



Building High-Impact Boards

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October 9, 2025

Associations West ** Capital Summit

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What makes a Board “great?”

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Agenda

- High-Performing Boards: What They Have in Common
- Preparing Your Board for Success
- Doing Business Together: How Effectively Does Your Board Make Decisions?
- Key Takeaways



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High Performing Boards....

- Define and model shared values
- Use data, not relationships, to inform decision-making
- Come prepared for meetings, informed about issues
- Understand their leadership role and the visibility it brings
- Learn and grow along their journey
- Agree to healthy debate in the boardroom, speak with one voice outside it



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Wait, there's more....

- Voice the interests of their constituency; then vote to advance what is in the best interests of the organization
- Apply a spirit of partnership in working with staff
- Focus on the “why” and “what” and leave the how to staff



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Preparing Your Board for Success

- Building the Leadership Pipeline
- On Boarding/Orientations
- Building in Accountability



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The Tools of Leading Practice

A Commitment to Leadership Development

An Investment in Ongoing Board Training

Mentor Programs

Retreats that Build Community

Time for Environmental Scanning and Learning New Tools

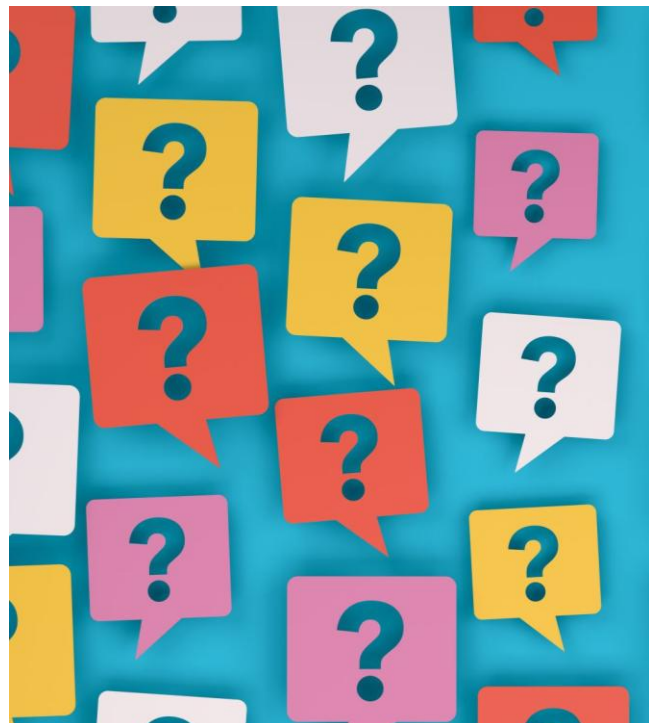
- Board Orientations that share big picture strategy, how leaders fit, and the structure of governance
- Adopting technology that ensures accountability and collaboration
- Building Strategic Agendas
- Board Resource Handbook

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Communication for Understanding

What story are you telling?

Pictures say a thousand words.



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Association Roles as a Bicycle

Back Wheel

- Propels work
- Tactical/operations
- Staff – Committee work
- Plans
- Budgets
- Implementation

CEO

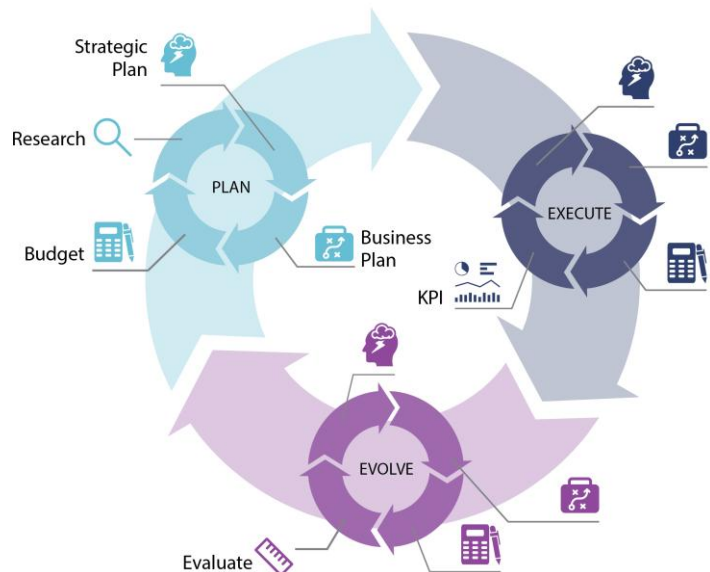
Bridges the front and back wheels

Board - Front Wheel

- Provides direction
- Strategy
- Mission
- Vision
- Values
- Goals
- Evaluation



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Effective Decision-Making: The Heart of a High-Performing Board

- Are decisions data driven?
- Are board members informed and invested in sharing diverse views?
- Does the conversation stay strategic?
- Do volunteer bodies understand how they relate? Eg Committees recommend, boards decide
- Do the CEO and staff engage with the Board as partners?
- Are decisions made around the board table or are shadow governance forces at work?



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Now it's Your Turn

Shadow Governance Scenario

- Riverside Community Center must cut \$50,000 from the budget—either reduce staff hours or eliminate two youth programs.
- Before the board meeting, Chair Maria calls her longtime friend Tom, a fellow board member: "I'm leaning toward cutting the youth programs. If we present a united front, the rest will follow. Can you loop in Janet?"



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Now it's Your turn

The Result

- At the meeting, Maria, Tom, and Janet arrive aligned. Other board members notice the predetermined outcome. Alternative ideas are dismissed. A board member with youth program expertise stays silent.
- The vote passes 5-3.



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What's the Damage?

The Problems

- Decisions made outside meetings exclude voices and expertise
- "Inner circle" dynamics erode trust
- Board members disengage when they can't influence outcomes

ACTION: Discuss how new ideas come to the board, call out shadow governance when it's happening.



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Final Takeaways

Apply and discuss Board Self-Assessment Results

Leadership Development and Board Training Make a Difference

Build a Board Skill in Managing Conflict

Celebrate Culture and Strong Values

- Make values visible, name the behaviors when they happen

Build Strategic Agendas

- Invite outside perspectives, good questions

Use technology to your advantage

- Online Board Management tool (tells you who's engaged)



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Any Questions?

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