Building Boards That Show Up

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Our goal: create the conditions where trustees can contribute with confidence, purpose, and meaningful results.

Think about a board member you wish were more engaged.

You'll come back to this person at the end of the session.

Who are they?	What matters to them?	What do you observe about their participation?

1. Reframe the question

~~**Why won't my board members engage?**~~ → **What conditions make participation easier—or harder?**

"Don't ask how you motivate other people. That's the wrong way to think about it. Instead, ask, 'How can you create the conditions within which other people will motivate themselves?'"
— Edward Deci

What do you want this board member to do more consistently?

Reframe it. Turn "Why won't they ___?" into "How might I (we) ___?"

*How might I (we)*_____

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2. Understand the system

Strong boards create the conditions that make meaningful participation possible.



Why are we here?	What do we intentionally create?	What emerges when we work together?	How do people experience it?	What are we trying to accomplish together?
What does our organization exist to make happen? What are we governing?	Roles and decision rights Meetings Onboarding Information Opportunities to contribute Decision processes	**Identity:** Who are we? **Trust:** Can we rely on one another? **Belonging:** Do I feel included? **Norms:** How do we work together? **Influence:** Whose voices shape the conversation? **Support:** How do we help each other succeed?	**Competence:** Can I do this? **Agency:** Do my actions make a difference? **Connection:** Do I feel connected to the work and to others?	What does it mean to govern? What does that look like in our organization?

Governance in action

Governance is the system used by a group of people to make decisions, maintain accountability, and lead on what matters.

Establish a system	Make decisions	Maintain accountability	Lead on what matters
Set roles, responsibilities, policies, and ways of working.	Set direction and make choices about resources, strategy, and priorities.	Ensure the foundation fulfills its responsibilities to purpose, community, resources, and law.	Stay informed, bring perspective, ask hard questions, and respond to a changing world.

Which responsibility needs more meaningful participation from your trustees?

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3. Diagnose your board

Performance = Potential – Interference ***(Tim Gallwey, The Inner Game of Tennis)***

Routine Check-Up

HOW TO USE	RATE EACH STATEMENT	FOCUS AREA
1. Complete individually. 2. Compare and discuss as a board. 3. Identify top opportunities. 4. Choose one or two experiments. 5. Revisit and reflect.	**CONSISTENTLY**: This is a strength. **SOMETIMES**: There's room to improve. **RARELY**: This is getting in the way.	What area board work would you like to focus on? Date:

		CONSISTENTLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY
PURPOSE Why are we here?	We have a shared understanding of why our organization exists.	O	O	O
	We connect board discussions to our mission and purpose.	O	O	O
	We revisit our purpose when making important decisions.	O	O	O
STRUCTURE How do we organize participation?	Roles and expectations are clear.	O	O	O
	Meetings make good use of everyone's time.	O	O	O
	Everyone has meaningful opportunities to contribute.	O	O	O
GROUP DYNAMICS How do we work together?	People ask honest questions and different perspectives are welcomed and respected.	O	O	O
	Participation is shared—not dominated by a few voices.	O	O	O
	People work through disagreement constructively.	O	O	O
INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE How do people experience participation?	Board members feel prepared with the knowledge and skills to contribute.	O	O	O
	Board members believe their contributions make a difference.	O	O	O
	Board members feel connected to the mission and to one another.	O	O	O

Diagnose a Problem

What is one thing you are observing with your board?	What conditions might help explain it? *Consider purpose, structure, group dynamics, and individual experience.*

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4. Design for engagement

How do we intentionally design environments where people can do their best work together?

Change the conditions. See what changes.

Work in groups of 3. Each person brings the board member from page 1. Rotate roles until everyone has had a turn. **OBSERVER describes what they are seeing. SLEUTH asks what might be shaping it. SCIENTIST suggests a change to test.**

1 Observe 	2 Investigate 	3 Experiment 
What is the person actually doing?	What conditions might be shaping that behavior?	What could you change and test?

What will you try?

Return to your board member. Choose one change you will make to create better conditions for this person to participate.

The change I will try:

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