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
Tell us about yourself:

- Non-profit CEO
- Board Chair
- Soon to be Board Chair
- Senior staff
- Board member
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
Questions?
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
- Culture of Inquiry
- Culture of Learning
- Impact Oriented
- Empowered
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?
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
Questions?
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