



Vol. 22 No.2
June 2017

REALBoardTM Advisor

R—RESULTS-FOCUSED E—EXCELLENT A—ACCOUNTABLE & LINKED TO OWNERS L—LEGACY-CREATING

Imagining Futures to Expand Horizons

PLUS Inside

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 - Disruption, Risk & Strategic Foresight

New Column: You Asked Us?!

Editor's Note

Our last newsletter focused on the basic principles of Policy Governance®. This issue is designed to help you move your board forward to use this governance system as a springboard to exercising strategic foresight that will help your organization co-create the future it envisions. Whether you are just starting on the journey of using Policy Governance, or are well along the way, there is something here for you.

If you are just getting started, Jannice Moore's article, "Hands-on or Heads-up," will help you understand the importance of the board caring about strategic foresight. Andrew Bergen's article, "Mind-Stretchers," provides some simple starting places for this kind of thinking. In "Connecting the Dots" Dee Inconato elaborates on how strategic foresight is connected to Ends policies.

For those who have already considered some of these options, Rose Mercier addresses some practical ways to build strategic foresight into your board meetings. Richard Stringham discusses the kind of board members that are best suited to imagining possible futures, and Joe Inskeep challenges the reader to consider the rapidly changing world in which we live and become "students of emerging trends, friends of the horizon."

In this issue we introduce a new column called "You Asked Us" in which Ted Hull addresses your questions.

Finally, we are excited to announce the upcoming publication of a new book, *A Tale of Two School Boards*, by Andrew Bergen and Jannice Moore. Watch for more details soon.

Marian

Marian Hamilton
Editor

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Volume 22 No.2

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**Even the most unlikely events should be prepared
for, if the consequences are great enough.**

– Peter Swartz

HANDS-ON OR HEADS-UP? STRATEGIC FORESIGHT AS THE HEART OF THE BOARD'S WORK



by Jannice Moore

Is your board hands-on or heads-up? Being a hands-on board – focusing on operational details, providing approvals, listening to CEO reports – is much easier. The down-side is that your organization is left with no-one providing the vital strategic foresight necessary for your organization to survive, let alone thrive, in our rapidly changing world.

In 1677, the Dutch philosopher Spinoza suggested that wisdom is seeing things in view of eternity. “A foundational principle of wisdom is to have a long term perspective; to see the big picture; to look beyond the immediate situation.” (McKinney.) Robert Greenleaf (p. 18) maintained that failure to foresee is an “ethical failure, because serious ethical compromises today (when the usual judgment on ethical inadequacy is made) are usually the result of a failure at an earlier date to foresee today’s events and take the right actions when there was freedom for initiative to act.”

Internationally known author on business and management from McGill University, Henry Mintzberg, has said that “strategic planning is an oxymoron.” He goes on to say that strategy cannot be planned because planning is about analysis while strategy is about synthesis. Synthesis is about combining diverse concepts into a coherent whole.

I propose that the board’s key role is much more about synthesis than analysis. Thus, to maintain clarity, boards need to make a distinction between strategic **planning** and strategic **thinking**. The latter focuses on setting strategic direction. (See Moore for a more detailed explanation of the difference between strategic planning and strategic thinking.) The purpose of strategic thinking is to exercise strategic **foresight**.

Noted futurist Ruben Nelson describes strategic foresight as “the personal, group and societal capacities/culture that enables us to make and live by strategic commitments in the present that are wise and context-sensitive enough to survive context change and actually co-create a more deeply desirable future.” Why should a board care about this?

Let’s take a step back in time – the future is always connected to the past. The derivation of the very word “governance” comes from the Latin *gubernare*, which in turn was derived from the Greek *kubernetes*. In ancient times, the *kubernetes* was the person on the sailing ship who pointed out the direction the ship was to go, and watched for dangerous shoals. He provided direction and protection. Today, millennia later, those are still the key functions of a board – providing *direction* and *protection* for the organization. In Policy Governance®, this is accomplished through the use of Ends policies (direction) and Executive Limitations policies (protection from imprudent and unethical means).

To fulfill these responsibilities, the board cannot be mired in the details of current-day operations – it needs to be the look-out, doing the best possible job of foreseeing what may be coming in the future. The best way I can put this into context is to share several diagrams from Ruben Nelson’s work (Nelson). In these diagrams, think of the triangle as your organization.

