glad you're back. We are in the midst of an expert seminar about decision making in your non-profit. We're in the midst of an expert seminar that is attempting to help you as a board chair or as an executive director in trying to figure out this messy thing about shared leadership. That if you buy my theory that you're like co pilots in a twin engine jet, who does what? In the last video, we started by talking about staff, not the executive director, but the decision category was, who makes the decision? Who's the decider when it comes to the hiring, managing, and evaluation of staff other than the executive director? It is my personal opinion, that the decider is the executive director.

We also talked about something that I think is super important. We talked about the fact that just because someone is the decider, that the other partner isn't necessarily, nor should they necessarily, be totally boxed out. We introduced the notion of, I have not be the decider, but do I have a role? Do I have a voice? As we look at this next category, which is, who gets onto the board, we'll look at it through

this same lens. The ED is the decider when it comes to the staff. Who's the decider when it comes to the board? My answer, is simple and not simple all at the same time. The ultimate decider is the board chair.

The board chair is the coach of the board team, so ultimately, nobody should get on that board that the board chair does not believe will be a high performing member of the team. Ultimately, the board chair is responsible for the recruitment and retention of high quality board members. I would use the world full stop, but there's more. It is true, but if we leave it just at that, and the board creates a recruitment committee and decides amongst itself who should be on the board, that is a disservice to your twin engine jet.

Before I talk about what's the role of the executive director, and what responsibilities are, what I've now called not gray but shared, you might ask yourself, "Well, wait a minute. If the ED gets to decide, and I'm a board chair, and I really have to stay away from whether they hire a good volunteer coordinator or not ... Is there a role the ED plays on who gets on the board?" Well, there is actually a role. Yes, and a much more clear role than in the other situation. Why is that? Why does the executive director get to play a role in who's on the board, but the board doesn't really get to play a role in who gets hired on the staff?

I think there's kind of two reasons. The first one is, you are paying an executive director to run an organization. You've got to give them the run room to do that. It's part of their job description. It's part of how they will be evaluated and measured. On the flip side, the board, which is that other engine, is a group of volunteers, on which the executive director relies ridiculously heavily. It is important that the ED have a voice. It's important that it not be too loud, and it is important also, because the ED is often your best source of candidates.

The board chair is the ultimate decider. The board runs the nominating committee. Interviews, votes, onboards, evaluates. That's part of my job, on my engine, in my lane. Okay, so let's say I'm the executive director. What role do I play? A super important role. I am probably your very best source of prospects. I'm out and about meeting people all the time. I know who would make a good board member based on, sort of being out there. I should absolutely serve on the nominating committee. Yes, executive directors should serve on the nominating committee,

because they're bringing prospects to the table, and those prospects have to be evaluated in concert with the other people who have been brought to the table.

As an executive director, I have to tell you what. I'm going to advocate for folks. I'm going to say, "This person is a rockstar. We'd be crazy not to get them, and here's why. Someone else, some other board is after them, or they bring a unique set of PR skills, and we have no one who does public relations." That is my role as the executive director. The best piece of advice when I was given when I first started as an executive director was by another ED who said, "If you sit on no other committee when you first start, sit on the board recruitment committee." How that board shapes up ... Yes, absolutely. It is this person's team. I can't be successful unless he recruits a great team, and I have a lot to add to that.

Now, let's go to shared. When we go to shared, there's some interesting things here. I believe it is a shared responsibility that the board and the executive director need to sit down and together, define the ideal board. You want the ED at that table. That board will be better, and richer, and smarter, and more effective, and more higher functioning if the executive director is at that table. Full stop.

Now, what else? I think it is a shared responsibility to identify prospects. I think the board should be in that business. I think it is absolutely essential that the executive director be involved in identifying prospects. I think that it is a shared responsibility ... What I'm just going to put here is, building a leadership pipeline. Yes, that has to do with identifying prospects. Your ideal board needs to have competencies like leadership potential, but there should be a discussion between the board and the executive director. Particularly the board chair and the nominating committee, about what the board should look like, what prospects should be in the hopper, and do we have enough leadership in the pipeline so that this board can be built to last?

Now, there is risk ... I want to point one other thing out before we move on to the next topic. There is risk associated with engaging your executive director in board recruitment. What do I mean? I've just said they need to be involved. I've just said there are shared responsibilities, right? Two examples, and they're not flattering actually. One, one CEO that I know is the first stop for any board prospect. You want to be on the board of XYZ organization? You've got to cut it with the CEO first. No. The board chair is the ultimate decider, not the CEO. If you engage the CEO in the

process of identification, recruitment of board members, that role has to be clearly defined, and you may not give the executive director inordinate power.

In case number one, the executive director was the first person. If that executive director did not like the prospect, gone. That's a bad process. Here's the second process. You give the executive director so much power that the executive director stacks the board. I had a situation long ago with a client, where the board determined that it was time for the CEO to go. They had been so hands-off in their decision making process about who was on the board and who wasn't, that the CEO stacked the board. When it came to making a decision about whether or not to renew that CEO's contract, guess what happened? That CEO had the votes and was not fired, and his contract was renewed.

These are the things you want to avoid, so I can tell you that the board chair is the final arbiter about who should sit on his or her team. That the executive director has to have a role. It's important, it's critical, actually, but it must be clear. It can not get out of hand. Everyone needs to understand that you need an ideal board to have an ideal board engine.

That's the story on decision making when it comes to who gets to be on your board bus. The decider is the board chair. The executive director has a very clear role that must be boundaried. There are shared responsibilities to identify prospects, to build the ideal board composition matrix, and to ensure that there's a strong leadership pipeline.

That's life when it comes to the decision about who gets approved to be a board member. We've talked about staff. We have talked about board, and next up, what are we going to talk about? Next up, we're going to talk about budget. See you in the next video.

Lesson 5: The Annual Budget - Who Decides?

We are back, this is video number five in the expert seminar, that I feel is totally foundational to the building of a thriving non profit. How does decisions get made? What's the role of the ED in decision making, what's the role of the board chair in

decision making? It is my fondest hope that an ED and a board chair will sit and watch this course together, and really begin to think about their relationship as a partnership, because as I have mentioned in one of the earlier videos, this is like co pilots in the cockpit of a twin engine jet.

That's what we're going for, we're not going to get there all the way, because it's messy, there's tension, there's ego, there's all those things, but that's what we're going for. We started with theory, and then we dove right in to muck around into the mess of decision making. We started with people, first the question we asked, who decides what staff gets hired? Not the ED, I'm not talking about hiring the ED, that's another lesson coming up.

Who gets to decide what staff gets hired? The decider, the executive director. Does the board have a role? Does it have a voice? Yes it does. Go back and look at that lesson again and you can see in more detail what that looks like. Then we went on to the board, who gets to decide who sits on the board? The decider there is the board chair, it's his or her team, but does the executive director have a role? Quite a big one, and is there some shared power and shared ownership of that? There is, and that makes that one a little even less tidy.

We've got this same situation when it comes to the budget, there is a clear decider, there is an absolute role for the other, and there are some shared responsibilities. So let's do it.

In a non profit organization, hands on the buzzers people. In a non profit organization, the approval, the final approval of the budget for the organization rests with? The board. That's one of those biggie responsibilities of the board, the board approves the annual budget. Approves it.

Notice that I did not say rubber stamps it. I suspect there are many non profit organizations out there where there are board members who couldn't tell you too much about the budget. In fact, I have had more conversations than I care to admit where I've asked a board member, oh that's a wonderful organization you're on the board of, what's the annual budget? Crickets.

Actually crickets is a funny phrase isn't it, because crickets actually make noise. Anyway, the board chair is the ultimate decider, the board is the ultimate

decider and approves the annual budget. Okay, so this, I'm putting here is decider, the board decides about the budget.

What else does the board decide? What else is the board responsible for here? So I'm the board chair, I tell you what, I want to know, I want to be sure, I feel responsible, I'm I'm approving that budget, I better well have developed or overseen the development of a budget process that is rich with integrity, right, that is going to result in a budget that is clear, easily understood, where there are clear sets of assumptions, and that when those board members vote, they ain't rubber stamping.

That's the board chair's job. So, what's the executive director? Remember, we've been talking through the course of the course, of course, about role and voice, so I may be the decider, the board may be the decider about the budget, but you got to know, the executive director has a very big role to play. They got to build the budget, and that budget has to thread that needle between doable and aspirational.

That's really important, you have sometimes, I've seen clients that present budgets to the board, that are just crazy town, crazy town. These people are never going to hit these numbers. You look at the percentage increase, and the board members who are not financially literate, and are not really paying that much attention, they approve a budget with some wacky ass percent increase in the budget on a particular revenue line.

You have to thread that needle, all right. The next thing you're responsible for is making sure that the organization tracks and reports against the budget on a regular basis, that's your job. Your job is to make sure the board has the information that it needs to monitor that budget once it's approved.

I believe it is the role of the executive director to be financially literate. Oh I don't know, I've heard executive directors say, I don't know, they show me the balance sheet, I don't have a clue what a balance sheet is, that's bad. If you have an executive director who has no idea about budgets, finances, please consider a course or a pro bono CPA who can spend a half a day with your executive director and do that sort of finance for the non financial executive.

I actually did it when I was at MTV. I was not a finance person, but I was starting to write business plans, and I had such a training, and it was amazing.

Here's the shared part is that there's a new partnership that we're going to introduce with budgets, and it is the treasurer, and the finance person, that could be the executive director. That's a shared responsibility, that partnership has to be really strong, there has to be a nice degree of trust, good communication.

I think it is a shared responsibility that the budget have really clear assumptions. This may be another expert seminar, but don't get me started on budgets that are just simply like, oh, well what we did was we just increased all the expense lines by like 3%, and the revenue by 3%. That's not a budget. I need assumptions that tell me where my money's going to come from, and where my money's going to go, because at the end of the day, who am I beholden to? The donor who wrote the check, I've always got to be able to look that person in the eye, and say, I invested your money well, and wisely.

This is how this works. It can easily go off the rails, it goes off the rails all the time. I'll come back to, in a future lesson in this course, a little bit about how things go off the rails. Oh, another shared thing over here, so clear assumptions and a clear process for monitoring. That's important, and there's one more thing that's important about this process. It goes back to what we were talking about in the last lesson about who joins your board.

You need a five star treasurer. I could talk for a long time about what makes a five star treasurer for a non profit, it is not necessarily a CPA, not necessarily. It is somebody who can actually interpret the numbers, tell you what they mean, what the impact of them might be, how it informs your strategy. That's way more important than whether they can spot a journal entry or not.

The board is the decider when it comes to budget, ultimately the board chair. They have to develop a great process for developing the budget, and they need to recruit a five star treasurer. The role of the executive director is not inconsequential, because they're in fact building the budget that gets approved by the board, so it has to be something between doable and aspirational.

They have to be financially literate, and then the shared responsibilities here, the treasurer and the finance person have to develop a partnership of trust, and communication. That's important, there need to be clear assumptions, and a clear

process for monitoring, and making adjustments to your budget through the course of the year as you go.

No rubber stamping please. Board members may not roll their eyes or check their emails while the treasurer is giving their report. The role of money in the organization rests ultimately, the buck around the bucks stop with the board. So, we've talked about people, staff, board recruit, we've just talked about money and budgets. Next up, strategy.

Lesson 6: Organizational Strategy - Who Decides?

So welcome back. This is video number six in our expert seminar, on what I think is probably one of the most challenging topics you'll grapple with in leadership roles in the nonprofit space, and that's decision making. Who makes the decisions? When does the executive director decide? When does the board chair decide? When is there really a real shared responsibility?

So we started with my theory that a great nonprofit is like a twin-engine jet, and that the copilots are the executive director and the board chair. And then we dug right in. We've talked about people. Who's responsible for supervising and managing staff? Who's responsible for bringing on new board members? We talked about money and budgeting and where the decisions rest there. And now we move on to strategy, which of course is tied to money; it's actually tied to everything, isn't it?

We start with who's the ultimate decider. And this one's a pretty easy one. The ultimate decider. Interestingly enough, I have to say the decider is the person who has to cast a vote. The board is responsible for the approval of the strategic plan for the organization. If there is not a strategy or a strategic plan, the buck stops with the board.

So, I am here to tell you that the board is the decider, the voter. The ultimate decision-making authority rests with the board. Now, if nonprofits were not messy, we could just end this video right here, but we can't do that. That would make for a very short two minute and six second video.

What does that mean to be responsible for the strategy? Well, I believe that in order to make a good decision about the strategy, that the board chair has to be responsible for leading the effort to approve, own and champion the strategic vision, direction and plan. The strategic plan is not ... We're long past the days when it's some binder that sits on a shelf. It should be a north star that drives you, that inspires you to want to be on the board, that inspires you to want to invite people to know more and do more about the work of your organization.

So it is the board chair's responsibility to lead an effort, to make sure that when all is said and done, the board isn't just approving it, the board is owning it. Would that it were true that in many organizations the board feels a sense of ownership around strategy. And there's a reason for that.

Sometimes executive director's egos and control freakness can get in the way. The staff can say, "Well, these are volunteers. They come in and out. We live this every day. This is what we ought to do." And there can be a real temptation, in fact, for a board to say, "Well, they know a hell of a lot better than we do. Why don't we just let them decide the strategy and we'll just sign off on it?" That's so not a good idea, because if the board does not own the strategy, the board cannot be the ambassadors your organizations need and deserve. The board has to own the strategy process with you, as an executive director.

So, board is the decider, but let me tell you that nothing is more important to share between the executive director and the board chair, than the strategic planning process. You have to be on the same page. Think about yourselves in that cockpit. You don't want to be disagreeing about where the plane's going. No you don't. And you want to be excited about the destination. You've got to do that together.

I want to talk about what's shared, because that's actually the most important piece of strategy work and where decisions rest. So the shared leadership of the ED and the board chair, which I've actually put over here. So first things first is to develop a collaborative process, and when I say collaborative, I'm talking about board and staff. Please, please, please, please, put behind us those days when staff members put a strategy plan together and presented it to the board and the board just looked at it and said, "Gee, I kind of wish they had asked me for my opinion about this." That's what this is about.

The next thing is if you're going to do some kind of an outside facilitator, that should really be shared. It shouldn't be the ED's job, shouldn't be the board chair's job. I do this kind of work, and if I am asked to do it by an executive director, I will not do it unless I am also interviewed by the board chair. I need to know they're on the same page. I need to know the decision is owned by both of them.

Monitoring the progress of the process; it's really shared. And then of course, once it's approved, there's got to be some shared understanding and a development about how you're going to actually monitor that. But most importantly I think, it is important here in terms of shared between the ED and the board chair, is you've got to design board meetings that engage the full board throughout. So important, because this group could become perceived to be the power base around the strategy work, and we don't want that. We want them to be driving and leading, but the rest of that board, they have to own the strategic plan as well.

So this, interestingly enough, is a decision unlike the others we've talked about so far, that has more shared pieces and components to it than any of the previous ones. The board and the staff must be on the same page about where the organization is going. I have to know as the executive director, that that destination, that I am just loving the idea of taking the organization there, that I can market it, that I can pitch it to donors. And I know that my role, once it's approved, is that I'm going to have to develop some goals and ways that the board can monitor the success of the plan. How are we doing against the plan? That's certainly an ED-staff role.

But what I'm saying in this particular lesson, is that when it comes to strategy, we are more shared than anything else, because if you do this the right way, that when you get to a vote, it's kind of a no-brainer. And the reason it's a no-brainer is not because it's rubber-stamped, it's because there's been an engagement all throughout.

And there's one last thing I want to say before we move on to the next video. Done right, done collaboratively, done asking the right questions, done with board meetings that give enough air time for board members to actually engage, to say, "What if?" or, "Have you thought about this?" or what if you actually had a board meeting where you came up with the ten big questions the strategy has to answer, and you then handed that list to that collaborative team? Then you've got something

going and you have board members who, not only are going to own it, but the process is going to engage them. And that's what you're looking for.

So, it's very interesting as we look at decision-making through the course of this course, of course, is that each kind of decision has a foreground-background to it. That yes, there's a decider, but boy, oh boy, you have to actually do this dance just the right way, and each kind of decision requires a slightly different dance.

Next up, I'm going to talk a little bit about program design.

Lesson 7: New Programs - Who Decides?

So we are deep into our expert seminar in decision making in a nonprofit organization. It's the ED side, there's the board chair decide. You're watching now video number seven. We started with an intro video, then we moved into a theory video about the power of shared leadership, and a thriving nonprofit like a twin engine jet. Then we dug right into varying kinds of decisions that need to be made in a nonprofit. People who hire staff, who decides who joins the board? Who decides on the budget? Who decides on strategy? Our next topic, this video I'm gonna spend just a few minutes talking about program design. Program design, new programs, what programs does the organization do? Which do they walk away from? Where does that decision rest?

Now, I maybe have been giving you a headache through these first six videos because the answers just are not always clear cut or easy. This is why I say that nonprofits are messy, right? I wish it was this clear cut, I got these really nice little lane tapes from Amazon.com, but there's a whole lot of swerving that goes around, so I'm hoping that you're finding this helpful. What I'm really hoping is that it becomes a way for you to have a discussion with your executive director, with your board chair. Maybe with the entire board because this clarity around decision making gets nonprofits tied up in so many knots I cannot begin to tell you. It creates tension, it creates animosity. It leads to distrust, and this is not what you want. I mean, think about that for just a second. In any relationship, without communication, without clarity of roles, who's doing what?

What is my role? What is your role? If I overstep my boundaries, do I ... does the other person feel like I don't trust them? Maybe. Or do I feel ... or does that person just feel dismissive. It's like, this person is in my business, like just stay out, go raise money. What I've been trying to do in this course is really to give you some framework for a discussion and for you to think carefully about these decisions, 'cause one of the things I said at the very beginning is people who are drawn to leadership, as executive directors or board chairs are type A's. They're accustomed to making decisions, being good at making decisions, being clear about their decisions, and there's a lot of gray in the world of nonprofits. As I said, type A's dislike the grays.

Let's talk about program design pretty briefly. Who decides what programs you do, what programs you don't do? The decider here is the executive director. You're generally not going to go to your board to get approval for everything you do in terms of programs. There's a caveat here. The executive director is the decider. If it is wildly, stinkingly clear that that program aligns with your strategic plan. You're the decider if it aligns with the plan. See why the plan is so important? And if you, especially if this is a new program, if you have a strong funding source. And three, if you have the bandwidth, person power.

The decision ultimately rests here. If I'm the executive director and I decide to launch a program, and I feed hungry people at a soup kitchen, and I decide to open a homeless shelter. Someone gives me funding for that. Certainly in the world of solving the problem of homeless people, there's an alignment there. Do I have the money? Can I actually do it well? I believe that it is my job as part of being the decider, to make this case to my board. I am about to embark on this. Here's how I'm going to do it. Here's how I'm going to fund it, and here's how I'm going to handle the bandwidth issue.

Does the board get to decide? This is a pretty squishy one, but I'm gonna do with no. Do I believe they could ask a bazillion questions that would challenge all of my assumptions? You bet. You bet. Do I believe that as a result of those bazillion questions I may rethink my own decision? You bet. The board here, the important thing about the board chair's role, which by the way, no new program comes forward to a board unless the board chair and the ED have spoken about it first. I believe the board chair's role in this is to really poke and prod. There are more than a few executive directors that have what I call BSOS. Bright Shiny Object Syndrome.

There's in fact a quick win in the leadership lab about how to say no to programs because there's an epidemic of BSOS.

This is a little bit iterative, but for the most part, if you've got a plan and you've approved goals, and the staff has created goals, the program stuff lives in the ED's purview. You get just like if you feel like your ED made a bad hire, file it away. We got involved in a program we never should have gotten involved in. Bang, right into the annual evaluation folder. If there is a tremendous potential vulnerability to the sustainability of the organization, the board chair has to have a real heart to heart conversation with his or her staff partner to sort that out. You can see ... you can see how important conversation is. You can see how important it is that the board chair be responsible for creating a high functioning engine that can ask an executive director tough questions.

That's what it's about, right? Is how it is that I ... I might make a mistake, but if I built a really strong board, that other engine is gonna kick the tires with me. How many transportation metaphors can I come up with here? Oh my gosh. Anyway, right, they're gonna help me kick the tires. My decision is gonna be richer for the conversation. I don't have to be defensive about it. The decider on programs really is the executive director, but if the board chair and the board has not given the executive director a really thorough vetting of that, especially a new program, then it's not doing its job either.

That's program design. Again, there's a lot of really good material in the leadership lab around program design, and how to get started on it, how to determine whether it fits or aligns, so I don't want to go into that because we have content there. I just wanted to make the point that is this. If you have developed collaboratively, as we talked about in video six, a wonderfully shared strategy that everyone is inspired by and owns. The decisions about what programs you do and what programs you don't do is gonna be really, really clear and the decision will ultimately rest with the ED, with the board chair and the board as a whole asking good questions to make that program design even better.

Next up, supervision and evaluation of the executive director.

Lesson 8: Evaluation of the Executive Director - Who Decides?

So this is gonna seem like a no brainer.

We are talking about who gets to make the decision about who evaluates the performance of the Executive Director.

We've been talking about a series of categories of decisions throughout this course, from who gets to hire staff, who gets to approve board members, who decides about the budget, who decides about strategy, who decides about program design.

You're gonna think this one is pretty easy, and it's generally pretty easy, and yet, it causes more animosity than anything that I can think of in the relationship between the Board Chair and the Executive Director.

I'm thinking about a client who, as part of her contract, which is always a nice thing to have, and most people don't, an annual performance review. A self evaluation and an evaluation by a group of people on the Board. The annual date for that review approached, it came, it went, it went. The Executive Director started to get upset. Do you not value me enough to meet your deadline to provide me with an annual evaluation? And it really wasn't about the money. And you know that board members are volunteers, I don't know if you know this, they actually have other day jobs, and so things do fall through the cracks. But annual evaluations? How would you like it if your boss just forgot to give you one? Did my client stay in her job? No, she didn't. They finally gave her some kind of evaluation, but she felt disrespected, she didn't feel valued, and they even gave her decent money in terms of a salary bump. It was too late, she was headhunted for another job and took it.

You have to treat your Executive Director the way you want to be treated, and nothing is more charged than the annual evaluation. Easy answer here, no, the Executive Director is not the decider. Ultimately, the Board Chair has the best knowledge and understanding of the performance of the Executive Director during the year that has proceeded. And it is the Board Chair's job to make sure that each

year, on or before the Executive Directors anniversary date that, there is conducted, an annual performance review.

The Board Chair is responsible, and the ultimate decider for what that process should look like. The Board Chair should be designing a smart, timely, thoughtful, and inclusive process. And the Board Chair is responsible for ensuring that that evaluation is presented to the Executive Director with care and thought.

Here's what happens. Volunteers get busy, and they have to rush to get through their to do list for their responsibilities. Please, if you ... please do not rush through a performance evaluation process, it is unfair, it's disrespectful, and ultimately, you could lose someone who is really good.

This is almost exclusively a Board gig. I could end the video here, but I want to say a few other things quickly. I coach quite a lot of CEO clients and the annual review process is highly charged for them. Many of these type A's have egos of some magnitude, or they wouldn't have the jobs they have, and do not believe that the Board is engaged enough or knowledgeable enough to be able to provide them with a fair assessment. But they don't just dismiss it, they get defensive, and so I will have a session where I will have to work really hard to move them off of, "Can you believe XYZ?" "Oh you know who I bet that was? I bet that was the Chair of the development committee." Why? Why are we doing this?

If you have a good process, let the process take its course. So the ED may not be the decider but I argue that the ED has a very significant role in providing substantial input into what the process should look like.

It's cold here in New Jersey, you may be hearing my radiator.

There are a couple of other things I want Executive Directors to recognize that what their role should be in this process. That, you need to work really hard not to be defensive. Everyone who gets a performance review has to work really hard not to be defensive, but you're being evaluated by volunteers, for some reason, it triggers that in a bigger way. So please dampen that down.

Yes, you can absolutely have an expectation that you will be reviewed on your ... on or about your anniversary date. But bite your tongue a little, if it's a little late.

Don't make it the be all end all. Don't fall on your sword over minor infractions. Make sure you're focused on the big things.

And then the last thing is, ensure that the process includes a self evaluation so you can compare what you think about your performance with the Board thinks about your performance. You can make all kinds of decisions about whether there should be a 360 degree review, an outside stakeholders should be involved. Any of that is fair game, that's a great conversation for a lengthy discussion between the co-pilots. What should the process look like? What do you want Joan? What do want Karen? What do you think it should look like?

Don't let the Executive Director drive it, but let the Executive Director have some good solid input so that she or he feels like she had a voice, a role in shaping what that process is.

Like I said, I can not tell you how many organizations lose great Executive Directors over this. Because they do a sloppy job, they do a rushed job, or they're not honest. That's why, if you remember from these previous videos, there needs to be that ongoing, "I wish she really should have fired that person sooner." "I believe that she went after the bright shiny object." Make sure that your evaluation includes these very specific, practical, pragmatic things that are not just generalities, but make me as the Executive Director say, "Okay, I'm buying that, yeah, I think I fired Marcel too slowly. You're right." That doesn't mean I should get dinged for it, but evaluations are opportunities to improve.

So, I just would say, that while it is abundantly clear and it's the easiest video to make here to say, it's the job of the Board to evaluate the Executive Director. I just want to say, please take it seriously, give it the time and attention it deserves, do it timely, do it smart, inclusive, and that decision rests right here with your Board Chair.

In our ... we're coming down the home stretch here, in the next video I'm just gonna give you a couple of quick ... a quick list of the things that get in the way. The things that cause trouble in the cockpit.

Lesson 9: Shared Leadership - What Gets In the Way?

When I'm thinking back to all of the videos you've watched so far, and there's just a ton, just a ton of food for thought, isn't there? This notion about who decides, the executive director or the board chair, and where does the responsibility rest? Where's the role the other one plays? What responsibilities are legitimately shared, right? These are all like ... I don't about you. I actually kind of have a headache. But I am hoping that you're gleaning some good material from this, and as I've said, I really do hope that this is something you might be able to share with your organizational partner, your copilot in the twin engine jet of your dreams.

So I just want to talk for a couple of minutes about things that get in the way. One of the reasons I created this course is I want fewer things to get in the way, because one of the biggest things that gets in the way is a lack of clarity. Hey, that's my turf. Hey, that's my turf. Well, if you had that going on inside the cockpit of an airplane, you'd buckle your seatbelt a whole lot tighter. So a lack of clarity is probably the number one thing that gets in the way of a really robust staff, leader, board leader partnership. And so, I could have put up here the number one thing that gets in the way is neither your board chair, nor your executive director have seen this course. But I thought that was a little self-serving.

Ego. Ego gets in the way a lot. Ego gets in the way a lot, but board chairs and executive directors, I don't know that I need to say a whole lot, but when you are in a relationship, you're not out to win. Ego is not something that should be at the forefront. What should be at the forefront is how do we work together in the service of the mission of our organization. That's super, super important.

This is actually a bigger ... there's a root cause for this, and I'll come to it in a second. All right, the board leadership is not strong. I think you've seen through the videos in this course that a strong board chair is absolutely essential to the creation of a thriving non-profit. So what could it look like, the board chair doesn't take responsibility for that annual evaluation? The board chair doesn't hold a toxic board member accountable.

A board member allows people to ... goes into executive session, and they spend the whole time talking about Marcel, the volunteer coordinator that needs to get fired, and why are we not making Joan fire Marcel, as opposed to saying, you

know what, I have had some conversations with Joan about Marcel. Joan is very aware of some of the challenges of Marcel's performance. She seems to have a very good plan, and I don't think it is a good use of our time. This is not the right forum or venue for us to be talking about Marcel's performance. That's Joan's purview, but you can rest assured that I will make note of this conversation, and I will put it in Joan's file when we review her next year on her anniversary date. These comments and concerns will be raised at that time. But if you don't have a board chair that's actually leading and managing that engine, you can have real trouble.

Lack of communications. I am a huge fan of standard weekly or biweekly meetings between the executive director and the board chair. Not to go through some tick list of minutiae in the weeds kinds of tasks, but to really stay on top of what matters. Where are we with these three board members? Are they being treated well? Are they still in the pipeline? Are we voting them in? What are the big things that matter, and talk about them. I can't tell you how many clients of mine say, oh my goodness, I talk to my board chair all the time. He calls me like three times a day. Why? That's bad. It's not a good use of your time, and not a good use of your board chair's time either.

I'm going to call this the huff and puff ED. The intimidating executive director who has it going on, is high performing, and knows his stuff and just wants to tell the board what it should do. That gets in the way. And it really gets in the way because it's really hard to provide feedback to the huff and puff ED, especially if your board leadership is not strong. Then your huff and puff and I'll blow your house down executive director can actually blow your house down. And so the checks and balances are missing. There's trouble in the cockpit, and things are just not going to go the way you want or need them to.

And the last thing I just want to say is we just have to own it. The people that are drawn to leadership positions in non-profits are type A's. They like to make decisions. They like clarity. They like all of these things. They probably have a bit of an ego, and they do not care for ... what's the word? The gray. Does that mean that they don't share, that they can't do that shared leadership thing? Well, if the egos are too big, no, they're probably not kids that share very nicely in the sandbox.

No, I'm just saying this kind of diplomacy, that shared leadership, how do we do this together? It's a little messier than type A's like. And so be conscious of this as

you develop the leadership pipeline, as you think about who to hire as your next executive director, because those copilots, they're everything. And if you're thinking about these things, and how to avoid these things, you should be looking at that when you're doing a hire for your ED, and you should certainly be looking for that, when you're actually thinking about who would make a great board chair for your organization.

So, one last video to follow, and it's just some practical advice about how to preempt some of these challenges that we've been talking about. When either you, as the executive director, or you as the board chair are new, or both of you are new. How to set it up to succeed.

Lesson 10: Setting Co-Pilots Up to Succeed

So here we are in the final video. I hope that I have given you a lot of food for thought. Maybe you thought I would have more answers than I did. Maybe some of what I said evoked quite a number of questions for you. That would not surprise me. This is not cut and dry. And you are in the leadership lab because you're a staff leader or a board leader and you're probably a little bit of a type A and you were expecting more like, "Do these six things." "This is his, this is mine, this is hers, this is mine." It doesn't always work like that in the cockpit.

I hope that you've written down questions and I hope that you will submit them to the Q&A that we'll be doing in the lab. There is no question, if you've got the question, someone else shares it.

So my last piece of advice is this. When one of the pairs is new, new board chair or new ED, God forbid both. I hope that does not happen. We like institutional memory. We like some continuity. You need to take time. Your organization, the mission, the people you serve demand that you sit and plan and think about what a successful partnership will look like with the two of you at the helm in this shared leadership model. You're going to say, "I don't have two or three hours. My board chair would not be able to allocate two or three hours." And I am here to tell you it could be the best investment you make during the tenure of your board chair.

So what I want you to think about is a session, and it would be wonderful, truly wonderful, if it was facilitated in some way. Could be by another board member. Could be by an outside person. It'd just be nice to have someone kind of guide the conversation. But your goals are several fold.

One, is you just want to sort of set the groundwork. To this end I'm a big fan of coming to this session with a copy of the ED job description and a copy of the board chair job description. Take a look at them. See how they're the same. See how they're different. See how they overlap. So I'm just going to put job descriptions there so as you're thinking about it, it's just an interesting tool. And it allows you to then establish at least some amount of role clarity. So that's another goal.

Communications. How often will you meet? What might that meeting look like? Who should prepare the agenda? Set the expectations up front so you're not sitting there as a board chair saying, "I have no idea what this weekly meeting is about." And the ED is just rambling on about like things that don't feel like they're really important to talk about. Set it up here. And the most important thing this session does is to define success for the organization as a result of your partnership. What do you want to be able to say. So some of the things that you might want to do in this session, I think probably the first one is, what do you want to be able to say a year from now? That the organization did or how it changed or what things happened on both engines as a result of your shared leadership. As a result of you working together. That's a very good question and a very good way to frame a several hour conversation with your leadership partner.

I like for there to be some candor. What do you see as the biggest challenges over the next year, executive director? How do you feel about the people on the bus? You know, if you have staff, are there rock stars you want to retain? Are there people we should be keeping a close look at? Now staff stuff is not my responsibility. "We know that," says the board chair, "but if you need guidance, I'm here,"

On the board side, I think you spend a good amount of time going through the strengths, the weaknesses and the opportunities associated with every single board member. I believe that you should be talking about, how are you going to move the organization forward with board committees? You should be talking board leadership. How are you building a leadership pipeline? These are the kinds of things ... what I would do, is I would go back over through some of the lessons of this

course and think about where that shared stuff is. Put that on the agenda. Bring it front and center. And then talk about it and write it down. If I'm the executive director I say, "You know what, I will take responsibility for putting notes together and action items that document the conversation that we had and we should revisit this quarterly or every six months to make sure that we're making good on the promise to lead this organization together."

But these conversations, they just don't happen. And if they did, there would be so ... more non-profits would be thriving. There would be less tension. People would meet their obligations. There'd be more of a leadership pipeline. There'd be clarity. So have a conversation. Maybe the ED thinks they should be deciding who's on the board. Have that conversation. Have the board chair say, "You should absolutely have a voice, but at the end of the day the decision about who sits on this board belongs with me. That's my engine. But nobody is probably a more valuable asset in helping me identify who should be on that board than you."

And what does this all do? It helps you to define success as a result of your partnership. But more importantly it sets your relationship off to a good start. It starts to foster candor. And the most important element, the single most important element in a strong partnership in that cockpit, at the leadership of that organization, trust. You can't build trust by just going from zero to 60 miles an hour. You've got to take the time. You've got to take the time and talk about what it means to be in partnership with one another and lay that out. Be really clear about it. Document it, revisit it, shape it, change it as you go. Your organization will be the better for it and so, too, will the clients that you serve.

So thanks for joining me. Enjoy the other content in the lab. There's a lot of related content regarding boards and leadership. Take advantage of it and as always, I'll see you in the Village.

Who Decides?

Executive Director? Board Chair? Both?

THE BIG BUCKETS		EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	BOARD CHAIR	SHARED
	Staff	- Hire, manage, supervise, fire	- Provide guidance when asked - Raise concerns for ED consideration - Save feedback for annual review	X
	Supervision of E.D. & Annual Review	- Keep file of accomplishments, lessons learned for annual review process - Write a candid self-evaluation	- Lead a smart, thoughtful and timely annual review process	- Develop a process that is fair and inclusive, that measures skills, accomplishments, and leadership attributes - Conduct a debrief for lessons learned
	Strategy	- Once approved by board, lead a process to develop and execute goals aligned with the plan - Provide full board with regular progress updates	- Lead the board to approve, own, and champion the strategic vision, direction, and plan - Ensure regular monitoring	- Develop a board/staff process - Design board meetings that allow for robust engagement by the full board throughout
	Program Development	- Develop, procure funding, and implement programs that align with the mission and plan - Create a mechanism for program evaluation	- Lead effort to monitor program effectiveness - Challenge staff on new program ideas	- Work together to ensure that the board has what it needs to evaluate programs with a process that is effective and not onerous on staff
	Budget	- Know your #'s cold, including the balance sheet - Build a thorough budget that threads the needle between doable and overly ambitious	- Provide clear direction to the Finance Committee to create a process with integrity	- Build a strong Finance Committee / Staff partnership for building and monitoring the budget - Ensure that the budget and all assumptions are clearly understood by all board members
	Board Building	- Identify strong prospects - Serve as non-voting member of the Recruitment Committee	- Hold all board members accountable to the vast array of responsibilities they signed up for - Ensure that board members have what they need to be successful	- Define the skills, expertise, and attributes necessary for your board, its mission, and the approved strategy. - Build a leadership pipeline – groom chairs and leadership

WEEKLY AGENDA FOR YOUR CEO/CHAIR MEETING

INTRO

Regular meetings are important. REALLY important.

I want you to remember the metaphor I use here in the Nonprofit Leadership Lab. **The most effective nonprofits are like twin engine jets.** You have two engines – the staff and the board. And in the cockpit, co-pilots!

Yes, yes, I am well aware that the CEO reports to the board and that one of the board's key responsibilities is to hire, evaluate, and (gasp!) fire the staff leader.

But humor me and think “partnership”. It's a much better model. It's what I called “shared leadership.”

So now back to that cockpit.

What is the key to a successful relationship between the pilot and the co-pilot?

Yes, they both have to be good at their jobs. That's a given. After that, it is all about communications.

Now, maybe you think you communicate just fine. You think, “Regular meetings? Joan... don't worry! We talk all the time!” If you say this, I'm even more worried for you. I don't want the staff leader bombarded with regular texts or calls or emails. The staff leader needs to focus on his/her job. the board leader needs to lead the board. If you talk all the time, I guarantee your twin engine jet isn't flying at the right altitude. It's stuck in the weeds.

