

## Georgia CASA

# Building Board Engagement & Partnership with Your Board

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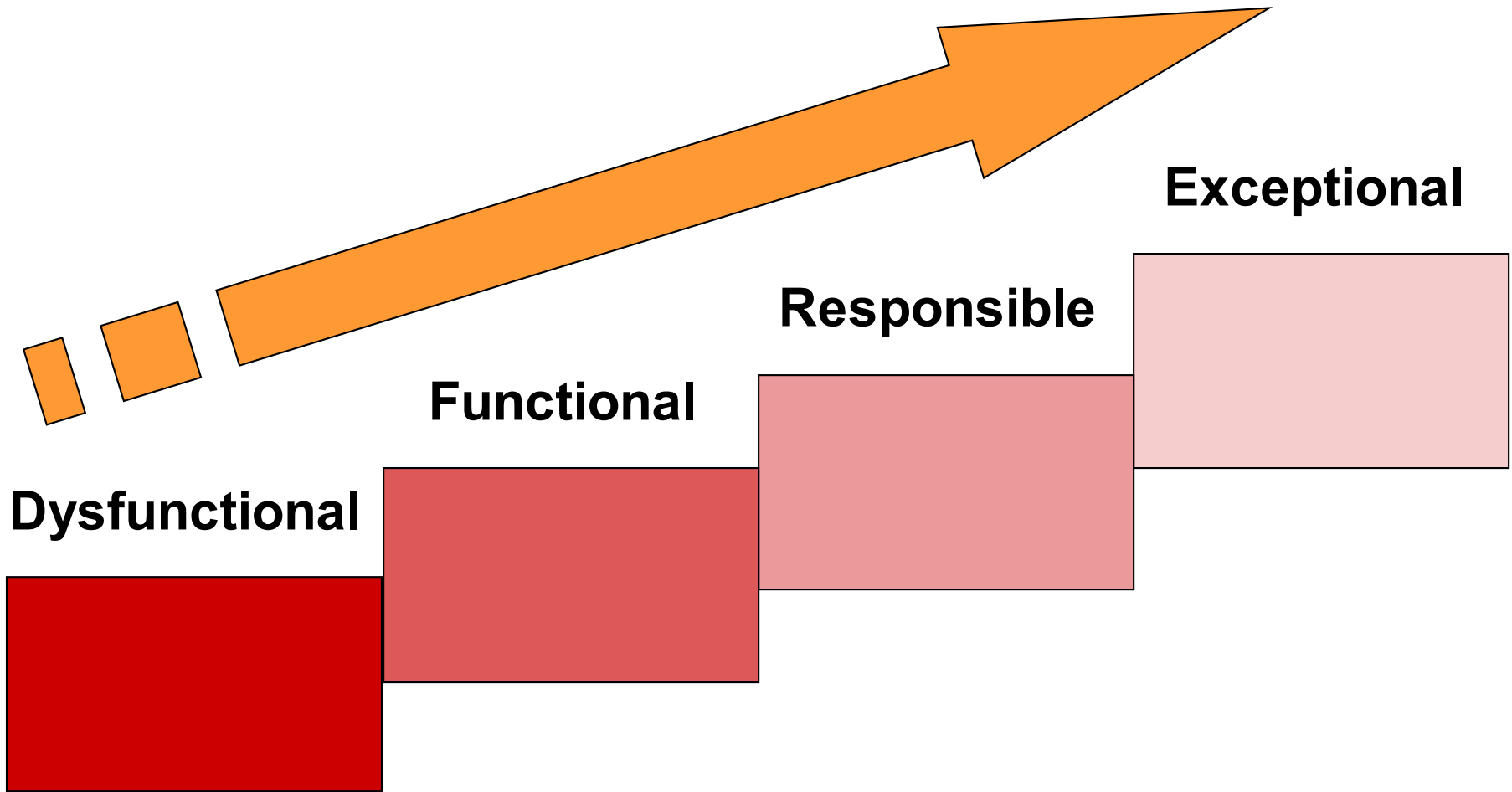
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# Objectives

