

Broken Engagement: Why Has Our Board Checked Out? How Do We Fix It?

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ARTSFUND



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- Board Development
- Strategic Planning
- Executive Coaching
- Training & Facilitation
- Board – Arts Alliance Illinois



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Agenda

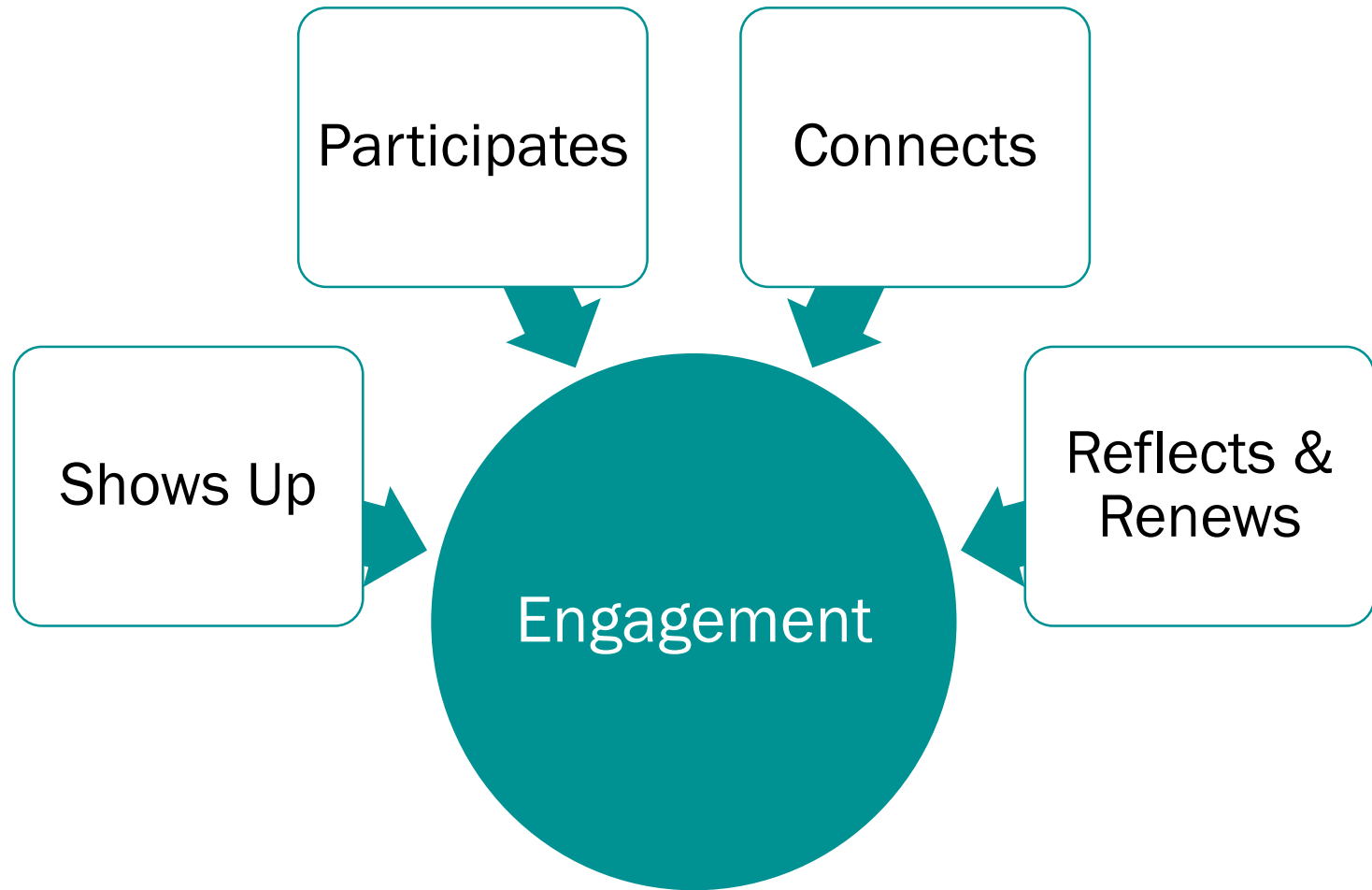
- What Is Board Engagement?
- When Does It Break Down?
- Why Does It Break Down?
- How Can You Fix It?
- Situations When Boards Disengage
- Action Plan