The following template should be helpful to you both so that you:

- Make the most of the time you spend together
- Ensure nothing big gets left out of the discussion
- Keep the conversation at the right attitude (so you don't spend 10 minutes talking about what time works for each of you to meet with a toxic board member or a board prospect)
- Pay attention to both engines of the jet – how they are functioning, how they could be functioning more effectively

THE DAY BEFORE THE MEETING

- Set yourself some kind of reminder to review the Action Items from last week's meeting.

- Make the reminder for first thing so that you have the whole day to cram if you totally forgot to do a few of them. Both of you are over-achievers and not getting your homework in on time always feels bad.

SETTING THE GROUND RULES

- **One hour max.** I know the idea of weekly meetings causes some of you to break out in a rash but if there is a limit, it will work better.
- **Self monitoring.** You have to agree to call each other out if you are going off on a tangent and there is a risk you won't get through everything.
- **CEO responsible for capturing action items.** What has to be done, who "owns" it and a deadline. You can pop them right into the body of an email as you go through the meeting so that all you have to do is hit SEND at the end of the meeting. (If you are old fashioned and take handwritten notes, be sure they are legible and purchase the TurboScan app for your phone so you can scan and send them right after the meeting.)
- **Both engines are important.** The board chair may want to talk only about staff related issues. Nope. You're in that cockpit together.
- **No more than 2 weeks without a meeting.** If you have to cancel, the next meeting should be 90 minutes – there may not be enough time.
- **Board meeting prep is a separate meeting.** I hate to break it to you, but board meetings must be carefully planned and thoughtfully crafted. Way too big a topic for a standing weekly meeting.
- **"Bad news" is important news.** The board chair must make it clear that s/he needs to hear about problems. I know I know. You don't want to tell your boss what is going wrong. But the Chair is the most important thought partner for the CEO.
- **Do NOT open the meeting with, "So what's going on?"** No one question annoys me more than this. If I'm a CEO, what am I supposed to do with that? My job isn't to simply spit out an update to my board chair so s/he is informed. If you ask this question, it means neither of you are prepared to have a good, solid, productive regular meeting and you should both go back to your day jobs and think long and hard about how to make the most of the time you spend together.

THE AGENDA

First, the CEO

- **Sector update** - some kind of external context / framing
- **"Big Wins" of the week**
- **Priorities for the coming week**
- **"Pink flags" on the field** – issues worthy of attention
 - Staffing issues
 - Can't fill X job
 - Something falling through the cracks
 - "What I need from you"

- “What I need from the board”
- **“Bright red flags” on the field** – major fires that need immediate attention
- **Special initiatives**
 - Status
 - Flags
 - Needs

Next, the Board Chair

- **The past week** - review accomplishments against her/his action items
- **Upcoming priorities** - Here you want the chair to make sure s/he is focusing on the most important things. The two of you should be on the same page about how the chair spends her/his time in the coming week.
- **Board recruitment** - Never meet with talking about how this process is going. Don't get too into the weeds, but this demands vigilance. And vigilance means regular info back and forth.
- **Fundraising** - Every week, the Chair should offer observations about the board and how fundraising is going. This could include a discussion of board members' own giving or ticket sales to the gala. The CEO might have requests from the staff.
- **Board member “red flags”** - Anyone go off the rails? Missing in action? Anyone the CEO should email with thanks?
- **Full board communication** - Quick touch point here. Is the board getting all the information it needs to do its job? Is there anything the CEO wants the board chair to communicate out?
- **Questions** - What I call “Have you been thinking about...?”

ENDING THE MEETING

- Review action items for both
- Any thoughts for items requiring attention in next week's meeting
- Confirm next week's meeting time



HOW TO USE THE "ARMY OF THE ENGAGED" WORKSHEET

How to Use the ‘Army of the Engaged’ Worksheet



You are often asking (also known as “nagging”) board members to dig into their nonexistent rolodexes and find you new names of folks to invite to fundraisers and galas, folks who would entertain board service, folks to ask for money. Rich ones are the very best of course.

Below you will find a link to a resource here in the Nonprofit Leadership Lab. It’s a worksheet created by Joan Garry for board members to fill out that enables them to “place” the folks in their networks into a context – book club, synagogue, birthday dinner. When prompted by ‘place,’ your memory just plain works differently. There is a terrific TED Talk by Adam Grant, [‘How To Remember Anything,’](#) that affirms this.

In this Quick Win, we’ll offer you a way to use the ‘Army of the Engaged’ worksheet to its best advantage.

Let’s start with how NOT to use it.

DO NOT JUST EMAIL IT TO EACH BOARD MEMBER

Does the phrase “getting nowhere fast” mean anything to you? The worksheet is not intended as a solo exercise. The power of working with your peers cannot be underestimated.

THE RECIPE THAT WORKS

1. Board meeting agenda: Set aside 30 minutes. 45 is even better.

Your board meetings are only an hour long you say? OK, extend one. Building a list of possible new stakeholders is about as important as it gets. Do it at least annually. It's a great exercise at a board retreat too, by the way.

2. Pre-Board Meeting Work – None

Don't send the worksheet ahead of time. There is necessary context (keep reading) that will have them thinking differently. Need some language like this for the agenda? Try something like this:

Your Role As Ambassadors: Building A Bigger List of Folks Who Know About Our Work

We have crafted an exercise (no, it's not an icebreaker) that will enable all of us to consider who we know, who knows about the work of our organization, and who should know more.

3. The Board Meeting: The Exercise Set Up

One important thing: the facilitator or E.D. should have a reliable scanner application on their phone.

Ideally this is led by your board chair and the most enthusiastic fundraiser on your board (I would hope that is the chair of your development committee). The set up should go something like this:

Let's try something. What words come to mind when I say the word 'board member?' (capture those on a flip chart).

OK, now what words come to mind when I say the word 'ambassador'?

(flip chart those)

If a person is designated as an ambassador – at your alma mater perhaps – think about school tour guides – they may be the first ambassador someone meets when considering the college application list. What is the role of that ambassador? (flip chart those and work with them to get 'tell stories' that bring the school to life)

We would like you to begin to think of yourself as an ambassador with all the roles we just described. But unlike a college tour guide, we as a board have to build a group of folks we'd like to invite to take the tour with us.

Thus this exercise. (time to handout the worksheet)

4. The Board Meeting: The Exercise

Far too often we make the mistake of just asking you for names. Do you know anyone who...? But this is not how our mind really works. We need prompts and context.

For example:

“Do you know a person who is really terrific in media and communications? And if they work for a big firm, might they have affinity groups as part of their diversity work? We could really benefit from having a PR person on our board and affinity groups are a terrific place to identify diverse prospects.”

Instead of:

“Do you know anyone who might be a good board member?”

Thus this worksheet. It offers these kinds of prompts to get your mind thinking like a great ambassador

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are not writing down names of folks who you or we will ask for money. That's not what will happen to these names. It might happen at some point – but our goal right now is to generate a list of names.

So take this worksheet and your phone (that has your contacts in it) and fill out the prompts. Add as many names as you can. INCLUDE AN EMAIL ADDRESS OR PHONE. Void of any context of their capacity to give or their historical volunteer service. Just add names. Take 20 minutes or so. Please be thorough and don't be constrained by the prompts.

5. Debrief

Facilitator: Reactions to that exercise? <you are hoping for ‘easier than just coming up with names’>

Facilitator: Next, can you put a star next to any name of a person on your worksheet that

- Does not know you are on this board*
- Knows very little if anything about what the organization does*
- You have not spoken about the organization and/or your board service to*

<trust us. There will be a lot of stars.>

Facilitator: How many had at least 1 star? More than 5? More than 10?

Facilitator: OK, so guess what, we now have folks to take on our ‘college tour’.

6. Next Steps

Facilitator: First, we will do absolutely nothing with any of these names until we speak with you. We’d like to know a bit more about these folks. Maybe some of them do have capacity. Maybe you and a fellow board member have names in common. We’ll want to talk about that. The question we will answer is, “What is the best way to invite them to know more (and maybe do more) for our organization?”

1. Every worksheet should be scanned so staff has a copy and board member keeps original.
2. If this is a retreat, consider more time for folks to write down info next to each name that helps guide next steps.

Facilitator: You will be contacted by me, the board chair, or the Executive Director. And we’ll chat about these names and what strategy we might employ to engage them. Please don’t play hard to get . The more folks who know about our organization, the more people THEY will tell. Our strength comes from numbers of engaged folks.

And your job?

Invite folks to know more about the organization. Remember: you are in the invitation business. Be a great storyteller. Share your enthusiasm and your pride about our work.

That is what great ambassadors do.

related links

[PDF How to Grow Your Army of the Engaged](#)

**HOW TO
GROW YOUR
“ARMY OF THE
ENGAGED”**

As a lead ambassador for your organization, consider yourself to be in the “invitation business.” Your role is to be a visible and vocal voice/face/storyteller in the service of building what we call the “army of the engaged.”

The ability of any organization to have influence, impact, and resources comes from the volume of people who are aware of the good work of your organization and are invited to have the opportunity to be a part of it.

This template is designed to address the ‘paralysis’ that comes from the question: *“Do you know anyone we can ask to...”* It’s nearly impossible to consider a list of folks to engage outside of the context in which you know them. In this template, we offer just that context.

HOW TO FILL OUT THE FORM

With a pen in one hand and your smart phone in the other, consider the following questions and begin to consider all of your personal and professional orbits. In each of these orbits are different people, many of whom may have no idea that you are a lead ambassador for an organization you care deeply about.

For each prompt, try to identify 3-5 names. Include at least an email address.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE FORM (AND THE NAMES)

Maybe the organization has an event coming up? Perhaps an e-appeal? Maybe you will decide to host a brunch? Or better still, can this be the beginning of your own personal cultivation, which you can begin by sending an email to each to let them know you are a board member, why you love the organization, and then tell one success story?

Whatever you do, make a collective plan and commitment and continue to use these and refer to them. Perhaps an iPhone or Android scanner can create a copy of each form and a person on the board can be designated to serve some kind of role to hold folks accountable as a peer.

Lots of interesting options.

We have never done this exercise without folks unearthing new folks to engage. Not once.

Go for it!

Who are some of your friends at work?

1. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____
2. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____
3. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____
4. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____
5. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____

Whom have you spoken to about the organization who has expressed genuine enthusiasm (and you haven't really known what to do with that enthusiasm)?

1. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____
2. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____
3. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____
4. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____
5. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____

Whom have you met / Who do you spend social time with / Have fun with?

(Members of your bowling league, volleyball team, running group, gourmet cooking or restaurant group. Pick-up basketball players, the bridge club, your poker buddies, drinking pals, workout friends. Think about classmates from your Lamaze class, aerobics and jazzercise class; people from ski weekends, beach trips, camping trips, vacations, music festivals; People you hike with, camp with, you sing with or play music together. People you shop with and members of your garden club.)

1. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____
2. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____
3. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____
4. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____
5. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____

Think about the last 5-10 times you have gone out to dinner. Who has joined you?

1. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____
2. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____
3. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____
4. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____
5. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____

Who was at your Thanksgiving table? Your Passover Seder?

1. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____
2. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____
3. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____
4. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____
5. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____

Do you send holiday cards? Who is on that list that should be on this one?

1. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____
2. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____
3. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____
4. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____
5. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____

Think about family. Family members (especially the ones you are speaking with) love to support the work of their loved ones.

(Parents, step-parents, step-siblings, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews and nieces. Don't forget relatives who live out of town and those who you haven't seen in a while.)

1. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____
2. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____
3. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____
4. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____
5. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____

How about folks you haven't seen in while?

(Friends from your old job, who you used to go to school with, maybe your former teachers; other volunteers from here or elsewhere, past sorority and fraternity friends. Have a peek at Facebook maybe?)

1. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____
2. Name:_____ Email/Phone_____

3. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____
4. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____
5. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____

How about the professionals who support you that you have grown to know over the years?

(Your lawyer, dentist, doctor, pharmacist, broker, dry cleaner, hairdresser, masseuse, children's teacher, vet, computer repair person, your favorite restaurant manager, accountant, landscaper, fix-it person.)

1. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____
2. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____
3. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____
4. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____
5. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____

How about a few other "orbits"?

(Your house of worship? Your neighborhood? Your old neighborhood? Are there interesting people in your community that you know but not really well who would have a professional (or personal) interest in the work of the organization?)

1. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____
2. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____
3. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____
4. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____
5. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____

Last call? Anyone else?

1. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____

2. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____

3. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____

4. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____

5. Name: _____ Email/Phone _____



HOW TO RUN A GREAT BOARD MEETING

How to Run a Great Board Meeting

Lesson 1: How Much Does It Really Matter?

Hi. I'm Joan Garry, and in this next series of videos what I'm going to do is talk about how to run a great board meeting. You're skeptical that there is such a thing, right. But I've been a board member and I've been an executive director, and I'm here to tell you that there is such a thing and there needs to be such a thing ... that I believe the great board meeting is critical to the success of a nonprofit.

Now, I have been known to say that a really thriving nonprofit is like a twin engine jet where there are two engines, a board and a staff, and that in that cockpit are co-pilots, the board chair and the executive director. Okay, maybe that's not the picture at your shop, but we all need something to aspire to. Why did I just show an image of a rocket ship blasting off? Because I believe that the best board meetings ignite your board members, so that they invite. What do I mean by that? Ignite them so that they invite.

You want a board meeting that calls people to action and have them leave this board meeting ... with the information, the knowledge, and the passion that they need to go out and invite people to know more and to do more about your organization with and for your organization. All right. Now, ignite and invite. I have sat in board meetings. Others listening and watching have sat in board meetings. They don't feel that way, right. Do they? They're not igniting.

Here's what they might look like. Let's see ... 25% of the board members don't show up, and oh, if they do they call in and they put their phone on mute and they check their Facebook. The second thing is you might wind up with an exquisitely organized agenda with times and consensus items that you're going to vote on, but there's not a single thing that's stimulating or engaging and not a single time is any board members asked their opinion about anything other than, "Umm, have you sold any tickets to the gala yet?"

Number three. Did you walk away learning anything about the programs of your organization? Did someone present something and they just say, "Oh, my goodness. I am so proud to be on this board." Lastly, was the meeting well run? We've all been

on boards and we know them. There are windbags and there are board chairs that are supposed to tell those windbags to shut their pie holes. Did that happen? I'm going to guess at everyone of your board meetings you've ever been to, somebody has gone off the grid and nobody has really stopped them.

Maybe the meeting even ends on time. That would perhaps be a plus. Okay. If you're a board member at that board meetings, was it worthwhile? Did you add any value? Did you learn anything new? Did you walk away with a greater sense of pride or at any moment during that meeting? Did you have any goosebumps? I'm going to go with no on that. If those things are not in place, worthwhile, engagement, enrichment, learning something new, goosebumps, there will be no ignition.

In the next series of videos, what I'm going to do is this. I am going to show you the steps to create a great board meeting. I'm going to do that by looking at before the meeting, during the meeting, and after the meeting, but before we do that, I think you and I have to actually get on the same page about something. How do we define great? What is a great board meeting? Not just for you as an executive director or you as a board chair, but for the whole organization. What makes a board meeting great?

That's what we'll talk about in the next video, and I'm going to give you a hint. Ending on time and feeling like you actually survived it are not two of the elements to define a great board meeting. Stay with me. We'll be back with the next video in just a bit.

Lesson 2: The Formula That Ignites Your Brand

Welcome back to this second video in our series about how to create a great board meeting.

In the first video, I talked about why I think it's important to have great board meetings. Some of you think it's just something that you have to manage through, and I respectfully disagree. The reason I do, is because I believe that a great nonprofit is like a twin engine jet. That you've got a board engine, and a staff engine, and in that cockpit you've got co-pilots, the board chair and the executive director. Your board meetings present an opportunity for both engines to get together and really think through, and engage in real and substantive ways.

Those are not the board meetings that you're accustomed to having, I'm pretty sure. In the first video I talked about what makes a lousy board meeting, you can make that list as well, usually involves people not showing up, people not talking, people leaving early, no real decisions being made, you know, that kind of stuff.

So, I thought it would be useful in this video to talk about what makes a great board meeting. How do we define great? I have a quick simple equation that I'm going to use, that I think will be really helpful to you. So, here it is. We're going to inspire, we're going to enrich, we're going to engage, in the service of getting your board members to ignite. Alright? And by the way, yes, this is the wall of my office, and yes, I have painted it with dry erase paint. Mm-hmm (affirmative) yeah, I'm a big nerd, but it works doesn't it? Anyway.

So, remember, as Steven Covey says in his many great books on management and leadership, "Begin with the end in mind." The end is to ignite, you want those board members to leave that board meeting, right? With the knowledge, the information, the tools and with the passion to go and talk about your organization and invite people to know more, and to do more. That simple. How do you get there? You start with an inspiration. How do you inspire them? Easiest thing I can say to you, make sure you bring the people you serve into the room. Not necessarily literally, figuratively is fine, it could be a story.

I'm not talking about a PowerPoint slide here, where you say, "Hey, this week we served 5,000 people." "People" as a word, is not inspirational. Martin, the driver of the truck, who picks up the produce that gets taken to the food pantries, that's real, that's bringing something to life. Right? Delivering food, and having the elderly person say, "This soup is almost as good as the soup I made when I was younger." Hear the difference? I hear that and I go, "Oh wow, I'm so proud to work for this organization, because Rita got that soup, and Martin delivered it." Right? So, if you have long enough and you can bring people into the room, that are touched by your work, well that's a home run.

Number two. Enrich. I didn't join your board just to be a human ATM. I didn't join your board just to rubber stamp your budget, or to say, "Oh my goodness, you guys do such great work, that's so awesome." I actually joined the board, because I care about the sector, about the movement, whether it's food scarcity or whether it's an illness, or whether it's immigrant rights, or whether it's what happens to the kids at

the school for autism. It doesn't matter, I came because I care, and when you care you want to learn, right?

So, I need a bite of enrichment in every board meeting that I go to. What could that look like? It could be the staff sharing information about the sector and trends. It could be that you bring someone in from the outside, who can talk about the impact of the new administration on X, Y and Z. If you're in an illness based organization looking for a cure for something, maybe it's someone who comes in and talks about trends in drug trials. Anything like that, let's say you were on the board of a charter school, maybe you bring in somebody who knows a lot about charter schools, and can talk about the future opportunities and challenges for charter schools. I want to know more. The more I know, the better the ambassador I am.

Number three is engage. I know what you're saying. "You want me to ask my board their opinion about things? Do you want me to do something with those opinions?" Yes, actually. If you do it right, and at the right altitude right? When you say engage them, it's not about, "Do you like carnations or lily's on the center piece of the galley." Right? We're not talking about that. We're talking about the fact that every board member comes in as a three dimensional person.

Maybe I'm an HR professional, maybe I'm an attorney, maybe I'm a marketing person, so at a board meeting can you designate a certain amount of time where you pose a question, a real authentic question you're grappling with that you haven't solved for yet. Has to be authentic, and let the board kick the tires with you about it. Look, it's not the easiest thing in the world to do, board members will say, "You already had a decision." Or, "Why are you asking us? Aren't you supposed to figure that out?" Sometimes there's a no win piece to it, but I don't think there's ever really, in the long haul, a no win piece to it.

So, I've got some goosebumps, I've learned something, I've added some value. Those are the three components that allow me to leave, as a board member, feeling this sense that I have value on this board, that I added value, and that I got some personal and professional value from the experience. Right? Look, I know what you're thinking. You're thinking, "Well that's really lovely Joan, but my board chair doesn't really show up for our bi-weekly check-ins and, I create the agenda, and our gala's coming up, and you actually expect me to plan? You know, I had this meeting with the help desk the other day, and they really need my help."

This is the kind of stuff you encounter every single day, I get that. So, in the next video, I want to talk just for a very few minutes, about how often you meet, because that does impact this equation, and how much of your time can be spent on each of these activities. That'll be a short video, and then we're going to go on, and we're going to talk about that four letter word, P-L-A-N. Plan. And, I have a very simple tool for you, that I do believe will make you think about this four letter word, just a little bit differently. So, I'll see you in the next video.

Lesson 3: How Often Should a Board Meet?

Hey, welcome back. We are in video number three of our series on how to create a great board meeting. First video was why does it matter. Second video was what are the key elements of success for a great board meeting, and I talked about inspiring, enriching, engaging all in the service of igniting your board members to leave as fabulous ambassadors for your organization so that they will invite people to know more and do more for the great work that you do. This is actually a very short video because I want to address something specific. In that last video, I am guaranteeing that there are some of you who said, "Joan? Joan? Joan? We meet every month. By the time I finish one board meeting, we're about to start thinking about the next one, and you want me to what? Inspire, engage, enrich, are you kidding me?" No. I'm actually not kidding you, but I do want to talk about the frequency with which you meet because I think it's important.

You've got some boards that meet three times a year. I know those of you who are meeting monthly actually just fell off your chair, right? Oh, what you wouldn't give to meet three times a year. For those who meet three times a year, often larger boards, national boards, they come in from all over the place and they stay a long time. At least those of you that have monthly board meetings, they're gone in a couple of hours and that's all there is to it, but it gives you plenty of time, plenty of time, to do the inspiring, the enriching, and engaging. That's if you plan, which comes up next. Then you have quarterly board meetings. This is actually my favorite model. A day and a half? Maybe a social dinner the night before. You can often use the social dinner as a way to do a little program thing after dinner, maybe team building to make this more than just a collection of individuals, but actually, rather, a community of ambassadors, right?

I like the quarterly board meetings because it gives you time to but substantive things on the agenda. It give you some breathing room between board meetings. Those are the kinds of things I like. The quarterly is my favorite because it's almost like four mini retreats. Excuse me. In four board meetings, you can get everything done that you need to get done because you have more time. I would argue you can be much more prepared, and you would have, in fact, time if you wanted to bring someone in from the outside because I guarantee you that if you have four board meetings a year, you're planning those pretty far ahead.

Then we have your sixes, six board meetings a year. Six board meetings a year means you meet every other month. Then we have this one, 12 board meetings, one every single month. I have a bias. I actually don't believe that organizations should meet every single month. I don't think that boards really understand the toll that preparing for a board meeting takes on staff. Let me erase this if I can. Yep. If I erase this, so these are your numbers, month, bimonthly, quarterly, and three times a year. I believe that the greater the number of board meetings, the greater the likelihood your board will be in the weeds and flying, stay with my plane metaphor, at too low an altitude. Now, why do I think that? Let me move so you can see that.

The greater the number of board meetings, the greater the likelihood that your board will be in the weeds or flying at the wrong altitude. It makes sense, right, because you're going to sit at a board meeting for 90 minutes every single month. You're going to talk about details because you're not going to have enough time to talk about the big things. If I was going to make a plea to non-profits, I would say please do anything in your power to consider not doing monthly board meetings. I think they are a recipe for weeds, and as a result, a recipe for disengagement. I do not come out of a monthly two hour board meeting, necessarily, now sometimes you can, necessarily feeling, "Oh, my gosh. I can't wait to get out and ask somebody for money." It's just too hard. There's too many details.

My first plea, think about having a conversation, board and senior staff, do you have to have board meetings every month? My argument, that they don't work. If you do and you cannot sell the bimonthly meeting or the quarterly meeting, non-negotiably you must have at least one full day, if not longer, board retreat. I don't actually think that's enough for the inspiring, the enriching, and the engaging to take place, but it's better than nothing. You will get people who'll balk. They'll say, "Well, we meet every month. Why do we need a retreat?" You need a retreat to talk about the things that

matter, to bring your clients into the room, to enrich and educate your board members, and to engage them in their three dimensional selves so that they actually feel like they're bringing everything they have to that board meeting table. If you do those three things, you call them to action.

That's why I'm a big fan of three or four board meetings a year that are a day, a day and a half. I understand those become big productions, and they're exhausting, and sometimes you don't get full participation, but when do you ever get full participation? What I am saying to you is this, plain and simple. If you meet very, very regularly, the increase in the number of board meetings, there's a direct correlation in my mind between the degree to which your board is engaged. The greater the number of board meetings, I could do this a different way, the lower the level of board engagement. Please be careful about the number of board meetings you have and how you use them.

That's my soap box. I'm going to put it away. We've talked about why board meetings are important. We've talked about the recipe for success. Now we've just talked in this third video about how many board meetings a year you should have and how to contend with the volume of them that you have. In my next video, what I'm going to do is offer you a nice tool that I think will be really helpful in making planning seem much, much less onerous. I'll see you in the next video.

Lesson 4: That 4-Letter Word... "PLAN"

Welcome back. This is video number four in How to Create a Great Board Meeting. You know, sometimes I think you must read my stuff or hear me and you must think, "Great board meeting? Like, really, Jo, like great board meeting? Are you kidding me?" No, actually. I'm not kidding you at all and part of my effort here with this series of videos is to make that a reality for you in a way that is not onerous.

In the first video, we talked about why it's important to have a great board meeting, right? We talked about that twin engine jet I like to talk about. Two engines, staff and board, the executive director and the co-chairs and the pilot in the cockpit, right, making sure that everything's in alignment. That's the why.

In video number two, I talk about what is a great board meeting look like so that we have a shared understanding and I talked a little bit about this notion of inspiring,

enriching, engaging, and igniting, that those are the components. That what you're looking for, as Stephen Covey says, is to begin at the end. What do you want at the end? What I want at the end is I want a whole posse full of board members racing out of the boardroom so inspired, so informed, so enriched, feeling so valued, with goosebumps all over their bodies, ready to go out and tell everyone they know about this remarkable organization and inviting them to know more and to do more. That's what we want, right?

In video number three, I spent some time making it really clear that I understand that some people meet three times a year, some people meet four times a year, some people six, and I made it really clear that there is a correlation. That's important to remember and it is what I believe to be that increasing the number of board meetings does not necessarily increase the satisfaction and productivity of your board. In fact, the reverse can happen. The more board meetings, the more in the weeds, the less engaged, enriched, and inspired.

In this video, I want to deal with a four letter word and here it is, plan. I have this weird vibe that I get from nonprofit leaders sometimes that planning isn't important. It's almost like that thing like I'm so busy in meetings I don't get a chance to do work, right? Like meetings aren't work. Planning isn't seen as work. If you have time to plan, you mustn't be serving clients or advocating or lobbying or curing an illness or developing a clinical trial. Well sure, sure you are, because if you don't plan, you won't get it right. You will not serve your communities as effectively as you could or should.

This whole notion of planning is hard, right? When I was talking to this client and we were talking about some big presentation where I thought, gee, this would be a really interesting thing to engage your board on and she said, "Oh, you know, I probably could do that at the next board meeting." I said, "When is it?" She said, "You know, I don't remember. Let me look. Oh, it's a week from Friday." A week from Friday. Mm (neutral). Okay. We didn't even know when our next board meeting was? She laughed a little bit and then she said, "Well, you know, I mean I don't even know if my board chair's going to be in town for it. We just had a board meeting so I'll probably put the agenda together. It will be easy, not a big deal." Equals missed opportunity.

I often learn lessons of pluses and minuses from my clients and it is thanks to a particular client that I'm going to share a tool with you that I believe will be quite helpful. This is my friend Doug, a client of mine, and to be fair, Doug works in the field of infomatics. I don't need to explain it to you specifically other than the fact that he does a lot of work around organizing data. He helped me think about how to help you think about your board meeting so they don't surprise you, right, and so that you can plan for them. There's two components to Doug's thinking about this. One is why should there ever be surprises. No surprises. The other theory he has is that board meetings are cyclical. Do you approve your budget at the same time every year? I bet you do. If you don't, you should. Right?

There are things that happen every year. Do you do a spring gala? Is it in the fall? You're not reinventing the wheel every single year and so what I'm going to do is I'm going to go through a basic premise. Let's presume, and you know I'm a big fan of four board meetings a year, not six or 12, but I'm going to just for argument sake, we're going to go with six, so we've got one in January, we've got one in March, we've got one in May, we've got one in let's say September, October, and in December. Okay? There are your six board meetings. The same things don't happen every January or every October but there are key things that happen at each point if you're on a fiscal calendar year that happen at the same time, most of the time. All right.

Let's say in January you might have the executive director send out your annual goals. This may be where you start to see where you're at against your strategic plan maybe. You look at metrics for success for the year, what I like to call the New Year's Eve thing. What do you want to be able to say over here in December that you accomplished because of your good work during the year. Maybe this is the board meeting when you bring in some kind of an outside speaker. Maybe that person is a client, maybe it's an enrichment thing. Some kind of an outside speaker who lends some new credibility. Does either that enrichment or the engagement piece.

In March, let's say ... What are we going to do in March? Well, in March, maybe we're going to focus on board governance. Maybe we're going to look at our matrix of board members and say, "Gee, you know, we said we really wanted a juggler on our board and we haven't really recruited a juggler. Should we talk a little bit about how we might bring a juggler onto the board? We're going to look at our composition

matrix and see how we're doing and what the pipeline is looking like and get the board to focus on governance." Something like that.

This is also a nice opportunity for a big program presentation and here what you're looking for, I think, is you're looking for some opportunity for the board to weigh in. We are thinking about approaching this program issue in one of these three ways and we'd love to get your thinking about which one you think makes the most sense. You have to do it authentically, as I've mentioned before, right? You can't have decided and just asked them so that they feel like they've been invited into the conversation. You've got to take their input with some seriousness and it has to have the opportunity to potentially shape this to make it better, right?

By May, you're probably going to approve your audits and it's going to be beautiful. I know it's just going to be totally beautiful. Oh, another thing you might do in March is you might be having your spring gala in the spring and if you are, then you want to talk about the gala here. Not the centerpieces, you want to talk about sponsorships, new people you can reach out to, that sort of thing. You've got your audit in May. You probably here are going to do some kind of midyear budget to actual and again, you want to make sure that it's not all money so maybe you want to have somebody come in from inside the sector and enrich your board about homelessness as an issue or something that takes you from your organization to your place in the larger sector. Okay?

September, this is when you want to focus on fundraising, especially if you are in the year end fiscal calendar business because you have until December to get your numbers and everybody who does fundraising knows that this period of time, from September to December, is when you are going to do the vast majority of your fundraising. If you are going to a training, do it here. This is where you might have officer elections. Officer elections maybe. This may be where you bring on new board members and you want to start to tee up the budget. Here's where we are thinking about going. We're not sure, what do you think? It's kind of an opportunity to pre-sell a little bit.

Then in October, you approve the budget. That's the big thing that you do. You approve the budget and I believe very, very strongly that you don't do a budget without goals. If we raise \$750,000 by the end of next year, I expect that as a result

of our work the following things will be true. It's not about money. It's about what you're going to do with the money.

Then I like December for board appreciation, to take a look at that year in review. Go back to these annual goals. How did we do? Celebrate success, some serious high five stuff, lessons that got learned, right, and how did we do on fundraising and what did we learn there that we can take with us into the new year?

That is a racetrack for a six board meeting a year plan. Those are the kind of milestones that happen at every board meeting every year and you can build around those and plan for them. That's what this kind of racetrack is all about. That's what we're talking about and the last thing I want to say is now we've got to get into the meat of the board meeting itself so what's going to happen during this board meeting? Let's say you've set it up to be inspiring, enriching, engaging. You've got an outside speaker. You've done all of these things I've talked about and you're all set and ready to go and then you all sit down at the table. What happens? How do you make sure that what happens in the boardroom delivers on all the work that you've done. Stay with me for the next video because that's where we're going. We're heading to the boardroom.

Lesson 5: The 4 Things to Do Before the Meeting

Welcome back to our video series on How to Build a Great Board Meeting. Stop laughing. Board meetings can be great. I hope that so far you've learned some important tips and tricks and advice and a little bit of soapbox material that helps you to understand why this is actually so important.

We talked about why board meetings are important. We talked about what great looks like. We talked about the number of board meetings and how things have to shift based on the quantity of board meetings. I took out my soapbox for a couple minutes, talked about not having too many board meetings.

In our last video, we talked about planning and I hope that the tool that I provided will help you to think about this idea of planning and not be so overwhelmed by it. In the last video, I said we were going to go right into the boardroom, I was wrong, because we can't go to the boardroom yet because we have to prepare for the board meeting. What has to happen before a board meeting in order for that board

meeting to be set up to be great? That's what we're going to talk about in this meeting, in this video.

There are four things I think are very, very important that you got to do and do really well before you walk into the board meeting. Here they are. We're going to take them one at a time.

The first one is going to seem really easy, building a solid agenda. You're going to say, "Oh, well, I can do that in no time at all. In fact, my board chair doesn't pay any attention at all. I put the board meeting agenda together. We're all good to go." No. This is the key to success. Now remember go back to my last video, we have a planning cycle. Depending on where you are, if this is March, one of your agenda item is going to be talking about the May gala. If this is October, you know that the centerpiece is going to be the budget. So you're building a board meeting around key things.

As part of this though, you have to think about staff presentations, you have to think about the executive director report, and what else? What else would you have to think about? Oh, when do board members get to open their mouths. The number one complaint, I think the number one reason that people leave boards, is because they're never asked their opinions. They come with them. They have them. I believe far too often staffs don't value those opinions or they don't know what you do with them or they feel like they have to incorporate every single one of them. This is the art of board staff relationships. You can't avoid it. You've got to step into it. You're going to make some mistakes, but you're going to score for trying and you're going to learn as you go. As long as you're authentic, that's what matters.

Staff presentations, you want them to be impressive. You want your staff to be shown in their best light. You want those presentations not simply to be, "Hey, check me out. Look how good I am here. See, and oh by the way, I was so busy." It should be engaging. There should be some goosebumps. There should be a lesson you learned, maybe a failure. Something that went wrong, you learned something from. It should be well thought out. If you need PowerPoint presentations, use them but don't use them as a crutch. Don't use them to distance yourself from your board, use them to amplify. I'm a huge fan of PowerPoint presentations that have no words on them at all, just photographs. It's amazing how visual images stick with your board members longer than almost anything else.

Next you need an Executive Director presentation at your board meeting. This is what your board comes for. They come because they're following your leadership. What are you going to say to them? You can't repeat what he said in the book. You can't do it on the fly. This is kind of show-and-tell. Show-and-tell, here's a clip of a piece about our work that appeared on the local news. Let me tell you a story about a conversation I had with a donor. Here's a challenge that the organization is facing that so-and-so is going to tee up in their staff presentation. Or we have a really good beat on a brand new grant. Or concurrently, you know, the new ministration has left us feeling wildly uncertain and that's one of the things we're going to talk about today. That we aren't sure what government funding is coming. What's coming our way. Whether it's coming anybody's way. I would like to give you a sense of that at today's meeting.

You're kind of the orchestra conductor, the MC, and people want to follow your lead. That's really important. I think that the Executive Director presentation is, even the shortest of meetings, a place where inspiration lives. Then as I said, you've got to figure out a way for the board members to have an opportunity to weigh-in. Nothing will lose your board members faster than if they think that along with their iPad, they should pack their rubber stamp. That's number one.

Let's go to number two real quickly. You've got to empower board committees. If committees are going to report out, they need to have something to say. You've got to empower the committees so that when they report out there's an engaging conversation. That means that the board share or the ED or the staff liaison to the board committees. Got to work with that committee to say, "What are you all going to talk about?" If you're the development committee, are you just simply going to give the numbers or you're going to do something that's sort of engaging. Maybe that's the time for a training or a storytelling workshop.

I don't know, but all I know is nothing is more deadly than the committee report time and it's like this, "Governance, would you like to share your committee meeting? It's your committee time. Would like to do your report?" "Well, we didn't meet before the board meeting and so we have a meeting scheduled for just after the board meeting. If any of you have anything that you'd like to see us talk about on that agenda, do please you can let one of us know, but for right now, we have nothing to report." Every board meeting, every committee should be engaged, should have something to say that shows forward movement, that illustrates that the board is holding up its

end of the bargain. That this is a key responsibility of every board member, to serve on a committee that actually does something.

All right, number three. We've talked about the agenda. We've talked about empowering committees. How about those things you get via email? Maybe 20 minutes before the board meeting. Those are called board reports. Here's my piece of advice about board reports. Please do not start with the words, "I have been very busy," or, "My department has been very busy." I'm going to take it for ... Just assume I know that you're going to be busy. That's the first thing.

The second thing is remember that I as a board member was at the last board meeting and then I had a whole life. Maybe I did some things for the organization, but here I am again. I sort of drop in, I go away, and I drop back in. One of the first things a board report has to do for me is remind me about what happened when last we left. I like that, when last we left. It's a good topic. You don't have to spit back out your report, but a quick one. When last we left, x. Here's what's happened. Here's what has happened since last we left. Here are the couple wonderful things that have happened. Here are some challenges we have faced and here's where we are going between now and when we see you next.

I'll do that for you. Last we left, how we doing, where we going, how can you help. That's what a board report should include. It shouldn't be long, but it should include each of these pieces. Remind me where we were when last we left. Tell me how we're doing, accomplishments, challenges. Tell me where you're going to go between now and the next time I see you and how can I as a board member help you. Easy enough, right?

