

Moving from Good To Great: Practical Steps toward an Engaged & High Performing Board

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**Take Five Nonprofit
Leadership Conference
May 16, 2023**

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Good Advisors, LLC**

Cindy Cheatham, President, Good Advisors

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- Good Advisors Nonprofit consultancy
- Georgia Center for Nonprofits VP of Consulting and Governance Trainer
- Service on a dozen community boards
- Strategy, Governance, Organizational development, Leadership coaching, Partnerships & more

Agenda

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- The Importance & Benefits of Board Service
- Board Roles & Performance Overview
- A Better Board in 4 Key Steps
- Guest Speaker, Paula Goodman, Board leader
- Q&A & Resources

Housekeeping

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- Welcome guests
- Please stay alert for audience participation (use chat to answer if online)
- Be ready for Q&A
- Challenge you to take 1 action and to share (in chat with fellow participants)
- Slides and recording will be sent after workshop
- Any follow-up questions not addressed during workshop can be sent to Cindy Cheatham at cindy@good-advisors.com to address

Importance and Benefits of Board Service

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- Connections to a different network of people to enrich your life experience
- Opportunities for learning
- Leadership development opportunities
- Opportunity for impacting lives and improving your community

**Governance
Matters &
the role is
demanding
& complex**

- Pandemic Pivoting
- Competition for talent and dollars - Quiet quitting & remote workforce
- DE&I
- Inflation & Recession

Nonprofit Organization Model

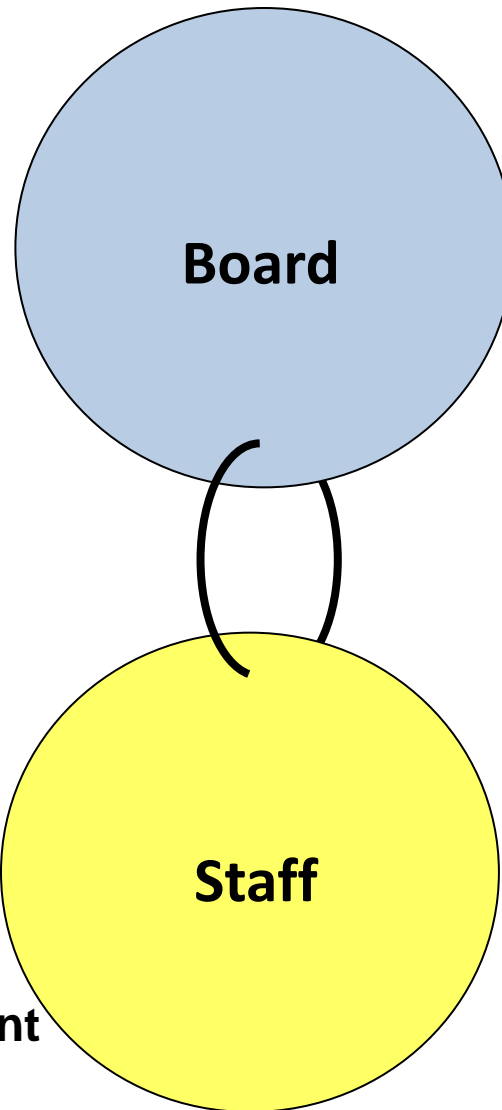
Governance & Mission-Impact

- Strategy
- Funding
- Financial
- Board Development
- Ex Dir Accountability
- Policy

CEO/Executive Director Linking Pin Role

Operations

- Staff Leadership
- Service Delivery
- Day-to-Day Functions
- Community Engagement
- Volunteers



Advisory Board
Expertise
Reputation

How are Boards Doing?

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Figure 1. Board Report Card: Grades



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

Poll

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Q: How do you evaluate your board's overall performance right now?

