

# Boosting Planning Effectiveness: *Board Engagement as a Catalyst for Change*

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# Our Presenter



**Debra Thompson, MBA**  
**President & CEO**

25+ years' experience in strategic organizational development including research, planning, program development and evaluation.

Deb is a licensed consultant, trainer and peer reviewer for the Pennsylvania and National ***Standards for Excellence:® An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector*** and certified ***Immunity to Change®*** facilitator



# Objectives

A

Understand the key elements of the strategic planning process (noting the parts that are often overlooked)

B

Identify board and staff roles in the planning process and how to engage board committees to be a catalyst for change

C

Learn how to operationalize board engagement through the committee “agendas of work” to achieve your strategic plan

Vision without action is  
merely a dream.

Action without vision just  
passes the time.

Vision with action can change  
the world.

Joel A. Barker

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

*What do we do well to engage the board?*

*What can we improve?*

Which of the following best describes how engaged our board is overall?





*Standards for*  
**excellence**

AN ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY CODE  
FOR THE NONPROFIT SECTOR



**PANO** | Pennsylvania Association of  
Nonprofit Organizations

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MAJOR SPONSOR



**PNC**  
INSTITUTIONAL  
ASSET MANAGEMENT

- **6 Guiding Principles, 27 areas of focus and**
- **67 Benchmarks:**
  - Preamble
  - Mission, Strategy and Evaluation
  - Leadership: Board, Staff and Volunteers
  - Legal Compliance and Ethics
  - Finance and Operations
  - Resource Development
  - Public Awareness, Engagement and Advocacy

**What is the Standards for Excellence?**

- Governance and Fiduciary Responsibility
- Members committed to the mission
- Members understand fiduciary role
- Periodic review of bylaws and policies

### **Act in Accordance with Legal Standards:**

- **DUTY OF CARE:**  
Stay informed and ask questions.
- **DUTY OF LOYALTY:**  
Show undivided allegiance to organization's welfare.

## **Standard: Leadership and Governance**



1. Clarity about roles & responsibilities
2. Focused time & attention on important issues
3. Restructures board work to get important things done
4. Views board composition as strategic
5. Uses evaluation to learn rather than criticize
6. Has the confidence to take risks
7. Has a constructive relationship with staff
8. Open and honest communication
9. Board works together as effective corporate unit

## Hallmarks of an Effective Board

# The Role of the Board in Planning

- Understand fiduciary responsibility: sustaining the mission
- Set vision, overall strategy and direction
- React to the ways the Executive Director/Manager plans to achieve those aims
- Monitor whether the organization is making sufficient progress toward goals

The board says the “what.”  
The ED/Manager says the “how.”

## How should this work?

- When the organization has an Executive Director/Manager, the ED/Manager is responsible for “staff support to the board” as part of their job description, including strategic planning.
- The ED/Manager establishes a planning process to engage the board to:
  - Educate them about the current environment and the strategic issues facing the organization
  - Ask and answer key strategic questions
  - Achieve consensus on vision and direction
  - Identify goals and objectives
  - Set performance criteria for the ED
  - (Re) Structure the board to support strategic plan implementation