Number four, so we have building an agenda, which includes staff presentations, Executive Director presentation, and how to engage your board. Then we have number two, which is empowering your board committees, to not just report out but to engage the board as well. The third thing are these board reports. Last, this is before the board meeting, what's the last thing, practice, kid, practice. If I'm an Executive Director, I want to see the staff presentations. I want to know where you're going with them. I want to make sure that you're going to deliver to the board what the board deserves. Remember, I've got to inspire, enrich, and engage. Are your board reports, are your staff presentations, are the presentations that are being

given, are the committee reports, all doing that? Because if none of them are doing that, you're nowhere. You have not created a great board meeting.

Some people find me as an Executive Director to be a little OCD. The night before the board meeting, I would have basically a run through and I would make people go through their presentations. Then the rest of the senior team would play the parts of different board members, happy board members crabby board members. Sometimes, we would make slight adjustments to the presentations, but most of the time, what we would do is we would just arm the person presenting with the tools to answer the questions with grace, with dignity, with all the expertise and skill that they bring to their jobs every day. That's it.

Before the board meeting, you want to build a great agenda. You want to make sure the board committees are functioning and are ready to engage the board in real discussion so that the board is holding up its end of the bargain. You want make sure that your board reports are short, to the point, clear, and you want to practice your presentations. It's an important moment. Every board meeting matters and practicing it makes for a great board meeting, so that's what you do before every board meeting. Now we can go to the boardroom and talk about what needs to happen at the boardroom table. See you in the next video.

Lesson 6: The Meeting Itself

Welcome back. This is Video #6 in my series about How to Create a Five-Star Board Meeting. We've been traveling for awhile. We started by talking about the why. We talked a little bit about what great looks like, that you've got to inspire, enrich, and engage in order to ignite those board members to go flying out of the boardroom ready to be terrific ambassadors, ready to invite people to know more, and to do more about the organization.

Then we talked a little bit how many board meetings you have and how to contend with that. I offered you a planning guide that I really do think will be super helpful in having you think about board meetings, both the board chair and the CEO in that cockpit of that twin-engine jet, and not have the board meetings take you by surprise, which amazingly they seem to do.

Then we prepared for the board meeting and we talked about the things you need to do in order to be ready for a board meeting, from board reports, to empowering committees, to practicing, to the board reports. Here you are. You're at the board meeting. What makes the boardroom work? I think there are six things. I'm going to go through them briefly.

I need to know when I walk into a board meeting who is running it. I literally had a client one time that said, "Oh, you know, it's so funny. I thought the executive director was supposed to run the meeting." No. No. That would be a big no. The board chair is supposed to run the meeting. The board chair is not supposed to be a puppet who gets handed notes by the executive director throughout the meeting.

Remember, this is the board meeting run by the board chair or co-chairs taking care of the business of its engine on the jet. Yes, of course, there are intersections because the plane can't fly with only one engine. But I need to know when I walk into that boardroom who is in charge. I like to believe that the board chair is pretty obvious not just because of where she sits, but because of how she interacts. I do think the executive director should sit right next to her and they should copilot the meeting in certain kinds of ways. I need to know who's in charge.

Number two. I want to talk about someone named Robert. If I go to one more board meeting where it is very, very clear that the person running the meeting has absolutely no facility with Robert's Rules of Order, I think the rest of the board members should get up and leave. There's a book. It's about this thin. You can buy it on amazon.com. It is not rocket science. It exists for a purpose: to create structure, to open discussion, to close discussion, to add friendly amendments. It's not onerous. It's smart. By-the-way, if I join a board and my board chair flounders through Robert's Rules of Order, do I think I'm on a professional board? I'm going to go with no on that. That's number two.

Number three is managing the voices around the table. People who join boards largely are successful, Type-A people who have a lot to say. Sometimes they go on a bit. You need to manage this meeting in such a way not only that the big voices don't consume the meeting, but that you give people the opportunity to be heard. Not by putting them on the spot, but how about this? "I'm not really sure we've heard from everyone on this. I would like to make sure that you feel comfortable sharing your

opinion, even if it may actually totally differ from mine." You might get some people to raise their hands that haven't raised their hands.

Number four. The right amount of time at the right altitude. Okay? What I'm talking about here is that you don't spend too much time on something that is not important. That you try to stay on schedule, but that you honor the fact that some discussions might take a little longer. But you say that. "I know that we had said we were going to talk about X, but boy, this really feels like it deserves more time. Are you comfortable if we boot this to the blah-blah committee or to our next meeting? Because I don't think we have given this sufficient time. I'm not sure everyone has weighed in." As long as you communicate, that works fine.

But here's what you don't want to have happen. You don't want to have a long period of time stuck in the weeds. Again, nothing will chase good board members away faster. If you're going to spend, on a \$4-million budget, you're going to spend a half an hour of a board meeting talking about whether or not every member of your community, your congregation, should have a name tag, and that that's going to cost \$5,000, that's a community discussion.

There's a question about whether or not that tactic actually creates community in your membership and that's a fair question. How do you define community? What does it look like? But if you drive into the weeds, into the tactics, that should be offloaded away from your meeting. Because you can't afford to waste smart board members' time. By-the-way, any more time they spend in the weeds is less time they spend doing the work they were actually recruited to do. Recruited board members engage in strategic discussions, increase the sphere of influence, of people who know about your organization. You want them spending time there.

The fifth thing. We've got making sure we know who's in charge, being in charge with Robert's Rules, taking control of managing and hearing all the voices at the table, spending the right amount of time at the right altitude. Number five is working to create a sense of community.

A board is way stronger, like way stronger, when it is not simply a collection of individuals, but instead a community of passionate and committed ambassadors. You hear the difference in that? A community of passionate ambassadors. That means they need to know each other. They need to know why they're on this board

and not some other board. They need to know a little bit about their life experience. Figure out ways to make that happen at board meetings that isn't deadly dull. There are lots and lots of different ways, especially if you meet only a couple of times a year or especially at a retreat.

I do a foolproof icebreaker that you can find in my blog at joangarry.com. We use it in all different kinds of settings and it works like a charm. It's something you do ahead of time that you share. There are lots and lots of ways to bring the community together. Bringing clients into the room. Going to your site for a site visit. Then talking as a community about how that felt. These are really important things, both from feeding me as a board member, as well as creating a sense, and a bond, and a community with my fellow board members.

The last thing, that would be number six: appreciate your board members. Okay, so I know that you have board members that are on your bus and you wish you could invite to get off at the next stop. I know that. Everybody does. Actually, everybody does. Somehow or another, executive directors and board chairs think that's headline news. No board is perfect. Every board has dead weight on it. But even for dead weight, you can come up with one thing to appreciate them about. It is important. I think it was on the planning guide I shared with you. December is a great time to appreciate your board members.

I did this exercise when I was an executive director. People really liked it. I went to each board member. Some I had a long list of things to appreciate them for, others I had to stretch, but I came up with one thing per person. I handed them a flower, each one a different flower. Then at the end everybody put their flower into a vase and we put the vase in the center of the room. Now you might find that to be cheesy. My board members liked that a lot. They liked to be told in front of the rest of the group that they mattered, and that they were valued, and they loved the visual imagery of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts.

That's what it should look like in the boardroom. The board chair should be in charge with strong co-piloting. Everybody should understand Robert's Rules of Order. Every voice needs to be heard. The big ones need to be managed and the quiet ones need to be brought out. You need to have the right amount of time on the agenda dedicated to things at the right altitude. You need to work to create more than just a

group of individuals, but rather a community of passionate ambassadors. You need to appreciate them for their service.

So often, executive directors are disappointed in what their board members don't do that they spend very little time appreciating them for what they do in fact do. You need to keep board members' mojo up so, again, they leave feeling ignited to be your best volunteer ambassadors.

There's one last piece of the puzzle. What happens after a great board meeting? The measure of success of a board meeting is not what happens in the room, but what happens after. We'll see you in the next video.

Lesson 7: How to Sustain Momentum

So welcome back. We are deep into the throws of a series of videos about how to create a really great board meeting. And you stayed with me this long so you are maybe have stopped laughing at the notion that there could be a great board meeting.

So we began with a simple question why. Why do board meetings need to be great? I've got a twin engine jet I've got a staff engine, I've got a board engine, I've got ED and Chair in the cockpit and I needed to fly evenly in alignment at the right altitude and the right destination.

In our second video we talked about what is a great board meeting look like so we have a shared understanding of that. We talked about inspiring, engaging, and enriching so you can ignite those board members to become the best possible passionate ambassadors for your work and the clients and communities you serve.

In the third video we looked at that fact that people have different frequencies of board meetings and how to sort of accommodate for that.

In video number four we looked at that four letter word called plan and how to think about board meetings. Similar things happen at similar points each year. And that can really help you build board meeting agendas in advance.

In video number five we thought, "Gee, what do you need to do ahead of time for a great board meeting?"

And in our last video we talked about the six things that make a great board meeting in the board room itself. From leadership to knowing raw rituals of order, to managing the loud voices and the quiet voices. All of that which can make a board meeting feel valuable to those who attend and where the board members themselves recognize that they are adding value to the work of the organization.

Now we take on this question. How do you define the real success of a board meeting? It's not in the board room. It's what happens afterwards. And there are four things I want to talk about in terms of how to measure the success of a board meeting or to sustain the momentum that's created at that board meeting.

So at most board meetings, actually I would hope at every board meeting because it's part of being a 501C3, you take minutes. I want you to do something else. You have to do minutes because it's part of your obligation. I want action items captured too. What did people say they were going to do? What did people say they were going to continue to research? You know what would be great to know director of development? It would be great to know if blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Action item. Not a minute. An action item.

Somebody on the board says, "I know somebody who knows someone at the Gates Foundation and I'd be happy to introduce the Executive Director to them." Action item. What's the action? Who's the lead? Anything about time table would be great too, but for the purposes of this, it should be a separate stand alone document attached to the minutes or accompanying the minutes that everyone gets after the fact. And in many ways, it becomes the guiding factor that takes you from this board meeting to the next one.

So action items. I'm gonna leave that up there cause that feels really important and we're coming back to it.

The next item is debriefing. People spend a lot of time prepping for board meetings regardless of how often they are. And they deserve from the Executive Director some feedback. Here's what worked. Here's what didn't work. I thought you did a great

job on this and you know what, I wish you had spent a little bit more time on that. That helps me. I'm gonna be better next time.

Then I want to debrief between the board chair and the Executive Director. What did you hear from the board about how the board meeting went? How did we lead the board meeting together? Should we do something different next time? What should that look like? I can't tell you how many organizations just move from one meeting to the next and they don't really sit, and this should be like 90 minutes. What worked? And incorporate into that board members.

Any board members really like surprise you with some really good ideas? Was there a board member that's usually engaged that's super checked out? Is there any, honestly is there any action item that I as the board chair should take to check in with? Such and such a board member who did not seem particularly engaged? And what about the board members who did not attend? How do we fill them in so that they at least have some element of the juice that existed at the meeting? So a debrief.

Then, on both the staff and the board side, you want to track the progress against the action items. So some of the action items are gonna be in the hand of the ED and some of them are gonna be in the hands of the board chair. The board chair may actually delegate those to committee chairs depending on what the action items are. But the ED and the board chair have to stay on top of these. They can't just disappear into the ethos. You know why? Because the action items ... should be ... in the next board packet. Board meeting packet.

Here we introduce accountability. So we put this list into the board packet. It'd be good if this list had some updates. So I as the ED got to person A, B, and C and I say, "Where are we on these things? Did we get that report that somebody else forwarded? Did we answer that question?" Let's put those in underneath those action items.

Board chair goes to a committee chair and says, "Did we take that up at the committee level? No? Alright we'll leave that as an open action item." So you get your board packet and you get your great board reports that we've talked about and you get your ED report, right? And you get all this information. You get your financials and you also get this. The things we committed we would do between

then and now. How'd we do? Did we actually get the contact from Gates? Get the information from development that we asked for? It's a very, very good way to hold everybody accountable for the commitments they make at each board meeting.

And when your board governance committee becomes sophisticated enough to begin to do annual evaluations, these kinds of things become the perfect fodder for appreciating board members who are just crushing it and for raising concerns about board members who ... you know it doesn't seem like your heart is really in it. You offer to do quite a number of things and based on the action items that we captured each board meeting, there are very few of those you've delivered on. And I just wonder, what's going on for you? Sometimes those are the board members that will say, "You know, I'm actually too busy. I'm gonna have to self select off the board." But you cannot do it without introducing accountability.

So those are the things you've got to do after a board meeting in order to sustain the momentum that you create at the board meeting. The same, by the way, absolutely true to retreats as well. Maybe even more so at retreats because you invest so much more time.

So that's it. We talk about before, during, and after. We're coming down the home stretch. Join me in the next video. We're gonna do some summaries and some big takeaways. We'll see you in just a couple of minutes.

Lesson 8: Begin With the End in Mind

This is the final video in our series on how to create a great board meeting. It's something I feel really, really strongly about. Board meetings are this unique opportunity to bring together the most valuable leaders in your organization. To engage them, to enrich them, to inspire them, and I'm not just talking about your board members, by the way. Your staff members, if you're lucky enough to have staff, should walk away tired for sure, but also really proud of the work that they do, proud of being able to share it, listening to the great ideas of these remarkable people who have chosen to be on your board, at least most of them. It should be a really great experience for everyone in its ideal.

I want to go back to something I said in the very first video. I believe I quoted Stephen Covey from Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, that you begin with the

end in mind. The question I really like to ask is, "What do you want your board to know, feel, and do when they leave the board room?" That feels like a really important question, because if you can in fact answer that question and then build that board meeting or those series of board meetings around the answers to those questions, you can't lose. You totally cannot lose.

We've talked about a bunch of things throughout the course of this series of videos. We've talked about my theory that one of the things you want to do, is you want to ignite board members. You want them to shoot off like a rocket. In order to do that, you've got to inspire them. Bring the clients into the room, the community into the room, figuratively or literally if you can. Create some goosebump moments. You've got to enrich board members and each other. Bring someone in who can talk about not just your organization, although that's fine, but also the sector in which your organization exists. A panel of speakers who can talk to trends, issues, challenges, opportunities.

You want to, and I think this is the hardest part, this is the real art. You want to enrich your board members. You must give them the opportunity to bring their full selves to every board meeting, not just their contacts. Not just the people they're going to sell tickets to the gala for. Staffs make such pivotal errors when they focus on that and forget that, "I joined this board because I have something to say. I have a unique skillset, a unique life experience, unique attributes, and I came to share them. That I have a good strategic mind, I have a good sense of humor, I have common sense. Can I share some of that? Can I have a bite of that? Or do you have to do that show and tell thing and prove to me that you're so good at your job that you don't need me?" You could do that, but you do that at your own peril.

We talked about not letting board meetings sneak up on you and the power and value of planning. Not that kind of planning that keeps you from running around like a chicken without a head, but simple tools that can help you plan board meetings more effectively. I gave you some thoughts about how to prep for a board meeting, how to get ready for it, what materials. We sat inside that board room and we looked at what makes a board meeting professional, what makes is productive. Those things are so important, especially when you bring on new board members. Right?

In the last video we talked a lot about this issue of accountability. You can't just presume it. It's got to be part of the culture of your organization on the staff side, and ultimately on the board side. People have to say, "Yes, I am ready to serve. I understand what that means, and I am committed to deliver, and you may hold me accountable to do that." That's when you go from messy to growing, to healthy, and then ultimately to a thriving nonprofit. When people understand the responsibilities they step up to the plate, they deliver on them, and they feel a sense of personal accountability.

The last thing I want to say is this. I spend a lot of time with executive directors in a strategic advisory capacity. We spend a lot of time talking about how to get the "do nothing board" to do something. So often, far too often I see executive directors, staff leaders, looking at the board as if their productivity belongs solely to them. That the staff leader has no responsibility, has no responsibility to feed, engage, enrich, inspire that board. To engage with them so they can be productive, so they know what they need to know in order of connect the dots, to bring in new spheres of influence, to raise money, to engage in strategy. That the road absolutely runs both ways. I think that is so, so important that both the board and the staff have a responsibility in making sure that there's a commitment to great board meetings and that that's emblematic of building a partnership between the board and staff that's built to last.

One last thing. Promise, this is the last thing. I'm hoping that you took some things away from this series of videos. I would love to know and I would love for you to leave that in the comments section below. Tell me what you took away. What was most valuable for you? As you all know, my content is very contingent on your needs and the things you tell me you're struggling with. It would be very helpful for me to know and for your colleagues to see as well what the big takeaways were for you. Thank you very much for joining us, and I will talk to you soon.

OCT

BUDGET PRESENTATION ALONG WITH ANNUAL GOALS FOR THE ORGANIZATION THAT TIE TO THE BUDGET

YEAR IN REVIEW - RECAP OF SUCCESSSES, CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNED

BOARD MEMBER APPRECIATION - BUILD IN TIME TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF EACH MEMBER AND THE GROUP AS A WHOLE



JAN

YEAR IN REVIEW

PRESENTATION OF ANNUAL GOALS - FOR BOARD AND STAFF

KEY SUCCESS METRICS FOR THE YEAR

"GOOSEBUMP MOMENT" - IE. OUTSIDE SPEAKER, CLIENT

FUNDRAISING GOALS AND ROADMAP FOR GALA (IF APPLICABLE)



QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING

(TYPICALLY A MINIMUM OF A FULL DAY)

SEPT

BIG FOCUS ON FUNDRAISING WITH YEAR-END AHEAD!

OFFICER ELECTIONS

CONVERSATION ABOUT BOARD MEMBER RECRUITMENT

TEE UP KEY ELEMENTS OF NEXT YEAR'S BUDGET FOR DISCUSSION



MAY

APPROVE AUDIT

MID YEAR BUDGET VS ACTUAL

BIG PROGRAM PRESENTATION BY STAFF (INCLUDE OPPORTUNITY FOR BOARD TO WEIGH IN ON STRATEGY)

ENRICH BOARD WITH OUTSIDE GUEST - PERHAPS A LEADER IN THE SECTOR

FINAL PREP OR DEBRIEF ON ANNUAL GALA (DEPENDING ON TIMING)



nonprofit
LEADERSHIP LAB

Because the World is Counting on Us.

MONTHS



MONTHS



QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING

(TYPICALLY A MINIMUM OF A FULL DAY)

MONTHS



MONTHS



nonprofit 
LEADERSHIP LAB

Because the World is Counting on Us.

DEC

YEAR IN REVIEW - RECAP OF SUCCESSSES, CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNED

BOARD MEMBER APPRECIATION - BUILD IN TIME TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF EACH MEMBER AND THE GROUP AS A WHOLE

DECEMBER FUNDRAISING PUSH



JAN

YEAR IN REVIEW

PRESENTATION OF ANNUAL GOALS - FOR BOARD AND STAFF

KEY SUCCESS METRICS FOR THE YEAR

"GOOSEBUMP MOMENT" - IE. OUTSIDE SPEAKER, CLIENT



OCT

BUDGET PRESENTATION ALONG WITH ANNUAL GOALS FOR THE ORGANIZATION THAT TIE TO THE BUDGET



SIX BOARD MEETINGS PER YEAR

(MEETINGS TYPICALLY 2-3 HOURS)

MAR

SPRING GALA PREP

NOMINATIONS/GOVERNANCE
REVIEW COMPOSITION MATRIX AND GOALS FOR RECRUITMENT

BIG PROGRAM PRESENTATION BY STAFF
(INCLUDE OPPORTUNITY FOR BOARD TO WEIGH IN ON STRATEGY)

SEPT

BIG FOCUS ON FUNDRAISING WITH YEAR-END AHEAD!

OFFICER ELECTIONS

CONVERSATION ABOUT BOARD MEMBER RECRUITMENT

TEE UP KEY ELEMENTS OF NEXT YEAR'S BUDGET FOR DISCUSSION



MAY

APPROVE AUDIT

MID YEAR BUDGET VS ACTUAL

ENRICH BOARD WITH OUTSIDE GUEST
- PERHAPS A LEADER IN THE SECTOR



JULY
SUMMER RECESS

nonprofit 
LEADERSHIP LAB

Because the World is Counting on Us.

MONTHS

MONTHS



MONTHS



SIX BOARD MEETINGS PER YEAR

(MEETINGS TYPICALLY 2-3 HOURS)

MONTHS

MONTHS



MONTHS



nonprofit
LEADERSHIP LAB

Because the World is Counting on Us.

HOW TO SURVIVE A CRISIS

HOW TO SURVIVE A CRISIS

“2/3 of all crises should never make it to the level of “crisis.” From the top of the management chain to the bottom of the organization food chain, everyone should always be on the lookout for those little problems or issues that, ignored or underestimated, can grow into a full blown public nightmare.”

Larry Smith, President of the Institute for Crisis Management.

“Because of what Larry just said, you should make sure your staff feels empowered enough to share bad news and even potential bad news with you.”

Joan Garry

PLAN

I know. You don't do enough of this on any front – there just isn't time. But this is easier (and harder) than a 3 year strategic plan. This is a 3 hour meeting. Maybe even 2. Senior staff. A flip chart. Maybe cocktails (that was a joke).

One important thing to say that might ignite you to take the time to do this.

Ask anyone who has been in the eye of the storm how much time they spent. How demoralizing it was. How little time the storm left them to do the other 99% of their jobs.

You pause and answer the following questions:

- Make a list of your organization's biggest vulnerabilities. Look hard, look back, look deep. Could be about staff. Could be about certain policies. Could be about challenges your community has had / currently has with your organization
- Could any one of those constitute a real 5 alarm blaze crisis in you organization – this could also be phrased as “what do you have nightmares about?”
- As part of that question, make a list of the organizations and more specifically the individuals who might like to see you fail. The sad reality is that most crises are either self made or ignited by someone in our own tribe. And they always involve reporters.

- What are the assumptions the press, the public, your stakeholders might have in this situation?
- Agree on a crisis team and a lead spokesperson.
- Develop basic crisis operating principles. Personally I like seeing “never lie” at the top of the list.
- Prioritize stakeholder groups. Write it down and put it in the crisis file. Probably don’t want your board to read it in the newspaper before getting your call.

CRISIS MODE

- Respond quickly. Do not procrastinate. Objectors and the press fill the open space. To angry constituents, an hour feels like four.
- At the same time, be sure you have solid, well thought out messages. You need to get it right. If that means you answer a reporter’s call and say “I am going to need to get back to you at <certain time>,” make sure you can deliver on that certain time.
- At your organization, the assumption is that the executive director will be the spokesperson (unless it is a crisis of smaller magnitude and using the ED as spokesperson actually elevates the level of crisis).
- Assign someone to monitor the media. How often? How widespread? You want to be mighty sure that a crisis that hits your sector press does not spread to mainstream press. That should be one of your biggest worries.
- Be available. If you are in a crisis, you don’t want to be criticized for handling it poorly by being rightfully accused of being unresponsive.
- Find allies. External validators (not board members) can be very useful in helping people to either control the situation or contextualize it.
- Avoid the bunker mentality. Of course it matters if the sector press is causing your organization trouble, but keep it in perspective. When you are dealing with the problem all day long, it always seems bigger and more out of control than it actually is.
- Remember: you have many constituents. You can’t ignore them because your bandwidth is being eaten up 24/7 by your naysayers.
- If your crisis involves criticism regarding a policy and a call for change, follow your heart and not the mob. Keep your eye on the mission of your organization and do what is right for all of your stakeholders.
- If at all possible, use the crisis to actually AFFIRM the value of your organization.
- Make sure that you yourself are not prolonging the crisis by giving the critics too much power.

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN THE STORM IS PASSING?

- Good question, Joan.

- Sometimes you decide, especially if it involves a policy decision. Make it, explain why you made it and move on.
- More often than not, it diffuses. And you have to take the temperature carefully so that you can make a judgment call to begin to disengage at the right moment.

IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A ½ DAY DEBRIEF....

- Another crisis will come your way and I guarantee you you'll walk right into the same trap and make the same mistakes.
- You will not be available to mentor a colleague who may need support as he/she maneuvers through a crisis.



Crisis Management Matrix for: **HOPE FOR FAMILIES**

(A long-term shelter for female-identifying victims of domestic violence and their children (up to age 17))

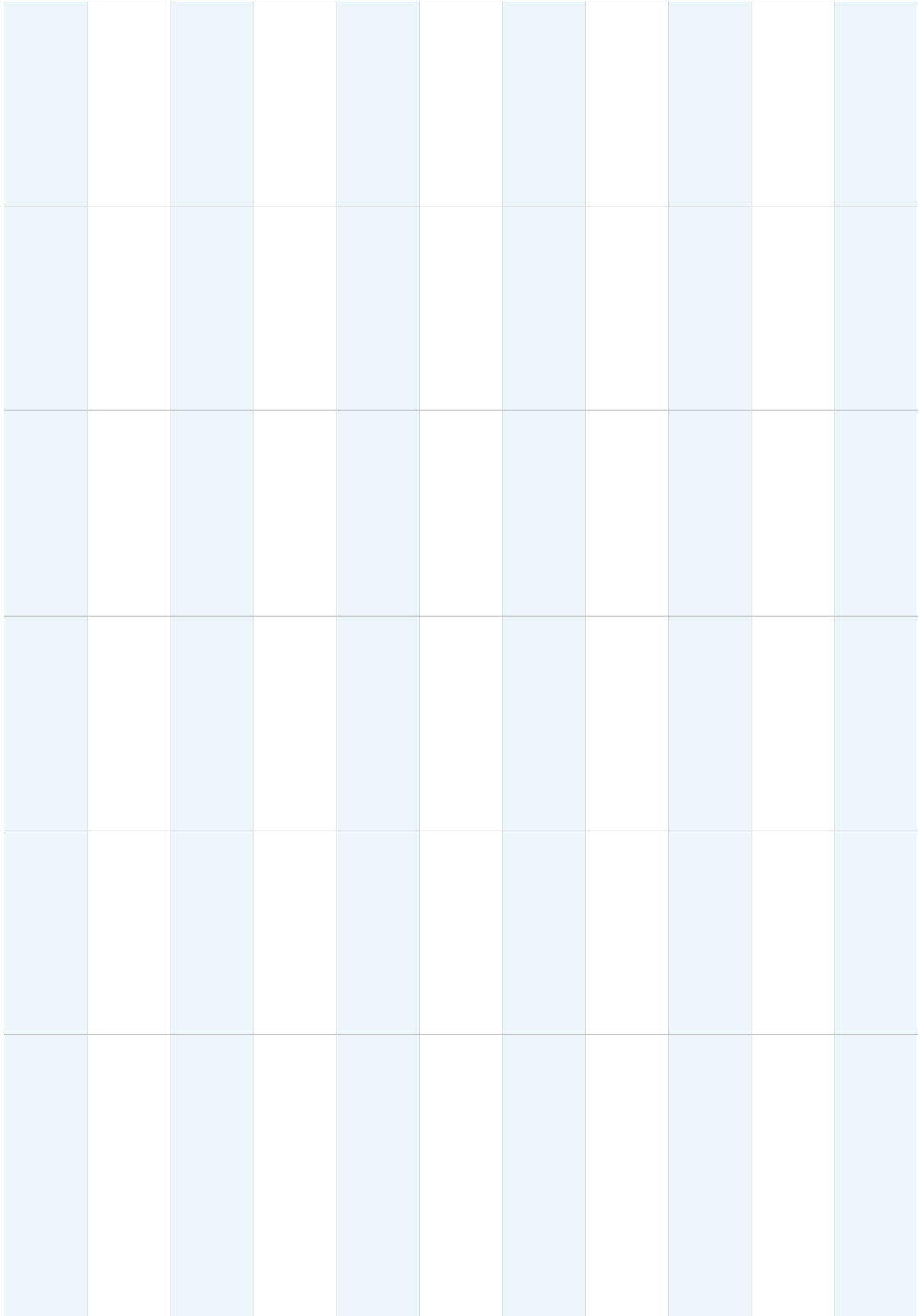
	THE NEXT CALL YOU MAKE NEEDS TO BE TO YOUR BOARD CHAIR. STAT.	BOARD TO BE NOTIFIED TO APPROVE ACTIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS PLAN	UPDATE BOARD CHAIR AT NEXT REGULAR MEETING	NOTIFICATION AT NEXT EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT MEETING w/ PLAN FOR REVIEW	NO BOARD INVOLVEMENT
Serious bullying situation between two adolescents in the shelter.			X		
Volunteers disrespecting residents with sexist comments					X
Case of Food Poisoning tied back to meal served at the shelter. Possible health violation	X			X	
You learn about a Sexual relationship between a staff member and a client				X	
Resident injured in fight with a fellow resident			X		X

Adolescent child of resident misses curfew and has to be reported as missing	X	X		X	
Staff or volunteer injured on the job.					X
State of Emergency in Your City - power outage, no heat . Relocation of residents may be needed	X	X		X	
You learn that the Finance Director is embezzling funds	X	X		X	
An abusing spouse of a resident gains access to the building - situation resolved quickly					X
An abusing spouse maneuvers through security and takes the life of a resident (his spouse)	X	X		X	



Crisis Management Matrix for:

THE NEXT CALL YOU MAKE NEEDS TO BE TO YOUR BOARD CHAIR. STAT.	BOARD TO BE NOTIFIED TO APPROVE ACTIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS PLAN	UPDATE BOARD CHAIR AT NEXT REGULAR MEETING	NOTIFICATION AT NEXT EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT MEETING w/ PLAN FOR REVIEW	NO BOARD INVOLVEMENT



BUILDING THE BOARD OF YOUR DREAMS

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

BUILDING THE BOARD OF YOUR DREAMS

TOP 10 COMPETENCIES *(plus 1 bonus)*

1. Legal
 2. Financial (CPA / Budgeting)
 3. Human Resources
 4. Public Relations / Marketing
 5. Fundraising
 6. Digital marketing / Technology
 7. Strategy
 8. Funder
 9. Sector Expertise
 10. Board Experience
 11. BONUS #11: Direct connection to the work.
-

TOP 10 ATTRIBUTES *(plus one bonus)*

1. Collaborative
2. Respectful of varying points of view
3. Leadership potential
4. Optimistic
5. Team player
6. Ego in check
7. Strategic
8. Enthusiastic about being an ambassador
9. Responsive
10. Strong work ethic
11. BONUS #1: Sense of humor

Building the Board of Your Dreams

Lesson 1: The Board You Have is the Board You Build

Welcome to the course that we've entitled Building the Board of Your Dreams. Not the board in your dreams, not the board of your nightmares. The board of your dreams. So who's this course for? This course is for Executive Directors, Board Chairs, for folks on Governance and Recruitment committees, or all of you together. Please feel free to watch this course together.

Why is this topic so important? So, I think one of the most common complaints that I get from non-profit leaders, I have a terrible board. They're a bunch of do-nothings. You know, they never show up, in fact there's one board member who's on the board, I don't even remember what she looks like.

So when I hear this, I am reminded of a famous old movie called, Moonstruck. And there's a scene where Nicholas Cage confesses his true love for Cher. But she's on the verge of marrying Nicholas Cage's brother. So, she slaps him not once, but twice for good measure and she says, snap out of it. And that's what I'm gonna say to all of you today, during all of these videos.

You've got to snap out of it. Why? Well, what do you think, did this board just sort of fall out of the sky like E.T.? My mantra here is, the board you have, is the board you built. So this series is about building your board with intention. That's it, that's what it's about. And what's interesting, the reason I'm doing this is because, the most common question I get, Joan, how do I find board members?

And I wanna say, could you be just a little bit more specific please? Right? So this is exactly what we're going to do in this course, is we're going to be intentional, and we're gonna get specific. You don't have to add a lot of board members to change the nature, tone, and tenor of your board.

I consider it sort of the exercise that's calling, tipping your board. Adding a few new voices, new faces, folks with new competencies, skills, expertise and perspective, that can shift your board in a pretty big way. So what we're gonna do in this course, there's a number of videos as part of this course.

The first thing we're gonna do is just a quick assessment of the board you have. I think it actually might make you feel a little better. Then, we're gonna talk about what does your organization need. Next up, after that we'll talk about why diversity is important and what I mean when I talk about diversity. I have a rather diverse definition.

Next, we'll take you through a recipe for what I call sort of fishing for new board members, and finding different kinds of ponds. After that, I'm going to take you through a case study. A client I worked with, and how that recipe resulted in a successful effort to bring on some terrific new board members.

Now, you already know that I'm a pretty optimistic person at heart, so I wanna make sure that it doesn't feel too Pollyanna. So I'm going to include what I consider, some big, fat, red flags when it comes to board recruitment. I would be remiss to talk about board recruitment and not offer you my point of view, read rant about term limits. And then there are a few final words of advice.

So that's the whole thing. We're gonna build the board of your dreams. I'm going to help you think about board building as an intentional, ongoing process that you as a staff and a board leader own together. Remember, you're sitting on this twin engine jet, each engine has to have the right people in it.

It has to be fully functioning. And in order to do that, you can't just say, I need board members. You need to figure out which board members and then, go fishing for them. And then bring them into the house and let them share the joy and privilege that comes with service. I look forward to seeing you in the next video.

Lesson 2: An Exercise – the Rule of Thirds

Welcome back to our series called building the board of your dreams. So we begin with an exercise, an exercise I believe you're gonna find helpful and it's a relatively quick, painless exercise. I also think that it's going to make you feel a little bit better about your board because it helps you to identify the strongest folks on your board and the weakest folks on your board. And I think you're gonna find that your board is stronger than you believe it is. Why? Because troublesome board members take up a lot of emotional bandwidth. That's jargon for they suck the life out of you. So this is an exercise that you can do as a board leader or an executive director. And what I

like about doing this is if you do them separately and then you come together and see where you fall out on it.

The other thing that's great about this exercise which is called the rule of thirds, and some of you may be familiar with this, is it helps you to manage your expectations. So you're a board chair, you're an executive director, you're totally type A, you're totally about saving the world, nothing gets by you. And you can be really impatient with board members who are volunteers with other day jobs. In fact you can forget that they have other day jobs. This is not to let them off the hook at all. I was a board member, I had a day job, and I did the very best I could as a volunteer. But you have to remember that these folks are volunteers and you have to be really careful about thinking that all of them should be of the highest possible caliber and performance, because that's just not the way the world works.

The rule of thirds begins with a basic premise that in fact most boards, if you are lucky ... No, strike that. If you have built your board with intention most boards would get a grade of about a B. Not an A, not an A minus, about a B. And I'm gonna show you what a B board looks like in terms of the rules of thirds. So behind me on the whiteboard you should be able to see an A, a B, and a C. So what I want you to do is I want you to think about your board in terms of A's, B's, and C's. So to make my math easier I am going to assume that I have a board of 18. Can you see that? Yeah, board of 18. All right, so a B, a grade B board has six of these, six of these, and six of these. Well what do I mean by these?

So an A board member is what we would call an initiator. We might also call them a rockstar. These are board members you can count on. Not just if you ask them will they do something, but they're gonna step up and say, "Why don't I? Can I help you? Why don't we?" A B level board grants, let's call them grants requests. I don't initiate if I'm a B board, if I'm in this category. But if you ask me to do something a pretty good bet I will. And then C we could call them low performers if you like. Let me get out of the way here. You could call them low performers if you like, but I think the catch phrase that really does the trick here is dead weight. That's that board member you can't remember what she looks like because she hasn't shown up and the board member who checks his or her email constantly, has nothing to contribute, never grants requests. When you email her you get crickets.

Okay, that my friends is a great B board. Okay? Do you feel better already? You were thinking to yourself, "Well a B level board would have a lot more request granters, a lot more rockstars." Now if you have a whole posse full of dead weight board members then maybe I didn't make you feel so much better.

Now the question that you want to pose to yourself is this, I've got initiators, request granters, and I've got dead weight. What's very interesting is it is often the dead weight that eats up a lot of your emotional bandwidth, isn't it? Maybe they're dead weight, maybe they're toxic. Maybe that's dead weight, right? They're useless or less than useless. So you often feel like you have more in this category of dead weight or worse than you do in this category. But I bet that if you and your board share or you and your executive director take a look at this rule of thirds you might be pleasantly surprised.

So here's the next step of the exercise, and it begins with a quiz. Now if you were gonna focus and invest in any particular board member in the board member category, where would you put your greatest degree of investment? Maybe, maybe it's your rockstars. Think to yourself, "Well I got to retain them, right? I have to appreciate the ever loving hoo ha out of them." I'm gonna tell you that this is the category you need to focus on. And if you got it right good for you. But there's actually another piece to this puzzle, because there are two different kinds of B's. There is ... You know what, I'll do it down here. There is a B plus and there's a B minus. This is a really important part of this exercise.

So the next piece of the exercise if you've got to take your group of 18, decide how many you have in each. Maybe you're lucky and you have a B level board, maybe you're luckier and you have like seven people here and seven people here and only a handful of dead weight. And you get to decide with your copilot what dead weight looks like.

