
Twelve Principles of Governance That Power Exceptional Boards

BoardSource

Building Effective Nonprofit Boards

2005

CONSTRUCTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

- Effective boards govern in constructive partnership with the CEO, recognizing that the effectiveness of the board and the CEO are interdependent.
-

MISSION DRIVEN

Exceptional boards shape and uphold the mission, articulate a compelling vision, and ensure the congruence between decisions and core values.

STRATEGIC THINKING

- Exceptional boards allocate time to what matters most and continuously engage in strategic thinking to hone the organization's direction.
-

CULTURE OF INQUIRY

- Exceptional boards institutionalize a culture of inquiry, mutual respect, and constructive debate that leads to sound and shared decision making.
-

INDEPENDENT MINDEDNESS

- Exceptional boards are independent-minded. When making decisions, board members put the interests of the organization above all else.



ETHOS OF TRANSPARENCY

- Exceptional boards promote an ethos of transparency by ensuring that all (involved) including interested members of the public have access to appropriate and accurate information regarding finances, operations, and results.
-

COMPLIANCE WITH INTEGRITY

- Exceptional boards promote strong ethical values and disciplined compliance by establishing appropriate mechanisms for active oversight.
-

SUSTAINING RESOURCES

- Exceptional boards link bold visions and ambitious plans to financial (resources), expertise, and networks of influence.



RESULTS-ORIENTED

- Exceptional boards are results-oriented.
They measure the organization's (progress) toward mission and evaluate the performance of major programs and (strategies).
-

INTENTIONAL BOARD PRACTICES

- Exceptional boards intentionally structure themselves to fulfill essential governance duties and to support organizational priorities.
-

CONTINUOUS LEARNING

- Exceptional boards embrace the qualities of a continuous learning organization, evaluating their own performance and assessing the value they add to the organization.
-

REVITALIZATION

- Exceptional boards energize themselves through planned turnover, thoughtful recruitment, and inclusiveness.
-