Audience Poll

Tell us about your primary role:

- ☐ Non-profit CEO
- ☐ Board Chair
- ☐ Soon to be Board Chair
- ☐ Senior staff
- ☐ Board officer
- ☐ Consultant

The Engaged Board



The Engaged Board

Shows Up

- Board and committee meetings
- Events
- Funder meetings
- Community meetings

The Engaged Board

Actively Participates

- Personal contribution
- Healthy debate
- Leads board, committee or task force
- Enhances culture

The Engaged Board

Connects

- Recruits board members
- Identifies donors
- Asks for donations
- Attracts other resources
- Advocates for mission
- Develops positive board relationships

The Engaged Board

Reflects and Renews

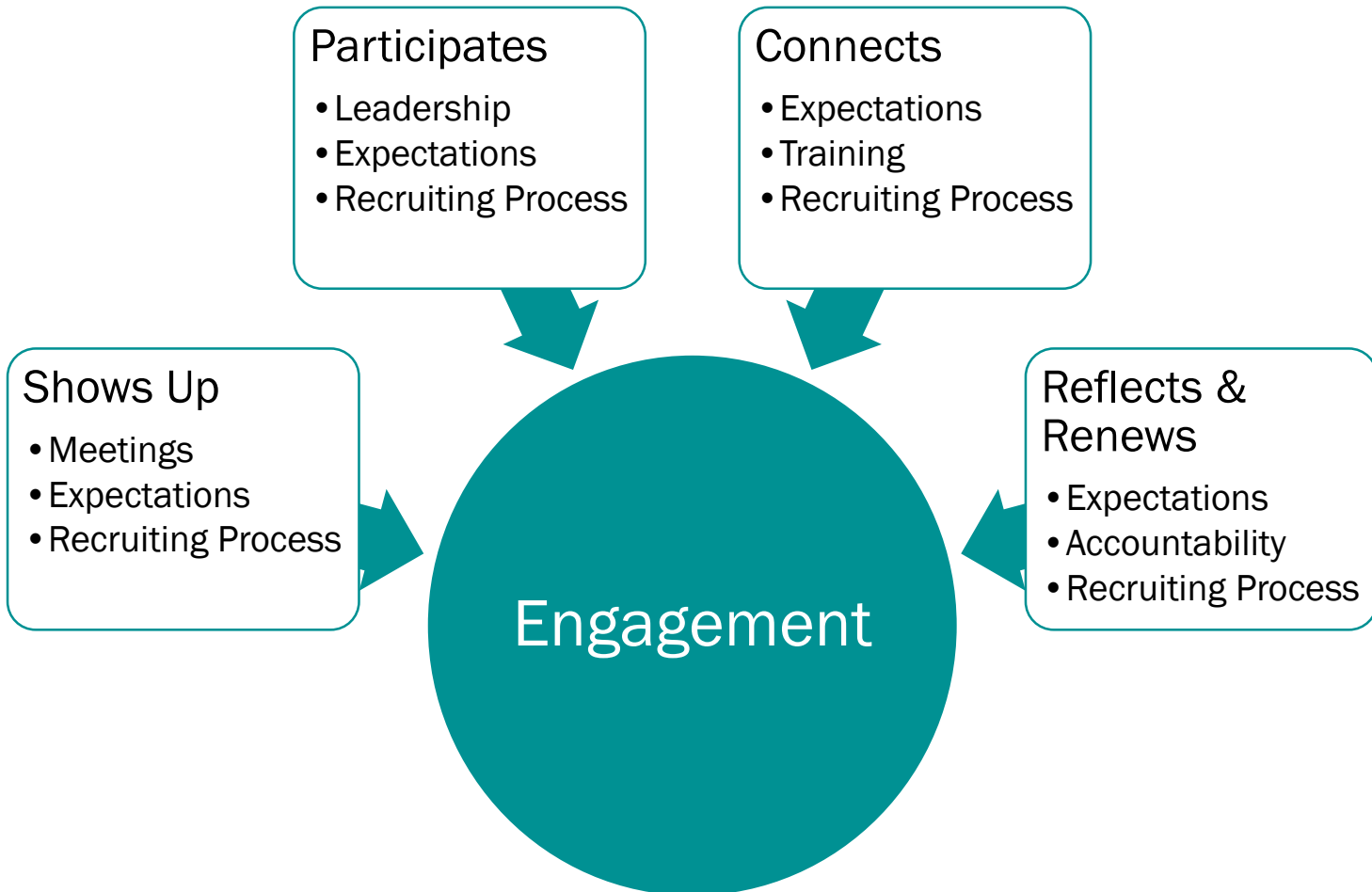
- Recruiting process
- Orientation
- Assessments
- Structure and design
- Retreats
- Exit Interview