Okay, so next step of the exercise is to divide your B's in your B pluses and your B minuses. Okay, now let me ask you a question. If your choice is A, B plus, B minus, or C, which group are you gonna invest in? Yes, that's correct. Your B pluses. Why? Because you want to tip. You want to do some tipping. So here's how the tipping works, is I take a couple of B pluses, and let's say I have three of those and three of these, right? Can you see that? Yeah you can. Okay. So I have three of these and three of those. So I take these three people and I invest in them. And you know

what I do? I put them on a special taskforce, I ask them to do something that feels really super important to creating a thriving non-profit. And then they do it because they are request granters, and they're responsible and they're there for the right reasons. Guess what happens to those B pluses if you're really lucky, if they do their jobs and you appreciate them to no end? You move a couple over to A. So you wind up with more rockstars.

There's one other thing that happens. Is there are fewer B's. And the B minuses end up having to really something or get off the pot. Because all of a sudden they start to feel a little like, "Oh, wow, look what just happened to those folks. And do I really, hmm, am I really pulling my weight? And I end up going either this way or I end up upgrading to a B plus." And the more dead weight, the more the people in the C category feel like they are dead weight the much more likely they are to self select off. They'll start coming to fewer board meetings or they'll say, "You know ..." They'll feel this change and they'll say, "You know, work's getting awfully busy, I just don't think I have time for the board." Or they'll say, "The board is really evolving in a way that doesn't really connect with what I think I'm bringing." And you're sitting there going, "What things you're bringing? Really?"

So I often talk about the fact that if you do things right dead weight ... People say to me, "How do I get rid of dead weight on my board?" This is a pretty good strategy. This is a pretty good strategy. There are other strategies too but this is a pretty good strategy. And this exercise is really useful for the copilots of the non-profit to a twin-engine jet to do together to try to get an overall feel of what you're working with in terms of commitment and delivery.

So that's the rule of thirds. But obviously there's a lot more to board building than just this. So in the next video we are going to look at the board of your dreams. What are the competencies, the skills, the attributes that you should be looking for as you build the ideal board? We'll see you in the next video.

Lesson 3: Who Should Be on the Board "Bus"?

So welcome back to our course on building the board of your dreams. This is the third video, the third video in this series. First, we actually talked about why it matters, who this video is for. It's for you. Then, in our second video, we talked about this simple exercise called the rule of thirds, which I bet many of you have heard

about, but a good way to take a look at what types of folks you have on your board, in terms of their strength, their ability to deliver and perform, how they approach the work, as a board member.

Now, in this video, this is video number three, we're going to talk about who should be on the ideal board, remembering that their really ... ideal board is a relative term. Get that right. So we're going to begin with actually the most important piece of the puzzle.

It's not a skill. It's not an expertise. It's not a professional experience. Anybody want to guess? Did anybody ever watch Blue's Clues with their kids, when they were little? I'm starting to feel like Steve. Anyway, anyone want to guess the single most important thing you need in a board member? Yes, passion.

Now, when I talk about passion, I'm talking about passion for the mission of your organization, passion for the mission of your organization, not somebody who says, "I am passionate about board service." Not enough.

So, I need somebody who has a personal connection to the mission, so if it's the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, someone whose family, a loved one, a dear friend, college roommate, who has lived with T1D. Personal connection. That is a key component of passion.

Fierce sense of commitment. When you interview this person, you have to really feel it. When they talk about your organization, not about board service in general, or their other volunteer activities, to your organization, and maybe it's from a personal connection, maybe it's just a deep social justice thing that focuses them on your organization.

Then, last thing is that you actually need to feel it in an interview. It needs to be palpable, because if this person does not have passion for the mission of your organization, they will not be the effective ambassador that you need them to be, nor will they be people who will be able to open doors, inviting people to know more and do more for your organization. This is the secret ingredient, the not-so-secret ingredient, that does that.

Okay. Now we want to talk more specifically about ... So, in the course of assessing, doing outreach, you've got to feel their hunger, their sense of urgency, the

fierce passion that they have for your organization. You can't blow it off and say, "You know what? They'll get involved with the organization, and they'll really start to feel it." Mm-mm (negative). Not good enough. It's not good enough.

If you invite a board prospect to come to your offices, to meet some of the staff, or to see the client work in action, or to be part of a dinner feeding the homeless, and they are not available to do that, that's a pretty big clue, boys and girls, okay? You're looking for passion, and make sure that your process susses that out for you.

Now, there's a lot of different ways to slice the pie, in terms of what we might call skills, professional expertise, so for the purposes of this video, I'm going to bunch together what I would call competencies and expertise, because it covers a range of things, and I'll explain this in just a second. Then, we're going to look at attributes.

I'm going to rattle these off to you. I'm not going to write them on the board, because it's a fairly long list, but either as you're reading this or quite soon, there will be a downloadable list of what I call these top 10. Now, remember, these are my top 10, based on lots of client experience, yes, for sure, based on serving on a board, and based on being an executive director, but it's not gospel.

You may decide that there are a couple of other things that feel important, that I haven't put on the list, and that's totally fine. I don't want to hear, "Oh, well we didn't think that was very important, because you didn't put it on the list." Build your own list, and use my list as a good, solid guide. I have my list here. So, I am not going to write them all down, but I want to explain the difference between a competency and expertise.

Let's pretend my name is Mary Smith, and I am an attorney. That's an expertise. I have professional expertise in the law. On the other hand, you might say, "I have fundraising. I'm a fundraiser. I haven't done it professionally," but maybe that would be considered more of a competency. Maybe Mary Smith didn't get paid to be a fundraiser, but she's done some fundraising, so that gives her that competency. So, maybe the distinction works for you, maybe it doesn't totally work, but I put the two of them together.

So here's what I've got on my top 10 list, plus a bonus number 11. So let me go through them. Again, the list will be attached as a downloadable template, but here we go. Legal. Now, it's not that helpful if the attorney you recruit has dealt with mergers and acquisitions if you don't plan to merge or acquire. You might want someone who has legal experience that is related to your organization's work.

Finance. I have seen many times people recruit people with finance background, but not budgeting, or CPA, so make sure that the finance person you recruit has experience that can serve the audit and finance committee well.

Human resources, super important. Like, super important, especially with smaller nonprofits, because you're not going to be able to hire a human resources person until you're quite large, and even when you get what you think to be quite large, you'll only be able to hire somebody who will be able to administrate HR. You want someone that can help you in a gnarly situation, or help you suss out a "I'm thinking between one of these two people, and they're senior leaders, and I could really use your advice."

Public relations and marketing, because you probably don't have a communications director. Fundraising is a core competency you need on your board. You need somebody who can be a spark plug. Digital marketing and technology. This is so absent from so many boards, and this might actually be a way for you to get some age diversity too.

Strategy. There are so many people who work for strategic planning firms, young, hungry associates that may actually have a passion for your mission. A funder, someone who has been a funder, or has served on a grants committee, be really, super useful.

And the last two are very, very important, and these are not in priority order, board experience. That's a competency, right? "I have served on a board before. I know. I have been on this rodeo before," and this last one, sector expertise. If I'm in the world of dealing with homelessness, wouldn't it be really helpful to have someone, maybe an academic, who has studies the root causes of homelessness, that can help and integrate with marketing efforts, and programs, and things like that? And it also can add some real gravitas as well.

I'm going to ride through attributes. Attributes, okay? So I want you to think of your board as a dinner party, where you all have to solve a problem together, okay? Who do you want at your dinner party? What kinds of people would problem solve together, in a nice way, where you didn't end up with a food fight?

Okay, you'd need collaborative, respectful of varying points of view. I call this the "No eye rolling" attribute. When you're on a board, someone will inevitably say something that is like off the grid, but they mean well. They're passionate about the organization. They just went off the grid. No eye rolling.

Leadership potential. I'll rant later in this course about term limits, but you need to identify people who will stand for leadership roles. I want somebody who's optimistic. At my dinner party, I don't want a whole bunch of Debbie Downers. I want a team player. I want somebody whose ego is in check.

I want somebody who's strategic, and that doesn't mean that they are a strategic planner by trade. What it means is they're smart, and they ask good questions, smart, tough, challenging questions, at the right altitude. "Why did you choose that and not that? I'd like to know more," as opposed to approving a budget of a couple million bucks, and someone saying, "So, you're still doing direct mail, right? So what's the cost of a first class stamp these days?"

You need someone who is enthusiastic about being an ambassador, who will actually say, "Sure, I'd love to work that room at that fundraiser. I love meeting people." Right? That's a good thing. Doesn't have to be an extrovert. Just has to be somebody who's comfortable and enthusiastic about the work, enough to talk to people about it.

Are they responsive? If you send out an email, about something great that happened in the organization, is this the kind of person that will respond, and say, "That is awesome"? A strong work ethic, so if they sit on a committee, are they one of these people that are actually going to roll up their sleeves and do the work, or are they going to see that there is somebody who really is quite a leader, and they're just going to let that person do all the work? So, you want somebody with a strong work ethic, and it will not surprise you that the bonus attribute, number 11, is a sense of humor. I talk about the thing that separates good leaders from great leaders. It's joy,

the joy that people take in having the privilege of doing this work. Joy and humor go hand in hand.

Lesson 4: Why Diversity Matters

So welcome back. This is video four in the course you're watching called Building The Board of Your Dreams, not the board in your dreams. In our last video, we talked about the nonnegotiable on the ideal board, passion, a thirst for the mission of your organization. We also talked about the skills and attributes and competencies that you might be looking for on your ideal board. Be sure to look for the downloadable one sheet that outlines my top 10 in those categories, and remember, it's a good list. You may add or subtract as your organization sees fit.

I want to talk for just a couple of minutes about why diversity matters, and I'll get to my funny, little drawing here in a second. I want to say from the get go here that it is not about being politically correct. I have seen so many board recruitment committees say, "Well, we have to have young people on our board, we have to have people of color on our board, or we have to have blah, blah, blah." They don't always talk about the why in the have to. Sometimes the have to can feel a little shallow. It doesn't get to the root of the why. I want to offer some of my thoughts about the why because I believe it might help as you begin the process of really starting to tip your board in the direction of a solid engine and need for thriving.

I think it's about three things. I think it's about the power of different perspectives, I think it's about the power of varying spheres of influence, and I think it's about the power your board has when it reflects the communities you serve. So different perspectives, spheres of influence, and somehow reflecting the communities you serve. That's why I think it's important. Let me give you an example. I worked with a client. The board was high functioning, really great, terrific people, pretty good fundraisers. It was a legal organization, legal advocacy organization. Board members almost all lawyers, way disproportionately men, almost all straight, almost all white. In addition to that, many of them knew one another. They worked together. This one was the brother-in-law of that one. This one used to work with that one. Now remember again the three things I said about why diversity matters, differing perspectives, different spheres of influence, and reflecting the communities you serve.

Let's talk first about spheres of influence, even though that was my second point because it goes with my drawing. Right here we have a board that is not diverse. How do we know? Well, there's at least one way we know. It's about their spheres of influence. Who do they know? Who are they connected to that could be invited to know more and do more about your organization? Well, these folks actually all have pretty much the same sphere of influence because they used to work together, and then these folks have even some of those spheres of influence because they belong to the same tennis club or something. These people know one another for some other reason. Maybe there's one person who brings a sphere of influence that's different from the rest. If you're creating an army of the engaged, how many people does this board reach? Okay, hold that thought.

Now, I want you to imagine that you actually recruit a board that has differing spheres of influence. I have a sphere of influence, and I'm connected to Mary, but Mary really swims in a completely different pond from me. Then there's Ted, there's Manuel, there's Maria, baba, baba. Maybe there's a connection here and maybe there's a connection here. Right? Now, I want you to look at the spheres of influence. They're different. There's more of them. What's interesting is how that fans out. These folks all fan out to more people they know. These people fan out to more people they know, but that they do not. That's how you build an army of engaged folks because you build a board of differing kinds of people, each of whom have a different sphere of influence.

Now, let's talk about perspective. We talk about age, we talk about race, we talk about sexual orientation, we talk about gender. You don't add those folks, or you don't have 40% women or 50% women because the statistic feels better. You do it because you're a microcosm. If you want more women to come to your events or more women to be a part of your organization because women, generally we're not educated in the same way to be really ... The philanthropy is a different beast to women than men. Maybe we want to grow the organization to have more women. Wouldn't you want more women on your board? Don't women offer a different perspective? Yes, they do. The same is true of race and sexual orientation. I may not be a woman of color, but as a lesbian, I bring to the table a perspective of what does it feel like to be discriminated against. That's useful. Maybe particularly useful for the mission of your organization, depending. I may be many things, but I certainly have experienced being marginalized. That's a useful perspective to have around your board table.

The same is true with age, gender, race. This not about filling buckets. It's about adding perspective. Again, think about the most interesting dinner party. Oh, wow, I did not know that. That's not the experience I had in life. That's so interesting. I hadn't really thought about it that way. Isn't that the best dinner party? Oh, I hadn't really thought about it that way. Different perspectives enrich any decision you make. That's the bottom line about diversity.

The last thing I want to say is that in terms of perspectives, the only other point I want to make here is how do you represent and reflect the people you serve? That's really important for the creditability of your organization and the engine. How does the board reflect the communities it serves? If it largely serves communities of color, and you have no people of color on your board, what does that say about your organization's commitment to people of color? But then you think to yourself, okay, what if I serve very low income women and children, single moms with kids? What do you do about that? I mean, I can't put a single mom who barely has a roof over her head, and does thanks to our shelter, on my board. No. You fish in different ponds.

For example, Marea Chaveco, who works for me, she's a fabulous professional, great at her job, and has a life experience that most people would not know, that she was raised by a single mom and experienced all that comes with being at the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum, including food stamps. She'd be kind of a fabulous board member for an organization who's focus was on women, single moms, and kids. That's what I'm talking about here.

The last thing I want to show you before we move on to our next video, I'd call it a three-legged stool, but it's actually a pyramid. It should really be a stool but I don't know how to draw a stool. You have expertise, right? I'm a lawyer. By attribute is that I'm collaborative. What's my perspective? By the way, I'm not a lawyer. I'm just making this up. I am a lesbian. I'm not making that up. This perspective, this attribute, and my law degree or my nonprofit experience makes me collectively a great board member. That's what you're looking for, and that's why diversity matters. That's my shtick about diversity. It's not about being politically correct. It's about perspective, it's about spheres of influence, and often it's about representing the communities you serve. Next up, a recipe.

Lesson 5: A Recipe for Board Building - Part 1

We are now deep into the course called Building the Board of Your Dreams. This is video number five. Just as a recap, we began by talking about why board building needs to be a strategic and intentional initiative on the part of the organization. You can't just simply say, "I need new board members," and grab them, just so you can put bodies in seats. Just doesn't work that way, and trust me, your twin engine jet will not fly well. We talked about a quick exercise you can do called the rule of thirds, that'll help you quickly gauge the strengths and the weaknesses of your board. Then we dug a little bit deeper and started to look at the skills, competencies, and attributes of the ideal board. We talked about why diversity matters. That was our last video, video number four.

But now it's time to get even more specific, and the way that I want to do that is I want to use a case study. So this video and the one that follows will take you through actual work that I did with a small non-profit in the South Bronx. That's probably the best way for me to take you through the recipe, so this is recipe part one.

First and foremost, I know that some organizations have recruitment and nominating committees. That works, but if you were really feeling like it's time to really evolve the board ... Maybe there's been some kind of a significant shift ... she says as she shifts the camera. Maybe there's been a transition, I don't know, but you need to really be intentional about it. I think key is ... Oh, come on, really? There we go. Board/staff working group. Call it a task force, if you will, but to me this ... super, super, super important. If you don't have staff ... But I'm telling you that if you are the only staff person, as an executive director, you need to be a part of this process. Critical.

Now, you can say to me, "Hey, Joan, board membership, and who gets on the board, is actually a board job." It's one of those responsibilities that I refer to as porous. There's board responsibilities, there's staff responsibilities, and then there's ones that kind of weave across. The copilots need to behave like copilots when building the board, so I like a task force. I like a task force that is charged with, let's say, over the next four months, because it is not a short task. The object of the game is not to do this quick, the object of the game is to do this right. Over the next four

months we are going to bring on three, four, five, two new board members, depends on the size of your board. But you're looking to make a substantive change in how your board operates, its perspectives, then it has to be enough people to make that change happen. So we have a board/staff working group.

Our organization is called Chances for Children. It's in the South Bronx. It has a budget of about \$400,000. It was founded by two women who are therapists. Their secret sauce is recognizing that parents whose lives are challenged in some way, whether they were previously incarcerated, they suffer from mental illness, they live paycheck to paycheck, maybe their kids are hungry, that they aren't the best parents they can be when there is that much stress. So Chances for Children works in a therapeutic way with parents and their kids to essentially teach parents good parenting skills in tough situations. You need know nothing more than that. The only other thing you should know is at the time that I was introduced to them they had just gotten their own 501(c)(3), having been part of a larger organization that served as its fiscal sponsor.

I was approached by the founders. They had already put together a board of about four or five, six people, I think, maybe a little bit more, mostly people they knew. They wanted to grow the board, to do the kinds of things I've been talking about: diverse experiences, diverse expertise, diverse skills, diverse perspectives. Smart. So we took on the task, and we put together a team of people. I have some notes here, because they're actually from memos that I wrote, that I want to make sure that you know. First we talked about what is it the organization wants to do in a couple of years, and how might new board members help in that, and might that in fact inform what kinds of folks you want on your board? Well, they wanted to double in size. The need was far greater than their ability to provide it, so they wanted to double in size from \$400,000 in size to an \$800,000 budget, serving more families. They also wanted to diversify their revenue; 85% of their money came from foundations. Okay, that's important background.

That's the board working group. We want this group to be enthusiastic, determined, and you need to know that when you sign up for this job you're going to be put to work. You're going to make calls, you're going to send emails, you are going to do outreach to either directly to board prospects, or to the one step removed, the lead that leads you to a prospect. So when you sign up for this, make sure that the expectations are set quite clearly. Everyone will have homework after

every single meeting, and I would think about this as about a four month project where you meet every month, maybe five months even. Because remember, this is another important thing, this is a marathon and not a sprint. You're building the foundation for long-term board development, not just, "How quickly can we get a lawyer on the board?" It's got to be more strategic.

Let me tell you a little bit about the current board, because we said you'd need to assess your board. What have you got? We had one man, all the rest female. We had two people of color, in an organization that served almost exclusively people of color. We had a number of academics, no fundraising experience whatsoever. We had some marketing background, we had a couple of people with leadership potential, and we had somebody with sector expertise, very engaged in early childhood experience work. Then we also had a clinician. That's what we had, okay? But there's clearly people that are missing. There're people that are missing. So in our first meeting, after assessing what we had, we talked about what we needed.

These are the things that the working group came up with. Remember I said you ... This is what I call identifying the gaps. This is a board/staff working group. Then it is, assess what you have on your board, identify the gaps, right? Assess what you have, identify the gaps. I want to be just really clear, you want to identify the gaps in the context of where you want or need the organization to go. They want to double in size, they want to serve more people, they've got to get more revenue diversity, and they have no one who knows a blessed thing about fundraising. And the board is almost exclusively women, and a lot of people who are therapists or clinicians. Which makes perfect sense, the founders were therapists and clinicians.

Let's talk about what they determined, what they determined were their needs, and in the next video we'll take it from there. In terms of attributes, they were very clear. They wanted wealth, or what I like to call wealth-adjacency, manageable egos, diplomacy, someone who recognizes board service as a privilege, someone who wrote well. This is very much a working board, by the way. Some kind of personal connection to the work. We talked about that, right? We also talked about needing fundraising ... What did they determine that they needed? Where they wanted to go was double the organization size, and diversify their revenue. Did you hear me say they had any kind of strategy? None. None, so they needed strategy. They needed strategy, they needed fundraising. They needed ... What else did they

need? They needed more men. Usually it's the other way around. They needed more men. They weren't big enough to be that concerned about human resources.

But we targeted these things. We targeted wealth and wealth-adjacency, someone who could fundraise, someone who had strategic planning experience, also somebody ... Oh, the other thing that they were looking for is someone how had served on a board before, because none of these people had ever served on a non-profit board before. So that's what they were looking for. How do you connect all of those things? Someone who's wealth-adjacent or wealthy, who has some connection and might have some connection to the mission of the organization. Then you start to weave those needs together with what ponds you might fish in to find them. In the next video, I'm going to tell you how we creatively identified ponds to fish in to lead us to new board members. See you in the next video.

Lesson 6: A Recipe for Board Building - Part 2

Welcome back. This is video number six in our course called "Building the Board of Your Dreams." This is really the second part, picking up where we left off in video number five, of our case study, that I think will offer you a really good recipe for how to approach building, rebuilding, tipping your board in the direction you need it to go with real intention.

In video number five, we talked about creating a board staff working group, that this was a marathon, not a sprint. We needed like four or five months. We needed these people to understand that they were actually going to be doing work in between meetings. Homework assignments. We need it to be board and staff, because while it is a board function to build itself, the executive director, maybe the development director, are key people who have leads and prospects, and the organization has to have a board that works for everybody, so I'm a big fan of this. You assess what you've got, what you need to meet your goals, and you identify gaps.

We talked about our little organization, a \$400,000 budget, no paid staff, in the South Bronx, Chances for Children, all about supporting good parenting skills when the parents are having very, very tough times. They had just become their own 501(c)3, founded by two therapists, who built a board of about seven ... I think about

seven, and were looking to grow it to about 12, and they knew that they were missing some important things on the board.

Most of the people who were on the board were known to the founders. Pretty simple. Pretty standard fare for a brand new organization. They got a grant, from a community foundation ... Excuse me, from a family foundation, to bring me in, to help them over the course of four or five months, to really strategically help them intentionally evolve their board, and they were fantastic.

So, we talked in the last video about what they had. We talked about what they needed to meet their long-term goals. Two things that they could talk about was that they were a \$400,000 organization, they thought they needed to double and size, and they were highly, 85% of their money came from foundations, so revenue diversity was really important.

But then we began to tease out other gaps that they needed to fill, in order to be the kind of board this organization needed and deserved. So, we came up with these priorities. Now, when you establish these priorities, don't expect that you're actually going to find people for each of these right away. Again, marathon not spring, building a pipeline of prospects, a database of people who can be tapped into, so that your board recruitment process can become ongoing.

So they established, together with me ... There we go. They wanted either someone who was wealthy or someone who was wealth-adjacent, they wanted some strategy, because they had no strategy to get to "Double your size." They wanted someone with fundraising experience, someone with public relations experience. They needed more women. They only had one man on their board, the rest women, an unusual problem for nonprofits, and they wanted more folks representing the community. They felt that was super important, and I agreed with them on that. I'm trying to remember if there was anything else.

These were their sort of six priorities, and remember, they don't have to be separate and distinct. As I like to say, if you can get somebody who was wealthy, who had strategic planning experience ... Oh, we also wanted prior board experience. We wanted prior board experience. I don't know where my red marker went. Here it is. Prior board experience. There we go. None of these people had ever been on a board before. Does any of this sound familiar to any of you? Just saying.

Oh, what I was saying is you don't have to find seven unique individuals. The more buckets you can hit with a single person, the more you score, and that's what we talked about. So, how did you fish? "How'd you fish, Joan?"

Okay. Who are people that are going to care about the mission of this organization? We're talking about the South Bronx, but we're just a stone's throw from Manhattan. Manhattan is a veritable treasure trove of shrinks. What about a wealthy shrink, who deals with kids and families? So we started to think about that.

Funders. We also said, "Okay, who would have access to money? Do we want to talk to some of the foundations that support us, and ask if they have any suggestions?" It actually shows that you're intentionally building your board. It's a great thing to ask a funder, if they have ideas.

The healthcare community. You might find, what about a ... Okay, let's try this. What about a doctor, a pediatrician, who works at a hospital in The Bronx, who has prior board service? So we started to look at healthcare, hospitals in the South Bronx, like Montefiore, Bronx-Lebanon.

Then, we said, "Okay, we want people who care about the community, who represent the community we serve, so maybe we should start thinking about community officials, or maybe an elected, maybe somebody well known who lives in The Bronx, who could give the organization a little bit of cachet."

And then we talked about what about minority-owned businesses? That might be an interesting way to tackle ... What if you wanted a public relations person on your board, and it would be swell if the person cared about issues related to socioeconomic diversity or racial diversity? What about a minority-owned public relations firm? And in terms of public relations, maybe you don't need a press person. Maybe a journalist would know people. So we started to think about, "Okay, what does that mean by public relations?"

And then, lastly, we focused on online resources that might be useful. Taproot. Taproot is an amazing organization, that has resources to people who are looking for board service, who might be retired, so Taproot was amazing. LinkedIn for Good. LinkedIn has a very specific place for folks who are kind of do-gooders, or looking to do good, right there on LinkedIn. And then we found another organization called

Catchafire. Catchafire matches volunteers at varying levels. Some are lower level than these folks needed, but maybe not.

And then we started to think about this, strategy. My goodness, there's so many management consulting firms in New York. Do they have affinity groups? Could we look at McKinsey's affinity group for Hispanic associates? Yes, we could.

So, this is how we began, online resources, minority-owned businesses, affinity groups at larger companies, people in this community. We actually put somebody on the task of making a list of all the famous people who were born or who lived in the South Bronx, and we had a really fun meeting one time, talking about who was going to reach out to Jennifer Lopez. We didn't reach out to her, nor did we secure her for board service, but it was actually a fun conversation, over dinner at one of our meetings.

But we put all these working group people on the task of contacting ... "You know somebody at Montefiore?" "Yeah, I do. I know Donna Futterman," right? You're going to go do that list. You're going to research the online resources. "Hey, I work at blah blah, but my next door neighbor works at McKinsey, and I think they have an affinity group." This is how it works. "I'm going to go talk to the Tillman Foundation. They funded to have Joan come. Maybe they actually know somebody who might be a good board member."

This is how it works. This creative brainstorm is the most important part of board recruitment, and it is the thing people do the least of, because it takes time. They think, "Oh, do you know anyone who would like to be on our board?" As opposed to an hour-and-a-half with ordering in sandwiches, or if it's the evening, you know like kicking around ideas. That's how it works.

How did it work? Well, let me tell you. They brought on someone who had event planning background, a woman of some means. She organized one of their first fundraisers at the Harvard Club. We were actually looking at a woman, but we really needed a man. We were looking at a particular woman, then all of a sudden, one of the task force members remembered that her husband used to be a major gifts officer for the NAACP. Bingo.

We did a lot of homework with strategic planning firms, and we found a young associate who was deeply committed to issues of children and families, based on his own life experience, and he was a strategic planner.

And, lastly, a model/celebrity, who also was deeply committed to the organization came up, met with people, saw the site, was totally into it. It became a bit of her cause, and she was able to help them get visibility they would not otherwise have gotten.

That happened over the course of about four months, and the bench now has some folks sitting on it, because they have done this homework, and there is now a vast spreadsheet of other people they could talk to.

So that's how it works. In the next video, I'm going to just spend a few minutes talking about materials that the task force used, that helped them quite a lot, that I think will help you as you think about your intentional board building. So see you in the next video.

Lesson 7: Fishing Gear – Important Outreach Materials

So I'm glad you're still with me. We are in video number seven in our course called, "Building the Board of Your Dreams."

We started way back at the very beginning about why it was important to approach board building with intentionality, why that was important. We have an exercise on how to gauge the strengths and weaknesses of your board in a pretty quick, easy way. We then dug in a little bit deeper about the skills, attributes, expertise, and perspectives that you want on the ideal board. And we talked a little bit about the power of diversity.

Then we moved into recipe time. What's the process look like that you can engage in with intentionality, where you can, in fact, recruit some good new board members who fit the needs you have. And we've been using a case study of a small organization in the South Bronx called Chances for Children, \$400,000 organization, that works to help stabilize families by working with parents to be better parents when they are under a tremendous amount of stress from a variety of different kinds of sources.

So, I told you the story about how we went about it in the process and the board and staff working group, assessing what they had, what they would need to meet their long-term goals, identifying gaps, the important part that I called the brainstorm, which is thinking about all the different ponds you could fish in, and then I told you about the success we had in bringing on new board members as a result of this piece right here. Actually, as the result of the organic process we created.

I want to spend just a few minutes talking about gear. "What say you, Joan? Gear?" Yes, gear. So, here's the deal about gear. If you go fishing, you need gear. And so for me, there were four things I think would be important for you to create and prepare and think about as a working group, certainly before you begin the process of reaching out to prospects or leads.

So, item number one. Can I move my little camera this way? Keep my fingers crossed. There we go. Can you see that? Good. Number one is a one sheet. Actually, I'm going to call it a one sheet plus. One sheet plus. You have a conversation, you follow it up. Or, "Hey, I know you really care about the South Bronx. I don't know if you know about this organization. Would you be interested in having a cup of coffee? I'm on the board. I love this organization. I'd love to tell you more about it. I've attached a one sheet."

The plus would be a story. A plus could be a video. It could be a link to something. It could be a link to press you got. Anything that could be very quickly digested and sent as a quick follow-up. "Hey, thanks for our call today. Here's a couple pieces of information I think you would find helpful."

Number two. I wouldn't pull this one out at the first time you are meeting somebody, but somebody's going to ask you, "What are the obligations of board service at Chances for Children?" Now, I'm not suggesting that you hand them a job description, but you have to be sanguine about what the job description is and what the responsibilities that come with it are. Here, you're going to jazz them up about the organization, right? Here, you're going to say, "If you have the joy and privilege like I do of serving on this board, here are the obligations." And please don't hide the fundraising obligation. Don't make it cryptic. Don't leave it out. If there is a fundraising obligation and you do not say it up front, you will have no one to blame but yourselves when you have a board member that says, "Nobody ever told me I

had to fundraise. Nobody ever told me I had to think about people I could invite to events." So please, be specific.

This one is really important and a lot of people don't do this. It's what I call the meet and greet script. Because you've got to give this taskforce the tools they need to be good at their jobs. So I recently created one for another client and the object of the game of this is to draw the prospect closer in, to impress the prospect by the caliber of existing board members ... "I'm trying to figure out what would it be like to be part of this group." To engage in a conversation that digs at the most important thing I spoke about in an earlier video. Does this person have fire in her belly about the mission of this organization? And then to determine the prospect's interest in moving forward.

And so it gives a very easy sense about setting, how to contend with it, the opening should be led by appreciation for wanting to learn more. We want to learn more about you, tell you more about the organization, determine if there's a good fit, right? Nice, easy conversation. And then you might want to say, "You know, I heard you had an initial conversation with so-and-so. And I'm interested, what did you learn about our organization and what excited you about it? Did you give some thought to how you might contribute as a board member? And I'm sure that you have questions. I want to make sure that you get the chance to ask them."

You want to draw out all of the things you're looking for. Do they have prior board experience? Have they volunteered before? What kind of experience did they have? Was that exciting for them? "When you were first approached by so-and-so, my colleague on the board, had you been considering non-profit board service? Tell us what you think you bring to the board, besides what I can potentially see on your resume." And then talk about fundraising. You'd really be foolish not to.

If you don't have experience, that's not a deal-breaker. Many of us do not have fundraising experience, but we are interested in understanding your willingness. That's key. And then, of course, the prospect may ask you questions. Budget size, staff size, some other questions about who else is on the board, that sort of thing. So that's a kind of a sheet that will give talking points to this group as they begin to fan out and talk to the affinity group at a strategic planning firm or to a minority-owned public relations firm or wherever pond you are fishing in.

The last thing is a clear interview process. And there's a couple of quick things I want to say about this. Interview process is probably a subject for another piece of content in the lab, but I want to say a couple things here. One, the ED does not get to decide. The ED is involved in the decision-making, but the process doesn't start with the executive director. I have seen organizations where it starts at the executive director and if the person passes muster, then that person goes on to the board recruitment committee. That's not how it should roll.

Does an ED have veto power? You need to discuss that. My thought is not formal veto power, but if I'm the executive director and I have a real issue, I better make my case really well.

Who's involved in the process? Here's the other thing that's really, really important as you think about an interview process. Please do not let your hunger for bodies to put in seats lead you to make promises to board members before they've been through the process. I have seen that happen and as the process unfolded, there were all kinds of flags on the field about this prospect. And let's say this prospect was currently a rather significant donor. If promises were already made and there are flags on the field, what do you do?

So make sure your process is such that no promises are made. No commitments are made by anyone. And the last thing I want to say and then we're going to go on to the next video is don't take forever. I do not like recruitment processes where there is a class of board members that come in once a year. People don't wait. If they want to really get involved with something, they want to move. And they certainly want to be communicated with. So, communicate with them often, don't make commitments, make sure the ED is in at the right point. These are three very, very important components of a board interview process.

So, now we've taken Chances with Children and we actually have made a real difference. They're much more thriving. Maybe not thriving, but they're a heck of a lot less messy than they were before.

In our next video, just because I am sort of a Pollyanna, I felt it was important to say, let's talk about some flags you might find on the field with regard to board recruitment. I'll see you in the next video.

Lesson 8: 5 Big Fat Red Flags in Board Recruitment

Welcome back. Coming down the home stretch here in our course called building the board of your dreams. I hope you have been planning some good actionable advice and suggestions about how to think about board recruitment in a targeted, intentional way. The whole purpose of this series from why we do this to assessing your board to identifying the ideal attributes and skills and expertise and perspectives of an ideal board, identifying your gaps, the case study recipe, all of this is to combat this. "I just need board members, can you help me?" Or, "My board, it's useless." As if you had no responsibility for it. This whole course has been really designed to get you to sort of snap out of it. Remember that building this board is the board and staff's responsibility, particularly those copilots. And the board you have is the board you build.

So yes, I am a bit of a cockeyed optimist, but I want to point out five things that could get in your way. Five big fat red flags on the field. Ready? Let's do it. Here's number one. I bet you'll be able to guess some of them. Please, if you want a thriving non-profit do not put your founder on your board. Do not put the beloved board, the beloved CEO or Executive Director who's been there for 20 years on the board because you're desperately afraid that so many relationships will go with her. Please don't do that. The power in the room, regardless of how good a board you recruit, how well you retain them, the power in the room will sit right there. And you will take the risk of setting up your new Executive Director to fail. Mark my words, I'm not kidding, this is serious business. Boards bend over backwards to create roles for founders and beloved Executive Directors that give them authority. Please don't do that.

Number two, number two. This is a flag. I call it buying a seat. This is someone who gives your organization more money than anyone else and you ask that person to be on your board simply because they give more money than anyone else. Certainly it illustrates some kind of commitment to the organization for sure, but do they bring the skills, the perspectives, the attributes, or is their ego a manageable size? All of those other things have to be taken into account before you allow someone to buy a seat. Sometimes corporations or banks will say, "We are going to fund this capital campaign, and because of that we would like a seat on your

board." That happens and it's okay. It would be great if you had some say over who that person might be.

My friend Phillipa works for Investors Bank. They underwrote the building that the Montclair, New Jersey Film Festival is housed in. Awesome. Phillipa was asked to join that board. It's essentially a seat. But you could ask for no better board member than Phillipa who has proven to be a good fundraiser, and she also happens to be a chief risk officer, so she knows the right questions to ask.

All right, number three, number three. All right, some of you are gonna say, "I'd give my eye teeth to have a celebrity on my board. Why would that be a problem." Kind of the same reason of this. What are they there in the service of? There are some celebrities you would actually give your eye teeth to have on your board. I happen to know Judith Light who's in *Transparent* and is an actress of real depth and integrity, and she has been on numerous LGBT boards and HIV aids boards, and you wouldn't know she was a celebrity based on her participation. It has to be the right celebrity for the right reasons.

Clients. Here's the red flag, it's not necessarily no you can't do any of these things, you have to do them for the right reasons and so do they. So in the case of a client the only way a client in a direct service non-profit organization works on your board, if you are absolutely clear as a bell and completely confident that that client is not coming as what I call a congressional representative for all the clients at your organization, but rather is bringing that perspective to ensure that your organization is built to last, which may in fact occasionally be at odds with what the clients would like or need. So beware of clients. I'm not suggesting in any of these situations that you say, "It's a non-starter," in any of these categories. What I'm saying is that you have to be really careful. I think this actually is a non-starter. A founder on your board is a non-starter. You should avoid it at all costs. The other ones it totally depends and you have to be mighty careful about explaining the obligations and the responsibilities and making sure they can deliver.

The last thing is not a person. The other big red flag that will actually trip you up in effective board recruitment is if your organization does not have term limits. I know what a big discussion this is with a lot of people, but here's the deal. The people who think that term limits are a problem believe that the people who are on the board offer invaluable institutional knowledge. They also are skeptics. They don't

believe that anyone else will step into leadership roles. Or they're skeptics about the kind of process I just outlined for you. It's hard to get board members. Why would we want to term off somebody who's actually really good?

