

Society of Animal Welfare Administrators
2016 Annual Conference

*The Dynamics of
A High Functioning CEO-Board Chair Partnership*

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The Dynamics of a High Functioning CEO-Board Chair Partnership

Mindy R. Wertheimer

The partnership of the Chief Executive and Board Chair sets the tone for an organization in achieving its mission. Explore the dynamics of what it takes to build this critical partnership and expand your leadership capacity to make it happen. As part of a high functioning team, you can show real impact in achieving your organization's mission!

In this session, you will learn:

- *To identify and assess how the personal impacts the professional in executing the respective CEO/Board Chair roles and in establishing a working partnership*
- *To compare and contrast governance vs. management tasks and explore how these tasks (separate and shared) are operationalized*
- *How to create an individualized action plan focused on strengthening leadership capacity*

AGENDA:

- Introduction & Overview

- Governance: Creating a Foundation of Personal and Professional Balance
 - Leader: Know Thyself
 - Role Execution diagram

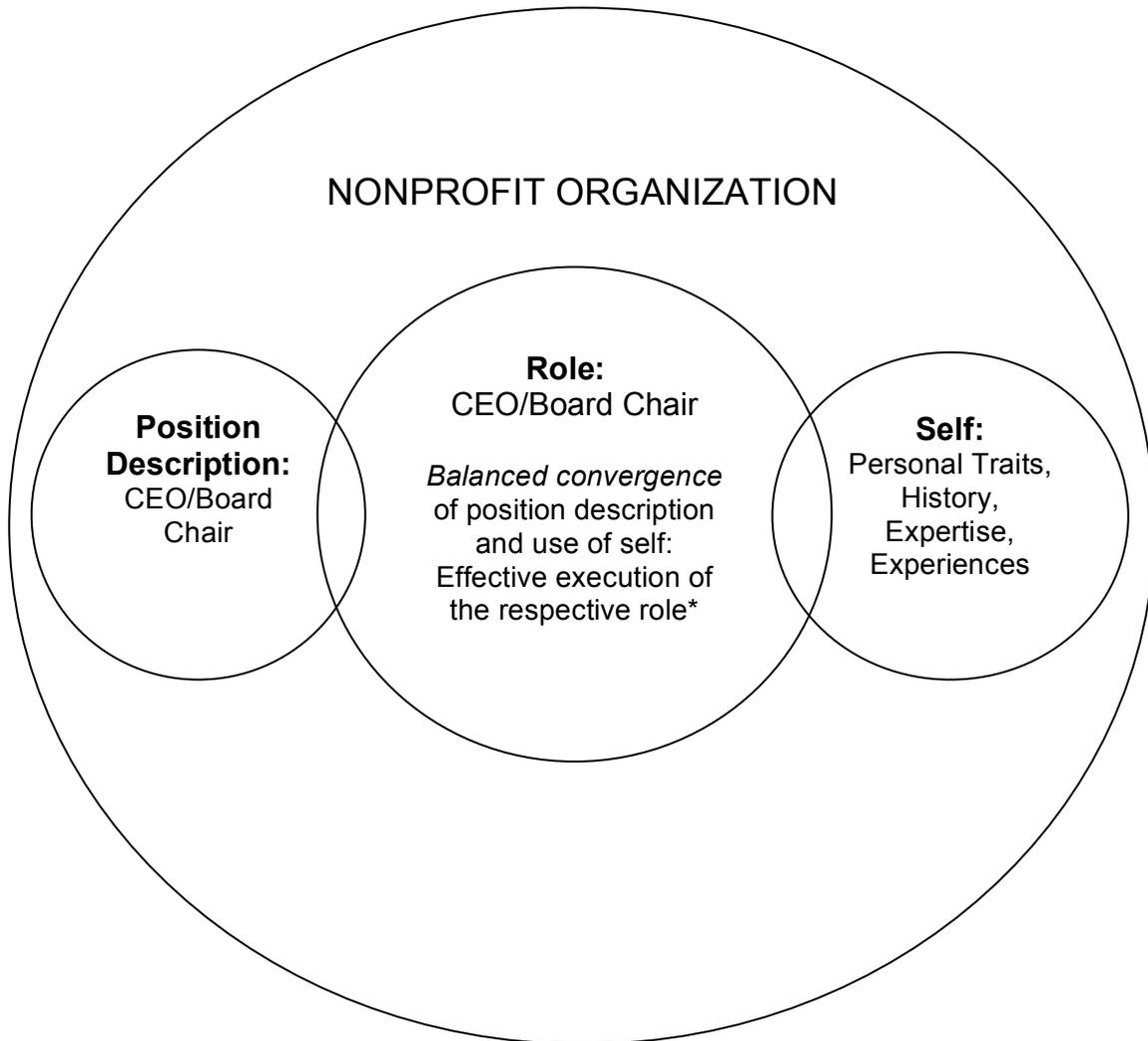
- Chief Executive-Board Chair Partnership
 - Governance vs. Management
 - Partnership Challenges
 - Model: Building Partnership Capacity