Figure 1 illustrates your organization. Figure 2 shows your organization’s most common connections, the way it spends its days. In Figure 3 we see the way in which your organization comes to be preoccupied. However, reality is shown in Figure 4. Your organization

is just a tiny piece in the reality of our rapidly-changing world. Threats – and opportunities – are constantly coming at it. The board has a very big job if it is going to direct and protect the organization in light of this reality.

FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2

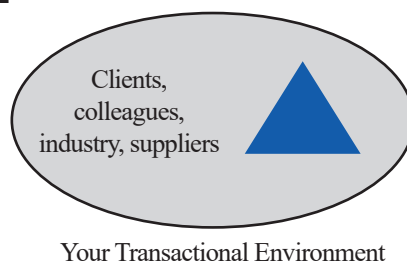


FIGURE 3

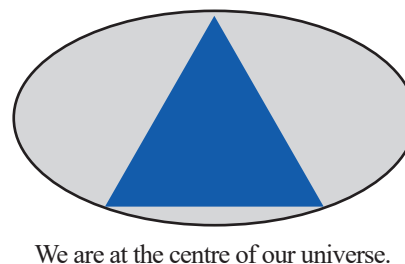
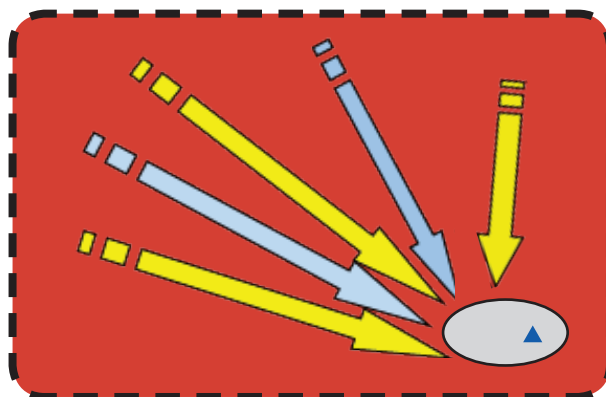


FIGURE 4



This is disturbing work. Robert Greenleaf (1991, p.19-20) said “the opening of awareness stocks both the conscious and unconscious minds with the richness of resources for future need. But it does more

than that: it is value building and value clarifying . . . Awareness . . . is the disturber and an awakener. Able leaders are usually sharply awake and reasonably disturbed. They are not seekers after solace.” Becoming sufficiently aware to exercise strategic foresight is a challenge for most boards.

“Able leaders are usually sharply awake and reasonably disturbed.”

I’ve written in previous issues about some of the ways in which boards can enhance their learning to enable wise decisions (Moore). Here, I want to particularly focus on the awareness needed to begin useful foresight work. All of us have ingrained “default” settings. These come from our personal experiences, the way in which we were raised, organizational biases, cultural biases, and even civilizational biases. We are, in a sense, programmed to experience reality in certain ways. Most of this is unconscious. Even when we *think* we are being future-oriented, we may be deluding ourselves. “Much of what passes for future-think is an imagination of what the world would look like if it ‘worked right’ . . . it is an imagination dominated by now, which aims to imprint the ‘best’ of now upon the future. The trouble is that the ‘best’ of now . . . is not very satisfactory in a world of profound change.” William Bernbaum said this in 1969. He was right then, nearly fifty years ago; how much more profound is the change in which we now live? (See Joe Inskeep’s article.)

Boards today need to devote significant time to activities that can jolt them out of their current-focused, default thinking mode, into a mental space that enables them to think wisely about the future – to help create the future, rather than simply letting it happen to them. Other articles in this issue go on to provide some ideas about how to go about such work. The Policy Governance® system allows you to place your day to day operational concerns into a system of carefully crafted Executive Limitations policies, which, when rigorously monitored, provide organizational *protection*. The Ends policies provide a place in which to provide *direction*. However, that direction will only be as good as the strategic foresight work that you do. I challenge you to take advantage of the opportunity to make it the best possible direction, ready to carry your organization into the future to make a real difference in our world. Focus on being not a hands-on, but a heads-up board!

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The Governance Coach™ Near You...