The people who are against term limits sometimes just kind of like the power of running the place for long periods of time. These are not good reasons to fight term limits. So if you want to build a board that is a solid engine in that twin engine jet you have to have term limits. You've got to have them. It is the only, the only strategy that actually forces you, that forces you to build a leadership pipeline. Our Treasurer is leaving the board. Maybe it gives you an opportunity to recruit a younger person, a person who is a CPA at a digital marketing firm. If you see the term limit as an opportunity and you are strategic about your priorities of what you want on your board, everyone who goes is a new seat you can add one of those new priorities to. You just have to be optimistic you can fill the seats. And if you do what I'm suggesting here by taking an intentional approach to the whole process you can be the Pollyanna that I am. You can because it works. Trust me when I say there are so many people out there that want to be of service, especially in this what feels to be a rather ugly world. All they need to be is asked.

I'm gonna finish up with one last video with some final thoughts, so I'll see you for just a few more minutes in our final video.

Lesson 9: 3 Keys to Board Member Retention

Okay. We are nearly done. This has been a course called "Building the Board of Your Dreams," and I was really committed to creating this course, because I believe, and I have good evidence of clients to support this, that people do not take sufficient enough responsibility for building their boards. There you go. There you have it.

So remember back to the Thriving Nonprofit Workshop, which by the way, is here in The Lab, under, I think, masterclasses. I talked about building a village. I talked about getting the right people on the bus. I wasn't just talking about the staff bus, the volunteer bus. I was definitely talking about the board bus, and I believe very strongly that you have the board you build.

One of the best pieces of advice I was ever given as an executive director was very early on. Another executive director who'd been on board for quite a long time,

at her organization, said to me, "Get involved in board development and recruitment early on." Not to stack the board in my favor, but to make sure that that engine was strong. It was very good advice.

So, after you've taken this course, I am hoping that you will begin to take responsibility, have faith and some optimism that you can recruit the kinds of board members your organization wants, deserves, and needs.

So just to recap, we began by talking about this notion of intentionality. Then we moved on to a brief exercise that was called "The Rule of Thirds." It helped you to understand whether or not ... how many initiators and rock stars you have, how many request grantors you have, and how many people you have that qualify ... I think the technical term was "Dead weight"?

Then we went deeper. We said, "Okay, in the ideal board, what kind of skills, competencies, expertise, attributes, do you want around this table?" In the video that followed, I talked about three very important things, the value of different perspectives. Maybe that comes from life experience, et cetera, but different perspectives, the value of each person bringing a unique sphere of influence, so you can begin to build an army of engaged stakeholders, and we talked about the value of reflecting the communities you serve on your board. Those three things are the reasons that diversity is critical to board recruitment. A successful board is diverse because of those things.

We then went on to a case study, my friends at Chances for Children, in the South Bronx, and I used that organization as a way to outline a recipe that you can use with a task force, to begin to tip your board in the direction you believe that you need it to for the future strategy you have in place. I think you learned that the recipe was more of a marathon than a sprint, that it required a fair amount of work, and that it can be really successful.

We talked a little bit about materials that your task force would need to be effective in their outreach, and then, because I want to make sure I'm evenhanded, I talked about some of the big, fat red flags, that can be on the field, that can stand between you and effective board recruitment. So I talked about the fact that if I had my druthers, no founder would ever serve on any board of any organization that person founded. I would never have it happen. It causes more trouble than you can

imagine, and there are ways to engage your founder in important ways, that honor the legacy of their contribution, without shifting the power dynamics away from your executive director, and right back to the founder.

We talked about buying seat, which can work. A corporation might say, "We're underwriting this. We would like to have a person on our board." It can work, but only under the right circumstances.

We talked about celebrities. Many of you would just k'vel to have a celebrity, but it has to be under the right circumstances. Otherwise, it's just a name on a list, and you need to make sure that each and every board member is held to the same standards. Can be hard to do with a celebrity.

And then lastly, in the last video, I saved my rant for the end of that video, where I talked about what I consider to be one of the biggest things that stands in the way of the organization's ability to really drive the board to where it needs to go, and that is when a board is against term limits.

I am a huge proponent of term limits. I think it is the only way to essentially force a board to grapple with the issue of bringing new people on, building a leadership pipeline, adding diverse perspectives, all of those things. They only happen when there are term limits. An empty seat is not a loss, it's an opportunity, and great board members get that.

So where does that leave us? It leaves us with a few final pieces of advice. One, remember, board recruitment is not an initiative, something you do that has a finite start and finish. My case study was designed that way, but remember, what was Chances for Children left with at the end? A spreadsheet full of names. Hopefully, they have continued to cultivate and steward those names, and are continuing to add people as they go along.

Secondly, all this hard work will just go right down the drain, unless you intentionally create a real orientation. And an orientation should almost be like a mini-board meeting. It's not just a whole bunch of information in a binder. There should be some reminder of the power of the work. Please don't forget that. And it's not enough to say, "Oh, well we always sit our new board members next to board members who've been around the block a while." Not enough. It has to be real and

intentional. You need to make a really good impression on the people you have recruited. This could be, potentially, upcoming content in The Lab.

Last thing, I think people miss this all the time, leadership touchpoints. The executive director and the board chair cannot leave brand new board members to their own devices, or they shouldn't. I believe that an executive director should have, if they are able to, geographically, have coffee with a new board member, within the first month or so of their board service. They probably should get a call as soon as they are voted in. This is one of your newest, most important ambassadors. Treat them as such.

And in that coffee, or that Zoom, or that Skype call, if they're geographically diverse, ask them what they see as successful board service, because you have an obligation to them. They've made one to you. You have one to them, too, so ask them to talk to you about, "What does successful board service look like to you? What do you think you bring to the board, that you want to make sure that we really tap into?" And then deliver on both of those things.

And that can be the board chair. It can be the executive director. I strongly encourage executive ... I've heard about executive directors that have not touched base with their newest board members. I think that's a recipe for detachment. I think that's a recipe for turning a rock star into a request granter, so leaders, get in touch with, cultivate, and steward your board members. Think of them like you would your most significant donors, because you know what? They are, if you do it right, your most significant contributors.

I hope this course has been helpful. I can't wait to hear stories of how you've used it. The stories I hear in the village, from folks about how they've used some of these classes, has been super helpful to me, as I design content, as I think about these videos, so I look forward to hearing your feedback and the successes you've had in The Lab. Take care.

A TEMPLATE FOR A BOARD INTERVIEW PROCESS

*Who Interviews When? Who Decides?
What Does The Candidate Know and When?*

There are three pieces of the puzzle you need to get right when a prospect has indicated interest in board service and you see a good fit.

1. Vetting – identifying red flags as early in the process as possible.
2. Communication – What does the candidate know? When? And who is the messenger?
3. Clear, Formal and Inclusive Interview Process: Your organization needs a process that is consistently followed for all candidates.

The following is a template for a clear, formal and inclusive process. It can and should be tailored to the needs of your organization but there are important components that should be a part of any process.

STEP 1: MOVE PROSPECT TO “CANDIDATE” STATUS

Ideally you have a board committee that is constantly adding to a pipeline of prospects based on the needs of your organization. Ideally you have a composition matrix and you know what your gaps are and you’re focused on filling those gaps.

But maybe not. Maybe your E.D. has found someone who would make a great board member and the individual has expressed interest. Maybe your board chair has found someone.

Step 1 is a simple question to the prospect: **Are you interested in being a candidate for board service?**

IMPORTANT NOTE: Look carefully at the question. The key word is CANDIDATE. You cannot and should not ask, “Would you like to be on our board?” No single person has the right to make that decision AND you have to beware of managing the expectations of the prospect.

If the answer is NO, be sure the “why” is captured in your ongoing prospect database (or maybe it is just a spreadsheet but hopefully something more sophisticated than a Word doc.)

If the answer is **YES**, move to step 2.



STEP 2: PRESENT CANDIDATE INFORMATION TO SOME DECISION-MAKING BODY

What decision-making body? It could be the full board if a board meeting is close at hand. Executive committee is my favorite. It meets regularly.

Those responsible for recruitment should be asked to do a regular report that ideally includes an update on the composition matrix and the gaps you need to fill. It should update the group on the size and quality of the pipeline and then, in that context, raise the name and profile of the candidate. You are informing this group that you plan to move forward pending their input. Present the following information:

- The candidate's resume with your commentary about attributes and / or competencies
- Why you believe this candidate would make a great board member
- Why you believe this candidate would make a great board member FOR YOUR ORG

Leave with thumbs up or down on moving the candidate into a process. If you have done good work, you'll leave with thumbs up. It is possible that someone knows this person and there is a legitimate problem with the candidacy and the conclusion is that the person should not move forward.

STEP 3: COMMUNICATE ASAP WITH THE CANDIDATE

Thumbs down? *Be careful!* Ideally you would say something like, "Met last night with X committee and decided we have some board work to do before adding new members at this time. Can we keep your name in the hopper?"

Thumbs up? Communicate:

- The process
- The timetable and timing
- The point person – who will be setting up conversations, who they can contact for updates

This conversation should set a tone for how seriously you take this process. It will set a new board member up to be quite serious about her responsibilities.

(up next, step four)

STEP 4: MINIMUM OF 3 TOUCH POINTS

- Interview with 2 - 3 board members (not the person who made the initial contact)
- Interview with board chair
- Conversation with the Executive Director

Candidates should have the opportunity to meet numerous organizational leaders to determine if the fit is right for THEM. You need the process to be thorough and inclusive. You want everyone to own the success of your newest member.

If you have to combine (1) and (2), it's OK but it is preferable for the 'coach' of the team to talk to the prospective 'rookie' one-on-one.

You'll see that the E.D. has a 'conversation' rather than an interview. The distinction is important. The E.D. should absolutely be in the process all along the way – generating prospects and actively engaged in talking with your board about the pros and cons of certain prospects she (or another staff member) have put forth. But the last stop is important. The E.D. doesn't just "seal the deal" but is also the leader and may be the best judge of the "passion" criterion.

Does an E.D. get a vote? If a voting member of the board, yes. If not, I think of the E.D.'s opinion as critical and very hard to ignore. Ultimately, the decision about who gets to serve rests with the board. That said, listen very carefully to E.D. concerns. She may be on to something you did not see in the process.

NOTE: After each part of the process, a candidate should receive an email of thanks and a reminder of the process and the timetable and what they can expect to happen next.

STEP 5: APPROVAL BY THE FULL BOARD

By this stage, a solid number of organizational leaders have met with the candidate, assessed the fit, clarified the expectations, and determined if the passion for the mission of your organization is there.

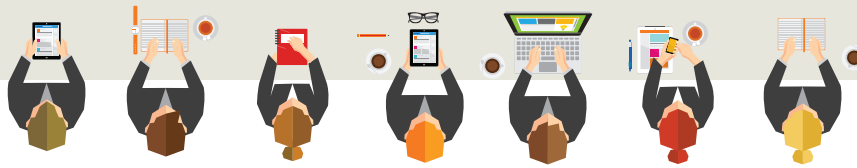
If a candidate gets this far, a "no" vote would be highly unlikely. That's the reason for an inclusive process with steps along the way.

In fact, putting a person who is very interested in board service through all these hoops and then voting 'no' can cause a big problem. You can alienate someone who is very interested in being a leader.

Celebrate your process, share the great things you learned about the candidate and pat yourselves on the back after a unanimous vote that affirms a job well done.



BOARD INTERVIEW PROCESS



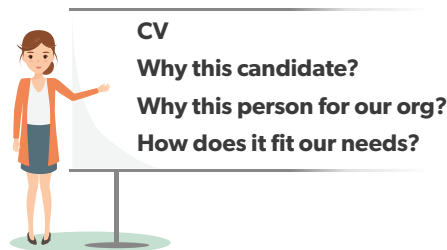
YES

Is this prospect a candidate?

NO

Leave on prospect list.

1 Present candidate info to decision making body



2 Should we move to interview?

NO

Not right
Someone has negative background

Communicate 'not at this time' to candidate

3 Communication to candidate

4



interviews (2-3)

5 Info circulated to full board

6

Board vote to approve

Important Notes

Make no promises. Ever.

A professional process leads to a professional, responsible board members.

ED. has a critical role in the process, with or without a vote.

Never leave a candidate guessing.

BOARD MEMBER INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

INTRO

Your organization deserves a great board. A great board starts with a great recruitment process and then a great interview process. You are on the hunt for terrific ambassadors who can spread the good word about your organization with passion and eloquence and are enthusiastic about inviting people to know more and do more.

Most organizations are quite hungry for new board members. Too hungry. What this means is that you don't treat the interview like an interview but instead it becomes about the "sell."

Board service is a job. You want all board members to take it seriously, to understand what the job is, what the expectations are, and to have the opportunity to determine if this board and board service in general is for them. This can only happen with a legitimate interview.

Last piece of advice: a great board discussion is like the best dinner party ever. Different folks, different points of view, vigorous and respectful debate, and fun. You leave feeling lucky you were on the invite list. That is what you are building when you build a board.

THE RESUME

- ☐ Does the candidate have the particular skill set you are looking for?
- ☐ Look at the candidate's previous positions – are there other skills s/he brings that would be of value?
- ☐ Does the candidate value community service and volunteerism? Is there anything on the resume to demonstrate that?

WHY SERVE ON A BOARD?

- ☐ There are many ways to be of service; Why does this candidate feel that board service is the appropriate way for her/him to engage with your organization?

WHY SERVE ON THIS BOARD?

- ☐ Does the candidate demonstrate authentic passion for the mission?
- ☐ Does s/he have a personal connection to your cause?
- ☐ Does s/he have a prior connection to this organization? (Volunteer, financial support, event attendee?)

ATTRIBUTE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Passion for the mission
- ☐ Ability to articulate that passion
- ☐ Diplomacy
- ☐ Honors and respects the voices of others
- ☐ Ego in check
- ☐ Tolerant of varying points of view around a table of diverse individuals
- ☐ Keeps eye on the mission
- ☐ Able to receive constructive feedback
- ☐ Strong work ethic
- ☐ Gets that serving on a board is a privilege and a real responsibility
- ☐ Sense of humor a must

OPTIONAL QUESTIONS TO DETERMINE FIT

While you may not ask all of these questions, you will want to hear thoughts from the candidate about all of these issues during the course of the interview process.

- ☐ There are many ways to support our organization. Why are you interested in board service generally?
- ☐ What is IT about this particular organization that has ignited you to raise your hand to be of service as a board member?
- ☐ Who are you in a group? What role do you typically play?
- ☐ We are building a board in which each member brings a new set of relationships, different from each other. Tell us about your sphere of influence, your web of relationships, and how they might add value to the work of organization. Please know this is not “code” for “Do you know people we can solicit for funds” - that is not the sole purpose of this question.
- ☐ What do you think are the characteristics of a great board member?
- ☐ What do you believe you need from the organization to be a great board member?
- ☐ Tell us something specific the organization does that excites / inspires you.
- ☐ Fundraising is a significant part of board service (spell out any specifics very clearly). This could mean stewarding a current donor, attending a lunch with the ED to assist with an ask, inviting folks you know to attend a house party or our annual gala. Tell us about your past fundraising experience and/or comfort level with this part of the role.
- ☐ We will have committee meetings between board meetings and each board member is expected to serve on a committee. Can you tell us a bit about how you manage your calendar and the degree to which you have autonomy over your schedule?

QUESTIONS FROM THE CANDIDATE

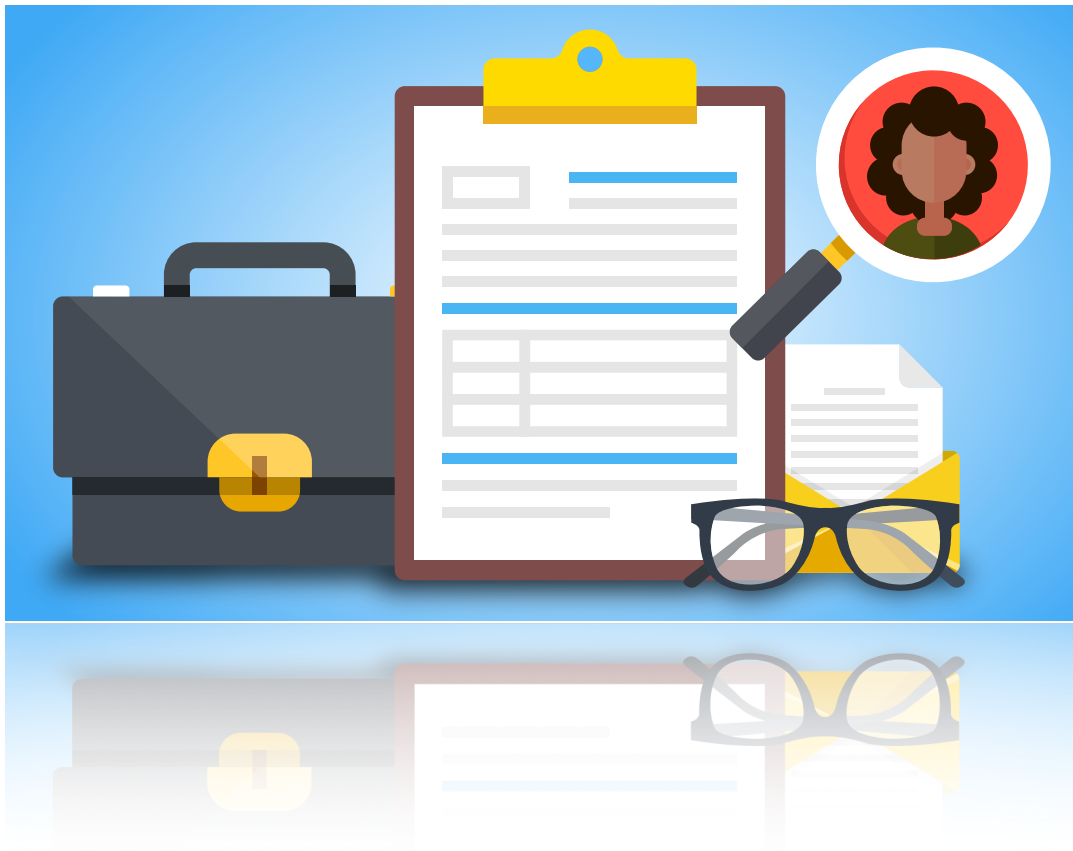
You should ask your candidate something like, “What can we tell you about the board, the staff or the organization that will help you to make a decision about becoming one of our lead ambassadors?”

You are looking for smart questions from the candidate like:

- ☐ Can you offer me a snapshot about finances? Cash flow? Reserves? Line of credit?
- ☐ Staff leadership questions - ED's tenure, when last reviewed
- ☐ Board Leadership – tell me about the current chair of the board, what are board meetings like?
- ☐ Can you tell me a little about board orientation? I want to hit the ground running and so I'm interested in understanding how the organization gets new board members up to speed
- ☐ What is it about my candidacy that you believe would value to the work of the organization? Why me?
- ☐ Tell me a bit about strategic planning. Do you have a plan? Where are you in the life of that plan? How does that plan guide and inform the work? Are there board goals in the plan?



Sample Board Member Application



BOARD MEMBER APPLICATION / QUESTIONNAIRE TEMPLATE

On behalf of everyone here at _____, thank you so much for your interest in board service. We know that those with an interest in being a leadership volunteer have many choices. In our community, there are an array of remarkable organizations engaged in the important work of making our world a better place. We are humbled knowing that you are interested in us.

The following application offers us an opportunity to know more about you, your skills, attributes and what you would bring to our board. It also gives you a sense of what matters to us in any board candidate.

The goal of our process is to determine if we are a good fit for each other – your level of commitment and ability to deliver on our expectations so that we are confident that you can help us to increase the scope and impact of our work. On the other side, we want to know what motivates you and how you think about our organization so that we can help to create an excellent board experience for you.

Thank you again for your interest in our work and for taking the time to complete this application with thought and care. We look forward to reviewing it with that same level of thought and care and to continuing our conversations.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

- Name
- Address
- Home Number
- Work Number
- Mobile Number
- Email Address
- Employer
- Employer Address
- Type of Business / Organization
- Preferred Method of Contact: () Work () Mobile () Home

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Past and Present Membership:

Boards, committees, task forces in the public sector (business, civic, community, religious, political, professional, recreational or social)

Organization	Role/Title	Date of Service

Other Volunteer Experience:

--

WHY?

Those committed to volunteering in a leadership capacity have an abundance of organizations to choose from. We are most appreciative of your interest in ours and would like to hear more. Why our organization and not any other? Please share your motivation and what it is about our work that has led you to raise your hand to be a leading ambassador for us.

OUR WORK

What excites you about the work of your organization?

What do you see as 1-2 challenges and 1-2 opportunities for us in the next few years?

SKILLS / EXPERTISE

Please mark the skills and expertise you will bring to us that will strengthen our board and enhance the ability of our organization to deliver on its mission.

	Public Relations		Reading / Understanding budgets and balance sheets		Public Policy / Advocacy
	Legal Expertise		Public Speaking / Presentations		Accounting
	Event Planning		HR / Administration		Strategic Planning
	Social Media		Marketing		Web Design
	Fundraising		Grant Writing		Information Technology
	Professional Nonprofit Experience		Facilities		Real Estate
	Financial investment Management				

[NOTE: ADD ANY OTHER SKILLS OR EXPERTISE THAT WOULD BE IMPORTANT FOR YOUR PARTICULAR ORGANIZATION.]

ATTRIBUTES

A board is more than a collection of individuals. It is an entity that governs, approves strategy and engages in robust discussion and debate on relevant issues. It must act as a single entity. As such, the personality traits you bring to the board will help us to ensure that we have a diversity of personality styles and traits that, when added to our current board members, will enhance the ability of the board members to work together as a governing body.

- ☐ Collaborative
- ☐ Respectful of varying points of view
- ☐ Willing and able to lead a discussion
- ☐ Facilitative style
- ☐ Enthusiastic
- ☐ Comfortable speaking in front of groups
- ☐ Manages time well
- ☐ Optimistic
- ☐ Responsive
- ☐ Strong work ethic
- ☐ Good sense of humor
- ☐ Asks tough questions with respect

NOTE: ADD TO THIS LIST OTHER ATTRIBUTES YOU BELIEVE ARE KEY TO YOUR BOARD'S SUCCESS

FUNDRAISING

Among other responsibilities, board members play a key role in raising funds for our organization. It is an expectation of board service that you will introduce people in your sphere of influence to our work and invite them know and do more – as prospective volunteers, board members, staff and as donors. Our organization commits to providing you with the information and tools necessary for you to stand as a vocal and visible ambassador for our work.

Further, we expect every board member to make an annual financial commitment for each year of board service **<language can range from “at a level you are comfortable with.” OR “that represents one of the most significant donations you make each year.” OR. “Our minimum board gift is _____.”>**

Can you speak to your level of comfort with this expectation?.

TIME

Board service is a true commitment of time and energy. We estimate that board service could be a commitment of ____ to ____ hours each month. In addition, we ask for _____ **(note – attendance at special events, etc. – whatever is unique to your org)**

Do you have any concerns or potential conflicts that may serve as impediments to this time commitment? If so, how will you manage the demands on your time?

OTHER

Who recommended you for board service?

Have you ever been convicted, plead guilty or plead no contest to a crime? (If yes, please explain)?

Please identify at least two references we can speak with.

Name	Relationship	Best Contact (Phone or Email)

RESUME

Please attach your most recent resume and / or professional bio.

BOARD MEMBER SELF- ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Resource: Board Member Self-Assessment Template



OVERVIEW

It's time to stop operating from a place of scarcity when it comes to your nonprofit board. The number one reason that boards do not engage in any kind of assessment of board members is that they are volunteers and can only do what they can do. And heaven forbid the assessment causes them to bolt. Then we have to fill **another** seat?????

With this mindset you will never have a high-functioning board. Can you imagine having a job for two years or three years or five years and **never** having a sit down with your boss about how you are doing?

Welcome to board service.

The nonprofit sector needs a new approach. Consider my model of a thriving nonprofit as a twin-engine jet. The strong nonprofit has two high functioning engines, and each engine gets regular maintenance.

Evaluation of board members is “engine maintenance”.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN ANY ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Commit to including either a board member job description or a list of the ten roles of the nonprofit board in every single new board orientation packet. It **must** be reviewed during an orientation. Can you imagine being evaluated at work for a job that had no written goals or responsibilities? Right.

So in addition to the template I have created, you will also find two other documents you can use for these purposes (if you don't already have them). From Bridgespan, an international nonprofit consulting firm, a job description and from BoardSource, a list of the ten core responsibilities of a nonprofit board.

APPROACH

People who join boards are typically Type-A personalities accustomed to getting 95s on their book reports. They want to know how to get an "A" in board service, and they expect to be graded. They are accustomed to good grades.

Now board members do indeed have day jobs and so the approach you want to take is different. It's a bit like grading on a curve, but better yet, think about it as a conversation about how the experience is going so that the board member can reveal her own thoughts and reflections. The conversation should result in either a **recommitment**, a **refocus**, or in some cases, an **opt-out**.

PROCESS

In an ideal world, your nominating and governance committee would be responsible for board member evaluation. Ideally, it would be an annual process. Ideally, the evaluation would include the voices of fellow board members.

But I prefer a real process over an ideal one. Why? 1) The more complicated the process is, the less likely it will happen at all (Let's remember, most executive directors are not formally evaluated.), and 2) this is a volunteer gig, and it should, in my mind, feel less formal.

So I suggest the following:

- Governance committee runs the process and ensures it gets done.
- A month before the anniversary date, each board member gets the attached template along with a copy of either the job description or the ten roles or whatever document was given out at orientation.

- Simultaneously the board chair and the E.D. get the same eval form.
 - E.D. provides input to the Chair about board member X that is either attached to the eval form or board chair makes notes to include.
 - Board chair should also seek input from the executive committee or the governance committee of the board before the evaluation conversation. Nothing lengthy but input from a few other board members seems right and fair.

As you'll see, the template is not formal. It is intended to be a catalyst for discussion. Essentially, it offers the board member an opportunity to reflect about the contributions she has made, what she wants out of board service, and what is needed to ensure that the conversation with the board chair is a productive one that generates a set of goals or next steps.

- The evaluation should ideally occur in person over a meal.
- Ideally, the board chair will have these conversations, but it may be burdensome for her (depending on the number of board members). The responsibility could be spread out amongst executive committee members or the board chair and the Nominations Committee chair. You just want to be sure that there is a process that is thoughtful, fair, somewhat formal, and very clearly communicated.
- The board chair should provide the governance committee with some kind of written document summarizing the conversation. This becomes part of that board member's file, and the board member should get a copy as well.

Executive Director

Annual Evaluation Template



Questions About the Process

Who drives the process?

Hopefully your board has an Executive Committee that meets with greater frequency than your board as a whole. The review process should be driven either by this full committee or a subset of the committee.

You want a small group of folks who have the most regular contact with the E.D. In addition to the board chair (a must), you will likely want the Treasurer and the chair of the development committee and one other engaged board member. At the least.

When?

It is best practice to have a discussion about performance within two weeks of the anniversary date of the Executive Director.

Who has a voice?

It is critical to seek input from senior staff (if you are lucky enough to have any) and a few folks who experience the leadership of your Executive Director externally. This could be a handful of volunteers, a group of donors, perhaps an organization or a colleague in the sector.

How long should this take?

Do it right and it should be done in less than a month. The hope is that this template can be easily adapted for your purposes and converted into a free survey app (Survey Monkey is my favorite). There is a monthly fee for the upgrade that helps analyze the data. The best approach is to either spring for the monthly \$15 and then cancel or get the free trial of the “standard” version and generate responses and reports before the 30-day mark.

Does this process lead to a compensation discussion?

Some people try to separate them but it feels so engrained in work culture that performance and compensation are tied together.

What about goals?

This may be the most important part of any evaluation process. Based on the evaluation, the E.D. should be sent off to develop draft goals for the coming year. A second meeting between the board chair and the E.D. should happen within two weeks and a list of goals should be set and attached to the final evaluation. These goals will then be the centerpiece of the evaluation 12 months hence.

Goals are absolutely essential to the review process. It would be my hope that upon hiring, the Executive Committee would set out at least basic goals for year 1 to serve as a basis for the evaluation process at the one year mark.

The Template That Follows

Yes, it is very detailed and you should feel free to edit it down, but do so as a team – board chair and E.D. It is easier to edit something down than to try to consider what might be missing.

Executing the Process

1. An email should be sent to all participants that their voices are valued as part of the annual E.D. evaluation process. Stakeholders will be impressed with the structure and comprehensive nature of the process. Indicate that all answers are confidential and will be collated by a third party.
2. You will need to identify a trusted external person to run the survey report and prepare the synthesis. Perhaps a board member knows an HR person who can volunteer a few hours? If you choose to engage more than the board, the person collating / aggregating needs to be sure that each cohort's responses are looked at separately.
3. The Executive Director should fill out exactly the same form the board members do.
4. Once the info has been collated, the Evaluation Subcommittee should review the results.
5. The most important assessment? The distinction between the E.D. self-evaluation and the aggregated board responses. Significant variances should be highlighted discussed and noted.
6. A member of the evaluation committee should be charged with writing up the overall evaluation for the committee's assessment. The overview assessment should be written clearly and honestly and also with a big heaping dose of diplomacy.
7. This summary document should be a part of an in-person evaluation and the committee should walk the E.D. through the key points in that document. It is important that the E.D. have a document to review.
8. At the end of this conversation, the E.D. should be instructed to develop a series of goals for the next 12 months. This draft should be the basis for a follow up conversation with the evaluation committee and these final goals should be attached to the evaluation so that next year's committee has what it needs for its process.

E.D. 360 EVALUATION OVERVIEW

On behalf of _____ organization, thank you for taking time to thoughtfully respond to this Executive Director evaluation.

You have been selected to participate because of your connection to our work, either as a board member, staff member, grantee, funder or professional colleague.

The richness of this process rests in your capable hands. We ask that each of you not only score _____, our Executive Director, but that you take time to add narrative comments as well. It will be the narrative comments (excerpted during the presentation of the review without attribution) that will offer the kind of dimension to the process that will be of most value to _____ and to the board as it fulfills one of its most important responsibilities – the evaluation of our staff leader.

Scale of 1 to 5 is used to rate each element. 5 = greatly exceeds expectations. 3 = meets expectations and 1 = does not meet expectations in this area at all.

Our evaluation will include the voices of the full board, senior staff, and a number of external voices – funders and professional colleagues.

- Board
- Staff
- Grantees
- Funders
- Professional Colleagues

E.D. 360 EVALUATION: BOARD EVALUATION AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SELF-EVALUATION TEMPLATE

Scale of 1 to 5 is used to rate each element.

5 = greatly exceeds expectations.

3 = meets expectations and 1 = does not meet expectations in this area at all.

VISION / MISSION / STRATEGY

The Chief Executive is charged with working with the board to set vision and strategy for the organization.

The E.D. has engaged in a process to understand the history of the organization in terms of its vision and strategy.	
The E.D. demonstrates a clear understanding of the strategic role the organization plays in its sector.	
The E.D. engages with the board in discussions regarding the organization's future strategy.	
The E.D. has a sense of what must change and what must remain the same in order to accomplish the organization's mission and realize its vision.	
The E.D. has made substantive progress towards building a strong vision for the future.	
STRENGTHS?	
How can the E.D. be stronger in this area?	

STAFF MANAGEMENT/OPERATIONS

As board members, you have limited interaction with many staff and solid interaction with key staff leaders (Development, Finance, for example). Please answer these questions to the best of your ability.

The E.D. selects and cultivates qualified, diverse staff.	
The E.D. has developed a system for setting goals and objectives with senior staff and monitoring the accomplishment of these goals through a clear annual performance review process.	
The E.D. establishes and leads an effective management team.	
The E.D. spends an appropriate amount of time in the area of management and administration.	
The E.D. runs an organization that is compliant with all relevant workplace and employment laws.	
The E.D. leads the staff in maintaining a climate of excellence, accountability and respect.	
STRENGTHS?	
How can the Executive Director be stronger in this area?	

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

1 – 5 plus N/A

The E.D. demonstrates substantive knowledge regarding the organization's work.	
The E.D. works with the board to develop appropriate policies to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of programs.	
The E.D. ensures that the staff manages all programs effectively	
The E.D., through effective oversight and staffing, sets high standards of quality for the organization's programs.	

The E.D. is strategic and thoughtful regarding the addition of or changes to the program palette for the organization and engages the board in discussion in this arena.	
STRENGTHS?	
How can the E.D. be stronger in this area?	

FUNDRAISING AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Here the board is evaluating both the staff's ability to drive resources to the organization as well as to provide support to the board in the fulfillment of its own fundraising responsibilities.

The E.D. has a clear understanding of the current and future financial resources needed to realize the organization's mission.	
Working in concert with the board and development staff, the E.D. implements a fundraising program that meets the goals established for the organization.	
The E.D. provides the necessary support and tools for the board to meet its fundraising obligation.	
The E.D. is an effective fundraiser – has asked for contributions and secured gifts.	
The E.D. demonstrates the skills and attributes to cultivate donors and has an effective communications strategy for stewardship.	
STRENGTHS?	
How can the E.D. be stronger in this area?	

FISCAL MANAGEMENT/STEWARDSHIP

1 – 5 plus N/A

Here the board is evaluating both the staff's ability to manage the finances to the organization as well as the staff's partnership with the board in the fulfillment of its own responsibilities around fiscal management.

The E.D. is knowledgeable regarding financial planning, budgeting, management of the organization's investments and endowment, and understands the place of each in the organization's overall financial picture.	
The E.D. links the organization's budget process with strategic and operational goals.	
The V.P. Finance and the Board Treasurer, under the leadership of the E.D. have an effective partnership.	
The E.D. presents financial reports to the board on a regular basis and submits an annual budget for board review, revision and final approval.	
The E.D. ensures that a clear and accurate accounting system is maintained, allowing the board to monitor the organization's finances and operations in relationship to the approved budget, enabling the board and staff to make informed financial decisions	
STRENGTHS?	
How can the E.D. be stronger in this area?	

THE E.D. / BOARD RELATIONSHIP

1 – 5 plus N/A

Nonprofit organizations thrive in a shared leadership model, when board and staff work together in a partnership. Here you are evaluating the E.D.'s relationship with the board and how well the board and E.D. work together to lead the organization.

The E.D. is clear about her role in the organization relative the board.	
The E.D. provides the board with ongoing communication, enabling them to be effective champions of organization.	
The E.D. is actively engaged in identifying board prospects.	
The E.D. provides the board and its committees with the appropriate level of support in order to carry out their responsibilities.	
The E.D. informs the board of both strategic opportunities and challenges that allow for robust board discussion.	
The E.D. prepares for and works with the board chair to design and execute productive and effective board meetings.	
The E.D. has established collegial relationships with the board.	
The E.D. is engaged with board members both individually and as a group.	
STRENGTHS	
How can the E.D. be stronger in this area?	

EXTERNAL VISIBILITY / COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

1 – 5 plus N/A

The E.D. is the public face of the organization. A key responsibility is to be an effective ambassador, to lead in an array of visibility opportunities within the movements and to be held in high regard by professional colleagues.

The E.D. is a strong public ambassador for the organization.	
The E.D. is a strong public speaker who can motivate and inspire audiences.	
The E.D. is a strong thought leader on critical issues of equality and philanthropy.	

The E.D. has secured positive exposure in the media for the organization and critical issues of equality for women.	
The E.D. is well regarded by her professional peers in the social justice movements and is seen as collegial and as a team player.	
STRENGTHS?	
How can the E.D. be stronger in this area?	

OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

1 – 5 plus N/A

What are the three major strengths of the E.D.?	
Where do you see room for improvement in the performance of the E.D.?	
What have been the E.D.'s most significant accomplishments this past year?	
In the last year, what challenges has the organization faced and how has the E.D. handled them?	
The success of a nonprofit E.D. is linked to the effectiveness of the organization's board. How would you characterize the role the board has played in supporting the E.D. this past year and are there areas in which the board can play a stronger role in partnering with the E.D. to ensure her success? If so, please elaborate.	

E.D. EVALUATION STAFF MEMBER INPUT

Scale of 1 to 5 is used to rate each element.

5 = greatly exceeds expectations.

3 = meets expectations and 1 = does not meet expectations in this area at all.

On behalf of our organization, thank you for taking time to thoughtfully respond to this E.D. evaluation.

You have been selected to participate because you are a full time staff member of the organization. The richness of this process rests in your capable hands.

We ask that each of you not only score _____ using the 1-5 scale but that you will take time to offer narrative comments (excerpted during the presentation of the review without attribution) that will offer the kind of dimension to the process that will be of most value to _____ and to _____ organization's board as it fulfills one of its most important responsibilities – the evaluation of the E.D.

You can be sure that your responses will be held in the strictest of confidence.

STAFF EVALUATION FORM

The E.D. selects and cultivates qualified and staff members.	
As a staff member, I respect the E.D.'s skills as a leader.	
The E.D. is an effective and supportive manager.	
The E.D. leads the staff in maintaining a climate of excellence, accountability, and respect.	
The E.D. is available to staff to provide support, strategic counsel, and to do her part to ensure the success of each staff member.	
The E.D. communicates with the staff regularly to ensure that all staff members are up to speed on organization successes and challenges.	
As a staff member, I feel my voice is valued by the E.D.	