- ☐ A
- ☐ B
- ☐ C

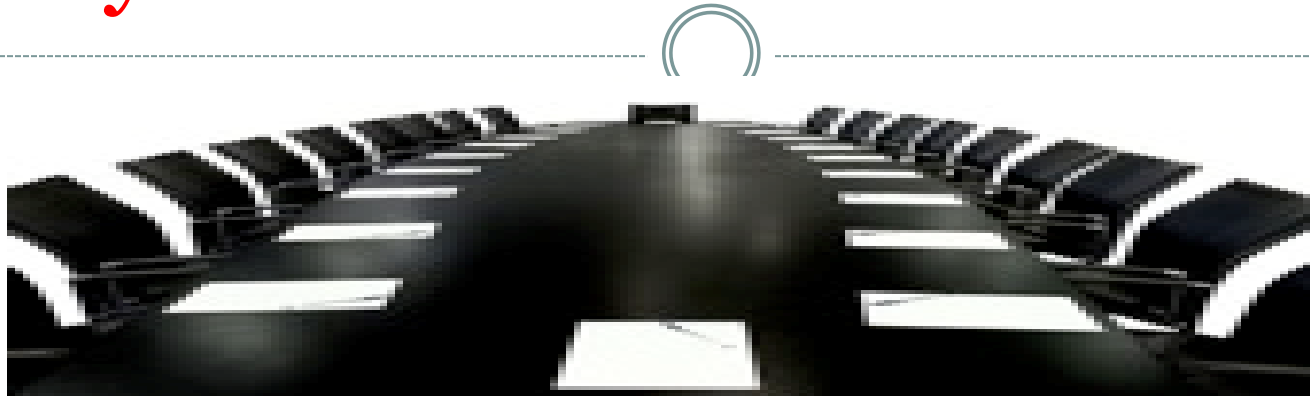
Audience Engagement

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- Rapid Fire - What gets in the way of stronger board performance?

(Online please send in the chat)

Why Do Boards Under-Perform?