As of this publication date, a member of The Governance Coach team will be travelling to the following areas in 2017:

June 16 Edmonton, AB

Introduction to Policy Governance® Workshop

June 16 Toronto, Ontario

June 16 Nipiwini, Saskatchewan

June 22-24 San Diego, CA

IPGA Conference

June 24 Vancouver, British Columbia

June 25-26 Los Angeles, CA

September 9-10 Cape Cod, MA

September 14 Toronto, Ontario

September 19 Toronto, Ontario

September 28-30 Edmonton, Alberta

September 29 Toronto, Ontario

October 19 Helena, MT

Introduction to Policy Governance® Workshop

November 9-11 Toronto, Ontario

December 5-7 Montreal, Quebec

December 9 Toronto, Ontario

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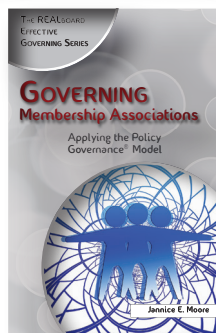
If your organization would like to hold a Policy Governance® workshop or meet with a member of The Governance Coach™ team while they are in your area, please contact:

Marian Hamilton - Office Manager

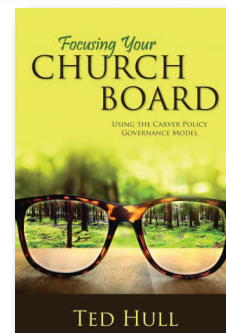
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MIND-STRETCHERS

by Andrew Bergen



Jannice Moore has just written about the importance of foresight and the necessary perspective for boards in order to create a desired future. The board provides the best value for the organization by spending its time thinking about and creating the future. It can also be said that the board's real work is to ensure that the organization remains relevant into the future; that the organization continues to provide valuable benefits to those it intends to serve as the world continues to shift at an ever increasing pace.

So, how might a board go about actually doing this work? Often the conversation at the board table can get stuck in taking the current world and projecting it into the future – and assuming that is future thinking. However, that really limits us to what we already know and prevents the ability to escape the thinking ruts that keep us stuck in present assumptions. I present here two potential ways of helping boards get out of thinking ruts to “stretch” their minds.

1. Mind-Mapping

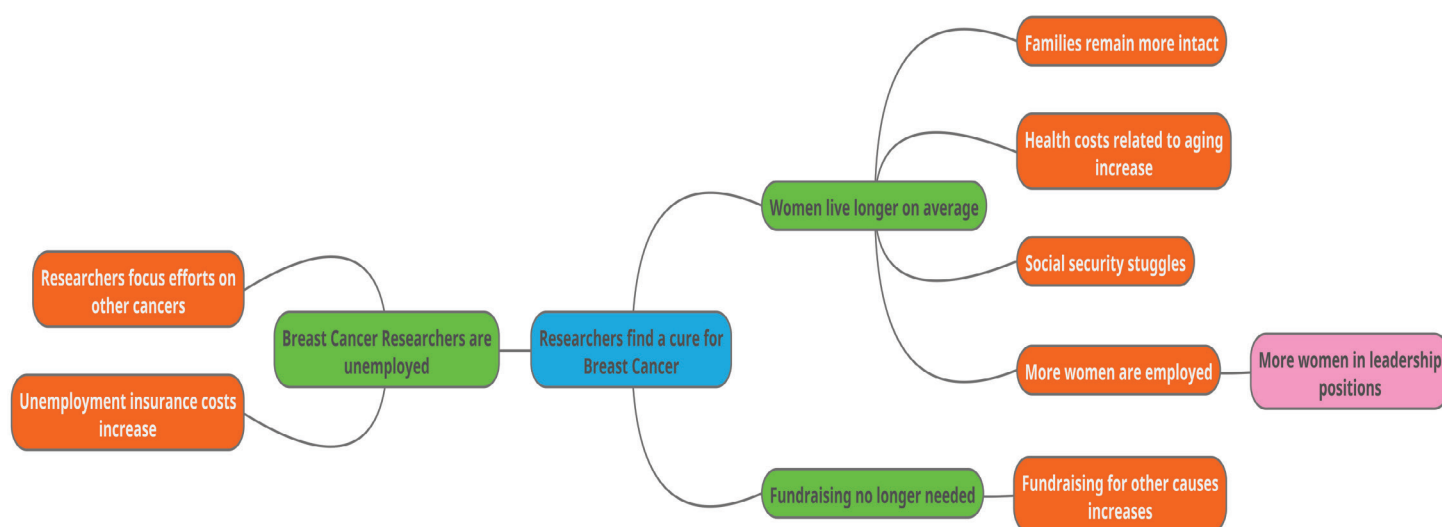
Trying to think of the future logically often limits you to what you already know and keeps you trapped in thinking ruts. Mind-mapping is a tool to help make previously invisible connections more apparent. It can open minds to a larger white space, can help you play *with* the boundaries instead of *within* them, and can facilitate a shift in thinking from reactionary to reflective and curious.