STRENGTHS	
-----------	--

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EVALUATION FUNDERS / DONOR INPUT

Scale of 1 to 5 is used to rate each element.

5 = greatly exceeds expectations.

3 = meets expectations and 1 = does not meet expectations in this area at all.

On behalf of _____, thank you for taking time to thoughtfully respond to our executive director evaluation

You have been selected because of your relationship as a funder of the organization.

The richness of this process rests in your capable hands.

We ask that each of you not only score using a 1 - 5 scale (with 5 “well exceeds expectations and 1 “has not met expectations”) but that you take time to add narrative comments as well. It will be the narrative comments (excerpted during the presentation of the review without attribution) that will offer the kind of dimension to the process that will be of most value to the board of our organization as it fulfills one of its most important responsibilities – the evaluation of the staff leader.

FUNDER EVALUATION FORM

What is your perception of the leadership of the organization over this last year? Elaborate if you can. Please let us know if you have had direct interaction with the Executive Director.	
How would you characterize the quality and quantity of communication you have received from the organization during these past 12 months? Are you satisfied with you knowledge and understanding of the work based on this communication?	
Can you speak to your perceptions of the work of the organization this past year? Can you articulate particular successes or accomplishments you feel are in keeping with the mission of the Organization?	
How effective is the organization in the reporting of results against any donations you have made to the organization this year?	

What else should we know about your observations and perceptions about our Executive Director?	
What else should we know about your observations and perceptions of the organization's strategy and vision?	

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EVALUATION PROFESSIONAL COLLEAGUE INPUT

Scale of 1 to 5 is used to rate each element.

5 = greatly exceeds expectations.

3 = meets expectations and 1 = does not meet expectations in this area at all.

On behalf of the organization, thank you for taking time to thoughtfully respond to this E.D. evaluation.

You have been selected because of your relationship as a professional colleague of the E.D. of the _____ organization.

The richness of this process rests in your capable hands.

We ask that each of you not only score using a 1 -5 scale (with 5 “well exceeds expectations and 1 “has not met expectations”) but that you take time to add narrative comments as well. It will be the narrative comments (excerpted during the presentation of the review without attribution) that will offer the kind of dimension to the process that will be of most value to the board of the organization as it fulfills one of its most important responsibilities – the evaluation of the E.D.

PROFESSIONAL COLLEAGUE EVALUATION FORM

What is your perception of the leadership of the organization over this last year? Elaborate if you can. Please let us know if you have had direct interaction with the E.D.	
As a professional colleague, what is your perception of the organization in the efforts of our sector to have a substantive impact? Is the organization collegial? Does it take a leadership role? What does it look like today and what changes might you like to see?	
What efforts (if any) has the E.D. of the organization made to build relationships and establish trust with colleague organizations?	
Is the organization seen as a team player in our sector?	
What else should we know about your observations and perceptions about our E.D.?	
What else should we know about your observations and perceptions of the organization’s strategy and vision?	

Notes:



→ The Changing of the Guard: —————



————— Managing The Transition of a Founder ← "Long/Strong" E.D.

Masterclass: Changing of the Guard: Managing Staff Leadership Transitions

Chapter 1: Intro: What You Will Learn

I am Joan Garry and welcome to the Nonprofit Leadership Lab course that we are calling The Changing of the Guard, Managing Staff Leadership Transitions. I really wanted to do create this master class because in my humble opinion, there is no point of greater vulnerability in the lifespan of a nonprofit than a staff leadership transition, full Stop.

The boat never rocks as much as it rocks when someone leaves and someone new arrives. The focus of this class is going to be on two cohorts that have very, very similar characteristics. Founders of an organization, the folks who tenaciously and remarkably saw a gap, filled it, started an organization and stayed a while. Long and strong, this is what the nonprofit sector refers to as folks who kind of grew up in the organization. They have been the executive director or the CEO for a long period of time and there's a pretty good bet that they are nearing retirement.

So why do I think this is such a point of vulnerability? Well, I see five reasons. Number one, in these cases, the identity of the organization has become very intertwined with the disposition and personality of the founder or the long and strong. Sometimes the organization is even referred to as Bob's Nonprofit. They're very intertwined in a way that sometimes it's actually a really good thing but in this situation presents a lot of challenges. Number two, the board has fear. Okay, what are they afraid of? Probably a pretty long list, right? Let's say they had a rock star in the job for 25 years, they're afraid they're not going to be able to replace that person.

Maybe that person really had it going on and the board was able to sit back a little bit more and now maybe they're going to be new or different expectations. These things create anxiety. They also know that a search for a new executive director is no small feat. It's not something you can kind of do out of your back pocket so it's just a lot of anxiety. Number three, your board in this situation has essentially been trained to follow, not partner. Your board has been trained to follow and not partner. And I'm not suggesting that this has happened because there's some manipulative

thing going on with the person who's leaving your organization. I'm suggesting that a powerful executive director can often put your organization a little out of balance.

They can be the person who kind of takes care of everything and can lead to a board that is not fully engaged. Number four, there are an emotional dynamics galore. And as a result there are landmines galore. You have an exiting executive director, and all of the things that come with the identity, their own identity as it relates to the organization. You've got your board anxiety and then you've got your new ED who has big shoes to fill.

All of these are at play, so we got emotional dynamics. So we've got the identity of the organization, we've got board anxiety, we've got the notion that the board has been sort of trained to follow and not partner. And number four is this sort of the notion that there are a lot of emotional dynamics at play. And number five, number five is a factual reality. We are either in or on the cusp of an epidemic of boomers retiring from nonprofit leadership jobs. You do not have to take my word for this. I want to point you towards a report that was done in 2018 by the Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management. Bayer is like the aspirin, B-A-Y-E-R. You can look it up and read it in its entirety. And after you read it, you may actually need a Bayer aspirin.

I just want to read one paragraph to sort of frame why getting this right is so important because it's going to be happening and happening and happening. So here's the quote. In the 1970s a huge new group of workers entered the workforce. These idealistic world changers often had nonprofit intentions. So over the next four decades, the number of nonprofit organizations grew. Catch this, number of nonprofits grew from 250,000 to 1.5 million.

So this enormous generation of 75 million people came of age at a time when social justice issues had come to the fore and as a result, hundreds of thousands of nonprofits were born to address the myriad concerns. Okay, so there are a lot more nonprofits and boomers are running them. What's the rub there, Joan? Here it is. These leaders at the rate of 10,000 a day are turning 65. Every day 10,000 nonprofit leaders are turning 65. That is for the nonprofit sector, just such an incredible wake-up call that we have got to get transitions right because they are coming at us at a pace we just can't even imagine.

So all of these things are super important to why this master class is important. Here's what I'm hoping. I'm hoping that you're not waiting until you're in a transition to watch this video. I'm actually hoping that you're watching it before as part of a succession planning endeavor. That would be dreamy to me. And I'm hoping that the people who are watching this, because I have crafted it to talk both to founders, to the board chairs, the founders, the long and strongs, the board chairs and the incoming executive directors. That's how I have built this class because I know that it needs to speak to all three legs of the stool. So what will you expect to learn in this class?

First, I'm hoping that what you'll do is gain a really deep understanding of this profound vulnerability and the pressure a leadership transition creates. I don't think people know the half of it. Number two, those of you who have ever heard me or read anything that I've written, know that I think of a thriving nonprofit like a twin engine jet. In these situations, you're going to learn that you go into this transition and you are not doing all that well in the cockpit.

Now the board and staff are typically not working in partnership causing the jet to be out of whack and when the jet is out of whack, when the board and the staff engines are not at level, when there's no pilots, co-pilots and partners in the cockpit, things get dicey. You can't thrive and it absolutely impacts your ability to build and sustain a really good transition.

Number three, I mentioned it earlier, we're going to deep dive into the psychology at play for each cohort. I will offer you advice for sure, but I'm also going to take you inside the ... We'll sort of do a little health head-space journey about each of these particular cohorts, the exiting, the board, and the incoming.

Number four, I'm going to point out big fat landmines. I think people don't always see them and I'm going to talk about how to avoid them. Number five, I want to talk about how to work with the exiting executive director. Oh my goodness. The myriad of mistakes that boards make in working with an exiting executive director and how to avoid them.

Number six is I'm going to offer you practical guidance for an incoming executive director. And then I'm going to lastly offer you some words of advice for boards as they welcome new executive directors. And at the end, we'll sort of put it all

together. So there's a lot to cover in this master class. So sit back. We're going to have some downloads under the lessons themselves. And that will enable you to take some notes, maybe some talking points, but sit back and let's begin our journey of a staff leadership transition. And we're going to begin by looking at the profile of an exiting executive director.

Chapter 2: The Profile of An Exiting Staff Leader

Okay, so let's dig in. We're doing a master class here called Changing of the Guard, Managing Staff Transitions in a Nonprofit Organization, and I wanted to begin by giving everyone a sense of the traits and characteristics of a founder, or what the sector calls a long and strong, someone who's been in their saddle for a long time, probably nearing retirement, who these folks are.

Now, the first caveat here is these could be seen as gross generalizations, but I am here to say that while not all founders and long and strong fit the profile I'm about to describe, I can almost guarantee you that every one of them has some of these traits, and it's really important to go through them because I don't know that boards during the transition process are really thinking about the mindset of the exiting executive director. So I want to think about ... I'll give you two stories.

We've got one person who is a founder, 25 years. Has identified a enormous gap in public defense. Charismatic, and just a remarkable person, and has decided it is time to move on.

The second one is somebody who started inside the organization, maybe the head program person. This organization ... Now, it doesn't actually matter what the organization does, but the profile of this long and strong is that this long and strong is, let's say, an attorney, and was doing program work on class action suits or something like that. Okay? So they started in the program area, and grew and grew in their profile, and became the executive director. Pretty young age, not a lot of the skills and expertise that you'd get from a nonprofit management course. This is a person that is learning OJT, on the job. This person has been there for, say, 25 years, and fits the profile I described in the Bayer Aspirin headache-inducing report. Turning 65, finally has decided, "You know, I should probably just ... It's time to retire."

So those are the kind of people we're talking about. What do we know about these folks? Here's the first thing we know. They're remarkable. A founder is someone who has seen, not just seen ... They have x-ray vision, let's be honest. They have some kind of special vision that enables them to see gaps, to see a problem in society, a unique gap or unique idea of how to approach it, and not just ... That's not enough for a founder, because the founder also has to execute design, start, and execute the vision of that gap by building an organization. Think about that for a minute.

The same is true for a long and strong. They have a lot of founder-like characteristics. Perhaps they've grown up in the organization, or perhaps they've just been there a super long time. There isn't anything about this organization they don't know. They're a thought leader in the sector. People look to them as leaders, and they are, in fact, remarkable. No question about it.

Here's another thing that we know about these folks. They're tenacious. If they weren't, they would never have started an organization, or they probably would've gotten chewed up, spit out, or fed up sometime during the course of their long tenure. They're tenacious. They see and are in love with the mission of the organization, and will do what it takes.

Generally, these folks have big personalities, charismatic. Now, not always. Not always, but this person, when they open their mouths, they can hold a room. They can totally hold a room, either because they're big charismatic personalities, or because they have ... there's such a deep investment in the mission and the sector that they speak with a level of authority that just blows people away.

Because of those things, they don't see things quite the way I do. They don't see this twin engine jet thing. Now, some of them do. Right? I made that disclaimer. Some of them do, but most of them are running the show. They are running the show, and that board chair who's in the cockpit doesn't have a partnership relationship with the remarkable, tenacious long and strong or founder. Now there is an implication of that, that I'm going to talk about shortly.

So what else do we know about founders and long and strong? Well, it's actually connected to the tenacious part. They don't let go easily. There's a reason that assets equal liabilities on balance sheets, is that the asset is they're tenacious, the

liability that goes with that is it's a little bit hard for them to let go. That makes perfect sense. Right?

You're going to find this one interesting, but I have found this profile of folks to be a bit change averse. Here they are, big old change agents, but inside their organization, they're not that receptive to new ideas all the time. They're accustomed to being the person who generates the great ideas. Again, not everyone. Look at the list. Some of them work, some of them don't, but I always find that to be a very interesting ... It's very interesting that big old change agents can sometimes be change averse. There may be a blog post in that. I don't know.

What else can we say about them? Some people will argue with me on this. As a result of being change averse, they can start to thwart new strategies. The board might suggest something, and that founder or long and strong might say, "You know, we tried that, and it really didn't work." And the board's sitting there thinking, "No, we didn't really try that." So that can be at play, and it is connected here to this notion of being change averse.

All right, what else? What else? What else? I'm hoping you can still see down here. Management not always a strength. You'll see that come into play when we get to the lesson talking about what the new executive director finds when they arrive. But essentially, this is much more true for founders, and having been someone who was part of the leadership team that launched MTV in the early 1980s, I can tell you that visionaries are amazing, remarkable, tenacious, all of these things. Oh, I don't know. They don't always hire well. Sometimes they do, but I think that there is ... the weakness in management is pretty strong with a founder. That's not what they do well. They come up with great ideas. They build relationships with key stakeholders who give them resources, right? That's what they're good at. But management, not a big forte, and in fact, to give them that role, to have them in that role somehow or another, I was thinking that it doesn't quite do them justice because it's like telling a horse to be a zebra. But so we have that at play too, that management is not always a strong suit.

Because they don't let go easily, they can overstay their welcome. Can you see that? Yeah. Overstay their welcome. There will always be some reason that maybe they should hang in there a little bit longer, until X. You know, we should probably wait until Y. Or for the long and strong, there's a practical reality. The practical reality of

retirement is real, and sticking around until it makes sense to retire is a legitimate and practical motivation, but the impact of the organization is it can result in someone sticking around just a little bit too long.

Now, the last thing that's really important, and I'm going to put it up here so you can see it, is the relationship with donors. Sometimes what we see is that because the identity of the long and strong or the identity of the founder is so intrinsically tied in to the organization, that you will have donors who will literally sit there, and I actually remember this happening to me, "I'm giving this a donation to your organization because I trust you." They almost are giving the money to me.

Now, a founder or a long and strong really should come back, and I'm not sure I always did this, come back and say, "If you trust me, then you should trust our strategy, you should trust my ability to build a strong team, you should trust my ability to work in partnership with my board, and recognize that it is all of those things that result in a thriving nonprofit that you will support with your donor dollars." Do I think that folks always use those lines? No. It's a pretty good line actually, but no, I don't think that they do.

And that, as a result of this, relationships are not institutionalized. I'm hoping you can see this. All right? I met Catherine. I cultivated Catherine. I stewarded Catherine over the last 10 or 15 years because I ... And it's a rolling stone that gathers moss. All of a sudden, someone is saying, "You know, we should really talk to Catherine. Oh, but Joan knows her well, better than anyone else. Let's have Joan do it." And then before you know it, the only relationship Catherine has is with Joan.

These are the things, the characteristics, the traits, the things that boards have to be thinking about when they think about an exiting executive director. They don't want to let go. They might be change averse. Maybe they overstayed their welcome, but in the meantime, they're remarkable, and they're king makers when it comes to donor dollars.

All right, so, that's just a profile of what a founder, a long and strong, some of the characteristics that you will see in them and in organizations that have been led by them. And it is very important context. I do believe, and the reason I've spent the time on this, is I do believe that boards often are not cognizant enough of the mindset of the exiting executive director when they roll into this transition. They

probably aren't because they're so anxious and stressed about the fact that this person is leaving that they're not actually thinking about the person and their mindset. They're thinking about the work ahead of them.

So next up, we're actually going to talk about what's happening in that ... what's the board look like? What's the board look like, that is part of an organization that is run by a founder or a long and strong. See you in the next video.

Chapter 3: The Profile of a Board With a Founder at the Helm

So welcome back. This is video three in our master class that we're calling Changing of the Guard, Managing Staff Leadership Transitions.

So we just kind of got into the mindset of the exiting executive director, either our founder or our long and strong. And I think I made it clear, I think that's really, really important especially for Board members to understand where that ED is coming from, what his or her characteristics are likely to be, and that will help them shape and guide their transition and their work with the exiting executive director.

So, and the bottom line I think is that for the most part, long and strong founders are tenacious, remarkably individuals, and they typically have a little bit of hard time letting go, that the organization and its mission and the people, it becomes, it's way more than a job and it always has been. But in this situation, it's especially a founder, it's like a baby, right? So you can just imagine the difficulty of letting go.

So now let's flip things a bit, and talk a little bit about what kind of Board does an organization with a founder or a long and strong tend to have. That's the other set of players, right? Now we're going to other engine in the twin engine jet. We already said that the staff engine is going full steam ahead with that tenacious charismatic, thought leader, long and strong founder at the helm.

And that person is not really digging the whole partnership thing. So now I want Board members to think about what does that say about where your Board may be at the time of this transition, at the time the person says, okay, I think it might be

time for me to step down. And often by the way that's what you hear as opposed as I've decided to step down. More on that.

So, here's what I think. I think that a Board at the time of transition, which is the time that the exiting executive director has said I think it's time for me to go, what does that Board look like? It's not a partner. For the most part, it's not a partner Board that the Board follows. What's the implication of that? Oh, there's a lot of implications, not the least of which is they can't follow anymore. They're going to have to lead.

The second implication of a long and strong or a founder at the helm is that strong folks on the Board don't typically stand for leadership positions. What do you mean, Joan? Here's what I mean.

If we buy the notion that a long and strong or a founder wants to kind of be in charge, then either they don't particularly want a strong Board chair. They actually are looking for the Board to follow them. If you've ever heard the expression "I wish my Board would just go leave me alone and go raise money," You might hear that out of the mouth of a long and strong. And that as a result, folks who really are ready to partner as leaders of the Board with the executive director, either they're not on the Board at all or they're just actually not going to take the job, or not be interested in the job.

Are we starting to get a sense of what this Board is like? And again, a caveat, not always true. In some ways what I am describing here are extremes to make a point about the enormous number of landmines that a transition presents. So if you have a Board that follows, you don't necessarily have a strong Board chair, the Board is also kind of kept at arm's length, at arm's length. This is not a Board that gets a lot of robust engagement, a lot of opportunity to share their voice or their perspective. For the most part, the executive director is driving. This is more like a bus. They're in the driver's seat on the bus, and the Board is actually on the bus with them.

Here's something else. There's an implication of this arm's length thing, which I will come back to. The next piece is an issue of loyalty, loyalty to whom or what, especially founders. This is much more true of founders. We talk about this a lot, that founders ask their friends to be on their Boards because they need a Board to get going. And so often there is a loyalty to the executive director rather than, that is

more of a loyalty to the executive director than to the mission of the organization. I'm not suggesting that everyone on this Board is, but you're going to have some group of people who are going to be enormous fans of that founder or long and strong, and quite loyal to them. This also, so loyalty is an emotional thing. So I told you we were going to unpack kind of the psychodynamics of what's going on during a transition.

Here's another thing you might find. This Board might actually be quite frustrated. Why would they be frustrated? They could be frustrated because they actually have something to say and they're not given much opportunity. They may not feel like they know enough about what's going on to fulfill their responsibility as Board members because they've been kept at arm's length. And in the case of long and strong who are leaving at retirement age, they're frustrated because they see that their long and strong may just be losing her fastball. And as a result, they're frustrated and they're hungry for change. And they've waited for it, because the ED has been at the helm for a long time, and what are they going to do? Ask the executive director to move on three years before their retirement age? No, they're not likely to do that. They're just not likely to do that.

So meanwhile, they feel all of these things, which leaves them to feel this. But what's the biggest thing that a Board feels as a transition gets underway in a non-profit organization when this long and strong founder who has both strengths and challenges, who's actually perhaps kept the Board at arm's length, the Board is a little frustrated about that. I saved the best for last. It's just all about fear on this Board. All of these things, what are they afraid of, okay?

So this is a Board that follows. We may not have the strongest person in the cockpit. The Board may be at arm's length, and may not feel like they know enough about what's going on. You might have a couple of people on the Board that are seriously loyal to that executive director, which may sort of color the transition for them. This Board might be frustrated, hungry for change, frustrated about not having a voice. But as this transition begins, all of these things create an enormous amount of fear in transition Boards.

Well think about it. Are we strong enough to sustain a transition? Are we strong enough to go and search for someone who might be irreplaceable? Are we strong enough to be able to recruit somebody because maybe we don't know everything

we should know? We might be frustrated that there haven't been changes, but maybe we just don't know enough about the foundation on which the organization rests.

So I'm afraid the ED's irreplaceable. This cohort totally, totally true. I'm afraid that the executive director has all of the relationships. We talked about that in the last video, that these founders and long and strong become very tight with individual donors, with program officers, and we don't really think about institutionalizing those relationships.

Here's another thing Boards are afraid of. This loyalty that happens, can happen on the Board, can also happen on the staff, can't it? And what that means, let me move out of the way so you can see this, what that means is that the Board may find themselves quite anxious that their rock star staff members are in kind of a rocky position too. Are we going to be able to hold onto them? Is this an opportunity for them to move on too? Oh my gosh, what do we do now?

So what does all this, what does all this mean? What it means is that as you go into this transition, your Board may in fact not be as strong as it needs to be to manage a challenging transition. It may mean that you're not all on the same page, that if you have a couple of folks who are serious loyalists to that executive director, how the executive director is contended with during the transition could be shaped by those voices.

And, this is your biggest problem. You cannot during a transition operate out of fear. You can't operate out of weakness or fear. You have to operate from a place of strength. And that, my friends, is why I am hoping against hope that you are watching this now as part of a succession planning initiative, because you need to understand where the weaknesses and vulnerabilities are in your organization so you can shore them up now before that founder or long and strong decides it's time to move on.

So, in our next video, the rubber kind of hits the road. We now know about the mindset of the ED. We know about what kind of shape your Board may be in as a result of having a long and strong or founding executive director. In the next video what I want to do is I want to really begin to tackle how to manage the executive director who is leaving. There's probably no more important lesson in this master

class because it is right here, because of this, the potential weakness of your Board, the potential fear of your Board, and the potential that you have Board members who are loyalists, that you will make decisions about the exiting executive director that are not in the best interests of your organization, and definitely not in the best interests of your new incoming executive director. So we're going to tackle that next. See you in the next video.

Chapter 4: How to Manage The Exiting Staff Leader Part 1

Hey, it's Joan Garry, back with video number four in our master class here in the Nonprofit Leadership Lab that we're calling Changing of the Guard, Managing Staff Leadership Transitions, the point at which I believe that most organizations are at their most vulnerable.

We've been teasing out the mindsets of the executive director, talking about what kinds of things you'll see, that you tend to see in boards that have been run by founders, and long and strong's. What you can see, I think, I hope, is that the jet's out of whack, that we don't have a thriving nonprofit, because what we have is we don't have a twin engine jet that's in alignment.

Here we have the executive director saying, "It's time for me to retire. I think I'm gonna move on." Maybe the founder is moving on to start something new. Oftentimes the founder's also, this was their big or their last play, and they too are thinking about retirement.

This is the pivotal point of a transition right here. It's not, actually it isn't, believe it or not, it isn't the search itself, it's what choices the board makes about its relationship with the executive director who is leaving. If there is one thing you take away from this video class, and I hope you take many things away, as a board leader or a board member who is either currently dealing with a transition or knows that they will be, the most important thing you can remember is the moment the executive director says it's time, the power has shifted in the organization to you.

I am reminded of my friend Kenny Cohen, who is the board president of our local synagogue. I remember our High Holy Days service. Our rabbi was retiring. He'd

been in the saddle ... Rabbis don't sit in saddles. I don't know. Anyway, our rabbi had been at our synagogue for 35 years and was stepping down. There was this moment during the High Holy Days when Kenny stood up to give some series of remarks about, it might've been the High Holy Days appeal, and you could just feel the power in that congregation, you could see the power shift from the rabbi to the board president. It was remarkable.

I need to tell you that Kenny built a really strong board, and he did hire a rockstar rabbi. Things are going really, really well. The exiting rabbi has been honored. He comes to the synagogue for other events. The new rabbi is making his mark. That's how it ought to be, but the most important thing I can tell you is that the power shifts to the board the moment the ED says, "Okay, it's time for me to move on."

Now, if you remember from the last video, at that moment, that board is like ... Now, in some cases it's like, I don't know what you're so surprised about. This ED is now 64 and a half. They've been in the organization for 25 years. What's the big surprise here? We don't think about things we don't want to think about, right?

Here's the important piece of advice. This board, your board now has to own it and lead it. Remember how I talked about the fact that sometimes board shares in these scenarios are weak? You can't afford weak leadership during a transition. The first piece of advice I'm going to give you is that you need to pull together the strongest people on your board.

You're going to say, "Oh, she's going to talk about the search committee." No, I'm actually not. I'm talking about a group of people that are charged with the transition, the orderly transition of power. Here's why. Remember that tenacious executive director, doesn't like to let go. Remember that fear that boards feel that someone's irreplaceable, that they have all the relationships? They don't want to let go either. Boards don't want to let go either. What they do with that executive director who is leaving makes all the difference between a fabulous transition and a crash and burn one.

I'm not kidding. It really is. It comes right down to this. I have seen it way too many times, so I'm digging into this lesson full bore. There are some dos and some don'ts. I'm going to give you some examples as we go.

Again, this requires that someone can go to this exiting executive director and have good, honest, candid, important conversation that is about what is in the best interest of the organization. Now, some exiting executive directors will be all over this. Some not so much.

Okay, so number one, here's one, set a date certain. If the executive director comes to the board chair and says, "I'm thinking about leaving," take a deep breath and say, "We knew this time was going to come. Let's sit down. Let's talk about the specifics here, because we need an orderly transition. That means we have to agree on a date."

Here's one. We call this follow the bouncing founder. I worked with an organization who brought me in to help with the transition, and she wouldn't leave. She was not only the CEO, she was also the board chair. Think about how much power she had in the organization. Oh my. There was always some reason to continue to stay. "I need the organization to be steadier." "As soon as the organization has hit 3 million." The list goes on and on.

Once the person has decided to go, set a date and move on. My second piece of advice is about set a certain date. I am a fan of six month's notice, no more, and probably no less, unless for some reason the executive director has become a serious challenge. Six months gives you the amount of time you need, I think, and is not too long, and it's not too short. That's number one.

Now there's a lot of other things, but I just want to point out some key ones. Institutionalized relationships. Oh, you know, here's one that I've heard. "Oh, you know, Mary actually doesn't, she only likes to meet with me. I'll fill you in. I'll put all the information in the database, but after I leave, I promise I will set up the new person to succeed, but Mary feels ganged up on if more than one person meets with the exiting executive director."

"I hear you, but I need you to know that these relationships are key to the sustainability of everything that you built here in this organization over your remarkable tenure. It is our obligation to ensure that those people meet the other folks in this organization who are trusted, who are five star, so that those relationships can belong fully to our organization."

Number three, if you have money, or if you can get somebody to fund this, or you know somebody who can help you pro bono who is not on your board, if you get the idea here, I can do a lot and say a lot because I'm objective. I'm on the outside. If you have some kind of an external resource to help you through the transition, that can make a tremendous, tremendous difference.

These are what I would consider to be the dos, some of the dos. I can add to this list. I can add a lot of things. Honor the executive director. Actually, I will add this one. We don't have farewell tours. What we have is pass the baton tours.

That's a way to navigate the challenge here. "Mary only really likes to talk to me."
"All right, well we're going to have several events, and we're gonna invite Mary and some others, and we're gonna pay homage to, you know, honor the heck out of you for your service, and begin to talk about passing the baton even before the new CEO is hired," before the CEO is hired.

These people don't like transitions. It's a limbo situation for everyone. The board has to own that leadership, talk about what's going on, talk about passing the baton. All of those things are really, really important.

Last one here I would say is over communicate. During this period of time, over communicate with your exiting executive director. Again, they have very, very, very personal ties to the organization, very personal. Honor that. Stay close to them. Don't indulge.

Over communicate to your stakeholders. Oftentimes what happens is a organization in transition will go into hibernation to go and find the person who replaces the irreplaceable founder, replaces the irreplaceable long and strong. No, don't. I guess that could be a don't.

I'm going to say the do is over communicate. You think that you only have something to say when you have a new CEO, you don't. You actually have something to say all through the process, so the organization knows that you are driving. Remember what I said at the beginning of this video. The moment that the executive director announces that she is going to step down, the power in the organization shifts from her to the board of directors. You've got to own it and lead it.

Next video, I'm going to talk about the don'ts. Some of them are so bad that you can't even believe that a board has actually decided to do them. I have real honest to God evidence that these things happen. You need to understand why they happen, and you have to avoid them. The next video is the grande landmines.

Chapter 5: How to Manage The Exiting Staff Leader Part 2

Alright. Welcome back. This is video five of our masterclass we have called The Changing of The Guard: Managing Staff Leadership Transitions. What I've been trying to do all through this class is really introduce you to the sort of mindsets and psychographics that are at play during a transition that lead to a whole host of landmines, how to avoid them, and then practical advice associated with both the exit and the introduction of your new CEO.

There are a lot of things about transitions and succession planning that you won't see in this masterclass, which gives us an opportunity to offer you additional content, but I think I feel really good about the journey that we're on in this class so that your eyes are wide, wide, wide open as you move into a transition.

And I would say also that, so that you recognize that there's nothing bad, that you're not bad. You know, just because your board is somewhat disengaged doesn't make you a bad board. Like, there's no judgment attached to this, and in fact, a lot of what I'm talking about here is so common that it should actually give you some comfort that you're in this kind of difficult, turbulent waters with a lot of kindred spirits.

Now I wanna talk about things boards do wrong with exiting founders and exiting long and strong. They all come under this heading not wanting to let go. Fear of letting go. Fear of angering the founder.

Fear that the founder or the long and strong, if they do not continue to be engaged in the organization in some way, will talk smack about the organization, will potentially soil relationships, and trust me, sometimes those things actually do happen. Sad, but true.

But you, as a board in transition, have to keep your eye on the prize, and the eye on the prize is what's in the best interest of the organization, and most importantly,

what choices are you going to make during the transition that set the new executive director up to succeed?

We talked in the last video about institutionalizing relationships, about the transition being over communicated so that the board is coming from a place of strength. We're talking about the board owning its leadership, which is very good for an incoming ED.

Now let's talk about the choices that boards make with regard to the exiting executive director that they make out of fear, just out of fear. Here's one. Overlap outgoing and incoming staff leaders.

There are times when some of these things seem like they make so much sense, but in execution, they're really horrible ideas. I'm coaching a client right now that was hired two years ago as the head of programs.

But she wasn't really hired as the head of programs. She was hired to be the head of programs for a year, maybe a year and a half, and then she was going to become the new executive director. Remember in the last video how I said you need to set a date certain?

Well, in this case, the board didn't set a date certain, and my client just kept waiting for someone to set a date certain. So, here she is reporting to the person she's going to replace, who's not letting go very easily. He's someone who has been with this organization 35 years.

She asks for information, he doesn't give it. This has been kind of torture for my client. The truth of the matter is, the idea behind it isn't bad, which is sort of we wanna transfer knowledge, we wanna transfer relationships. But think about if you are not in the nonprofit space and you're a board member as a corporate job.

Would that ever happen? No. No, I mean, unless the person was leaving because they've gotten ... I mean, it happens under some circumstances, but not many. Okay. Here's the next one.

Ask her to join the board. This one seems so obvious to board members, right? Oh, this is an awesome idea! This is an awesome idea, because then we hold onto Mary

and Mary still can maintain those relationships, and she is part of the board, and isn't that great?

No. It's not great. If I'm the incoming CEO and I am starting at the head of the table to do my report, how many of the people around the room are listening to me, and how many keep looking over there to Mary to see what Mary thinks?

What if I have to actually communicate that there were some messes that Mary left behind? Can I do that when Mary's in the room? I'm gonna go with no on that. What if I have a new idea that's actually really good? Mary doesn't like it.

How much sway does Mary have in the room? The answer is a disproportionate amount of sway, and that's why this is a very bad idea. Here's one of my favorite ones. Put her on staff.

Yep. Yeah, people do this. I had another client who arrived to the job and found out that the exiting executive director, who was a long and strong, that they had created a new role for her and that she was on staff reporting to my client, the new CEO.

My new CEO does an organizational diagnostic, and within no time at all she realizes that there are dust bunnies on top of dust bunnies. They have, actually, quite a deep financial crisis. And who was responsible for that?

Mary, the exiting ED, who now works for my client. How do you have an open staff conversation about what you're gonna do, what you're gonna change? Or the problems that you found, if the exiting executive director is actually in the organization?

I couldn't. That was actually the ... I don't know if that's the craziest one, but these are examples of ways in which boards, the extent to which boards will go to hang onto the relationship that they have with the exiting executive director when, in fact, they just need to let go.

Because if they do not, there is no run room for the new kid on the block. I've had this one, I've seen all of these by the way, that they've hired a new ... they're gonna hire an executive director, but there's something called a CEO emeritus.

That's merry. These, by the way, these are real examples. File under the, "You can't make this stuff up." Right? Their real example: they made the outgoing executive director the CEO emeritus. Do you know why they did that? Because Mary was a rockstar fundraiser, and because all of the relationships with all of the big donors belong to, who? You guessed it: Mary.

No, no, Mary can't be a consultant. A consultant to whom? Really? No. No. You know, if Mary has a specific expertise in policy or program, this is usually about fundraising, figure out a way to transition that using other staff, using documentation.

Figure out some other way. But don't saddle your incoming executive director with a line item, for a budget line item that includes money to pay Mary as a consultant. I had this situation. Remember this one, put her on staff?

You know, what was ironic about that was that to organization was in such financial disarray it actually couldn't be, the payroll couldn't pay Mary. I don't even know why I'm laughing. Alright.

Oh, last one. Oh, you know what? There are so many examples. Yep, yes, I've seen this. Well, who better to put on the search committee than the exiting executive director?

Almost anyone. This is a bad idea. Here's what you have to remember, is either the person is in charge, or the person isn't. They can't be some of the way in, to suit your needs, to dissuade your anxiety, that, by the way, could be diminished by making some really good choices before the person actually says, "I'm going to step down."

Is is incredibly valuable to get the exiting executive director's take on what kind of person, with what kind of skills and attributes should, in fact, be the executive director? Absolutely. Ask them to write that down.

Ask them to write two or three pages about what the search committee ought to be looking for, what they ought to be thinking about as it relates to the search for the new ED, so that their voice is actually at the table without them being at the table and potentially, honestly, throwing a big ole wrench in the search works.

Because it is impossible for this person, for Mary, not to have a really strong point of view that may, in fact, not be in the best interest of where to organization is headed.

Why do boards make these choices? Let's refresh. They make these choices because they worry that the organization will not survive without the person who is leaving.

I am here to tell you that it is your job as a board member to make sure that the organization is steady, and that things are in place so that there is no way on God's good earth that your organization could crumble due to the loss of a single individual.

That's your job as board members. When you think about exercising your responsibilities around strategy, and about pursuing the mission, that comes under that, and so I do hope you're watching this as part of a succession planning effort, because it is these choices, they get made because boards aren't ready for the transition.

And they fear that without their outgoing ED, somehow or another, the organization will crash and burn, and I'm here to tell you that if you do some of these things and then you bring in a new executive director, you're much more likely to crash and burn as a result of choices like this.

In the next video, we're gonna fast forward, and we're gonna bring the new ED into the house. We're skipping over the search. Maybe that's another class or piece of content here in the Nonprofit Leadership Lab, but now we're gonna fast forward to the new executive director who has arrived in the house.

We're gonna talk a little bit about what that person is likely to find, then we're gonna offer you practical advice for the new staff leader, practical advice for the board of a new staff leader, and then we'll sort of tie it up in a nice, tidy little bow.

See you in the next video.

Chapter 6: Fast Forward: What a New Executive Director May Find

Welcome back. Video six in our master class that we are calling, The Changing of the Guard, and we are talking about staff leadership transitions and we've kind of been taking you on a bit of a journey, and I'm a bit of a dog with a bone about this because I feel that new executive directors who follow ... founders or long and strong are often set up to fail, and they are set up to fail because of choices the board has made during the transition, because of the relationship that the long and strong has developed with the board over time that has lead to the board being somewhat disengaged and so brand new CEOs following folks who have been around for 20 or 30 years, they have much more of an uphill battle than I believe boards think.

Here's what I think boards think. I think that they think, "Oh my gosh, we hired a rock star. Aren't we great? They're going to take us into the 21st Century. There's going to be a donate button on the home page." Maybe those things are true, but it is important for boards to recognize something very important. You don't know the half of what the new executive director will find and that is not out of malice towards exiting executive directors.

Anyone who has been in a job for a super, super long time in the BARE Report I referenced in an earlier video, they talk about the executive director who has lost his fast ball. Founders who are perhaps on to their next adventure in their heads. They're not fully ... They're not always fully in the game, and that the organization can suffer as a result. Not always, but it can.