- Understand how to increase the functionality of a nonprofit board
- Understand board engagement strategies to foster the partnership between boards and staff
- Understand how to engage board members throughout their service

# Board Continuum



# Dysfunctional

- Dramatic disengagement
- Apathy or intense conflict
- Lack of alignment among board members
- Rarely have quorum
- Members don't show up
- Personal conflicts
- Micromanaging staff

# Functional

- Capable & dutiful in carrying out its responsibilities
- Understands its fiduciary obligations
- Adds value to the organization by approving strategic plans, budgets
- Regularly reviews financial statements
- Evaluates executive annually
- Participates in fundraising

# Responsible

- Pays attention to what goes on both inside and outside the organization
- Focuses on issues that make a difference
- Agrees on how to operate
- **Works as a team**
- Evaluates its own performance
- Knows its roles and responsibilities

# Exceptional

- Operate at a higher level – that is both more AND different
- Gives more of time, talent, treasure – but also act differently –
  - Time spent more wisely
  - Skills and social networks better leveraged
  - Treasure more strategically deployed
- Measure organizational impact AND evaluate their own performance
- Discuss AND debate ideas
- Open doors And make connections

# Ideal Board/ Staff Relationship:

## PARTNERSHIP



COLLABORATION



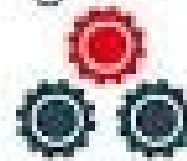
PERFORMANCE



PLAN



TEAMWORK



SYNERGY



SUCCESS



WIN-WIN



# Board Responsibilities

*No Micro-managing*

## Governance

- Determine mission & purpose
- Hire, support & evaluate CEO/ED
- Ensure effective planning
- Monitor & strengthen programs and services
- Ensure adequate financial resources
- Protect assets & provide financial oversight
- Build a competent board
- Ensure legal & ethical integrity
- Enhance the organization's public standing

