

Optimizing the Board Chair – CEO Relationship

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



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Agenda

Why is it important?

Why does it fall apart?

What makes it work?

Key Elements

Action Plan



Audience Poll

Tell us about yourself:

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

Audience Poll

My organization's Board Chair-CEO relationship is:

- ☐ Highly effective
 - ☐ Good, but could be stronger
 - ☐ Showing signs of stress
 - ☐ Highly dysfunctional
 - ☐ In transition
- (New Board Chair and/or CEO)

Why is this relationship so important?

- Impact on staff/volunteers
- Influence on board
- Connections with external stakeholders
- Culture
- Mission





Why does it fall apart?

Structure & Process

- Natural tension
- Lack of positive role models
- Lack of succession plan
- Frequent turnover
- Poor training

Behavior & Communication

- Static leadership styles
- Misunderstanding roles
- Disconnected

Warning Signs

- Unilateral decisions
- Weak discussions of issues
- Lack of disclosure



Warning Signs

- Action without feedback
- Interaction only at meetings
- Demoralized or disengaged board



Fresh Mindset

Unwrap the Gift of the Board

- Partnership
- Activate leaders
- Offline conversations
- Elevate strengths
- Target weaknesses



Understand Roles

Board Chair

- Lead and manage board
- Activate the board
- Focus on governance
- Develop & monitor strategy
- Financial oversight
- Revenue generation strategy
- Supports & evaluates CEO

CEO

- Lead and manage staff
- Support the board
- Focus on operations
- Develop & execute strategy
- Financial execution
- Revenue generation strategy and execution
- CEO reports to the board

Shared Roles & Responsibilities

Mission-focus
Strategic Planning
Board Priorities
Resource Development
Advocacy

What is the challenge in sharing?

How do you maintain balance?

Expectations

Board Chair

To govern more and manage less

CEO

To manage more and govern less

A photograph of a railway track with a crossing, overlaid with a teal gradient. The word "Questions?" is written in large, bold, black font across the center of the image. The tracks are made of wooden sleepers and metal rails, and the crossing is visible in the distance. The overall tone is contemplative and open-ended.

Questions?

Essential Elements

Trust is at the core

- Situational
- Communication
- Competence
- Character



Essential Elements

- Clear roles and responsibilities
- Effective communication
- Leading with integrity





Optimal Elements

- Shared responsibility
- Leadership awareness
- Clear expectations
- Succession Planning
- Results-driven

High Performing Elements

- Diversity and Inclusion
- Generative Thinking
- Culture of Inquiry
- Culture of Learning
- Impact Oriented
- Empowered



Elements of a High Performance Board/CEO Relationship

Essential

- Trust
- Clear Roles and Responsibilities
- Effective Communication
- Leading with Integrity

Optimal

- Shared Responsibility
- Leadership Awareness
- Clear Expectations
- Succession Planning
- Results Driven

High Performing

- Diversity and Inclusion
- Generative Thinking
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- Impact Oriented
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Relationship Reboot

Own the problem

Focus on the essential

Create connections

Chart a new path

Relationship Reboot

What Should Change:

Trust

Roles and Responsibilities

Communication

Audience Poll

My organization's Board Chair-CEO relationship is:

- ☐ Operating at a high performing level
- ☐ Has essential elements, and a few optimal and/or high performing elements
- ☐ Has essential elements only
- ☐ Has few essential elements
- ☐ In transition (New Board Chair and/or CEO)