Audience Poll

My board's primary engagement challenge is:

- ☐ Showing Up
- ☐ Active Participation
- ☐ Connecting Resources
- ☐ Reflecting and Renewing

How to Enhance Engagement



Walk In Your Board's Shoes





**Is it
exciting
or
scary?**



**Are you blazing
new trails or**

stuck in the mud?

**Can they stop and
smell the roses or do
they run from the
stench?**



Do
the
shoes
fit?



Audience Poll

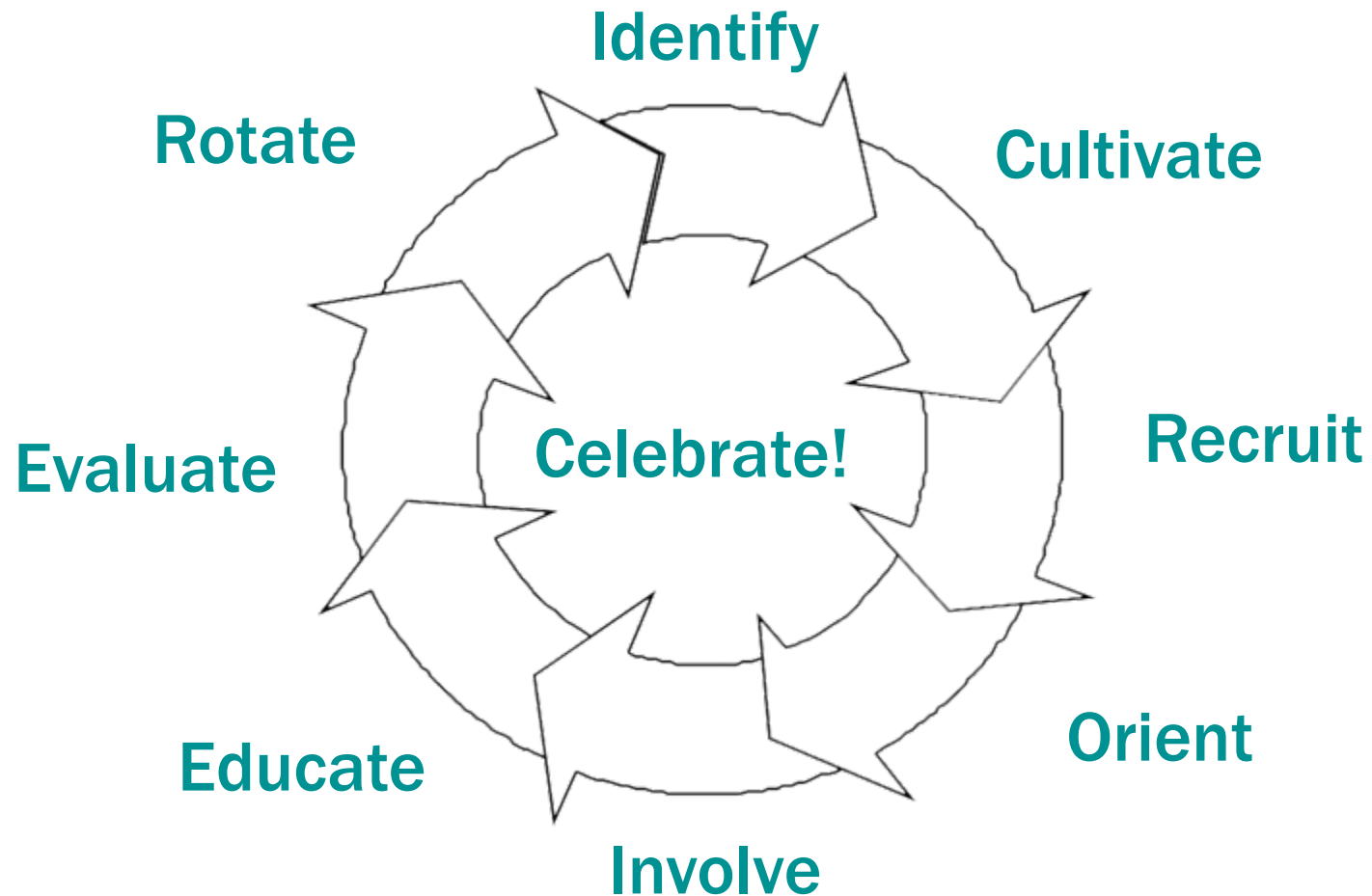
My board's overall operations can be described as:

- ☐ Highly functional
- ☐ Good, but could be stronger
- ☐ Neither good nor bad
- ☐ Showing signs of stress
- ☐ Highly dysfunctional



Questions?

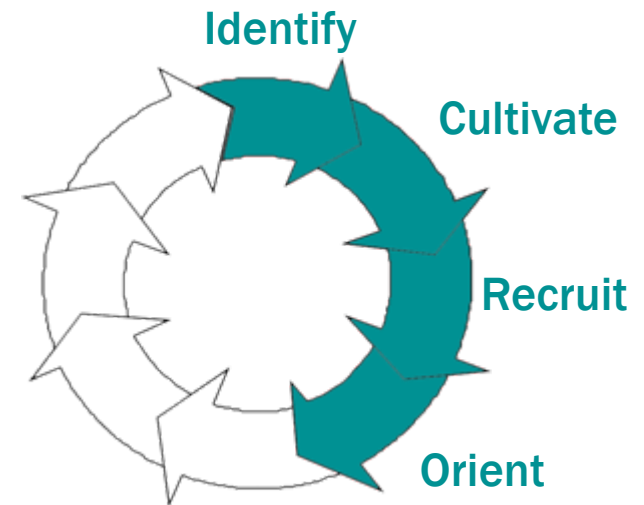
When Does It Break Down?



When Engagement Breaks Down

Before Their First Meeting Why

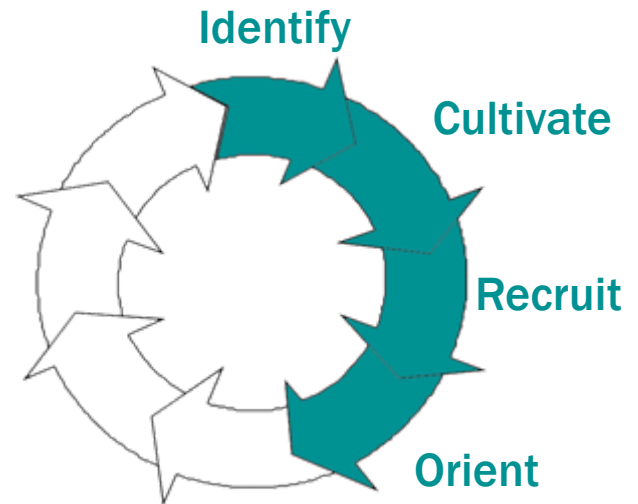
- Small candidate pool
- Limited number of entry points
- Poor fit
- Lack of clarity about expectations
- Too many members
- Poor onboarding
- No process or poorly executed process