Remember, you're a board that's been held at arms length. You found your outgoing executive director. Thought she was a complete rock star. You were happy to follow her. As a result, maybe you don't know as much. Maybe you're slightly less engaged. Maybe you're not as involved in strategy and planning. You might actually be a very good fundraising board. It's not really clear, but there are a lot of things kind of against you as the new executive director comes through the door.

Before I give you some practical advice that is directed specifically if you are the new CEO on the block and then specifically for board members, I want to give you a

glimpse of what is possibly the situation a new executive director will encounter when they arrive because again, this context is very, very important as it relates to setting up your new executive director to succeed.

Number one, yes you have a treasurer. Yes, you have monthly financials, and maybe you know there is some financial challenges, but very often boards who are at arms length don't know the half of it, and a new executive director will come in and find things you don't know about. Did anyone on the board or search committee tell me that my organization had \$360 in the bank when I started my tenure? No, no one told me because no one knew. Did they know that I was X number of weeks from not being able to hit payroll? No. They didn't. They didn't know the half of it.

Remember I was talking to you about the client who I had who arrived to find out that they had actually hired, the board had hired the exiting executive director to be on staff. She came in and the board didn't know the half of it. The finances were just a disaster due in large measure to the staff person who now reported to my client, so I often call it dust bunnies on top of dust bunnies, but sometimes that phrase is a little too tame for what people will find.

Okay. You may as a new executive director ... get ready. You may encounter low performing staff. If I've lost my fast ball. If I'm actually thinking ahead to the organization I'm going to found, I might allow for low performing staff to stay in their seats. I may not want to have the difficult conversation. I might not want to clean house. I have had several different clients that arrived to this particular situation. I can further say that one client in particular, and I have heard this story from other consultants, that the low performing staff, that several of them were people of color, making a decision to move those people out a much more layered one, but be that as it may, regardless, you will inevitably find that there are staff that need to be asked off the bus.

As a result, you as the new executive director are going to encounter anxious and potentially guarded staff. Now, depending on the situation you might be the biggest breath of fresh air on Earth and they couldn't possibly be happier, but do know that change makes everyone anxious, even if it's a great change. You move from an apartment to your first house, oh my gosh, you're so excited, but if you're not nervous, you're not human.

You've got anxious staff. If you're following a Boomer, your organization may have weak marketing. It's possible that it has weak marketing. Often times people, especially people who have grown up in an organization, they're so invested in the work that they believe it speaks for itself, but if you want volunteers, great new board members, great new staff, if you want donors, you can't keep the good news to yourself, but marketing often takes a backseat and so when I arrive as a new CEO, I see that we're not doing such a great job telling people about the great work we do.

Connected to that, this is especially true if you're following somebody who is retiring. You will see a bunch of flaws in social media. That's just a generational thing. I didn't have an Instagram account until a month ago, right? It's a generational thing, so you're going to come without an engine. You may be arriving as a new CEO to a place that doesn't have the kind of engine you need it to have in order to tell folks about the great work. To drive revenue. To hit those revenue goals your board has hit, right?

The other thing you might encounter is what I'm going to call over grown programs. To decided not to do a program is a very tough decision and the longer you stay in an organization, the longer your tenure, as you're thinking about retiring it is human nature to not want to confront or contend with the difficult choices and so you might encounter programs that need to go, programs that need to be really seriously evaluated. Your program efforts may just be overgrown and they may need some serious weeding.

Why do I tell you all of this? I tell you this because if you're listening and you're a board member, this information, you're not really thinking about this. You may be thinking about this or you may have been on the website and frustrated, but in it's aggregate, you're focused on the fact that you just hired a rock star and your troubles are over and I'm here to tell you that your troubles are not over and that the executive director who's coming in has a lot of clean up.

Here's the challenge that you have to be mindful of. Both of you, the executive director and the board of directors are excited about the opportunities ahead, no question. The executive director is going to spend some time in the house. They might feel a little duped. Why didn't you tell me that? Oh my gosh ... I remember thinking about myself. Should I be really angry at the board chair for not telling me

there is only \$360 in the bank? I was too busy trying to figure out how to put more money in the bank. I didn't have any time to have the energy to be angry at the board chair.

As a new executive director you might feel duped. You might be angry, but neither of those emotions gets you anywhere except wasting valuable energy that you need, so I'm suggesting that as a brand new executive director, as you begin to unearth all this, the dust bunnies on top of the dust bunnies, that you fasten your seatbelt. That you understand that it comes with the territory of following someone who founded the organization or someone who has been there a very long time. That's just often the kind of organization you arrived to and I want you to breath.

The reason I want you to breath is because of what I'm about to say if you are a board member. If you are a board member, some of this stuff is going to really surprise you. It might even make you feel duped or angry at the exiting executive director who kept you at arms length so you didn't know some of this stuff.

Neither duped and angry is a ... neither of those are valuable emotions for board members either. It is time for in this situation, for board members to be patient, a little bit patient. Maybe you waited quite some time for that executive director to retire and you are so hungry for change. There's a lot of different kinds of change that may need to happen first. You're going to need to be patient. You're going to need to be supportive and frankly, you're going to need to own the fact that you were the governing body when these dust bunnies arrived.

The last thing I want to say before we move on to practical advice for the new executive director who has just arrived is this is why, this is why you must in a transition get ready to build a partnership. The executive director needs to partner with a board and it's going to be hard because we have all these emotions. Why didn't you tell me this? I didn't know. I'm hungry for change. Could you do something new? That's why the partnership is so very, very important even before our transition is announced.

Next up, I'm going to talk to you about some very practical advice for the new CEO who has arrived thrilled. They have their dream job. They have a vision for the future, right? You've just bought this beautiful new house and then all of the sudden you realize it has something called knob and tube wiring which is illegal and a fire

hazard. What do you do? Next up we're going to talk about some practical advice for the new staff leader, both how that person should operate and how that person should operate in partnership with the board.

See you in the next video.

Chapter 7: Practical Advice for the New Staff Leader

Welcome back. I'm Joan Garry and this is the masterclass we have designed specifically to, kind of an anatomy of a leadership transition from sort of all different angles. Putting ourselves in the shoes of the exiting ED. Putting ourselves in the shoes of the board. Putting ourselves in the shoe of the incoming executive director, and sort of teasing out both the practical and the emotional things that present land mines, offering you some practical advice on how to avoid them.

This lesson is practical advice for you as a new staff leader. I do understand that I have multiple audiences in this masterclass. But, everybody should be listening to the messages I'm sending to everyone else. As board members, you should be listening to the advice that I'm going to offer to the new executive director, because I think it'd be really helpful for you to understand how a new executive director should approach the following of a long and strong or the following of a founder, given all the things we have talked about. Right?

This is all, of course, assuming that the board has made a really good call and has sent the founder or the long and strong off to do whatever it is they're going to do next and has not given the exiting executive director any kind of formal affiliation with the organization. That is the number one land mine that board members will step on that, frankly, set more executive directors up to fail than any single thing. I mean that. No hyperbole there.

I have six pieces of advice for a new staff leader following someone who's been in the saddle a really long time. Now, I work with clients as an executive coach, and I do a lot of work with CEOs who follow sort of the long and strong. I will tell you that I have lots more than six pieces of advice, lots more, when I coach people for six

months at a time. But, these six things feel really important to put out there in a masterclass so that you kind of get the idea. Here we go, here's our six.

Number one is manage board expectations. What do I mean by that? Maybe that's a bit of an overriding item, that this is probably the number one thing you have to be thinking about at all times. Is that, your board has just finished a hire, and they hired you. You're so excited. It's your dream job. They're thrilled, they've found somebody wonderful. They might now think to themselves, "That was really hard work. Okay, good luck to you new executive director. Have some fun. We're a little tired. We're going to hang back over here for a while."

We're going to have to manage the board's expectations about almost everything, almost everything. The most important thing you have to actually communicate to them is patience. Right? They may have waited three or four years, kind of waited out someone who lost their fast ball as the executive director to allow them to retire. They're impatient. But, if they waited that long for that person, they can wait a little bit longer for you to get your sea legs and be successful.

Here's number two. This is important. I don't think new executive directors think about things this way, and I believe they would benefit from doing so. The second one is, I would like you to tell your board that you are going to conduct an organizational assessment. They may want you to go out and raise buckets of money or start a new program or redo the website. You got to say, "Hang on just a second boys and girls. The first thing I'm going to do is I'm going to get myself under the hood of this organization and I'm going to evaluate the finances. I'm going to evaluate the fundraising capacities. I'm going to understand who are my rock stars, who are folks that are low performers. I'm going to begin the process of trying to determine whether our programs are having impact and how we're figuring that out."

What I call this is, I'm going to call it pluses and deltas. I want it to be a real report and a real presentation. Let's say, this is again to manage board expectations. They're going to want you to do a million things. You're going to say, "Just stay with me on this, because no longer than 45 days I am going to conduct this organizational assessment. I'm going to tell you what kind of shape the organization," like a physical. I mean, I do this stuff as a consultant quite frequently, but a new CEO has to think like a consultant when they first arrive. What am I

working with here? Where are my strengths? Where are my deltas? How do I prioritize the work I have to do on the deltas? How do I amplify the pluses? All that stuff. It takes a lot of work.

Then what I want you to do is I want you to do a presentation. I hope you have a board meeting relatively within that time period after you start in which you offer a presentation of your findings. Here's what I find. New executive directors are reluctant to tell boards about the dust bunnies. They are reluctant to tell them that things are worse than they thought, because they're fixers. Right? They just want to go in and fix the stuff, tell the board that it got fixed, get the gold star. Right? No, no. You have to be a truth teller. You have to be a truth teller.

In fact, actually, that's the next thing, is that you have to be a truth teller. Because, you can't even begin to explore the vision that you have, that the board has, to capitalize on the incredible energy and excitement that comes with a new executive director unless you have told the truth about what you have found that's both good and that needs to be changed. Some of that's not going to be easy. Not only is it not going to be easy to change, it's not going to be easy to communicate because you're talking to the people, especially this stuff, the deltas, you're talking to the people who were essentially in charge, governing, governing when these things were happening. Some of them can be quite ugly that need to be fixed.

It is oftentimes that new CEOs are saddled with tremendous challenges that happened on the watch of the board. I'm telling you that you should conduct the organizational assessment. Tell them what's good, tell them what's ... What is it? Good, bad, and ugly. Present it like a real presentation, presentation of findings and what you see as the priorities. I want you to be truthful, and that can be also hard if you followed a founder or a long and strong, and there are board members who are their college roommates, their investment bankers, who have long believed the mythology, and maybe it wasn't always so, but have believed the mythology that the person was as big a rock star on the last day as they were on the first day.

It's hard for any human who has a job for 35 years to be as good on the last day as they are on the first day. It's just against sort of basic human nature. You kind of start to lose your fast ball. But, what if you're presenting these deltas in front of a group of people, you have to be a truth teller in front of the exiting executive director's college roommate? Not easy. But, you know what? Executive directors

don't take these jobs because they're easy. They take them because they care, because they're absolutely, purely, unadulteratedly passionate about the mission of the organization and repairing the world in the way that they are uniquely suited to do. You see all these dynamics that are at play, and how they tie in from the previous lessons.

All right. By the way, something that can help you here when you're doing this, I'm a big fan of external validators. What do I mean by that? My own story is not unlike a lot of people's stories, that I arrived to an organization that was in deeper financial trouble than the board had any idea about. I had a board meeting about three and a half weeks after I started. During those three and a half weeks, I dug into as much as I could, focusing in on the finances because that was our area of weakness.

I went to see the organization's CPA. I persuaded the CPA to come with me to the board meeting, to be the deliverer of the financially troubling news. We kind of teamed, and I cannot tell you, it was just a really good move and it's something I want to share with you. That, if any of your deltas are really problematic, really problematic and are going to really upset the board apple cart, think about an expert in that particular arena that is trusted and known to the organization. The finance CPA is an obvious one, others might not be so obvious. Think about that, because it can really actually make the argument. People will hear the argument more effectively.

Number five, find board strength. If it's not your board chair, if your board chair is not the strongest person on your board, start to identify who is, and even without the title, start to use that person to begin to build some kind of partnership. It's got to start from some place. Also, you want that strength to be in an area you need. When I started at GLAAD, I had co-chairs of my board. Neither of them were excellent fundraisers. I needed excellent fundraisers. Over the course of the next month or two, I identified two people who were our very, very best fundraisers. I talked with all four of them, and basically said, "If we don't do our fundraising work successfully over the next six to nine months, we might not make it." The two fundraising board members became the co-chairs at the next meeting. You can maneuver that way.

Remember, there's something really, really, really, really important for a new CEO to remember. You will never have as much power as you do in the first, say, 90 days of your tenure. You can be more honest, you can put more things, get more elephants in

the middle of the room and get more of what you need to be successful in the first 90 days than you ever will after that. Take advantage of that. That actually is number six, right, is to lay out a 90 day plan.

This goes back, a lot of these things go back to this. You've done an assessment. Your 90 day plan may, and I would make this argument, I'm going to add a seventh one because just, I feel like it. Is, look for a couple of quick wins that show forward motion. Excuse me. Especially, especially, especially, especially if you've got a lot of deltas. The board is going to want to have a sense that things are moving forward, that there is a reason to be optimistic, that it's possible that your vision is going to be realized. You want to temper these things. Right? You want to say, "These things are challenges that the organization faces I'm going to have to deal with. In the meantime, I want you to know I met with our second biggest owner and upgraded them."

This is the kind of thing, this kind of palette of activities is the kind of thing that's going to do a couple things. Is, it's going to start to strengthen your board. It's going to affirm their decision to hire you. It is going to, I kind of want to use the word guilt, but it lays at their feet the challenges so that you can then ask them to be your partner in addressing and solving them.

The last thing I want to say, so I don't know if it's number eight or not, maybe it's number eight. Is, somewhere in here, I would love for you to talk to the board about what kind of relationship you want to have with them. Maybe, say you can give them a copy of my book. I'll take self serving comments for 400, Alex. Introduce them to the partnership idea, to the idea of a twin engine jet. Tell them that that's what you want, and that you need them to be with you.

They'll probably be hungry for that. Disengaged boards that have been held at arm's length are hungry to be invited to the table, so invite them. The more you invite them and engage them, the better they will be as ambassadors for your organization, and then you will get what you need from the board and they will get from the experience what they need, which is a feeling of satisfaction, a feeling that they are meaningful, that they understand what's going on in their sector, and that they are champions and ambassadors for your cause.

Those are the kinds of things that matter when you arrive as a new executive director following a founder and/or a long and strong. A lot of these things are similar regardless of whether you followed someone long and strong or not, but they are uniquely important in this environment. Next up, I'm going to talk about some practical advice for the board of directors who are governing and providing oversight to the new staff leader.

Chapter 8: Practical Advice for the Board of Your New Leader

Hi, it's Joan Garry and welcome back to our masterclass here in the nonprofit leadership lab and it's called the Changing of the Guard, Managing Staff Leadership Transitions.

We've been on a journey together through these lessons thinking about both the practical and the soft, emotional components of the journey from the time that a founder or a long and strong executive director decides to step down from his or her role all the way through to the first 90 days or so of your new hire. The moment that your executive director indicates that she's stepping down it's like a massive boulder has been thrown into a pond. The ripple effects are wide and many. And how you handle that transition ... well let me put it this way, screwing it up, worst case is that you make it really hard for the executive director to succeed, the new one and at it's worst you put the organization at significant risk of not being sustainable. So you got to get it right.

So I've tried to put you in the shoes of the board member, the exiting staff person, the new CEO all in an effort, the more you understand the better you're going to be at this transition business. And as I said through the lessons I really hope this is something you will consider watching with your board or with your executive director in advance of a leadership transition. Make this part of your succession planning endeavor.

So you've hired the rock star. Good for you. Took a lot out of you, didn't it? Oh yeah. It's hard work. Even with a search firm it's a lot, a lot of work. And guess what you

are after you're finished, not just exhilarated because you've hired the rock star, you're tired. And now you think, oh my gosh, because during that period of time of transition you've been communicating with the staff and you've been, whatever it might be, you might have had an interim, I'm not sure, but there's been a lot on the board's shoulder during the transition and now guess what, it can all just be handed off to the new executive director. It's almost like after the person's hired the board wants to take a vacation.

Headline news, this is where your work actually begins. Because that's what will set your new CEO up to succeed. She can't do it by herself. So I have a few pieces of advice. What a surprise.

And the first one. Is own your role. Own, and here's what I mean by own your role, own your role in being at the helm of an organization while the executive director was in charge and while there may have been a creation of multiple layers of dust bunnies. It happened under your watch. And it makes all the sense in the world, it's very common that there's going to be cleanup to do and it's important that you own that. Because a new executive director, as I said in the last lesson, might not be so inclined to tell you about what's wrong with the organization. That person might just really want to ... just give you the good news.

So when I say own your role, own your role in the challenges and invite the executive director to do the organizational assessment I encouraged the E.D. to do in the last lesson. Say to them, you know we know that regardless of whether our person who left was the best thing since sliced bread or somewhere below that, we know you're going to find some things that need to be fixed, worked on, some challenges, why don't you think about doing an organization assessment for a short period of time identifying what those things are, prioritizing them, present that to us. Because we want to be there for you because actually we ... we were at the helm when those things happened.

So own your role, I'm going to say own your responsibility. That will make things so much easier for your new executive director. Just to know that that has been said.

The second thing is to ... I'm writing here govern yourself. And here I'm talking about an assessment. This is a very, very good time for your board governance committee to sort of take stock. Remember if ... on the staff side there might be some dust

bunnies, you might have some board dust bunnies too. This is a good time for the governance committee to say, all right, do we have everybody on the bus we need? How can we be the strongest board we can be for our new rock star? This feels like a very, very important thing.

Connected to that is assess your leadership. Now in the last lesson I told the executive director that what I want her to do is identify the strong folks on the board. It would be nice if you all did that in partnership with one another, right. But just make sure you have the right folks in the right seats because if there are a lot of dust bunnies, if there are a lot of challenges your new executive director is going to need a partner at the top. Really badly, really badly. So connect these two efforts. If there really is a dearth of leadership on your board, get on it. Because your ... you would think, oh, we have a brand new leader, why would we focus on leadership? Because you are the other engine in a twin engine jet.

Manage your own expectations of your new E.D. Manage your own expectations. Set reasonable, achievable goals. Long and strong in particular are founders, the board during a period of time which they believe maybe it would be time for that person to move on are starting to make a really long list of things they believe the organization should do, things they should stop doing, people who should be hired, people who should be taken off the bus. Boards are never without opinions. But I just want to make sure that you manage your own expectations of how much of a rock star your person is going to be and how long that ... how long it's going to take for the rock star to really just begin to go full steam ahead. So I want you to manage your expectations.

What that means is you're going to have to be patient. And I know you were already patient, weren't you. You were already patient as you waited for the long and strong to reach retirement age, perhaps. As you waited for the founder to flush out her next engagement. Whatever it might be. You were already patient and I'm telling you, you have to continue to be patient. Now if the E.D. has followed my advice you're going to get quick wins, you're going to get examples of just what you bought. The new E.D. is going to do some great things, a couple big ones, a couple small ones and it's going to affirm your own choice. But you have got to be patient.

I have seen at some organizations where the board is so impatient, so impatient about making change they hire somebody who's really a change agent and the

combination of those two actually becomes combustible. Because if you are impatient and you hire someone who actually just loves to make changes, the organization, you can't make too many changes too quickly to an organization that's just gone through a transition. You can't. It destabilizes it very, very badly. So you have got, this is a slow and steady wins the race. And I know, I know, I know some of you run organizations where moving slowly is actually, doesn't feel like it's an option because the cause is so urgent. I get that. But for most organizations the world is a marathon and not a sprint. And we want to set our person up to succeed.

Be engaged. It's heartbreaking to me. I've had numerous clients, but just recently a client who's a brand new CEO, has followed a founder, she sent out a great memo to the board about exciting new things that are happening in the organization. And what did she hear? What I call the official insect of the non profit board of directors, crickets. Nobody responded to her email about new and good things happening in the organization. How could that be? We've been talking about how it could be. You started as a relatively disengaged board, you have fatigue from the search, you just want to take a little bit of a break. This is actually where you actually have to put your foot on the gas. You have, you just have to. Your executive director needs that and your mission demands it.

Related to that, be supportive. The list of to-dos for a brand new CEO following a founder or a long and strong is really, really long. And you have probably hired someone who is a type A, high performer who wants to get through them as fast as possible. And they're going to have bad days with all of these to-dos. An email, a call, be there for the new executive director. These things make a difference.

And then this is the last one, let the new E.D. be who she is. There is again human nature. We've always done it this way. The executive director has always done it this way. Why do we need to do something different? Well maybe the new E.D. wants to do something different. Maybe the new E.D. is someone different. That's what you found appealing. Let that person be the person she is. Don't compare. Don't do any of that. Let the person do the job you hired them to do and let them do it in their own style and fashion with your oversight and governance. Far too often boards, they compare, that's not how Kim would have done it. How helpful is that? The answer, not very.

So these are the kinds of things that boards need to do in order to effectively set up their new executive director to succeed. And I get that it's hard. But before the search is over maybe you all as a board should sit down and say, okay the search is over, we're about to extend an offer. What is it that we can best do to set this new executive director up to succeed? If we're really too tired, if we're really too burned out, maybe you should step off the board bus now. So that the new executive director has our full attention. Our full engagement and a full tank of gas in the energy category. This will help immensely.

My last video in this class is called Getting it Right. Or How to Avoid the Case of the Transitional Girlfriend. Are you curious? See you in the next video.

Chapter 9: Key Takeaways

Welcome to the last lesson in this Masterclass that we have entitled The Changing of the Guard, Managing Staff Leadership Transitions.

We've been on a journey together, in these many lessons, dissecting. I almost was going to call this lesson The Anatomy of a Leadership Transition, because it contains a lot of both practical advice as well as allowing you to stand in the shoes of your partner, whether you are the new ED, the exiting ED, with the board or vice versa, because I am convinced that the more you understand about where everyone is coming from, the more smoothly a transition you will have.

As I've described before, the moment a founder or a long and strong says they are planning to leave, it is like a massive boulder that has been thrown into your organizational pond. I'm hoping that the lessons I've shared with you today have been helpful to you, not only practically, but in gaining a deeper understanding of all of the things that are at play during a transition like this.

This lesson, our final lesson, is called Getting It Right, or How to Avoid the Case of the Transitional Girlfriend. Let's talk about the transitional girlfriend. So, the phrase comes from someone who has divorced after being married many years, and they bring a new significant other to your dinner party. You're sitting there thinking, "Really? I don't know. I don't see it." Before not too long, the transitional girlfriend is

out of the picture, and is transitional. Or, conversely, maybe your friend isn't actually ready for the rockstar girlfriend. You meet her and think, "Oh my God, she's fabulous. What a catch." And your friend doesn't see it, and moves on, and then maybe finds a great person after that.

You can't afford a transitional girlfriend at your organization. One transition is hard enough. Two rocks your organization to the very core. So, I put a lot of pressure on you with regard to the search. You've got to get it right. But, it's not just that. You've got to get it right on all angles. Trust me. If you keep a founder or exiting executive director on as a consultant, put them on as a board member. Make them CEO emeritus, all of those horrible things I described in an earlier lesson, you could wind up in the book called *The Case of the Transitional Girlfriend*. You could hire a rockstar but you won't keep them. That's what we're trying to avoid. A do-over search is excruciating.

Now, sometimes you just have to do one. Right? Sometimes you just made a bad call. But, you want to make sure that every piece of groundwork has been laid to ensure that if we have the right relationship, that we set it up to last, so we don't have a transitional girlfriend.

I just want to very quickly, before we end, highlight what I think are the most important things to remember that will drive a successful transition. The first one is highly self-serving. This video, make sure that all the right players in your organization see it, and see it before the transition. If you are an organization that has a founder or a long and strong executive director.

The second thing is begin to assess your board before your ED announces that they are retiring or going on to the next thing. The truth of the matter is when your founder leaves, or when your long and strong hits retirement age, it isn't going to be a huge surprise. So often board members think, "Oh my gosh, she's leaving?" What were you doing? What were you thinking? What kind of planning were you doing about how you as a board, whether you as a board are strong enough, solid enough, have sufficient leadership to manage that transition? Because as I said in an earlier lesson, that long and strong tend to be pretty big personalities, they tend to drive, and that can lead to a board that is somewhat disengaged at arms length.

Don't wait until the person announces they're leaving to begin to think about whether or not you are strong enough to withstand the transition, to conduct a great search. Think about that in advance. That's what real succession planning is like. It's not an executive session where you say, "Okay." Once a year you sit down in executive session and you answer the question, alright, what do we do if Joan gets hit by a bus? I'm hoping that this Masterclass has shown you that that question is so short-sighted, and does not reveal the complexities of a transition in any way, shape or form. So, think about when you're thinking about succession planning, don't put the [inaudible 00:06:12] just on the executive director, it belongs in the entire organization, and ask yourself the question, what needs to happen in this organization in order for us to manage a transition well? What needs to happen on the staff side, and what needs to happen on the board side? Then, do it. So that at the point that boulder hits the pond, you're in a position where you're actually strong enough to be able to contend with the implications.

So, make sure your organization sees this video as part of succession planning. Begin board development during a succession planning process. Number three, begin institutionalizing relationships before your executive director leaves. Right? Watch the video as part of succession planning. Begin board development work to make sure your board is strong once the person announces. Three, begin to institutionalize relationships. You may get pushback. Keep pushing. Don't wait until the announcement and have yourself caught with no connections to some of your key stakeholders. Doesn't have to be that way.

Number four, set date certain. When the person announces, make it specific. We talked about the profile of a long and strong, or a founder. They don't let go easily. They'll say, "I'm gonna retire as soon as," "When, blah." Have the difficult conversation and say, "You know what? As a board, we actually need to set a date so that we can begin an orderly transition that will be in your best interest, that will honor your legacy to this organization, that will enable us to get strong, and manage a search that will enable us to keep the staff nice and steady while we look, and it will enable us to recruit a rockstar to replace you." Set date certain.

Last but not least, please avoid the biggest landmine of them all which is giving your outgoing executive director any kind of formal or quasi-formal relationship with the organization. You must give your new executive director run room to succeed. If the person is in the room, and I mean physically in the room, or virtually in the room, it

will be hard, very very hard, for your new executive director to make his or her own mark in the organization, to make changes, to devise new strategies, to think differently, and frankly, those are the things you hire a new executive director to do, and by virtue of keeping the old ED engaged, you tie your new executive director's hands in this regard. You definitely don't want to do it. It is the easiest mistake in the world to make during a transition.

I hope this has been helpful. Please remember, if you're a brand new executive director, you followed a founder, fasten your seat belt. Know that this is not uncommon that you're going to find challenges. Be a truth teller. Tell your board that you need to go looking under the hood, and that you're going to tell them the good, the bad, the ugly. You're going to prioritize. Identify a couple of quick wins that get people motivated and remind people that change is a good thing. Chop it up into bite size pieces with a 90-day plan that you and the board develop together.

On the board side, your new ED is in the house. You waited a long time for the change. Embrace it. Show leadership, engagement. Really invest in looking at your board and determining how it can be as strong as it can possibly be with the right people, with the right skills, the right attributes and experience, to be that partner that your new executive director desperately needs in order to be successful. Own your own role in the challenges that that new executive director has found when she has arrived, and be a part of the solution in resolving those challenges, and in building a robust, exciting path for the future of your organization.

I hope you found this Masterclass helpful, and I'll see you next time. Take care.

EXIT INTERVIEWS FOR STAFF & BOARD

A Template

FOR STAFF

Note: Consider providing the questions to the exiting staff ahead of time. People have the opportunity to consider the questions and are generally way more thoughtful if they are prepared.

- What would you say is the single biggest factor leading you to leave the organization?
- You joined the organization because you believed in its mission and because you believed you could, in your position, add real value to the scope and impact of the work. Do you feel that way today? If not, can you tell me more?
- Did the expectations of the position you were hired for meet the reality? If not, what was different? Was the difference positive or negative?
- Were you set up to succeed in your role? (Note: you can tease out training, supervision, professional development)
- Let's talk about the role you had in the organization. We now have to replace you. Would you change the role in any way as a result of your experience in the job? (Note: It might be helpful to have a copy of the job description with you)
- With that in mind, what should we be looking for in a new hire for this role?
- Describe your relationship with your supervisor? (Note: probe availability, degree of autonomy, management style)
- How would you describe the morale in the organization? If low, do you have any advice for how to improve morale?
- Did you feel as if your work and your voice were valued here? (Note: tease out examples if you are able)
- What did you like most about your job (Note: You can instead ask about the employee's best day)
- What did you like least about your job (Note: You can instead ask about the employee's worst day)
- Is there anything else you want to share that would help our organization and its work?

FOR BOARD

- What motivated you to join the board?
- What did you know about the organization that led you to a decision to devote substantial time to being a lead volunteer?
- How do you feel about the organization as you exit?
- What was the recruitment experience like? (Note: you are looking for professionalism, amount of time, communication, opportunity to learn about the organization, to meet other board members)
- Do you feel you received an effective board orientation that made the expectations of board service clear? If not, what changes might you suggest?
- Did anything surprise you about your board service?
- Was your time used effectively at board meetings?
- Was your time used effectively at committee meetings?
- Do you feel that all of what you brought to board service was tapped into?
- Did you feel valued and heard?
- Were you given the tools and training necessary to be an effective board member?
- Is there a contribution you made to the board during your tenure that you feel very proud of?
- How would you characterize the relationship between the Board and the E.D. / staff? How might you improve that partnership?
- What would you suggest to improve the functioning of this board?
- Would you like to stay involved with our organization? If yes, what might that look like? If no, can you tell us your thinking?



How to Handle a Bad Apple Board Member

Quick Win: How to Handle a “Bad Apple” Board Member



Let's start with the most important question – how are we defining “trouble.” Here are six ways board members can be troublesome:

1. **Not fulfilling board obligations.** This can be as simple as shoddy attendance or as complex as, “I absolutely will not fundraise – I’m sure I told *someone* that during the interview process.”
2. **Disruptive in the boardroom.** This board member does not know how to behave in a group setting. This can be someone who likes to hear herself talk and monopolizes the conversation. Or someone who rolls his eyes when another board member says something he disagrees with or just thinks is not that smart.
3. **Complete lack of interest.** Here’s a board member who is too busy to pay attention. She thinks no one can see her checking her emails under the table but everyone can. She shows up but adds no value. Maybe this is a board member who gives money and thinks that is enough. Maybe this is someone affiliated with a corporate sponsor who is just filling a seat.
4. **Undermines the E.D.** This board member knows best, has the best ideas, and goes right to staff to tell them the ‘right’ way to do things.
5. **Badmouths the organization.** Yup we see this a lot. A decision gets made and she disagrees. She can’t buy in and get on board with it – refuses to, in fact – and then works to undermine the organization and its leader externally.

6. **Downright inappropriate behavior.** This would be any behavior in which a board member uses his / her power with staff or volunteers. This includes everything from bullying to harassment in any of its forms.

IN EACH OF THESE CASES, THE WORST THING YOU CAN DO IS NOTHING

While some of these examples are more egregious than others, all of them diminish the effectiveness of the board. Every one of them creates a dynamic in the boardroom that either diminishes the E.D. (a serious issue if E.D. retention is a goal), fosters an environment in the boardroom that is unpleasant (or worse), and can lead to board member attrition. One bad apple can lead the good apples to go find another basket. Lastly, you need to create a level playing field on your board. Everyone should be accountable to certain behaviors and obligations. Let one person off the hook and you risk demoralizing others.

TWO OUTCOMES

- **Rehabilitation:** Either you believe that with a warning or some kind of conversation, this board member can turn things around.
- **Exit Strategy:** The person is beyond rehabilitation – too toxic, too something else.

WHOSE JOB IS IT TO REHABILITATE / FIRE?

The board chair must lead and the Executive Director should be a participant in the process. NOTE: It is NOT the ED's job and he / she should never do this without a board leader present.

WHAT IS THE OUTCOME YOU SEEK?

The board chair and E.D. must be walking in lock step on this. If your goal is to set this person up to succeed, there is one process. If you believe this person needs to leave the board, there will be a different approach.

HOW TO HAVE THESE CONVERSATIONS

Let's start with how NOT to have them. Tough conversations should never happen via email. EVER. Ideally in person or video. Next best is phone. Nonverbal communication is so very important – so board members can see yours and you can get a better read on the person you are talking with.

So many of these conversations are sabotaged by putting someone on the defensive with an email that can be interpreted many different ways and inevitably leads to the recipient feeling attacked or on the defensive.

In the RELATED LINKS section below, you can download a PDF with sample scripts that will show you different strategies depending on the outcome you seek.

FINAL THOUGHTS

This won't cover every situation of course. But here's hoping it gives you some language to consider. You'll see that 'discovery' and the use of questions is key in these conversations. It should be considered a learning conversation that leads to an outcome.

Best of luck!

related links

[Download Sample Strategies / Scripts](#)

**SAMPLE
STRATEGIES &
SCRIPTS FOR
HANDLING
"BAD APPLE"
BOARD
MEMBERS**

NOTE: THE BOARD CHAIR SHOULD LEAD ALL OF THESE.

THE REHABILITATION STRATEGY: THE DISENGAGED

BOARD CHAIR: Sarah [THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR] and I thought it would be valuable to chat with you about your board service. There have been some clues that lead us to feel like you may not be feeling a sense of value in your board service like <not showing up, quiet as church mouse at every meetings>. That said, we REALLY believe that you have so much to offer and are invested in your success. We'd like to hear from you. How are you feeling about your board service?

<FROM THERE BE NIMBLE>

<NO TIME?> Is board service taking up more time than you imagined? Talk more about this.

<TRY TO SEGUE TO VALUE – PROBE ON THE EXPERIENCE FOR THE PERSON – LEARN!> Sometimes board service can feel like a big investment of time when a board member doesn't feel like their skills and expertise are being tapped into. Is that at play here? How do you believe Sarah and I are doing as it relates to engaging you and other board members to garner your insights, ideas, thoughts and opinions?

<ASK WHAT COULD BE DIFFERENT> What would you see that would need to change in order for you to be fully engaged? We are anxious for this experience to be great for you and for your involvement to really benefit the organization and YOU. What would that take?

THE EVOLVE-OR-GO STRATEGY: THE DISRUPTER / BAD MOUTH / NEGATIVE - INTERNALLY

BOARD CHAIR: So Sarah [THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR] and I thought it would be valuable to chat with you about your board service. Both of us have been talking about the evidence we see of your dissatisfaction – sometimes with the board, fellow board members, with Sarah, with me. It is feeling quite negative and we want to hear more about what is at the heart of that.

<FROM THERE BE NIMBLE>

- Is board service different from what you thought you signed up for
- Are you challenged by the direction the organization is going in?
- Do you have concerns about leadership?

We are not looking for blind followers on our board. Differences of opinion are critical and we welcome that. But it has been our feeling recently that your negativity is running pretty deep and therefore your comments don't always feel constructive.

What might the organization be doing differently to turn that around? IS THERE something we can do?

Because I need to say that your negativity has a demoralizing effect on the board and we are working so hard to activate board members to be real champions for the organization and its strategy moving forward.

If you don't feel like you can serve that function on the board, maybe this isn't a good fit?

We'd hate to lose you, but folks should be enjoying board service and engaged in a constructive way. That's how it feels for me as the board leader and how it should feel to board members. Maybe this really isn't a good fit.

<IF AGREED, THE EASY OUT IS 'TOO BUSY' AND NEED TO STEP DOWN>

THE TIME-TO-GO STRATEGY:

This comes up any time a board member has crossed a line. Anything that can be seen as harassment of board or staff, inappropriate behavior in the board room, bad mouthing the organization externally, undermine the E.D. in public settings, and any kind of inappropriate advances to any staff members.

Be prepared that this person will be angry and may disconnect from the organization entirely. If this person is a significant donor, be prepared to lose that money in future years. The org will be better for it in the long run. These are behaviors that bring a whole board own and can eliminate any sense of accountability for others.

BOARD CHAIR: Thanks for taking time to meet with us today. This is not an easy conversation to have because you have been involved with our organization for X period of time. You have invested your time and energy over the last X period of time and I know that Sarah [THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR] and I are grateful for that.

That said, it has been brought to our attention that you _____.

OR

That said, your behavior at the last board meeting crossed a line of civility and respect that we see as critical to the ability of our board to function

OR

We have spoken at length to X (staff member) who was quite clear about feeling unsafe after several encounters with you. Trust me this is very difficult to bring up. This staff member was very uncomfortable with sexual innuendos and advances.

OR

We have spoken at length to X (staff member) who was quite clear about feeling unsafe after a conversation with you in which X felt harassed and bullied.