How it works:

- On a sheet of paper or a whiteboard, place a potential future situation in a bubble. For this example, I have chosen “researchers have found a cure for breast cancer”.
- Using a different colored pen, jot down what would be first level implications that could occur if the root situation does become reality. In this example, I’ve represented three implications: “On average, women live longer;” “fundraising is no longer needed;” and “breast cancer researchers are unemployed.”
- Using yet a different colored pen, jot down any second level implications that would arise from the first level situations if they became reality.
- Having done this for as many levels as you like, step back and begin to examine the themes and connections that arise.

Tip: choose a central issue that might not be directly related to your industry. This will really push the boundaries of your creative thinking to get outside normal thinking ruts.

Once you’ve had a chance to work through a process like this, it is important that the board returns and discusses what possible implications the insights gained have for its current or future Ends statements.



2. Scenario planning

This is a more complex way of thinking about the future than mind-mapping. It is particularly useful to imagine alternative potential future “worlds.” The imagination of these potential futures is useful to help the board determine what present commitments it should make in order to

both influence and prepare for the potential worlds that might exist in the long term future.

How it works:

- Choose an issue that is relevant to your community, organization or industry. For this example, I have selected an issue relevant to public education – namely Student Learning Methodologies.
- Draw a line and label each end of the line with two extremes. In this case, the one extreme is: learning will continue to occur in person, in a brick and mortar facility. The other end is: learning will occur independently with content largely delivered online.
- Select another issue of relevance. For this example, I have selected the ethnic diversity of the community.
- Draw a line representing this issue and, again, label the extremes. In this case: relative ethnic homogeneity on one end and significant ethnic diversity on the other.

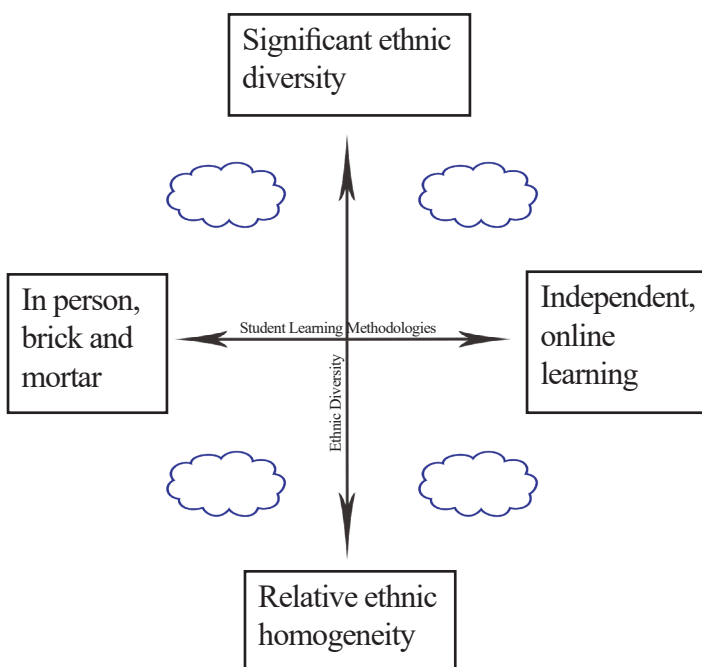
Condition #1 – Student Learning Methodologies



Condition #2 – Ethnic Diversity in the community



Having done this, place these two trend lines to form a 2X2 matrix as shown below. This would give you something like the following:



Now, for each of those four spaces created, consider what that world would look like. In other words, if student learning methodologies continued to occur in person, in a traditional school building AND the community became significantly more ethnically diverse (the upper left quadrant), what would that world look like? Do the same for each of the other potential worlds. It helps to give a name to each of those potential future spaces. (You could continue to select a variety of issues that are relevant and mix and match them to come up with different ways of picturing the future.)