How to Enhance Engagement

Before Their First Meeting

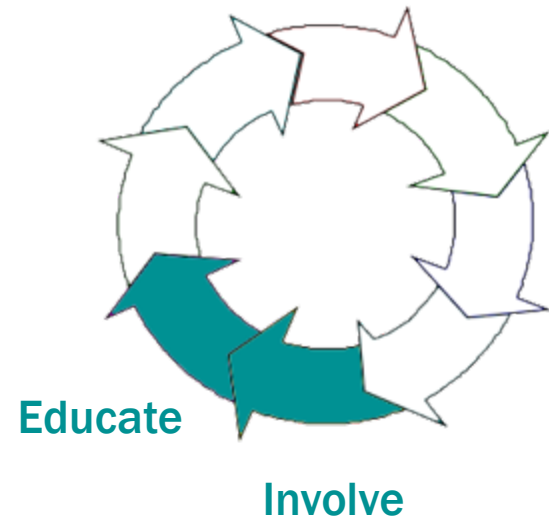
- Generate large pool of prospects
- Multiple entry points
- Screen thoroughly
- Rightsize
- Honesty about expectations
- Invest in orientation and training
- Have a process - Do not skip a step



When Engagement Breaks Down

During Meetings

Why



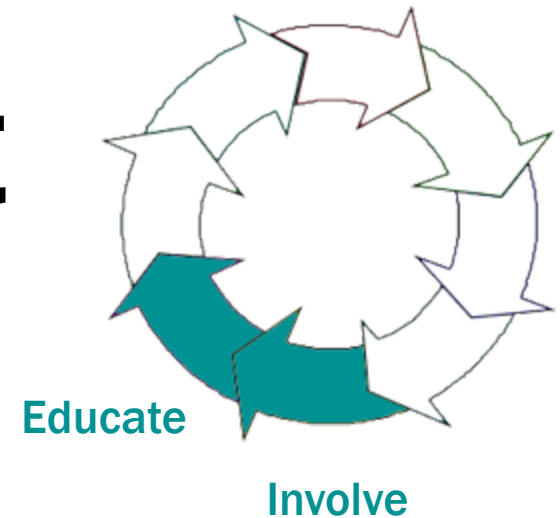
Accountability & Behaviors

- Ineffective leadership–Chair and/or CEO
- Poor recognition
- Lack of team building
- Bad behavior/toxic culture

Content & Design

- Committees not functioning
- Boring and trivial
- Lack of balance
 - Fiduciary vs. Generative
 - Operations vs. Governance
 - Reporting vs. Discussing
 - Concentrated vs. Shared Leadership

How to Enhance Engagement During Meetings



Accountability & Behaviors

- Shared and dynamic leadership
- Culture of inquiry
- Team building
- Individual recognition
- Model good behavior
- Have fun

Content & Design

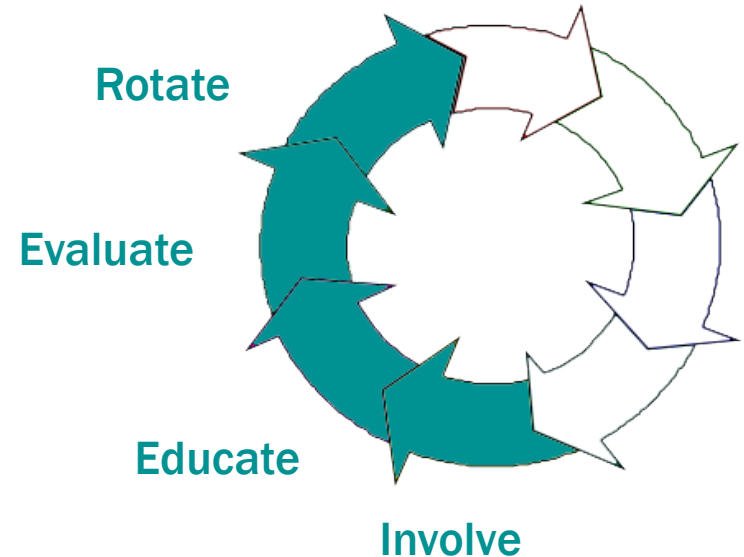
- Committees functioning
- Dashboards
- Mission moment
- Educate vs. report
- Generative thinking
- Link to strategic plan
- Appropriate time allocations