- Tips for Creating a High Functioning Chief Executive-Board Chair Partnership

- Personal Action Plan: Expanding Leadership Capacity

Role Execution: CEO and Board Chair**

Prepared by Mindy R. Wertheimer, Ph.D. ©2009



*If *balanced convergence* in carrying out the role is not achieved, the CEO/board chair may exhibit one or more of the following behaviors:

- Too professional; rigid; not mobilizing personal qualities OR
- Too personalized; focused on personal agenda and issues
- Too disengaged; limited attention and focus on tasks; “checked out” OR
- Too enmeshed; over involved; controlling

How one executes his/her role impacts the effectiveness of overall board outcomes. A well-executed role provides a strong foundation for a high functioning board that ultimately benefits the mission, work, and sustainability of the organization.

**Adapted from: Ryan, W. P. (October 12, 2007). *Personal Strategy for Effective Leadership*. Board Source Leadership Forum, San Francisco, CA.

Framing the Chief Executive & Board Chair Partnership

Mindy R. Wertheimer (2013), *The Board Chair Handbook*, 3rd ed.

Board Chair Leadership

Chief Executive Leadership

← Mutual respect, trust, and support →
 ← Reciprocal communications →
 ← Shared purpose & mission-driven →
 ← Context: *for the good of the organization* →
 ← Shared tasks →

No micro-managing →

← No micro-governing

Board Development:
 Initiation
 Orientation
 Sustainability
 Preservation

Staff Development:
 Initiation
 Orientation
 Sustainability
 Preservation

Shared Responsibilities:
 Social stewardship
 Fiscal stewardship
 Resource development
 Succession planning
 Strategic planning & program
 evaluation

Governance:*
 -Determine mission & purpose
 -Select the chief executive
 -Support & evaluate the chief executive
 -Ensure effective planning
 -Monitor & strengthen programs and services
 -Ensure adequate financial resources
 -Protect assets & provide financial oversight
 -Build a competent board
 -Ensure legal and ethical integrity
 -Enhance the organization's public standing

Management:**
 -Commit to the mission
 -Lead the staff and manage the organization
 -Lead & manage fundraising
 -Follow the highest ethical standards, ensure accountability, and comply with the law
 -Engage the board in planning and lead implementation
 -Develop future leadership
 -Build external relationships and serve as an advocate
 -Ensure the quality and effectiveness of programs
 -Support the board

Boardroom:
 -Mission-driven focus on governance tasks
 -Board focused on stakeholders
 -High functioning board focused on process, tasks, and outcomes

Workplace:
 -Mission-driven focus on management tasks
 -Staff focused on clients/customers
 -High functioning staff focused on process, tasks, and outcomes

Outcomes:
 ~Mission impact~
 ~Organizational growth and sustainability~
 ~Healthy, functional organization~
 ~Change as a constant~

*Source: Richard T. Ingram, *Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards*, Second Edition (BoardSource, 2009).