Now, having done this, step back and have a dialogue about what this might mean for the board's Ends. Where on each of the axes is the current situation? Where would the board like it to be? Are there commitments the board can make today in its Ends priorities that will potentially influence which direction this future takes? Or are there commitments the board should make in order to be ready and remain relevant for any of the future possibilities?

A structured process such as this can help break out of thinking ruts and develop foresight by considering possibilities not previously envisioned. When you are ready to engage in this work, consider inviting a facilitator to guide you through the process. A well-prepared facilitator can help avoid any potential built-in biases, as well as free all board members to participate fully in the thinking and dialogue.

You Asked Us...



Our Consultant Ted Hull answers your questions:

IS IT TRUE THAT THE MEMBERS OF BOARDS USING POLICY GOVERNANCE® CAN'T TALK TO THE EMPLOYEES?

The Policy Governance principle of Clarity and Cohesion of Delegation states that the identification of any delegatee must be unambiguous as to authority and responsibility. No subparts of the board, such as committees or officers, can be given jobs that interfere with, duplicate, or obscure the job given to the CEO.

With that in mind, your board wants to make sure there is clarity and cohesion of delegation. When this principle is being practiced there will never be confusion as to who has the authority to delegate and to whom they can delegate.

A Policy Governance board speaks with and as one voice to the CEO and only does so through officially passed motions of the board. In this way there is no ambiguity as to who has the authority to delegate (the board), what is being delegated (expressed in a formal motion, preferably as policy) and to whom it is being delegated (the CEO).

This principle does not prevent any board member from talking to the CEO or to any of the CEO's employees. It only prevents an individual board member from giving direction or instruction to, or evaluating the performance of, an employee, including the CEO.

CONNECTING THE DOTS: HOW STRATEGIC FORESIGHT INFORMS ENDS

by Dee Incoronato



The board's job is to look at the big picture, to think strategically and to envision the future. Future thinking applied to real world situations is strategic foresight. In Policy Governance®, the board's most important job is defining Ends; in other words, what the organization is to accomplish. Ends are the benefits that are produced for someone outside the organization. Collecting information that informs Ends requires purposeful board action. The largest portion of the board's time should be devoted to Ends work, so the board's agenda must allow time and space for this thinking. There are various ways to gather information for Ends decisions.

The diagram below categorizes information for Ends decisions. The Board agenda should be designed to allow time for all of these elements.

Social and demographic trends,

Technological innovations,

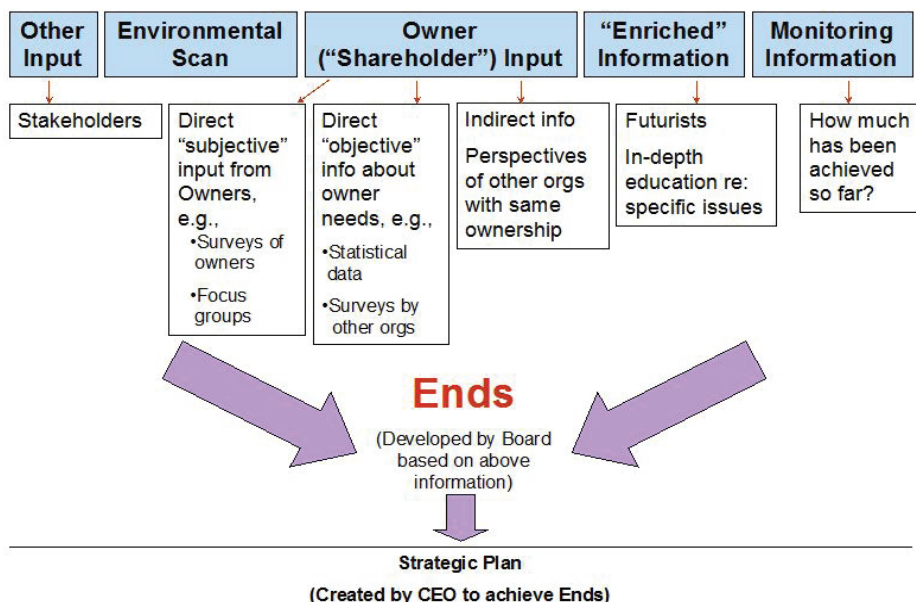
Economic trends,

Environmental developments, and

Political/legal/regulatory environment.

