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Boarding 2.0

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Caveat

With Boards (and probably most everything else in life), size matters and one size or approach doesn’t fit all.
Board Quiz

True or False?

1) Boards must focus on long-range strategic planning and policy . . . Not operations.

2) Boards need committees to do homework of the Board.

3) Board members should have term limits.

4) Boards should not be smaller than 9 persons or bigger than 20 persons.
Board Life Cycles

1. Infancy (start up or start over)
2. Juvenile (growth)
3. Adolescence (growth and decline spurts)
4. Maturity (established)

Know where you are!
Infancy Stage

- Founders
- Does the work of organization
- Grassroots
- Evaluation – next week, next month, next year
- Service providers first and foremost
- Uncertainty prevails
Juvenile Stage

- Often some staff hired . . . Often for “support”
- Focus still on operations
- Starts to see need for more systems/role clarification
- Reluctant to make big changes
Adolescence Stage

- Staff provides services and support
- Board in gray area
- Different skills needed – fundraising, financial oversight, addressing “governance” responsibilities
- Staff the driving force
- Boards often struggle, loss of dedicated board and staff occur
- Episodes of chaos, confusion, absenteeism, poor productivity are common
Mature Stage

- Roles/responsibilities between staff (mainly executive director) and Board established and clear
- Both sides hold each other accountable
- Board governs / staff manage = the partnership leads
- But the relationship can get unbalanced – either Board-centric or staff-centric
- Can have a false sense of security and unexpected or unplanned events can be devastating
Know What Stage You Are In

- Take stock
- Assess external circumstances
- Identify needs and activities
- Fill in the gaps
- Reach out and take action; get the skills, training, concepts that are right for the stage you are in . . . Or more importantly, the stage you want to be in!
No Matter What Stage You Are In . . .

What is the Board **Role** and How Is It Changing in 2012?
A board of directors is an “organized body of administrators” who “supervise, control, or manage.”

This definition is archaic and an invitation for disaster.
To govern, not manage

Not to direct the work or make operational decisions (manage). Rather, governance is a separate process and a distinct part of leadership. Board governance relates to decisions that:

1) define expectations,
2) grant power, and
3) verify performance.
“Ah, the temptation is great – but keep your hands out of the operation! Trustees are not to manage the institution, but to make certain that it is managed well.”

- Jerald Panas
If you don’t want board members involved in the daily business of the organization, why give them an invitation by reporting to them about daily activities?

- Anonymous Administrator