

Stages of Board Development

The Founding Board	The Governing/Managing Board	The Governing/Fund Raising Board
The Board is the organization	Assumption of responsibility for well-being and longevity of the organization	Focus on fund raising and recruitment of prestigious board members, increased expectations of staff
Strong sense of ownership, power shared, consensus leadership, reluctance to release power to staff, often entrepreneurial staff emerges from the founding board	Balancing of power between staff and board	Formal or informal levels of boardsmanship cause an “in” group or an “out” group, heavy reliance on the expertise of staff
Informal, consensus decision-making; sometimes “rubber stamping”	Formalized decision-making process, increased reliance on staff recommendations	Decision making delegated to committees and executive committee, formalized process, often “rubber stamping”
Strong mission focus, little distinction between policy and administration.	Focus on policy, planning, and oversight responsibilities; focus on building management systems and structures; micro-management often a problem; beginning to embrace fundraising responsibilities	Pre- and Post operations focus (planning and evaluation); strong commitment to fundraising
Small group, few committees	Committees more important, more delegation of work to committees, add board members	Add more board members, executive committee often functions as governance board
Passion for mission	Passion for mission decreases with focus on building internal capacity	Passion high (especially among leading fund raisers)
Composed of individuals with close ties to the mission of the organization	Recruit board members who are specialists in management, computers, finance, etc.	Recruit board members of high visibility and with “money” connections, members gain certain amount of prestige by sitting on this board

Transition:	Transition:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to growth and crisis • Tension between board and staff • New board members (new ideas) • Painful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to growth or crisis • Need for change mutually recognized • Less traumatic

Life Stages of Non Profit Boards

Stage	Early	Middle	Mature
Focus	Organizing Board	Governing Board	Institutional Board
Characteristic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small • Involved in everything • Homogeneous • Informal • Committed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board accepts responsibilities • Board is enlarged & diversified • Committee structure allows some tasks to be delegated • Staff gain new responsibilities & decision making power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on recruiting a large board that has the capacity to give or have access to funders and donors, and influential people. • Serving on the Board is considered prestigious • Board oversight responsibilities delegated to committees • Planning and budgeting is done by staff and approved by the Board
Transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift to more business like operation • Board/Staff must redefine roles • Open up to new people • Development of systems • Clearer job descriptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established organization becomes increasingly "professionalized" • Fundraising function of Board increasingly important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to delegate governance of the institution to an executive or management committee • Becomes an institutional fundraising board
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find it difficult to hire or trust first staff members and share power • Some founding members will choose to leave 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frustration with change occurring slowly • The Board is often the slowest to change and operate on a new dynamic, due to its operation being focused on last 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initially the straggle between being independent and interdependent may get in the way until both board and staff learn to adjust to their new roles

Source: Board Passages: Three Key Stages in a Nonprofit Board's Life Cycle, National Center for Nonprofit Boards