Using a tool such as STEEP helps the board ensure it has looked at a well-rounded set of external criteria that may impact the organization's future.

Information for Ends Decisions



Other input

Other input, such as that from stakeholders, provides a perspective from those who have an interest in the organization, including customers, funders or other similar organizations. Whether through a focus group with well thought out questions or a survey, other input provides the board with an opportunity for constructive and valuable comments from those who have a stake in the organization and where it is going in the future.

Enriched Information

Enriched information will enhance board knowledge. This information should come from those who know more about the issues at hand and are able to give the board in-depth education. For example, this education is not presentations from staff about what they are doing, but future-oriented education and information the board needs as context for policy decisions that lead the organization.

Understanding issues and the complex problems that organizations face helps boards provide future-focused leadership.

Monitoring Information

Monitoring information assesses performance against criteria found in Ends and Executive Limitations policies. While the primary purpose of monitoring is assessment of policy compliance, it is helpful for the board to know how much has been achieved so far in Ends. This information may influence the relative priority placed on various Ends.

In summary, information for Ends decisions must be purposeful. Future focused visionary thinking on behalf of the board provides the leadership to ensure organizational effectiveness and future relevance. Strategic foresight looks at the range of tomorrow's possibilities and informs today's commitments. A Policy Governance board designs a future focused agenda that includes time both for gathering information, for analyzing it, and for discussing insights from that information in order to inform Ends decisions.

Ownership Input

The centrepiece of this information is ownership input. An intentional and constructive dialogue should take place between owners and board members around Ends decisions. Having a good ownership linkage plan in place and taking time on the agenda to discuss the implications of input from owners allows board members to think strategically about what the organization should produce and who the benefits are for. There are various ways to get this input: directly from contact with owners such as focus groups, interviews and surveys; and indirectly from statistical data and surveys done by other organizations. Direct information about owners' needs and values helps the board envision the future. This future thinking can lead to a more desirable future.

Environmental Scan

An environmental scan identifies trends and emerging developments and their interconnections. External environments change rapidly and the ability to analyze and respond strategically is important. The board may use a scanning method such as STEEP for external analysis.

TAKING A DISCIPLINED APPROACH TO STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

by Rose Mercier



How can a board take a disciplined approach to developing its capacity for strategic foresight?

Getting started

First, your board needs to include future focus work in its annual agenda plan. Ensure the structure of your agenda emphasizes what's important. You could also have a place-holder for future-focus on the board's agenda template. When 'future-focused' agenda items appear on the agenda, put them early in the meeting when energy is typically higher and there is less time pressure. What you do under this agenda item will depend somewhat on the length of your meeting.

If you have 30 minutes

If you are a board that has monthly teleconferences or videoconferences that last 90 minutes, you could reserve thirty minutes on the agenda for "future focus." You can accomplish a lot in thirty minutes – if you prepare in advance.

In thirty minutes, your board can brainstorm about possible trends or topics in which it would like to deepen its understanding because of their potential impact on your organization's future. Concentrate your efforts on factors and trends that are external to your organization (Stringham).

Once you have a starting list, assign individual board members or a committee to do some preliminary research on these trends. (Remember the board is looking for knowledge and insight, not predictions.)

In the next meeting, spend another thirty minutes to prioritize your initial list after reviewing the background information provided by individual members or a committee. Once you have identified what you want to learn more about, use the thirty minutes to focus on a topic.

In thirty minutes, your board can discuss a recent expert-authored well-researched article or a summary report of several articles related to your prioritized list of trends or factors.

- Select an article or prepare the report prior to the meeting, circulate or post it on the board's site, and ask board members to read it in advance of the meeting. Assign the job of providing the basis of the discussion – article or report – to a different board member for each meeting. Alternatively, the board could assign a committee the job of selecting articles.
- Focus your discussion on a small number of pre-determined questions. For example: What does this article say about the social needs your organization currently addresses? Will these needs stay the same or evolve in the next five years? What insights does this article offer about possible future directions for our organization? Advise board members of these questions in advance so they can make notes to use in the discussion.
- Record the board's ideas! An individual board member or the responsible committee needs to keep track of the notes for all discussions during the year. Alternatively, if you have a board recording secretary, tracking the insights could be part of that job. You will want to access to these ideas and insights when the board reviews its Ends policies.