## Board Development

- Initiation
- Orientation
- Sustainability
- Preservation

## Boardroom

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

# CEO/ED Responsibilities

*No Micro-governing*

## Management

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

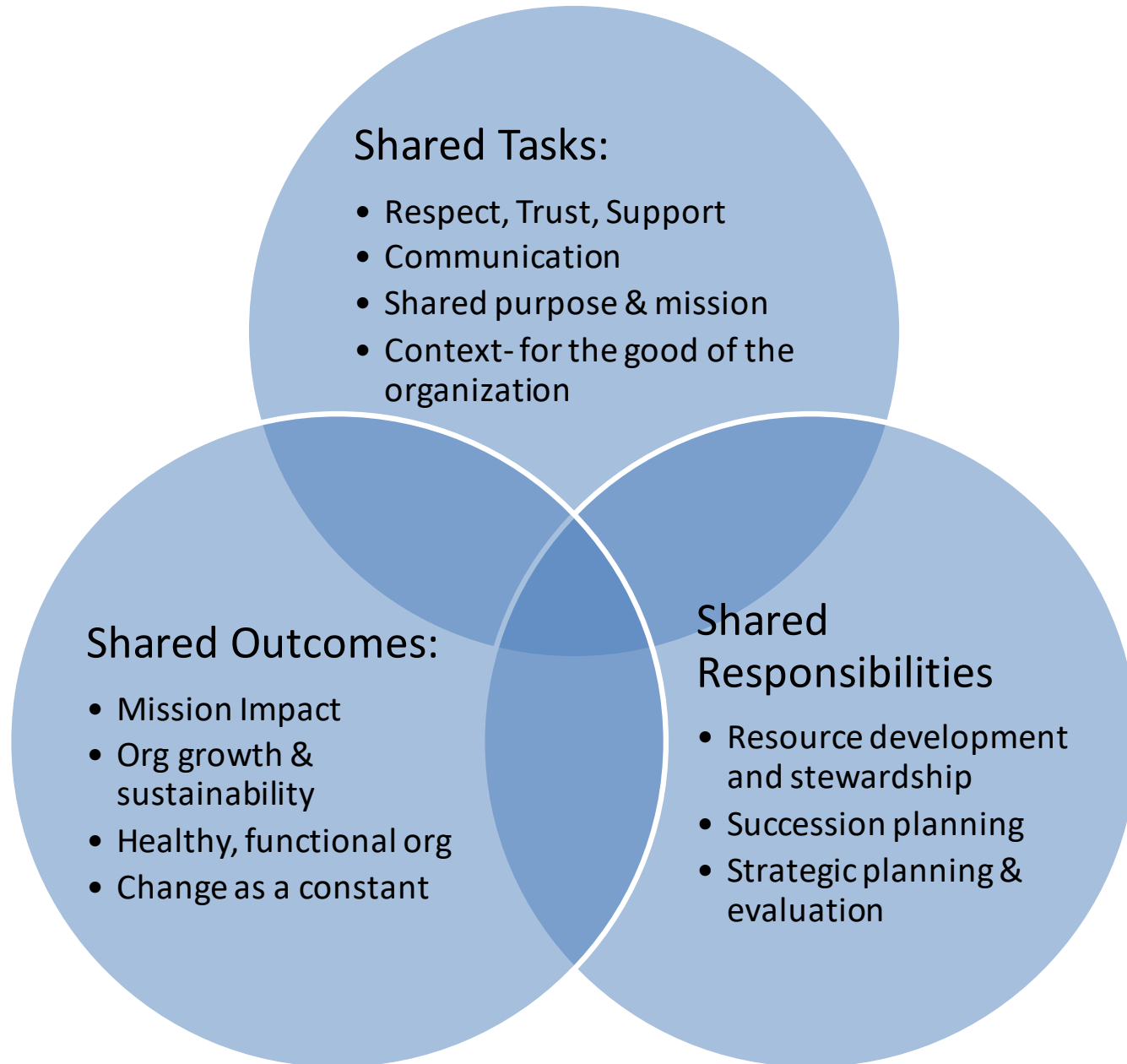
## Staff Development

- Initiation
- Orientation
- Sustainability
- Preservation

## Workplace

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

# Shared Responsibilities



# Successful Boards

- Apply Board Recruitment Process
- Conduct Orientation of New Members
- Provide Board Training
- Manage Board Relationships
- Conduct annual board assessment

**Best Practice**

**Size: 12-15  
members**

**Terms - 2  
3 Year**

# Structure to Support Board Engagement

## Orientation

1. Orientation Meeting
2. Orientation Manual
3. Board Assignments
4. Board Buddy/Informal Check-In
5. Board Chair Check In

Best  
Practice

2.5 hour  
Orientation  
Session Led  
by Board  
Members

# Managing Relationships

1. Informal Check In Meetings
2. Keeping Informed If Missed Meeting
3. Make Committee Assignments
4. Provide Strong Staffing
5. Build Relationships
6. Networking time
7. Retreat- Strategic Thinking Time
8. Communication

## Best Practice

- 2 Networking events
- Annual Retreat

# Ongoing Training

1. Governance Committee Role
2. Annual training schedule
3. Training topics
  - a. Technical
  - b. Mission/Constituent
  - c. Best Practices
4. Discussion Time at Meetings

## Best Practice

- 2 training sessions per year
- Executive Session

# Assessment/Board Evaluation

1. Annual Survey
2. Discussion at Retreat
3. Action Plan for Improvement

## Best Practice

- Annual survey for retreat discussion



# Committees

- 12 month Work plan
  - Committee Assignments
  - Task Force vs. Standing Committees
  - Reporting Back to Board
- Fewer Standing Committees
  - Governance
  - Fundraising
  - Finance

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# **HOW DO YOU ENGAGE BOARD LEADERS?**

**Know what their motivation was to become a Board member.**

**Have someone responsible for the care and nurturing of Board members (NOT the Executive Director)**

**Know the 10 Secrets**

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# THE 10 SECRETS

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# 1. BE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT YOU EXPECT YOUR BOARD TO DO.