**Source: Richard L. Moyers, *The Nonprofit Chief Executive's Ten Basic Responsibilities* (BoardSource, 2006).

Operationalizing the Chief Executive & Board Chair Partnership

Three basic principles:

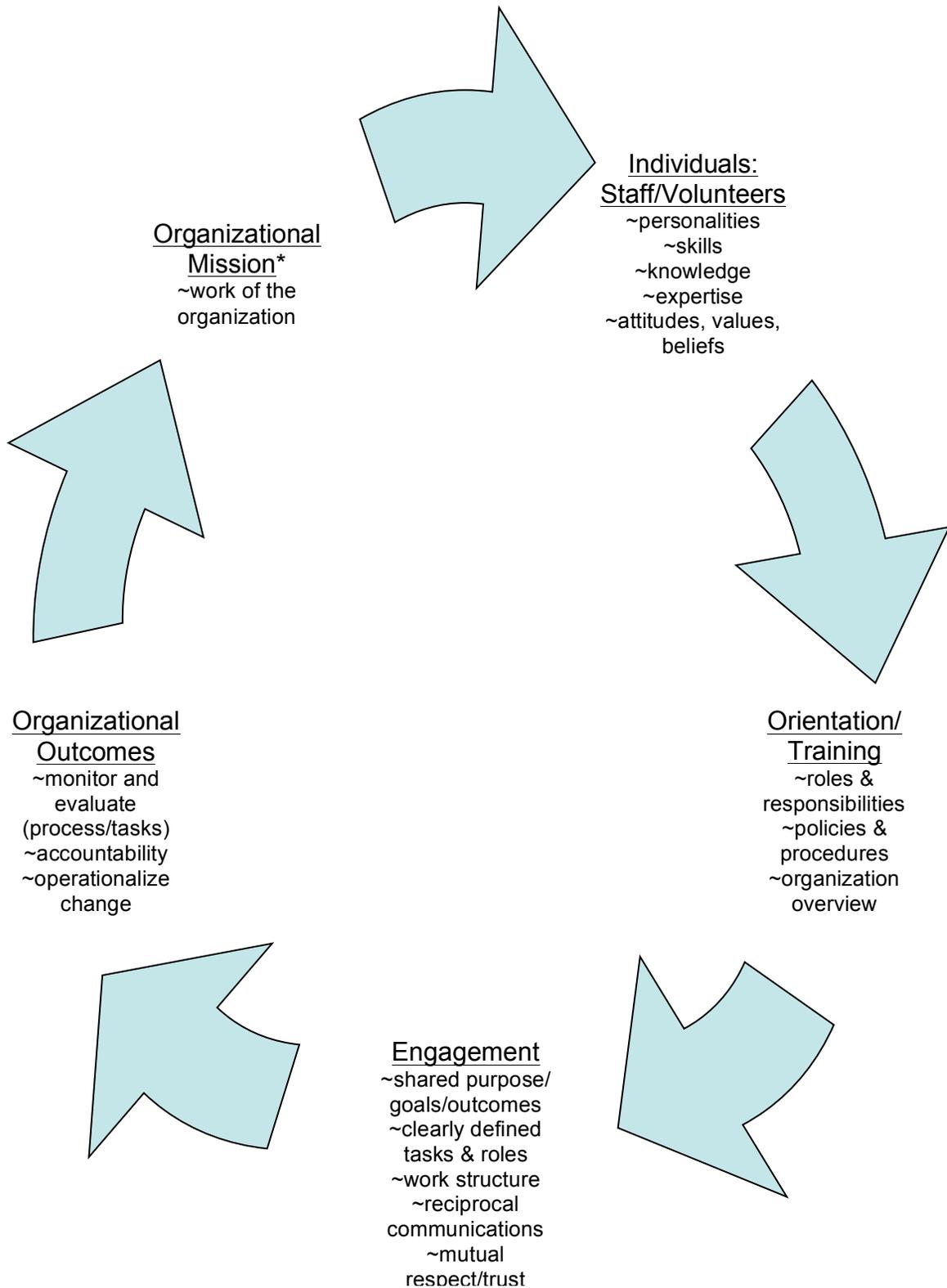
- Mutual respect, trust, and support for each other and the partnership
- Reciprocal communications
- Shared purpose and passion for mission & vision