In thirty minutes, your board could discuss a YouTube video featuring a presentation by a futurist or another prominent thinker in your field that board members have viewed prior to the meeting. As with the discussion of a written article, you want to record the board's insights for future use.

If you have two or three hours

Let's say your board meets face-to-face three times a year and you have 2-3 hours. What can you do?

In two hours, you could discuss several of the trends or factors that the board had previously identified. Individual board members could take turns presenting. Debrief after each presentation and make sure to record the board's insights. Not every topic need be related to your organization's purpose; it could be about the rapidly developing area of cyber theft and security. Deeper understanding of areas such as this could assist the board when reviewing the content of its Executive Limitation policy on asset protection.

You could invite a speaker who lives in the area. Explain the context of your learning session and invite her to speak about the emerging trends expected to influence the future.

In two hours, you could invite individuals from three or four different generations to speak about the same trend from their perspective. This could help your board understand the challenges of continuing to be relevant in the future.

You could select 1 or 2 of the trends your board has discussed at a prior meeting and use them as a focus in one of a variety of techniques for looking at possible futures, for example, "futures wheel," "cover story vision," "scenario-building," and "alternate futures." If the board has a committee that has been delegated the responsibility for board education or future focus, the committee can plan and facilitate the session. This type of session could easily be the basis of a stimulating and productive day. If you are considering this type of session as part of an Ends review or redevelopment, you may want to use a facilitator so that all board members can fully participate.

Integrate future-focus into board process

Apart from establishing future-focus as a standing agenda item, you can embed your board's commitment to being future-focused in Governance Process policy. This ensures the board will monitor whether its practices match its intentions (Stringham). Establish a Dropbox, Basecamp or SharePoint file into which you accumulate all of your future-focus insights. Establish a committee whose job is to plan and prepare the board's future-focus work or delegate the work to an existing committee with a related focus such as a Board Education Committee. Here are some possible ways to describe the job products or "deliverables" from such a committee:

1. An annual plan for the board's future-focus activities, for the board's consideration.

2. Organization of activities to assure success of board-approved future-focus activities.
 - 2.1 In advance of board meeting, information about material, preparation required and expected outcomes of activity.
 - 2.2 As required, arrangement for the appropriate leadership of activities.
 - 2.3 Assurance that the board's discussion and insights are recorded, stored and accessible for future use.
 - 2.4 An evaluation of the effectiveness of the plan by [date] annually, with input from the board.
 - 2.5 For use by [Name] Committees, a record on [site where records kept] of committee meeting notes, and a package of current guidelines/tools/ templates.
3. As required, a summary of board insights and deliberations for board's Ends review.

Summary

With the initial work of developing policies and implementing the processes and practices you need to be using Policy Governance® effectively, you are ready to do the rewarding work of a board – adding value by stewarding the organization into a relevant future. Enjoy!

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How is your board doing on:

- Being accountable and connected to those on whose behalf it governs?
- Clearly articulating expected organizational results?
- Setting clear policies within which the operations of the organization can proceed?
- Having clear distinction between board and CEO roles?
- Holding the CEO accountable and having clear processes for CEO evaluation?
- Having policies that the board itself follows for its own processes?
- Having clarity about board committees and their respective roles?
- Having an agenda that allows the board to focus on future direction?
- Knowing how the board itself is doing and where it could improve?

The Governance Coach™ offers The Board Practices Profile™, a quick and easy way to compare your board's current function to commonly accepted characteristics of good governance. Simply respond on-line to a set of multiple choice options to twelve questions, and one of our consulting team members will send you a response detailing where your board deserves kudos, and where it could improve its function to govern more effectively. We offer this service at no charge to help you gain insight into how to continuously improve your governance capability. Follow this link to take the Profile now: <http://governancecoach.com/board-practices-profile/>. This profile is designed for boards that are not currently using Policy Governance.

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WHAT KIND OF IMAGINATION DOES YOUR BOARD NEED?

by Richard Stringham



When developing its Ends policies, the board must imagine the future that the organization should create. But the work of “imagining” referred to here is not referring to large invisible rabbit friends. Instead it is picturing futures with a base in reality yet with a willingness to explore possibilities.