# The Process





**How do we engage the board to accomplish the plan?**

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

*What do we do well in planning?*

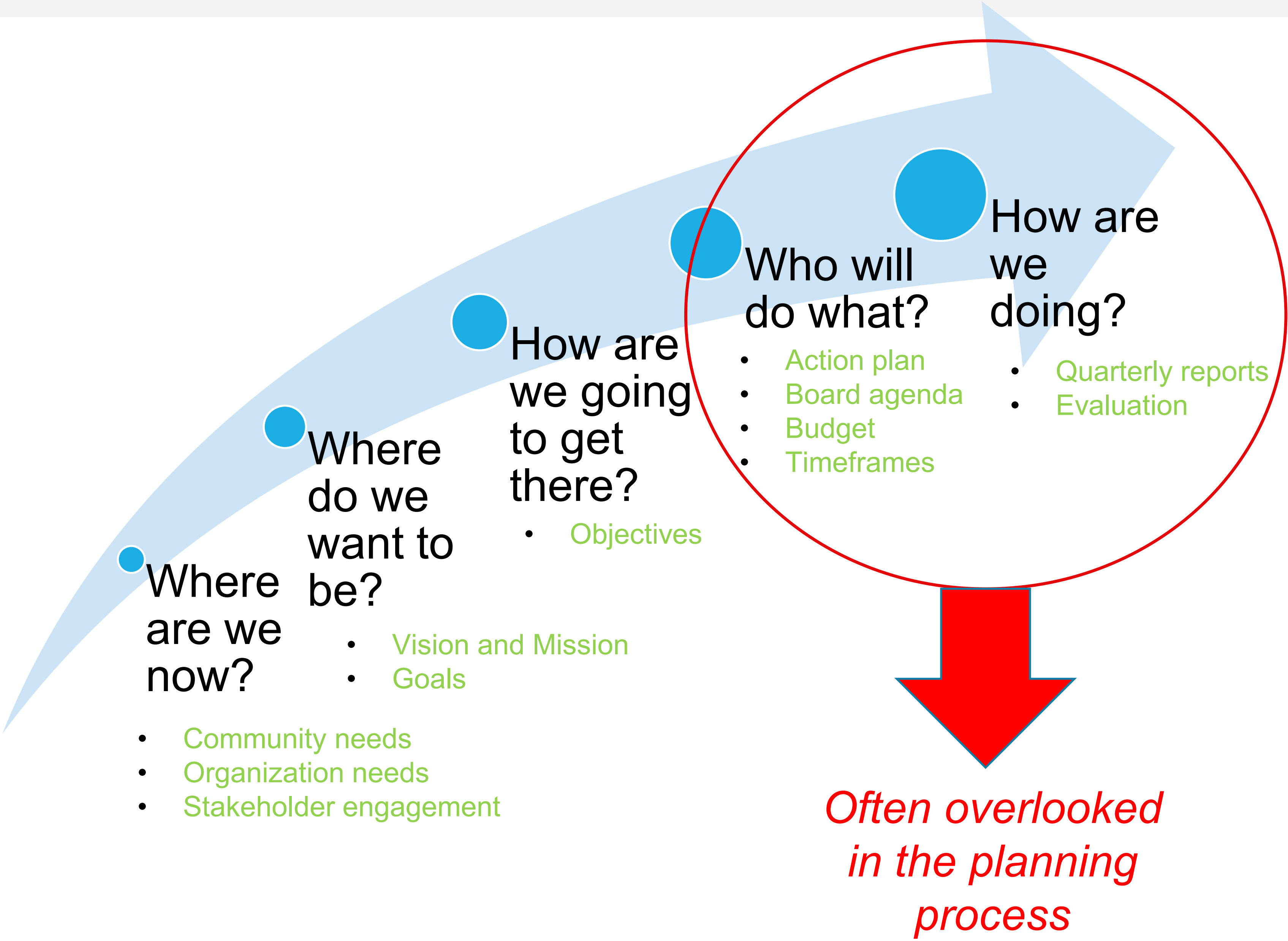
*What can we improve?*

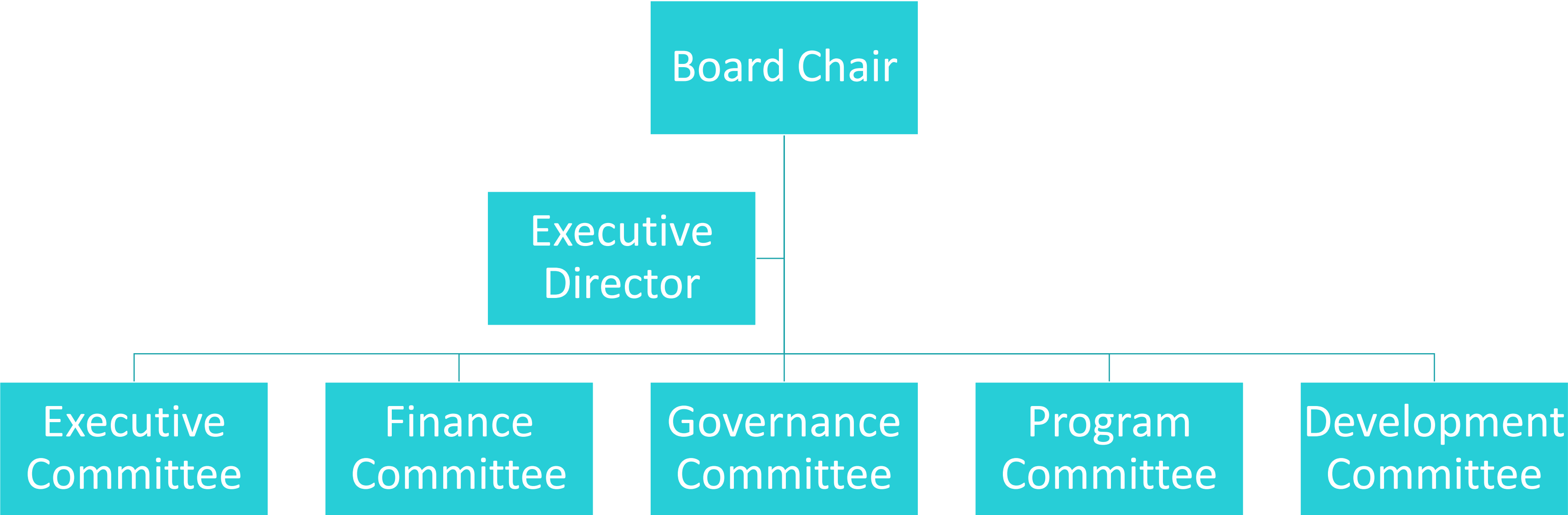
Which of the following best describes how well our committees function to support strategic plan implementation?