Role confusion/complexity

Time and lack of leadership to engage & structure

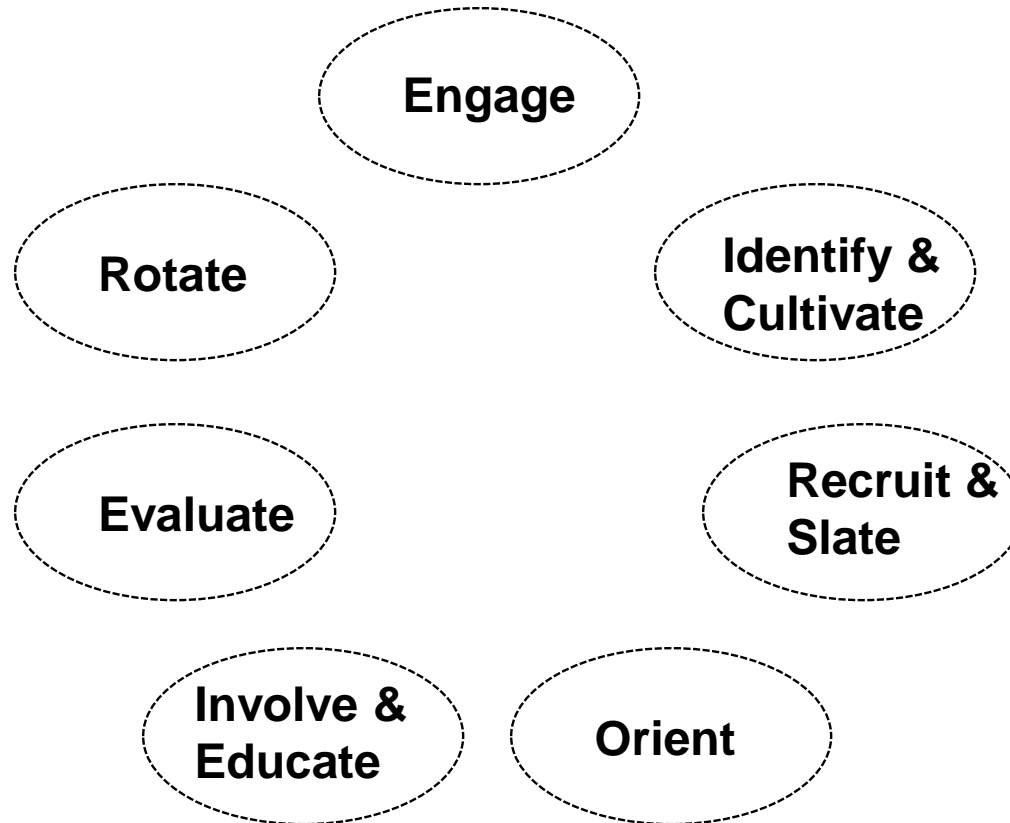
Sense of value and meaning

Little concerted effort to “develop” and “refresh”

Board not evolving & changing as needed

Not intentional attention to board culture & process

Governance is an Active Management Process – Are you paying attention?



Better Board in 4 Key Steps*



- Step One: Find Your Focus
- Step Two: Structure for Success
- Step Three: Marshall More Talent
- Step Four: Build Working Relationships

*Materials from GCN.org authored by Neil Sklarew, GCN Consultant: A Better Board Primer in 4 Steps

Step 1: Find Your Focus



- Why are we here? What does success look like?
- How does the board need to focus given the current context of the organization?
- How do we hold ourselves accountable (no more than 5 things)



* Use simple Board self-assessment tool to help identify priorities

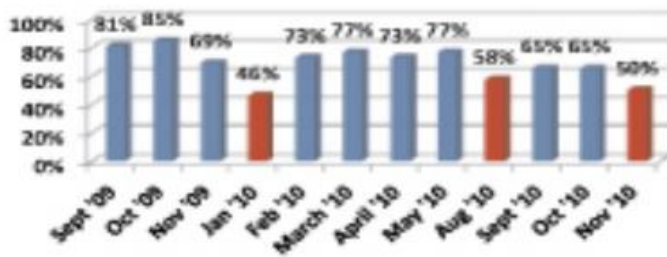
Examples of Focus

Organization Context or Challenge	Board Focus
Founding or Long-time ED retiring	Board Leadership for succession planning including Stepping up in Transition
Organizational growth	Board engagement to support growth initiatives including increased funding or creative staffing models
Financial Challenges	Partner with CEO to work on organizational restructure or cost savings; support costs of fundraising plan

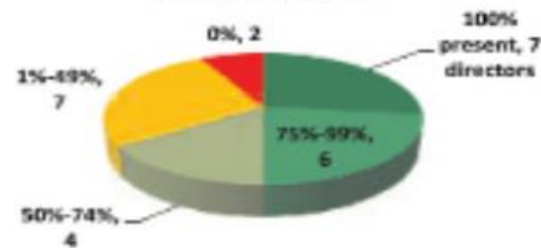
Dashboard

ACME Nonprofit for Everything Good Board of Directors Dashboard as of January 2011

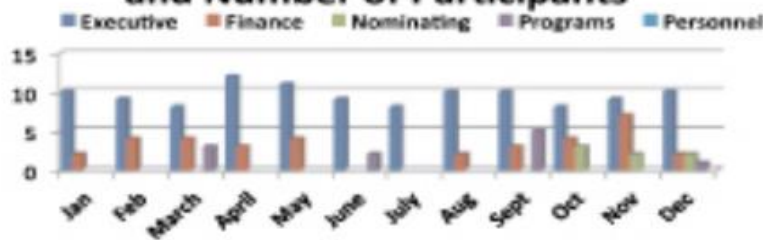
Board Meeting Attendance (26 members; 9 meetings per year)



