



ESC GOVERNANCE AND BOARD DEVELOPMENT CONSULTING

www.nonprofit-consultants.org

ESC works with nonprofit organizations to improve their effectiveness by providing affordable management consulting solutions delivered by experienced executives and professionals who donate their time and expertise.

WHAT IS BOARD DEVELOPMENT?

Board Development is the ongoing process of building and maintaining strong governing boards in order to help directors keep their organizations focused on meeting their mission effectively, efficiently, ethically, accountably and in compliance with law.

WHO ARE THE PLAYERS?

ESC's board development teams consist of two or more experienced Senior Consultants, plus the client's Board Chair, Board Members, Executive Director, and key staff.

WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF BOARD DEVELOPMENT?

Board Development engagements can address any combination of a nonprofit board's core responsibilities. We can address:

- Ensuring that resources are available to meet the mission
- Ensuring that resources are managed responsibly
- Dealing with regulatory changes
- Selecting, supporting and evaluating the Executive Director
- Keeping programs, policies, and resources aligned with the strategic direction
- Mobilizing and guiding organization change
- Improving financial reporting and accountability
- Legal and ethical integrity
- Maintaining positive relations with stakeholders and the public
- Providing for the board's own ongoing capacity development, self evaluation, and renewal

WHAT ISSUES ARE ADDRESSED?

Issues vary widely from running effective meetings in younger organizations to fine tuning committee structures for more sophisticated clients. Common issues are as follows:

- Board responsibility for fundraising
- Clarifying board and staff roles and responsibilities
- Board composition
- How to recruit new board members
- Founders syndrome
- Micromanagement
- Effective committee structures
- Effective meetings
- Preparation for capital campaigns
- Preparation for strategic planning
- Establishing board orientation, training, and self evaluation



- Improving financial reporting and compliance
- Stronger partnership between board and staff

Often we are able to make significant progress on operating issues by developing effective committee structures.

WHAT IS THE CLIENT'S COMMITMENT?

We like the client's board to demonstrate their commitment to the project with a unanimous vote of the board to ask ESC to lead the board development process.

We do our best to limit the time required to support the project. That said, there is a time commitment to prepare the printed info for our review. The Executive Director and Board Chair should be prepared to help plan and coordinate the project. All Board and Senior Staff will need to set aside time for one interview. Implementation of the board development recommendations usually involves time commitments, but the payback in agency effectiveness can be immediate and generous.

WHAT IS THE BOARD DEVELOPMENT PROCESS?

ESC's board development engagements are adapted to each client's unique circumstances, but most consist of the following phases:

1. Needs Assessment
2. Diagnosis
3. Planning
4. Coaching on Implementation

1. Needs Assessment

In the needs assessment phase we determine the readiness of the client for ESC consulting. We propose a contract and request the unanimous support of the board.

2. Diagnosis

The diagnostic phase takes from 3 to 4 months. During the diagnostic phase we

- Read all pertinent printed material (mission statement, history, strategic plan, bylaws, board and committee minutes, and financial reports).
- Interview all directors and senior staff
- Attend all board and committee meetings

We develop a diagnostic report that identifies the board's strengths and weaknesses and makes recommendations for dealing with priority issues.

3. Action Plan

Based on board approval of items in the diagnostic report, we work with the board to develop an action plan with a time line and responsibilities.

4. Coaching on Implementation

The coaching phase is typically 8 to 9 months. Consultants act as coaches and mentors attending board and committee meetings, providing resource materials, and facilitating change. The project is closed with a final report documenting progress and making recommendations. Contracts can be extended to continue work on open action items.