Action Plan

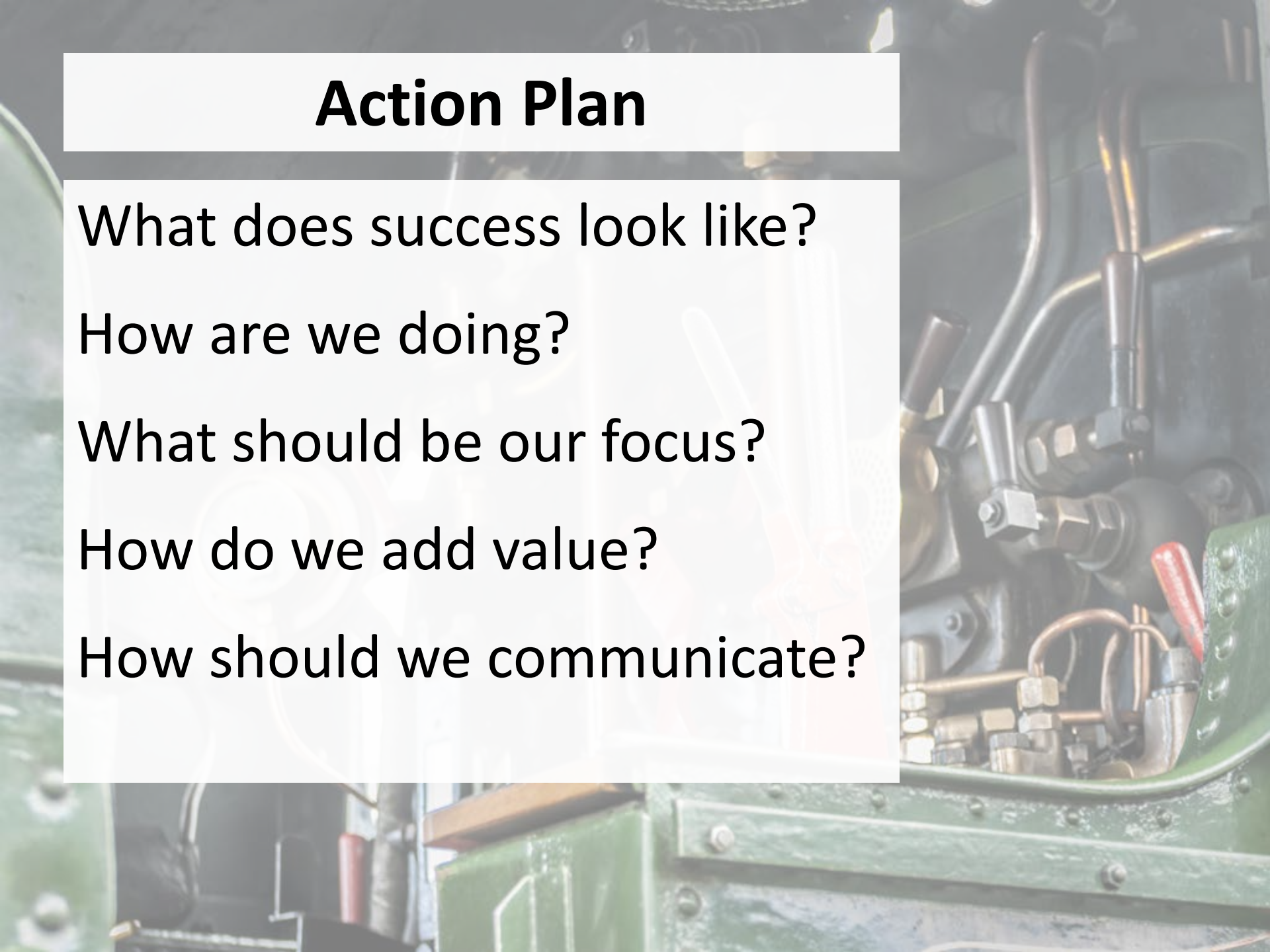
What does success look like?

How are we doing?

What should be our focus?

How do we add value?

How should we communicate?



The background of the slide is a photograph of a green aircraft engine. A prominent feature is a circular pressure gauge with a white face and black markings, connected to the engine's piping. The engine components are painted a military-style green, and various wires and mechanical parts are visible.

Action Plan

- Assessments
- Mini-retreat
- Walk in their shoes
- Accept evolving roles
- Get to know each other



Recap

Mission-Driven
Fresh Mindset
Key Elements
Journey

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Questions?



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