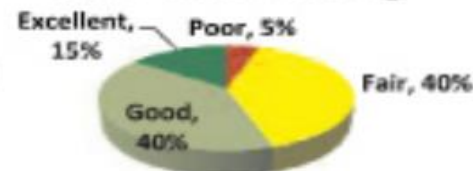
Individual Member Attendance



Committee Meetings and Number of Participants



Overall Rating of Last Board Meeting



Director Contributions



Priority	Organization Goal/Objective	Status
A	ACME is growing its programs and services	
5	Innovate new and improved activities	
2	Recruit/retain necessary volunteers	
1	Reach an increasing number of participants	
9	Maintain funding commensurate with service delivery	
10	Validate workplan initiatives against expected results	
B	ACME's policy voice is sought out and influential on "Everything Good"	
3	Be the primary source for data, policy examples, and best practices information	
8	Educate key decisionmakers	

Other Board Actions:

- 100% completed the annual COI disclosure
- 49% sent advocacy letters in 2010
- 35% attended most recent community information event

Step 2: Structure for Success



- Define Leadership Roles & Responsibilities
- Assess & restructure: charter committees for ongoing work or taskforces for project work
- Committee charters to define role, composition, decision-authority, operations, & collaborating mechanisms
- Match talent to roles
- Committees create annual goal(s) for focus

Structure for Success



- 3-5 committees for 12-18 person board
- Create Board Development committee
- Other common committees
 - Finance
 - Development/Fundraising
 - Executive
- Common Taskforces
 - Succession/Transition
 - Capital Campaign
 - Strategic planning

Step 3: Marshall More Talent



- Develop leader pipeline
- Assess board size & composition using matrix & board focus
- Organize strategic Board Nominations to recruit for:
 - Leadership
 - Profile of skills, experience & roles
 - Organization/people target

Marshall More Talent



- Orient new members about
 - The organization (mission, strategy, budget, field)
 - The people (board and staff)
 - The role of the board and committee, task force or leadership roles where they can contribute
- Assign new members to best meet organizational needs to their interests/preferences
 - Mentoring support for new leaders
 - Help new members find their place and to identify how they can make an impact
- Recognize, reward and support board contributions

Step 4: Build Working Relationships



- Build common understanding of board & CEO role including lines of authority, mechanisms for building trust and collaboration in areas of co-leadership
- Select board chair with mutual CEO agreement

Build Working Relationships

Invest to build productive relationships between board and staff leadership:

- Define and communicate leadership roles for board members and the ED
- Develop and agree to distinct performance expectations; Agree to ED evaluation and board evaluation (against board agreement & periodic assessment)

Build Working Relationships



- Define leadership roles for board & ED:
 - invest in developing clarity of roles of authority (e.g. decisionmaker, recommender, input),
 - discuss expectations of focus for time, and clarify role with relationships
- The ED and board should both conduct reviews to be accountable to their roles with each party
 - Board member assessment (annual or significant evaluation at least every 2 years) includes CEO review
 - ED performance review (annual) – ED self-review and Board review of the Executive Director

Build Working Relationships



Establish expectations for creating an environment and mechanisms to encourage honest, constructive communication

Build Working Relationships



- *“Zone of Accommodation”*: “zone” provides space for adaptation & compromise when questions arise
- *Constructive meddling*: Board members gain an intimate understanding of the organization by taking tours, surveying programs, volunteering and asking questions
- *Attend to process*: Ask questions about how power is exercised, how people are kept informed, how meetings are conducted. This helps reinforce and strengthen relationships.

Board Action Challenge



- What is one step you will take to bring action from this workshop to your board or to your board leadership?

*Start with a PlusDelta at board meetings as a quick way to get started with self-assessment

Q&A



Resources

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- Good Advisor Simple Board Self-assessment*
 - Sample Boardsource Board Covenant
 - Sample BOD Performance Matrix
 - Twelve Principles of Exceptional Boards
 - Boardsource Leading with Intent
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- *Start with a PlusDelta at board meetings as a quick way to get started with self-assessment

Thank you

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