Partnership Challenges:

- Adapting to differences in personality, temperament, work style, communication style, and time commitment
- Adapting to differences in experience and expertise
- Keeping ongoing tasks and responsibilities running smoothly during board leadership and/or executive director transitions
- Setting mutual expectations for the working relationship
- Establishing clear boundaries for roles and responsibilities and understanding where they overlap
- Agreeing on what sound governance practices are and how to apply them
- Developing a shared interpretation of what constitutes *in the best interests of the organization* and accountability to stakeholders
- Defining both separate and shared tasks
- Balancing job description with personal qualities ("use of self") in the respective roles of Chief Executive and Board Chair
- Operationalizing "the Chief Executive works at the pleasure of the Board"

MODEL FOR BUILDING PARTNERSHIP CAPACITY

Prepared by: Mindy R. Wertheimer, Ph.D. ©2008



TIPS FOR CREATING A HIGH FUNCTIONING CHIEF EXECUTIVE-BOARD CHAIR PARTNERSHIP

Adapted from

M. Wertheimer (2013), *The Board Chair Handbook*, 3rd ed., Washington, DC: BoardSource.

1. Frame the partnership in the context of good governance practices. Both parties should be focused on what's best for the organization. Remember the partnership is a means (process) to an end (tasks)!
2. Clarify and share mutual expectations around roles and responsibilities in the context of a shared purpose and strong governance practices. No micro-governing and no micro-managing!
3. Be sensitive to the many variables that can influence the success or failure of this key relationship. Stay focused!
4. Communicate openly and often, sharing both good and bad news/information. A great communicator is also a great listener!
5. Have the courage to address concerns and sensitive issues, and have the best interests of the organization in mind. Nothing is *off limits* (if it has potential impact on the organization's work)!
6. Keep individual egos in check, and don't compete for the limelight. Share it!
7. Be considerate and respectful. Practice *The Golden Rule*!
8. Work within the limits or boundaries placed on the relationship, such as those established in your organization's bylaws and polices or by the national association.
9. Periodically assess the health of the partnership in areas of trust, respect, communication, purpose, expectations, attitudes, and boundaries.
10. Acknowledge each other's contributions to the work of both the partnership and the organization. Say thank you!

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PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

1. In the context of self-reflection around the role execution diagram, what is the one (1) significant challenge you need to address in order to better execute your respective role as Chief Executive or Board Chair?
2. In thinking about your current Chief Executive-Board Chair partnership, what do you perceive as two (2) strengths of this partnership?
3. Reflecting on what we covered in today's session, what two (2) things do YOU want to do in order to create a higher functioning Chief Executive-Board Chair partnership?

Website Resources: Board Governance

www.boardsource.org

BoardSource (2012). *The Nonprofit Board Answer Book: A Practical Guide for Board Members and Chief Executives* (3rd ed.)

BoardSource (2005). *The Source*¹²: *Twelve Principles of Governance that Power Exceptional Boards*

Chait, R. P., Ryan, W. P., & Taylor, B. E. (2005). *Governance as Leadership: Reframing the Work of Nonprofit Boards*

Ingram, R. T. (2009). *Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards* (2nd ed.)

Wertheimer, M. R. (2012, December 4). What is the one leadership quality or attribute necessary for a board chair? [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://blog.boardsource.org/blog/2012/12/04/what-is-the-one-leadership-quality-or-attribute-that-is-absolutely-necessary-for-a-board-chair/>

Wertheimer, M. R. (2013). *The Board Chair Handbook* (3rd ed.)

Wertheimer, M. R. (2016, June 2). Leadership of the board chair in creating board culture [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://blog.boardsource.org/blog/leadership-of-the-board-chair-in-creating-board-culture>

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www.blueavocado.org

www.bridgespan.org

www.cen.org

www.compasspoint.org

www.fieldstonealliance.org

www.guidestar.org

www.independentsector.org

www.mapforprofits.org

www.ncna.org

<http://nonprofit.about.com>

www.nonprofitresearch.org

www.npgoodpractice.org