**Board Member Job Description**

**Annual Board Work Plan**

**Clear Committee Descriptions**



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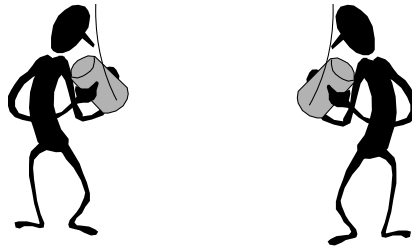
## **2. DETERMINE WHAT'S MISSING IN BOARD COMMUNICATION.**

**Send out agendas and materials in advance**

**Set up file sharing and/or a Board Intranet**

**Conduct a complete board member orientation**

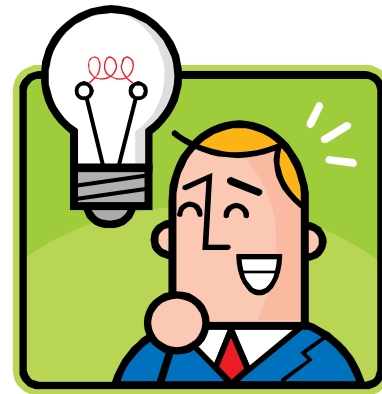
**Send out a weekly “headlines” e-mail**



### **3. DON'T EXPECT EACH BOARD MEMBER TO ACT ON EVERY BOARD RESPONSIBILITY.**

**Create an Annual Board Commitment and Development Plan**

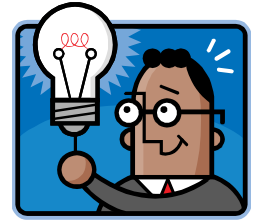
- **Fundraising/Events Attendance**
- **Networking/Friend-raising**
- **Committees**



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# **4. BE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT ABSOLUTELY HAS TO HAPPEN.**

**Strategic Decisions**



**New Policies**

**Strategic Plan Priorities**

**Essential Board Governance (e.g. fiscal accountability and oversight)**

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# 5. EQUIP BOARD MEMBERS TO SHINE.

Identify the things they do best and empower them  
to do it

Provide timely and responsive staff support



Train, Train, Train



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## **6. DON'T BE AFRAID TO TALK ABOUT THE “FUNDING GAP.”**

**Be Honest**

**Be Positive**

**Be Clear**



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# 7. IDENTIFY KEY BOARD MEMBERS WHO CAN BE YOUR PARTNERS.

**Connected/Networked**

**Good Communicators**

**Enthusiastic**

**Strategic**

**Vigilant**

**Organized**

**Positive**

- **Team-oriented**
- **Great Listeners**
- **Naturally Generous**
- **Natural Leadership**



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## **8. THINK ABOUT YOUR BOARD LEADERSHIP PIPELINE.**

**Think about cultivating the next round of board members/leaders before term limits are up.**

- **Committee/taskforce volunteers**
- **Episodic volunteers**
- **Constituents**

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# **9. HAVE A CONVERSATION ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY.**

## **Conduct an annual Board Evaluation**

### **SECTION 1: PERFORMANCE OF BOARD ON ITS CORE RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Shape mission and strategic direction**

**Ensure leadership and resources**

**Monitor and improve performance**



### **SECTION 2: PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE NEXT 1-2 YEARS**

### **SECTION 3: QUALITY OF BOARD EFFECTIVENESS ENABLERS**

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# 10. TO BOARD MEMBERS: DON'T HOLD BACK.

**No one owns a nonprofit....but it is yours to make successful beginning on Day 1.**

**You get out of it what you put into it!**

**Ask for help (training, materials, etc.)**



# Questions?

- Additional Resources:
  - Georgia Center for Nonprofits
    - <https://www.gcn.org/Board-Documents>
    - Elizabeth Runkle, [erunkle@gcn.org](mailto:erunkle@gcn.org)
  - Other MSOs:
    - Board Source [www.boardsource.org](http://www.boardsource.org)
    - Blue Avocado



*Thank you!*