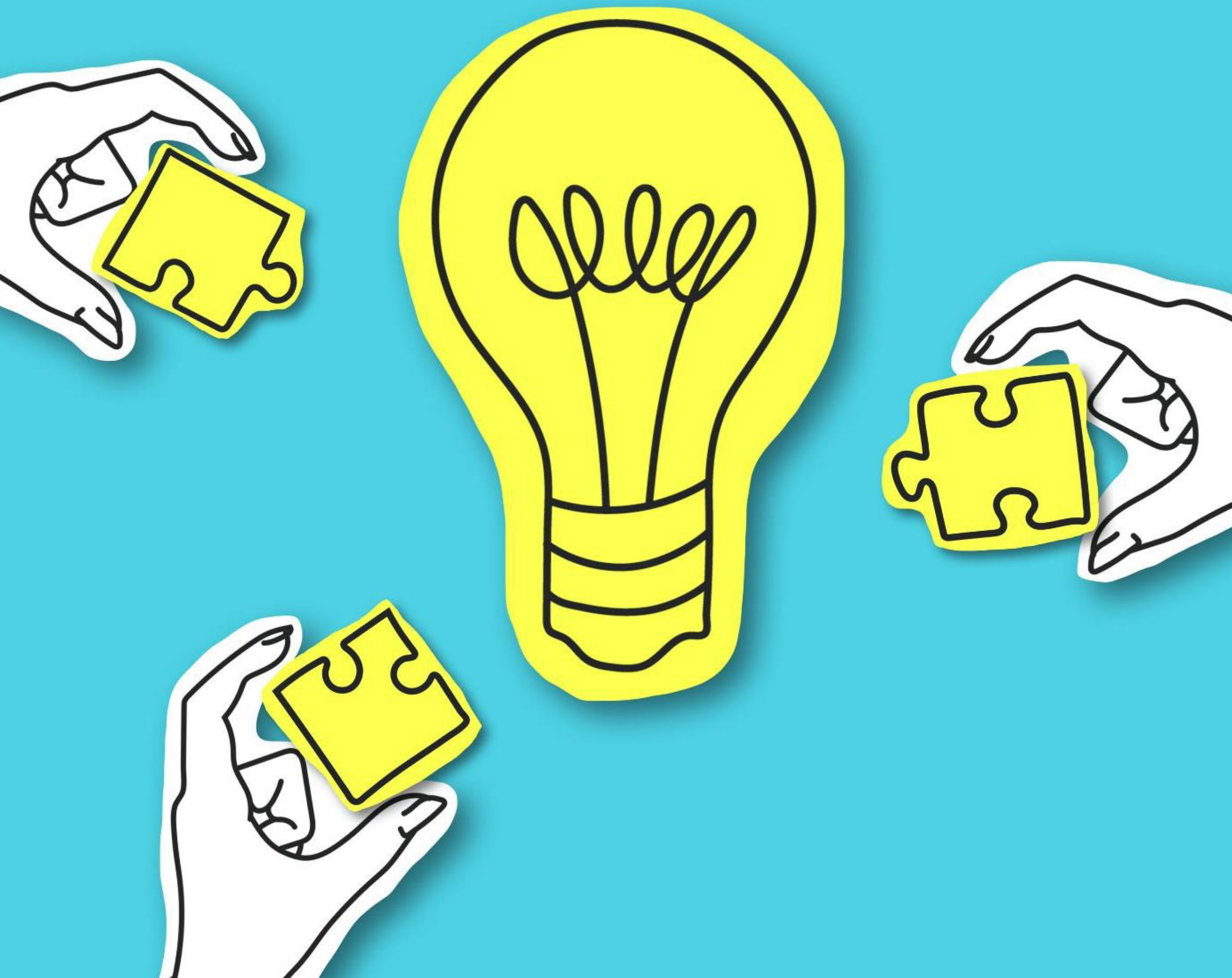


# The Process





# Structure The Board To Support Strategic Plan Implementation



According to BoardSource,

***Truly effective partnerships require a clear definition of the distinctive roles of the partners and the boundaries between them.***

