SHALL WE LEAD? THE BOARD-EXECUTIVE RELATIONSHIP

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FIRST STEPS: ROLES

- What is the role of the Executive?
- What is the role of the Board?
ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

- Factors that influence the roles
  - Type of board (Working, Policy, etc.)
  - Staff resources
  - Organizational size
  - Organizational type
  - Organizational scope (Geographical)
  - Organizational development
  - Culture
  - Structure
SUE STEVENS ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Idea

Start-up

Growth

Mature

Turnaround

Decline

Terminal
CONTINGENCY THEORY

- “It depends”
- Composition of boards
  - Funders, major donors
  - Founders
  - Representatives
  - Mandated composition
POWER IN AND AROUND BOARDS
(MURRAY, BRADSHAW AND WOLPIN)

- CEO-Dominated Board
- Chair-Dominated Board
- Fragmented Power Board
- Power-Sharing Board
- Powerless Board
CEO-DOMINATED BOARD

Board

CEO

- Sometimes helped by high-level paid staff
- The CEO controls the information
- Highly influential and trusted

Figurehead that gives stamp of approval rather than actively participating
CHAIR-DOMINATED BOARD

Chair

- Well connected in the community
- Single-handedly presents plans for the organization
- Charismatic/intimidating leader with strong influence over the board

CEO

- Tries to carry out role defined by the Chair
FRAGMENTED
BOARD
POWER

Representing
outside
stakeholders

Conflict, blaming, and
game playing

Differing beliefs or
ideologies

Competition
for power

Difficult to
make
decisions or
no decision-
making
process;
decisions do
not stick
POWER-SHARING BOARD

Committed to equality and democracy

De-emphasize formal positions, titles, and fixed committees

Participatory decision-making

Consultation with all interested parties

Extensive communication and consensus
POWERLESS BOARD

Lack of planning and communication

No clear board roles and responsibilities

The Board

No strong leadership

Apathetic and aimless

Indecisive, poorly organized, and poorly attended meetings
BOARD CHAIR-EXECUTIVE

- Most critical relationship
  - Board manager
  - Organization spokesperson
- Leader
  - Have a vision
  - Bring people along- linking and motivating
  - Willing to invest time
THE PARADOX IN A NUTSHELL

- The Executive as supervisee of the Board
- The Executive Manages the Board
- The Board as organizational leader
- The Executive as organizational leader
- The Board needs information from the Executive to make decisions
- The Executive often determines what information to give the Board
6 TIPS ON MANAGING UP

1. Facilitate interaction in board relationships
2. Show consideration and respect toward board members
3. Envision change and innovation for the organization with the board
4. Provide useful and helpful information to the board
5. Initiate and maintain structure for the board
6. Promote board accomplishments and productivity

MORE TIPS!

- Two-way Communication
- Don’t Surprise the Board
- Provide solutions, not problems
- Be honest and trustworthy
- Be loyal and committed
- Understand the board's perspective and agenda
- Understand the board’s preferences

- Understand your own management style
- Depend on the Board's strengths and use them
- Recognize your Board's weaknesses
- Be aware of your Board’s hot buttons and pet peeves
- Request feedback and learn to accept it

Adapted from “the Art of Managing Up” by Wayne Turk, Defense AT&L March-April 2007
TIPS FOR MANAGING DOWN

- Two-way communication
- Don’t surprise the Executive
- Provide problems and help with solutions
- Be honest and trustworthy
- Be loyal and committed to the organization
- Understand your Executive’s perspective and agenda
- Understand the Executive’s preferences
- Depend on the Executive’s strengths and use them
- Recognize your Executive’s weaknesses and secure resources to assist him or her
- Be aware of your Executive’s hot buttons or pet peeves
- Provide annual reviews
THANK YOU!

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