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Calgary and Area

DEVELOPING THE CAPACITY OF THE BOARD CHAIR:

Solutions to Common Chair Challenges

Feb. 21, 2013





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Key Topics of Discussion



- Executive Director (ED) Succession Plan
- Executive Transition
- Common Chair Challenges
 - ❖ Dominant Chair
 - ❖ Unskilled Chair
 - ❖ Non-performing Directors



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ED Succession Planning



ED succession planning is **not** about replacing the existing ED.

It's about preparing the organization and developing its competencies for future organizational requirements.



2 Types of ED Succession



Emergency/Interim ED Succession Plan

- Developed by the ED
- Identifies the acting ED
- Approved by the Board

Permanent ED Succession Plan

- Developed by the Board
- Identifies competencies of future ED



Necessary Elements



1. Performance Review System

- ❖ Identifying and preparing potential internal candidates for leadership roles

2. Assessing Candidate Competence

- ❖ Identifying skills necessary for optimal performance in a leadership position



Necessary Elements ...



3. **Personalized Development Plan**

- ❖ Specific development program based on assessment of competencies

4. **Management Support**

- ❖ Commitment from senior management
- ❖ Communication to all employees

Develop Leadership Talent Across the Organization



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How To's of ED Succession



- Identify Board and ED responsibilities
- Develop assessment criteria for ED recruitment, **aligned with strategic plan**
- Identify potential internal successors
- Establish Executive Transition Committee
- Define timelines for recruitment and selection
- Use external consultants as necessary. E.g. executive search firm



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Older vs. Younger NP Executives



- ⇒ Older leaders “live to work” vs. younger leaders “work to live”
- ⇒ Younger leaders want more space/time out of work for family and friends
- ⇒ Younger leaders want decision-making to be more participatory than hierarchical



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Older vs. Younger NP Executives



- ⇒ Older leaders are biased towards experience and knowledge vs. technical skills
- ⇒ Older leaders are not providing career paths for young leaders

From Up Next: Generation Change and the Leadership of Nonprofit Organizations



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Key Findings: *Ready to Lead?*



NP Respondents <25 years old:

- 27% want to start their own non-profit (NP)
- 3 top pre-requisites to prepare for ED role were **more of:**
 - ✓ technical skills
 - ✓ external connections/networks
 - ✓ leadership capabilities
- 90% feel they're underutilized
- 67% believe they need an advanced degree



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**Meet the 6 Types of Board
Members
that Give
Chairs Nightmares
+
The Chair that Gives
Directors Nightmares**



He Who Won't Play by the Rules



Characteristics

- Misses Board meetings
- Arrives late
- Comes unprepared
- Lacks respect for collective process
- Lacks understanding of Board culture

Strategies

Boardroom Bully



Characteristics

- Has personal agenda
- Fails to develop personal relationships
- Intimidates peers/staff
- Accustomed to not being challenged
- Overinflated sense of worth (low self esteem)

Strategies

Ms. Know-It-All



Characteristics

- Speaks with authority on every issue
- Poor listener
- Must comment on every issue
- Uses experiences and achievements to prove her value

Strategies

The Constant Questioner



Characteristics

- Frequently asks questions to the point of annoying others
- May be trying to show he's done his homework
- May have hidden agenda
- May simply have a curious mind
- May be trying to drive change

Strategies

She Who Loves to Get in the Weeds



Characteristics

- High maintenance
- Focuses on operations
- Requests lots of details and materials
- Fails to understand Board's role
- Sees her job as watchdog
- May not have trust or confidence in ED

Strategies

Change Resisters



Characteristics

- Overly critical of new ideas
- Glass is always half-empty
- Negative attitude
- Obstacle to creativity, change and growth
- Sometimes are founders

Strategies

What If the Chair is the Problem?



- Cannot run Board meetings effectively
- Cannot interact with Board members appropriately
- May display any of the “nightmare” behaviours

Strategies