***In the board/staff partnership, a proper division of labor is essential.***

***The violation of the boundaries will, over time, erode the trust, mutual support and good communications that are essential for any partnership to succeed.***

## **The Governance-Management Model**



- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

*What do we do well in role clarification?*

*What can we improve?*

**Which of the following best describes how well roles are clarified between board and staff to support the strategic plan?**

		Board/Staff				
Responsible	Involved			Responsible	Involved	
X		←	Governance	→		X
	X	←	Administration	→	X	
X		←	Decides What	→		X
	X	←	Decides How	→	X	
X		←	Makes Policy	→		X
	X	←	Carries Out Policy	→	X	
X		←	Sets Goals	→		X
	X	←	Plans to Achieve Goals	→	X	
X		←	Reviews Plans	→		X
	X	←	Implements Plans	→	X	
X	X	←	Monitors Progress	→	X	X
The Board					The Staff	

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Role Clarification: Board/Executive Director



## What is Completed Staff Work?

It is working through the details of a problem or project and presentation of a solution, with alternatives, to the board, so that all that remains to be done on the part of the board is to indicate approval or disapproval of the completed action.

*The words "completed action" are emphasized because the more difficult the problem is, the more tendency it is to present the problem and recommended action in a piecemeal fashion (or expect the board to tell you what to do).*

*It is the staff member's duty to work out the details.*

*This includes the ED/manager telling board members what you need them to do as a management service volunteer or direct service volunteer to assist*

## Completed Staff Work



KNOW YOUR

ROLE



## Board Member Roles:

- ☐ ***Governance***
- ☐ ***Fundraising***
- ☐ ***Management Service Volunteer***
- ☐ ***Direct Service Volunteer***



## Job Description

1. Perform policy work
2. Act as liaison to the chief executive
3. Help develop a strategic plan
4. Conduct executive searches
5. Handle urgent issues
6. Ensure an annual agenda of board work is completed in line with the organization's strategic objectives.

## Executive Committee

	2021											
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
<b>Executive Committee Agenda of Work</b>				4/7/2021						10/6/2021		
<i>Review HR plan and progress</i>				*								
<i>Review CEO salary structure/evaluation</i>				*						*		
<i>Review Strategic Plan progress</i>				*						*		
<i>Review and update board policies</i>				*								
<i>Conduct CEO evaluation</i>										*		

## Executive Committee Agenda of Work



	expected progress; on track
	progress delayed or barriers faced
	struggling
	objective not scheduled yet

Strategic Plan  
Goals & Objectives  
DATE

Instructions:

Complete the goals and objectives. Insert the “color code” in the Status column to reflect the current status. Write a short “bullet point” narrative summary in the Quarterly Status Report Column.



Status	Goal/Objective	Quarterly Status Report
GOAL 1:		
	A.	
	B.	
	C.	
GOAL 2:		
	A.	
	B.	
	C.	
GOAL 3:		
	A.	
	B.	
	C.	
	D.	
GOAL 4:		
	A.	
	B.	
	C.	

Strategic Plan Quarterly Status Report Format

## Job Description

1. Ensure that accurate and complete financial records are maintained
2. Ensure that accurate, timely, and meaningful financial statements are prepared and presented to the board
3. Provide interpretation of the financial data and educate the full board about financial matters
4. Oversee budget preparation and financial planning
5. Safeguard the organization's assets
6. Select auditor/manage the auditor relationship

## Finance Committee



	2021											
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
<b>Finance Committee Agenda of Work</b>		<b>2/23/21</b>		<b>4/27/21</b>		<b>6/22/21</b>		<b>8/24/21</b>		<b>10/26/21</b>		<b>12/21/21</b>
<i>Review financial statements</i>		*		*		*		*		*		*
<i>Hire auditor</i>						*						
<i>Review and approve audit and 990</i>		*								*		
<i>Review/include strategic investment budget</i>				*								
<i>Review annual budget and recommend to board</i>						*						
<i>Review investments and investment policies</i>				*								
<i>Review policies for financial safety measures</i>		*										
<i>Review legal/acctg checklist for compliance</i>				*								

## Finance Committee Agenda of Work

## Job Description

1. Help create board roles and responsibilities
2. Pay attention to board composition
3. Encourage board development
4. Assess board effectiveness
5. Prepare board leadership
6. Review and periodically update and revise bylaws (at least once every three years)