When Engagement Breaks Down

After and Between Meetings

Why

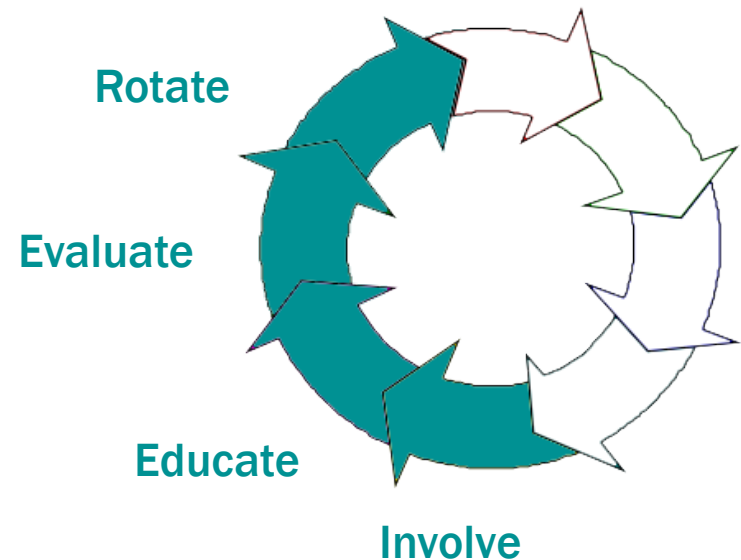
- Lack of accountability
- Concentrated leadership
- Ineffective leadership–
Chair and/or CEO
- Committees not functioning
- Lack of team building
- Poor recognition
- Bad behavior/toxic culture



How to Enhance Engagement

After and Between Meetings

- Actions tied to strategic plan
- Shared leadership
- High performing leadership
- Accountability
- Committees functioning
- Relationship building
- Individual recognition
- Model good behavior
- Have fun



Audience Poll

**My Board's engagement
breaks down:**

- ☐ Before the first meeting
- ☐ During the meetings
- ☐ After the meetings
- ☐ At every stage

Situations When Boards Disengage

- Leadership transitions
- Board Chair and/or CEO dysfunction
- Before and after major fundraising events
- Organizational transitions
- Resistance to change
- Financial crises
- Others?



Your To-Do List

- ☐ What have I done this week to engage my board?
- ☐ Evaluate engagement before, during and after meetings
- ☐ Develop strategies for specific situations
- ☐ What are the activities that will have an impact 3 months, 1 year, 3 year and 5 years from now?
- ☐ Checklist for an engaged board

Resources

BoardSource:

1. The Board Building Cycle: Nine Steps to Finding, Recruiting, and Engaging Nonprofit Board Members
2. Meeting, and Exceeding Expectations: A Guide to Successful Nonprofit Board Meetings
3. Boardroom Chemistry – Getting Your Board to Govern As A Team
4. Recruiting a Stronger Board
5. Getting on Board with Effective Orientation

General:

1. Meetings Suck by Cameron Herold
2. Death By Meeting by Patrick Lencioni

Summary

- Keeping your board engaged is hard work
- It begins with the recruiting process
- Distribute accountability throughout the board
- Build it into the board's culture, values and activities



Questions?



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