<THERE WILL BE BACK AND FORTH. HE SAID SHE SAID. ANGER, DENIAL.>

I'm sorry this is making you angry and perhaps your intentions were different. But it is my duty as a board chair to really hear board and staff and after several conversations, it is clear to me that these perceptions of your behavior must be treated as reality <OR YOU SAW IT YOURSELF> and that it is my duty to ask you to step down.

This conversation goes no further; we will not share details with anyone else and will just let folks know that increased time commitments at work or home demand that you step away from a few volunteer commitments, including this one.

<ANGRY? WILL TELL EVERYONE WHAT A HORRIBLE ORG THIS IS!!!!>

Please know that we know that your anger and resentment is real. But we are asking you to consider the many many folks who are benefitting from the work of this organization. We do very good work on behalf of those people and we hope you will consider that negative statements about the organizations hurt THEM.

**BONUS
MASTERCLASS:
FROM
WORKING TO
GOVERNING
BOARDS**

Masterclass: From Working to Governing Boards

Lesson 1: The Roadmap

Lindsay: Hello, my name is Lindsey Hoffman and I'm with the Nonprofit Leadership Lab. You are joining me today for our mini masterclass titled, Next Steps for Working Boards. I designed this class to address some questions raised by those lab members who are leaders of early stage nonprofits. So if you are a nonprofit founder or a member of a working board yourself, this class is for you. My own background is in strategy and fundraising for nonprofits. In the past few years I've worked with quite a few early to mid-sized organizations on organizational development and making that shift towards becoming a long lasting, thriving, sustainable organization. It's been satisfying to record some of what I've learned. But, I do want to say that a lot of what we've learned here in the lab team is from lab members themselves. From the conversations that we've had in the village about your questions and concerns. We've learned an enormous amount, and I think you might recognize some of the lessons we're sharing today.

Lindsay: Thank you for raising the questions that you've asked and for sharing your wisdom. Before I get started, I want to make sure we're on the same page about the question of the day, what is a working board? A working board is the board of a nonprofit, where the members of the board actually do the day to day work of running the organization. They're doing the bookkeeping, the donor data entry. They're doing all of the fundraising, all of the program work, and all of the administrative work, because there simply is not a staff to take on those

responsibilities. It's interesting, Joan Garry talks a lot about how a thriving nonprofit is like a twin engine jet, where one engine is staff and one engine is the board, and driving that jet are two people in a cockpit, a board chair and an executive director.

Lindsay: We know that those of you who are members of working boards, or nonprofit founders, have had a question on their minds, which is, "How do Joan's lessons apply to us if we only have one engine? Where do we go from here? How do we build that second engine?" Very bluntly, "When do we get to hire someone to help us with all of this work?" So that's what this master class is about. We don't have full proof solutions and we don't have a prescription for a detailed roadmap. But, we're going to give you a sense for the path ahead and some tips to keep in mind along the way. My hope is that you leave this class feeling more confident about how to strengthen and grow your organization in a way that feels right to you and is sustainable. So let's jump in.

Lindsay: This masterclass is going to cover these topics over three videos. In this video, I will explain a little bit more about what we mean by the shift from working board to governing board, and walk you through one possible pathway for an organization's development in this way. While every organization has a slightly different path. There are two major milestones that most organizations share as significant benchmarks along the way. I'll talk about those. In the next video, we'll go through some questions that you should ask yourselves about your organization before you start, if you're considering this kind of growth. It's essentially a readiness assessment. Then, in the third video, I'll share more steps along the way and tips for navigating them.

Lindsay: First, defining these terms. It's important to remember that these two terms do not have strict definitions. Each of these categories of

nonprofit includes a whole continuum of organizations. In fact, many organizations don't label themselves as one or the other. But, very generally, a working board is one where unpaid board members are doing all or much of the program and admin work themselves. They may or may not have paid staff people to help them out. On a governing board, unpaid board members are driving all of the fundraising, they're providing oversight, they're advising on strategy at a 10,000 foot level. In this scenario, an executive director and a paid staff are executing the organization's mission. They're doing the day to day program and administrative work. A governing board is what Joan is describing when she talks about a twin engine jet.

Lindsay: As I said, there's a continuum and there are infinite combinations of factors. Like, who was on the board? Are all of the members friends of the founder, or are there other leaders who've been strategically cultivated because of their networks and their skills? Who is doing all of the direct program and administrative work? If it's done entirely by your founder and your board members, then it should be clear you are very much a working board. Who is contributing to the fundraising, and how broad is your circle of donors? Finally, what's the role of the founder? Is that person serving as executive director? Is that person making all decisions in a way that everyone else defers, or has the founder empowered others to share responsibility and help lead the organization? In the later stages of development, that founder, ideally, will have passed the baton fully to others who care deeply and can help run the organization.

Lindsay: On the path towards becoming a governing board, you'll find that you're turning the dials on each of these factors. But, again, the path to turning these dials is different for every organization. To illustrate what this looks like, this slide offers just one generic example of how an organization might evolve. This organization was started by a founder who recruited friends and family to be the first donors, and also to join

the board. These wonderful people have primarily joined because they trust and want to support the founder. But, the founder and those board members together, achieve an enormous amount of program work and administrative work. That founder may or may not be working more than 40 hours a week herself. But, getting this organization off the ground is always truly a miracle.

Lindsay: In the next stage for the organization, the board begins fundraising a bit themselves. They're not just donating money directly, they're reaching out to their own networks to raise more for the organization. Maybe they've added a new person to the board who's not directly connected to the founder. In this phase, as the organization becomes more formalized, the founder might take on the title executive director, but still is not necessarily being paid. As the organization progresses, the board continues to expand. It turns out a lot of people care about this work and want to support it. As the organization has more financial resources, they might hire some part time employees or contractors to help with some of the programmatic and administrative work. We see a lot of Nonprofit Leadership Lab members who are in this stage very generally. Again, this is just a hypothetical example, each of these stages represents a continuum for a lot of organizations.

Lindsay: Now, I'll skip ahead a lot. Here is a snapshot of this organization with a governing board. This is the twin engine jet that Joan describes. At this point, the board members include a lot of folks who are not friends and family, they are business leaders, they are academic leaders, they are people who care about some aspect of this mission and want to give back. The board's role is to provide oversight and be ambassadors for the organization. They have the responsibility to hire, assess, and even fire the executive director. They provide financial oversight, they're advising on strategy. Each of those board members is drawing on their own experience to provide strategic guidance and expand the sphere of influence for the nonprofit. Meanwhile, all of the day to day work is led

by an executive director and paid staff or volunteers that have all been hired by the executive director. Most importantly, that is the executive director's domain. The board has no ... I'm sorry, the executive director's no longer counting on the board members to actually do the bookkeeping or any of the direct program work.

Lindsay: At this point, both board and staff are contributing to fundraising in different ways, but ideally, it's the board that's actually leading and driving the fundraising. In this sample organization, the founder has passed the baton, which just means that the executive director role is not filled by the founder, it's filled by someone else that the board has hired. I want to make clear that this is not a defining feature of a governing board for many organizations. That moment when the founder fully passes the baton happens later in their development. But, I use it in this example to give you a sense for where you're heading and what the future holds. In order to build a truly sustainable organization, one that will last the very long term, you're going to need a governing board, and you're also going to need a founder who has passed the baton to others who care, who can continue this work. The question is, how do you make this leap?

Lindsay: There are many steps along the way and many signs that you're becoming a more developed organization. I want to point out the two most significant milestones, just to simplify this for you. First, the moment you recruit your first board members who expect to be serving on a governing board and not a working board. These are folks who are expecting to be reviewing and approving your financial statements, not doing your bookkeeping on a daily basis. They've been recruited as ambassadors, as representatives of your organization. For example, you've run an animal shelter and you recruit the CEO of a local pet food company to be on your board. That person will be an ambassador for your organization. The moment you hire someone like that, it will quickly tip the board from being a working board to a governing board.

Lindsay: Your organization might start with a few members who are already itching to be governing board members, where they can do less work and more oversight. But, if they're still a part of your existing working board, it's going to be harder for them to energize change than a brand new member who has a completely fresh and different set of expectations. It's that moment that really tips the scales, because it's nearly impossible to go back and begin recruiting any additional people who would serve in a working board role. You won't be able to hire new or engage new full time volunteers as board members once you have someone like that CEO of a local pet food company on your board, especially if this person has experience serving on other governing boards. The path forward is going to be so much easier once you've achieved this milestone.

Lindsay: The second major milestone should be obvious. Hiring a paid executive director. Definitionally, I think you need a paid executive director to have a governing board. In video three we'll talk about best practices and and tips for hiring an ED. But, for now, it's helpful to know that regardless of the unique and very path that your organization might take, these two milestones are benchmarks for most organizations during this transition.

Lindsay: So takeaways from this video. First, many nonprofits begin with a board where the members do a lot or all of the work. There are many different pathways towards becoming a thriving nonprofit with a two engine jet, where one engine is at governing board. Along the way, there are two significant milestones, and I'll note, these are not in any particular order. Those two milestones that most organizations will experience are hiring a paid executive director and recruiting board members who expect to govern and not work.

Lesson 2: Your First Steps

Lindsay: Hi, this is Lindsay Hoffman and you're joining me for video two of our mini-masterclass, Next Steps for Working Boards. Because you're watching this video, I assume that you are in the early stages of your nonprofit's growth. I also assume that you've been asking yourself the question, "How do I make that jump to hiring an Executive Director, building a staff, and convincing your board to focus more on strategy and fundraising than on micromanaging operational details?" In this video, I'm going to offer five questions that you should ask yourselves to determine whether your organization is ready to begin this process of becoming a governing board. It will also illuminate some of the steps you need to take early in order to make your organization ready. So without further ado, here are the five questions.

Lindsay: First, do your board members even want to transition from being a working board to a governing board? Are your key board leaders aligned on their vision for the future? Is your board actively involved in fundraising? Do you have at least 12 months' salary for your new Executive Director already in the bank? And finally, have you considered any alternatives to hiring an Executive Director? Now, some of these questions are straight forward and easy to answer and others would definitely require a conversation with you and your board members about some pretty deep issues, and I want to assure you, most organizations need a few of those conversations in order to address these questions and that is what this step is about.

Lindsay: It's about spending the time with your board to address these issues and if I have to justify why you should spend this time, I would say we really think that this exercise can eliminate the steps you can take now to avoid a lot of messiness later. Theoretically, it's possible to leap

towards those milestones that we discussed in the last video, hiring a paid Executive Director and recruiting new governing board members. But if certain core pieces are not in place, to begin with, the road ahead will be messy. You'll face more conflict and more difficulty sustaining your new type of organization. So with that in mind, let's look at each question individually.

Lindsay: First, what proportion of your board members actually want to become a governing board? If no one wants this, ask yourself why you're trying to make this shift because it's a sign that this will not be an easy road. I mean, unless there is unanimous agreement already, someone is going to need to step up and paint a picture for what the future holds and why it demands a twin-engine jet to get there. That person is then going to need to sell that vision to others on the board, and that process is a lot easier if you already have a few supporters in your camp.

Lindsay: It's inevitable that some of your board members will want to remain working board members. They value the chance to touch and feel the work very deeply. They enjoy spending large amounts of time volunteering and doing direct program work. It is inevitable and it's truly wonderful that some of your board members will be holdouts, but the truth is going forward, this will no longer be the board for them. And so over time what you want to happen is for those individuals to step off the board while staying supportive. While still embracing your vision, perhaps even continuing to volunteer for the organization, but realizing that as far as board service goes, their resources might be better used on someone else's board. I want to say that the big takeaway here is that you'll need at least a few board members who really want this and a few more who can be convinced and if you don't have that, the road ahead is very difficult.

Lindsay: Second question, are your key board members aligned on a vision for the future? So you're out in place before your organization begins to grow and develop into this thriving two engine jet. At this moment, early in the process, it's really important to take the time to clarify what's most important to you. Take the time to articulate your values in vivid detail. Be clear about the things that you never want to compromise on.

Lindsay: We make the strong suggestion because hiring a new Executive Director and recruiting new board members can mean real change and change inevitably causes some anxiety. It can cause some conflict, but you can avoid a lot of that conflict if you take the time, in the beginning, to make sure that you and your board are aligned about what matters most to you. And once you are aligned, and I don't mean your whole board necessarily, I say key board leaders because you know the voices on your board that are the most powerful about future vision. This is you, your board, the people who mean most to you. If you are in agreement about what matters most, it will be a lot easier to find and hire a new E.D. and new board members who are aligned with you about the fundamentals, whatever those are.

Lindsay: A new Executive Director might bring new fundraising strategies or new networks of people or a new sense of professionalism or new technology ideas or even totally new program ideas. And you won't have to fear or resist those changes if you know that you agree about the fundamentals. So step one is to gain clarity about the fundamentals. What's most important about the institution that you created? What components and values need to be held onto tightly, even if other things change drastically? This is a period of reflection and strategic visioning to clarify your core purpose, your values, what's your main thing? What do you hope most for the future?

Lindsay: Ideally, this process can ignite your board members, or at least most of them, it can remind you about why you do this work. It can refresh your desire to fundraise and help you raise the money that you need to grow. We've a lot more to say about the process of leading a strategic visioning session with your board and we'll work on potential masterclasses for that in the future. But for now, just know that the more conversations that you can have and the more that you can articulate and solidify will reduce chaos and potential conflict in the future.

Lindsay: Okay. Number three, is your board currently actively involved in fundraising? It should be obvious that you need money to hire an Executive Director and may be less obvious, but I'm happy to provide a reminder, is that you need the board to care about this mission enough to fundraise for it. If the board is not fundraising, it could be a sign that the mission simply does not resonate with them. And if your mission does not resonate with people beyond the original founder, you're going to struggle to grow. So this is part of what that strategic visioning work can help you address or might help uncover. But secondly, a lot of organizations hire a new Executive Director thinking that that person is going to magically jumpstart all fundraising. And the truth is if your board members are highly resistant to fundraising before there's an Executive Director, it's not going to get much better when an E.D. is hired, so it's just helpful to keep that in mind.

Lindsay: So if you're in this position of not having actively active fundraisers as board members, one of your first steps is to spend some time growing your army of the engaged. And that's a Joan concept that basically means expanding the networks of people who care about your work, who truly connect to your mission, people who could possibly become new board members or they might even become candidates for the Executive Director role. Practically speaking, this is going to be

necessary in order to raise the funds needed to check off this next question. Do you have at least 12 months' salary in the bank?

Lindsay: We've written about this before, but without a savings reserve for this person's salary, you're setting up any new employee for stress and failure, and this is even more exacerbated with an Executive Director. It sends a message to that person that the board does not value the new employee unless that employee can successfully fundraise for his or her own salary after some time. So the rule of thumb you should stick with is to make no new hires until you have sufficient money in the bank even if that new hire is in a fundraising role. If you lack sufficient reserve engaged independent contractors instead until you save enough. Independent contractors can help you complete what needs to get done but won't have the same permanent allegiance to your organization than a newly hired full-time staff person would. And if the board is still determined to hire an Executive Director, your next challenge is to build the case for this investment and start fundraising. And that's something that's been mentioned before in a few of these other slides.

Lindsay: So the last question was have you considered alternatives to hiring an Executive Director? I want to be clear, I'm not suggesting that you should not hire an Executive Director, but if hiring an Executive Director is never a good idea it makes sense for a lot of organizations. However, a lot of other organizations jump to that stage in development before it's absolutely necessary, and we want to caution you against that. It's important to recognize that hiring an Executive Director is not a frivolous step. Yes, it can make everything a lot easier for your working board members, but if you're not ready, it can create a lot of conflict.

Lindsay: For one, going forward, part of the board's role will be to fundraise for this new salary. And if it's not a vitally important role, it can feel like an extra burden on the board that can actually stop their enthusiasm for fundraising. It can cause a lot of resentment and it can fuel a lot of micromanagement going forward. So the way to avoid this is to develop a very clear case for why the organization needs an Executive Director and what you hope for this new leadership role. Make sure that you've thought through alternatives in earnest. Your funders, for one, will be grateful that you did not leap into spending an additional \$100,000 a year when you could've had the same impact and the same mission achievement by spending only \$25,000 a year. They'll be happy to know that you thought through alternatives and priorities.

Lindsay: Okay. One more thing I want to make clear. It is okay to stay a single-engine jet if it's what everyone wants if it's what feels right. Maybe your organization is destined to have a working board for as long as it exists. A lot of the nonprofit leadership lab is focused on helping you build a thriving twin-engine jet, but if you've been through this assessment and felt that would be hopelessly impossible, I want you to know two things. I'm going to make myself dig for this. Here we go. Okay. First, it's not you. There's a lot of this that is not within your control and it's not a reflection of you and your leadership ability. And second, your nonprofit can contribute in extremely meaningful ways without that governing board model, and we're going to start talking about this more in the lab in general, but for now, I just want to offer that be assurance.

Lindsay: That is the end of video two. Big takeaways, first, these five questions can help you avoid messiness and conflict later. Second, unless there are a critical number of board members who want growth, you're going to need a leader to craft and sell a vision. You're going to need a few board members who are eager for growth and a few more that can be convinced. Number three, you should clarify your strategic

vision with your key board members and your constituents early. Define what matters most to you. Four, put some money in the bank before you hire. Make sure you have at least a year's salary. Five, hiring an Executive Director is a major milestone, so don't rush into it. Consider alternatives and make sure that this really is the best path to achieving the outcomes that you want. And finally, the last point was that it is okay to remain a single-engine jet if that's what everyone wants. It's okay to remain a working board if you've gone through this assessment and realize that's what makes most sense for you. Thanks so much.

Lesson 3: Tips for Success

Lindsay: Hi, this is Lindsay Hoffman and you're joining me for Video Three of our mini master class titled Next Steps for Working Boards. In this video, I'm going to talk through three other big steps along the path towards becoming a governing board and share some tips for navigating them.

Lindsay: We'll talk about just three hot topics, building your reserve of one year's salary. We talked about that in the last video, of how important it was, but now I'm going to share some tips about actually achieving that. Second, who to hire as your first staff person or people. And third, hiring your dream executive director, which I know is a topic on a lot of people's minds.

Lindsay: Jumping into building your reserve of 12 months' salary. I have two tips for you. The first one is based on a mistake that we've seen many, many nonprofits make. You cannot fundraise for money, to pay your executive director's salary.

Lindsay: Anyone outside of your organization, other than the board members who are extremely overworked and desperate for an ED, no one else really cares whether your organization has a paid executive director. It's simply not a milestone that means anything to the rest of the world.

Lindsay: And so, what you need to do here is think about what an executive director will enable you to achieve. You need to paint a vision for what that ED will help you accomplish and you fundraise to support that vision. I think this is a mistake that a lot of nonprofits make because it's hard to rationally see yourself as an outsider does, but also because so many board members are so overworked and so on the verge of burnout, that hiring an executive director does seem like an absolute urgent priority that the entire world should embrace.

Lindsay: But the truth is like other other ... your funders and people outside the organization, they care about what you accomplish. So when you think about making this pitch for more resources, when you think about starting to ramp up your fundraising, start your pitches with more resources, we will be able to.

Lindsay: We'll be able to triple the number of people we enroll. We'll be able to build more partnerships and open a new location. We'll be able to double down on the impact we achieved last year and then grow exponentially from there. And I'm not saying you should never mention the fact that some of the funds will be used to pay new staff and that you're hoping to recruit new leadership to the organization to help you with this, but that you should not lead with that. You need to lead with impact.

Lindsay: So the second tip I have for you is that every time I've written 12 months, I cringe because the truth is your reserve should probably be more like two years' salary, and it's not that your executive director will need two years in order to fundraise any additional money, but that person will likely want to hire a person or two. And having an additional buffer for that will make the transition a lot easier for your new leader.

Lindsay: Okay. Moving on to our next milestone, hiring your first paid staff person or people. So again, I'm going to talk about a mistake that a lot of organizations make. Your first staff hire should probably not be an executive director. For most organizations, that first paid employee should be someone to help you organize, to help you coordinate and fill gaps left by current working board members.

Lindsay: An executive director is a leadership role. It's someone who will share power with your board, and it takes most boards sometime to become ready to share power like that. In the meantime, lot of work needs to be done. So this first hire is someone you can think of to be your managing director, or perhaps coordinator, or chief of staff is a good title, or program director if the role involves running some of your programs.

Lindsay: And in order to get this job description right, it takes some self-awareness to know where your board is dropping balls or where there are gaps that a paid staff person could fill, because ideally, that person helps complete the puzzle, and give some stability to your organization while you gear up to potentially hiring an executive director.

Lindsay: So the most simple way I have of describing the roles and responsibilities is that this person might be running some of your

programs, while also helping with relationship management and administrative responsibilities. You should not be pinning your organization's survival on this person.

Lindsay: This person will be there to help, but not lead, necessarily, or fix major issues. Jumping too quickly into hiring an executive director because so much work needs to be done, is a common mistake. The truth is you can give yourself a lot of time and you can hire other people in the meantime. Okay. Over on to our third milestone, finding and hiring your dream executive director

Lindsay: The common mistake that we want you to avoid here is do not rush in to making this hire. It's really worth holding out for someone who's perfect. Someone who has skills, competencies, attributes that really will support their success and make you comfortable with sharing power. There's so much you can do while you search.

Lindsay: When I say like, "Okay, you're going to wait and hold out for someone perfect," I don't mean sitting and passively waiting for someone to find you, knock on your door and offer you their services. This is about actively building your networks, growing your "army of the engaged," because what that'll do is strengthen your organization and increase the likelihood that you find your dream later.

Lindsay: It's a little bit like dating advice. So a wise woman named Joan Garry wrote a blog post. The link is in the class page, but Five Qualities of a Great Executive Director. And they were authenticity, conviction, joy, humor, and fearlessness. This is what you're looking for in an executive director.

Lindsay: Remember, it's not necessarily what you need in a program director or a coordinator who's going to help you organize your donor database. This is someone that is going to be the leader of your organization and you need to feel good about this moment when you start to share power with that person. I would say that if you are a founder and this is a moment where you're passing the baton to someone new, make sure it's someone you deeply trust, someone you think might actually be able to do the job better than you. It's really important that you feel great about this person.

Lindsay: This is where taking the time to articulate your organization's core values, something I mentioned back in Video Two, is really important. Once you know what your core values are, it will be easier to find someone who is aligned with you. And remember, finding a really strong and really great executive director does not make the board any meeker. In fact, a very strong executive director is going to make the board stronger.

Lindsay: And now is a great time to remind you, another Joan Garry bit of wisdom that should just resonate in the back of your head at all times. "The most important ingredient in a thriving nonprofit is a strong relationship between Board Chair and Executive Director."

Lindsay: So as intentional as you are in finding and hiring the perfect executive director, be extremely intentional about who you place in that cockpit with the ED. Make sure you have a board chair who's absolutely in love with the organization and has the right skills and attributes, and attitude and enthusiasm to share the leadership with the executive director, because remember, this is going to be a partnership and you need both of them excited and aligned.

Lindsay: So that's the end of Video Three. Here are the big takeaways. First, don't fundraise for money to hire an executive director or to pay anyone's salary. You always need to be thinking impact. What will an executive director enable you to achieve?

Lindsay: Second, your first paid staff hire should fill gaps and improve the board's productivity, unless you're ready to truly share power. In any case, don't rush into hiring an executive director. Grow your "army of the engaged" while you search. And finally, be very intentional about the board chair you put into the cockpit with a new ED, because this new executive director of success is going to depend on it.

Lindsay: Because this is the final video in the series, I want to leave you with some final notes. There are two recurring themes that have appeared in each of these videos.

Lindsay: First, the importance of clarifying your vision for the organization's future. Long before you hire an executive director, it's really important that the founder, the working board members, the people who care most about this organization, take the time to articulate what is most important about what you do. Take the time to articulate your values, your core purpose, and what your hopes and dreams are for the future. This is going to energize your existing board and also make it more likely that you find new board members and eventually an executive director that are aligned with you.

Lindsay: Secondly, a vision that helps explain why an executive director and governing board are needed will help you fundraise. Remember that

hiring an executive director and having a governing board are not ends in themselves, they are means to an end. They're means to a fantastic impact that you hope to have on the world, so you need to focus on painting a vivid picture of that impact; and remember that this needs to happen before you hire an executive director, just to give yourself a foundation and a better chance at finding someone who's fundamentally aligned with you.

Lindsay: And the related point is that this will demand leadership. Maybe it'll just be from one person or maybe from several people, but building an institution that lasts requires leaders from the start, and you can't wait until an executive director is hired to begin making hard decisions and building enthusiasm and passion for what could be achieved.

Lindsay: You're going to need to start fundraising early and you're going to need to tap into what's most important about this organization to do that, and someone ... It's usually the case that one or two people need to step up and lead the other through that.

Lindsay: Finally, I want to direct you to the masterclass page for links to a whole slew of related resources. We offer deeper dives into hiring a great executive director, the roles and responsibilities and how they're divided between executive directors and board chairs.

Lindsay: It is specifically for nonprofit founders, and you can imagine that founders have a unique set of challenges and decisions to make when it comes to this process, and more.



Lindsay: So, thank you so much for joining and I look forward to discussing with everyone in the Village soon. Cheers.

♥ Visit us at nonprofitleadershiplab.com

© NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP LAB, LLC



Next Steps for Working Boards

With Lindsay Hoffman,
for the Nonprofit Leadership Lab

Topics covered in this Masterclass

Video 1:

- *Working Board* vs *Governing Board* explained
- One pathway towards *Governing*
- Two major milestones

Video 2:

- Big questions before you start

Video 3:

- Tips for navigating along the way

Definitions

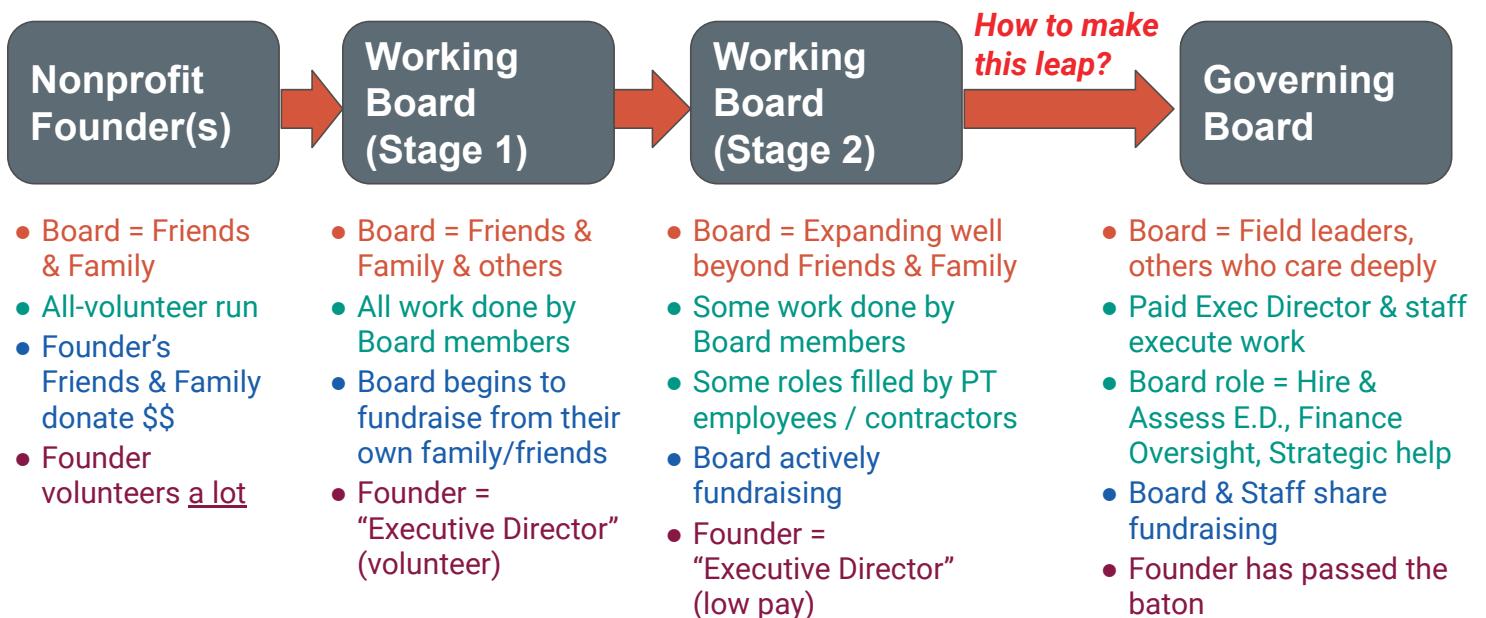
Working Board = Members do all/much of the program & administrative work themselves.

Governing Board = Members drive fundraising, provide oversight, and lead at 10,000 foot level. Executive Director & Staff are paid to execute the organization's mission.

Countless variations in:

- Who's on the board?
- Who's doing all of the direct program & admin work?
- Who's driving the fundraising, and who are your donors?
- What's the role of the founder?

One Pathway from Working to Governing Board



Two most significant milestones



**Recruiting
1st Board
Members
who expect a
Governing
Board**



**Hiring a
Paid
Executive
Director**

Big Takeaways from Video 1

1. Many nonprofits begin with a Board where the members do a LOT (or all) of the work.
2. Many different pathways towards becoming a thriving nonprofit with a “two-engine jet” - where 1 engine is a Governing Board.
3. Two significant milestones:
 - a. Hiring a paid Executive Director
 - b. Recruiting Board Members who expect to “Govern,” not “Work”

Video 2:

★ Is your organization ready to pursue those big milestones?

Are You Ready to Pursue Those Big Milestones?

- ☐ Do your Board members even want to transition from being on a Working Board to a Governing Board?
- ☐ Are your key Board leaders aligned on their vision for the future?
- ☐ Is your Board actively involved in fundraising for the organization?
- ☐ Do you have at least 12 months' salary already in the bank?
- ☐ Have you considered alternatives to hiring an Executive Director?

Why bother with this exercise?

- Illuminate the groundwork that you can lay now, to
 - **Avoid messiness**
 - **Avoid conflict**
 - **Ensure your growth is sustainable**

What proportion of your board members want to become a Governing Board?

Why is this important?

- If **zero** members want to give up their “Working Board” roles... developing into a Governing Board might be nearly impossible.

Someone will need to lead, with a vision for what a Governing Board could accomplish.

- Some “Working Board” hold-outs are fine!
 - Over time you’ll want them to step off, while staying supportive.

Are key Board leaders aligned on vision for the future?

Why is this important?

- So you can hire an Executive Director and recruit new Board Members who are aligned with you about the fundamentals - whatever those are.

Take time with your board (+ key constituents) to talk this out.

- Plan a period of reflection and strategic visioning, to clarify your core purpose, your values, what's the most important thing?
 - Remind you WHY you do this work, before it becomes more complex
 - Re-energize you, help you raise the resources you need to grow.

Is Board actively involved in fundraising?

Why is this important?

- You need \$\$ to hire an Executive Director (obviously).
- You need the Board to care about this mission enough to fundraise for it.
 - Your mission must resonate with others beyond the Founder.
 - If board members aren't fundraising before you hire an E.D., it's unlikely they'll fundraise with an E.D. at the helm.

Focus on Growing Your Army of the Engaged.

- Seek new board members who care deeply about the mission

Do you have at least 12 months' salary in the bank?

Why is this important?

- Without \$\$, you're setting up new employee for stress and failure.
- Sends a message = the board doesn't value this new employee.

Make no new hires until you have \$\$ in the bank (even if new hire is in a fundraising role!)

- If you lack sufficient reserve, engage independent contractors instead.
- If still determined to hire an Executive Director, then your next challenge is to build the case for this investment and start fundraising.

Have you considered alternatives to hiring an ED?

Why is this important?

- Important to recognize that hiring an E.D. is not a frivolous step.
- Going forward, part of the Board's role will be to fundraise for this new salary. This can feel like a burden, if it's not a vitally important role.

Develop a clear case for why the organization needs an E.D.

- Think through alternatives, in earnest.

One more note:

It's OKAY to stay a single-engine jet.

Big Takeaways from Video 2

1. These 5 questions can help you avoid messiness and conflict later.
2. Unless a critical number of board members want growth, you need a leader to craft and sell a VISION.
3. Clarify your strategic vision with key board and constituents EARLY.
4. \$\$ in the bank *before* you hire!
5. Hiring an Executive Director is a major milestone - so don't rush in!
6. It's okay to remain a single-engine jet, if it's what everyone wants.

Video 3:

Other big steps & tips for navigating them

- ★ Building your reserve of one year's salary
- ★ Your first staff person (or people)
- ★ Hiring your dream Executive Director

Milestone:

Building reserve of 12 months' salary

You cannot fundraise for \$\$ to pay your Executive Director.

- Think IMPACT.
- You need a vision for what an Executive Director will enable the organization to achieve... Raise funds to support *that vision*.
- "With more resources, we will be able to..."

Also, sorry to say, but reserve should = more like 2 years' salary.

Milestone: Your first staff person (or people)

Your 1st staff hire should not be an Executive Director.

- Many organizations' first employee is someone to help organize, coordinate, and fill gaps left by current working board members.
- Maybe a *Program Director* or *Chief of Staff* or *Coordinator* or *Managing Director*
- Roles & Responsibilities:
 - Running some of your programs, while also helping with relationship management and administrative responsibilities.

BIG Milestone: Finding & hiring your Dream Executive Director

Don't rush into selecting an Executive Director.

- Hold out for someone you believe in, with the skills, competencies, and attributes that will support success.
- Grow your "army of the engaged" while you search.
- **Five Qualities of Great Executive Director¹**
 - Authenticity, Conviction, Joy, Humor, Fearlessness
 - Shares your organization's core values

¹ "Five Attributes of a Great Executive Director," Joan Garry's Blog (www.joangarry.com)

BIG Milestone: Finding & hiring your Dream Executive Director

- Hiring a GREAT ED doesn't mean the Board becomes weaker!

The most important ingredient in a thriving nonprofit is a strong relationship between Board Chair and ED.

- Be intentional about who you put in the cockpit.
- Make sure your Board Chair is in love with the organization and has the right skills and attributes to share leadership with the ED

Big Takeaways from Video 3

1. Don't fundraise for \$\$ to hire an Executive Director.
2. Think IMPACT. What will an Executive Director enable the organization to achieve?
3. Your 1st hire should fill gaps + improve the Board's productivity - unless you're ready to share power!
4. Don't rush into hiring an ED. Grow your "army of the engaged" while you search.
5. Be intentional about the Board Chair you put into the cockpit with the new E.D.

SOME FINAL NOTES

Some recurring themes:

- Clarifying your vision for the organization's future, and why an Executive Director and Governing Board are needed.
- The need for leadership, long before an Executive Director is hired.

Links to related resources on the Masterclass page, for deeper dives into:

- Hiring a great Executive Director
- Division of roles between E.D. and Board Chair
- Tips specifically for nonprofit FOUNDERS
- ... and more!

Resources to Learn More

Other Resources to Help!

NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP LAB

- ❑ [Five-Star Governance Template](#)
- ❑ Masterclass: [Whose job is it anyway? ED or Board Chair](#)
- ❑ Quick Win: [90-day Roadmap for new Development Director](#)
- ❑ Quick Win: [90-day Roadmap for new Executive Director](#)
- ❑ Quick Win: [Board Committees](#)

JOAN'S BLOG (JOANGARRY.COM)

- ❑ [Founder's Syndrome and How to Avoid It](#)
- ❑ [5 Attributes of a Great Executive Director](#)
- ❑ [The Roles and Responsibilities of Board Chair and Executive Director](#)
- ❑ [10 Common Mistakes Boards Make when Hiring an Executive Director](#)



TERMS OF USE

COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

Full terms of use for all Lab content can be found on the Lab's website:
<https://members.nonprofitleadershiplab.com/terms-and-condition>

OVERVIEW

By using nonprofitleadershiplab.com, referred to as this "Site", all visitors, referred to as "user", "you" and "your" are bound by these Terms and Conditions. The terms "we," "us," and "our" refer to Nonprofit Leadership Lab, LLC (the "Company"), owner of nonprofitleadershiplab.com.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

In respect of the Material specifically created for the Client as part of this Membership, including modules, videos, documents, or other content (known collectively as the "Material"), the Company maintains all of the copyright, other intellectual property rights and any other data or material used or subsisting in the Material whether finished or unfinished. Nothing in this Agreement shall transfer ownership of or rights to any intellectual property of the Company to the Client, nor grant any right or license other than those stated in this Agreement.

Client may not modify, publish, transmit, participate in the transfer or sale of, create derivative works from, distribute, display, reproduce or perform, or in any way exploit in any format whatsoever any of the Website, content or intellectual property, in whole or in part without our prior written consent. Any unauthorized copying, reverse engineering, redistribution, reproduction, publication or modification of Website content by any person without Company's prior written authorization is strictly prohibited, may be a violation of federal or common law, trademark, and copyright laws and may subject such a violator to legal action.

© 2020 Nonprofit Leadership Lab, LLC. All rights reserved.