**Governance Committee**



	2021						
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
<b>Governance Committee Agenda of Work</b>	<b>1/26/21</b>			<b>4/27/21</b>			<b>7/27/21</b>
<i>Review board matrix and composition</i>	*			*			*
<i>Nominate potential board members</i>	*			*			*
<i>Nominate officers for leadership positions</i>				*			
<i>Complete board self-evaluation (bi-annually) and review board operations (annually)</i>							*
<i>Oversee proper orientation of new members (always)</i>	*			*			*
<i>Work on succession plan for Executive Committee</i>				*			
<i>Review Board conflict of interest forms (Chair)</i>							*

## Governance Committee Agenda of Work

## Job Description



1. Advise the board on industry trends and strategic challenges relating to the mission of the organization, and assess community need for programs and services.
2. Ensure that programs are developed and implemented that meet the needs of the community and achieve desired outcomes, ensuring that any program requirements of funders are met
3. Identify key indicators for measuring the quality and success of programs
4. Track program indicators
5. Plan and implement strategies to increase awareness and participation in programs
6. Work with the Finance and Development Committees to identify and implement strategies (including grant writing) to fund programs

**Program Committee(s)**

	2021											
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
<b>Program Committee Agenda of Work</b>		<b>2/23/21</b>		<b>4/20/21</b>				<b>8/17/21</b>			<b>11/16/21</b>	
<i>Conduct annual program evaluation</i>								*				
<i>Ensure client feedback is used for program eval</i>		*		*				*			*	
<i>Participate in program awareness building efforts</i>		*		*				*			*	
<i>Ensure new program development meets SP timeline</i>		*		*				*			*	

## Program Committee(s) Agenda of Work

## Job Description

1. Engage others to support mission
2. Help to develop fundraising policies
3. Ensure that the case for support is strong, current and based on the organization's mission and goals
4. Help to develop fundraising strategies
5. Provide information on environmental factors affecting fundraising
6. Help to evaluate potential prospects for increased support
7. Help to develop expectations for financial contributions from the board, and providing leadership by making their own "investments"
8. Solicit gifts at levels required for annual, special and planned giving programs including sending personal thank you letters
9. Participate actively in special events and providing leadership for capital and "investment" campaigns
10. Work with special event & project subcommittees (i.e., golf outing)



## Development Committee



	2021								
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September
<b>Development Committee Agenda of Work</b>			<b>3/17/21</b>			<b>6/16/21</b>			<b>9/15/21</b>
<i>Adopt annual fundraising plan/recom. to the board</i>						*			
<i>Identify and begin to cultivate major gifts prospects</i>			*			*			*
<i>Discuss/plan/ participate in special events</i>			*						*
<i>Review and approve fundraising policies</i>			*						*
<i>Review annual report</i>									*
<i>Discuss action plan/schedule for community education/outreach</i>			*						
<i>Review quarterly newsletter and annual fundraising progress</i>			*			*			*
<i>Review/discuss private foundation outreach strategy</i>			*			*			

## Development Committee(s) Agenda of Work

## How do we structure our board to implement our strategic plan?



# Plans are nothing. Planning is everything.

Dwight D. Eisenhower



## Questions & Discussion

If you feel that you would like some assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out to us:

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## Boosting Planning Effectiveness





- **Collective role**: control and direct the formation and administration of policy matters such as budgeting and strategic planning, board/staff relationships, approving the annual budget or the board's own processes
- **Individual role**: With the exception of individual committee assignments, there is not one

*Adapted from *Creating Strong Board-Staff Partnerships* by Karen Simmons and Gary J. Stern.*

*Published by BoardSource, formerly the National Center for Nonprofit Boards*



- **Collective role**: Determine policies on goals, committee responsibilities and restrictions related to involvement in fundraising.
- **Individual role**: Implement plans as part of board-staff-volunteer project committees; assist management in carrying out fundraising

*Adapted from *Creating Strong Board-Staff Partnerships* by Karen Simmons and Gary J. Stern.*

*Published by BoardSource, formerly the National Center for Nonprofit Boards*

## Board Role in Fundraising



- **Collective role**: Determine policies about board assistance in operational activities, especially those relating to conflicts of interest
- **Individual role**: work with staff on specifically defined management issues and activities; reporting to staff as designated staff members as individuals who just happen to be board members (note and caution: this is something that you need to be asked by management to do and is usually related to specific areas of expertise; usually done in small organizations only)

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## Board Role: Management Service Volunteer



- **Collective role:** Determine policies about board assistance in operational activities, especially those related to conflict of interest
- **Individual role:** Assist in direct service projects under the direction of the volunteer coordinator and other staff as individuals who just happen to be board members

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## Board Role: Direct Service Volunteer