You can't create change, or invent something new, unless you can imagine how things can be different. And as [Tessa] Finlev said, "The future is a place where everything can be different."

Jane McGonigal and Mark Frauenfelder

To get to that place, the board needs to explore potential futures (with emphasis on the plural nature of “futures”).

[Futurists] don't try to predict the future. That would be impossible. There is no single future to predict, because the future doesn't just happen to us. We actively make it.

Dylan Hendricks, Institute for the Future

What are the skills needed to imagine potential futures? To explore that question, the Imagination Institute, an independent non-profit based out of Philadelphia in collaboration with the Institute for the Future, brought together eight futurists to understand how they apply imagination to thinking about the future. Together, they identified five qualities that demonstrate well-imagined futures and the kind of thinking that accompanies this work. If your board is ready to engage in future-focused work, including looking at “alternative futures” consider these qualities.

1. Logical: An imagined future must make sense. Can we draw some sort of line of how we got there from here? Are the components of that future consistent throughout? It requires logical, cause and effect type of thinking.
2. Complexity and nuances: Each imagined future should be created in a manner that considers various dynamics or factors which could be at play.

Our economy is not isolated from societal shifts (e.g., changes in immigration patterns), peoples' health issues (e.g., ageing demographics), or technological developments (e.g., greater automation), to name a few. Likewise, our economic health impacts each of these areas in a complex web of interactions that should neither be perceived, nor imagined separately.

In other words, we live in a world full of systems. They may be simple, complicated, or complex.

An example of a simple system is using a cake recipe which, when followed, is highly likely to produce the same results.

A more complicated system might be the Apollo spaceship missions to the moon. A high number of factors had to be addressed through technology and planning; however, the use of similar designs of spacecraft in the series made for greater predictability of subsequent Apollo spacecraft.

Now consider raising a child. Using the same approach to raise a second child as raising the first will not provide predictable results. This is often cited as an example of complex systems.

Imagining futures requires consideration of the complex interplay of various factors, and both the positive and the negative impacts of the imagined future. (Fixing a problem can often create other problems.) This requires systems thinkers who can see connections and their implications, as well as an ability to recognize and work with both the positive and negative implications.

3. Evocative: Imagined futures should elicit an emotional response. Edward deBono noted that emotions are closely tied to our values. Consequently, a future that matters to us will inspire awe, wonder, joy, or a sense of fear or desire to avoid that future. Eliciting this kind of response requires the skills of storytelling which emotionally engage the audience.
4. Provocative: Well imagined futures should cause excitement or discomfort, either with the imagined future or with the current state of affairs. “A good scenario challenges your assumptions about the way the world should work, or has to work. The more common assumptions a scenario upsets, the more provocative it is” (Jane McGonigal and Mark Frauenfelder). Being provocative requires courage to provide viewpoints which may be unorthodox, challenging, or otherwise unpopular.
5. Stimulating: Imagined futures should be generative. In other words, the imagined scenario should spark a desire to explore the multiple implications of the scenario. What are the implications not only for your intended beneficiaries, but also for other stakeholders? One of the major benefits of imagining alternative futures is not for the sake of prediction, but rather to help you think more deeply and widely about the future, particularly the future you will want your organization to create. The ability to empathize and recognize how others in different locales, backgrounds, and circumstances will be impacted is needed to create stimulating imagined futures.

If a key responsibility for the board is to determine and state in Ends policies the desired future that the organization is to achieve, then imagining futures is critical for the board's success. To recap, this work requires:

- Logical, cause and effect thinkers
- Systems thinkers
- Storytellers
- Courage to be provocative
- Ability to empathize.

Not every board member will have all of these abilities, but it is important that they be present in the board team as a whole. When recruiting new board members, consider the attributes of your current team in light of this list and seek to fill any gaps so your board can

better imagine possible futures – the first step towards co-creating your desired future.

References

A report of the retreat written by Jane McGonigal (lead author) and Mark Frauenfelder is available at: <http://imagination-institute.org/retreats/futurist-imagination-retreat>

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**Our Consultant Ted Hull
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IS THE COST OF A POLICY GOVERNANCE® CONSULTANT REALLY WORTH IT?

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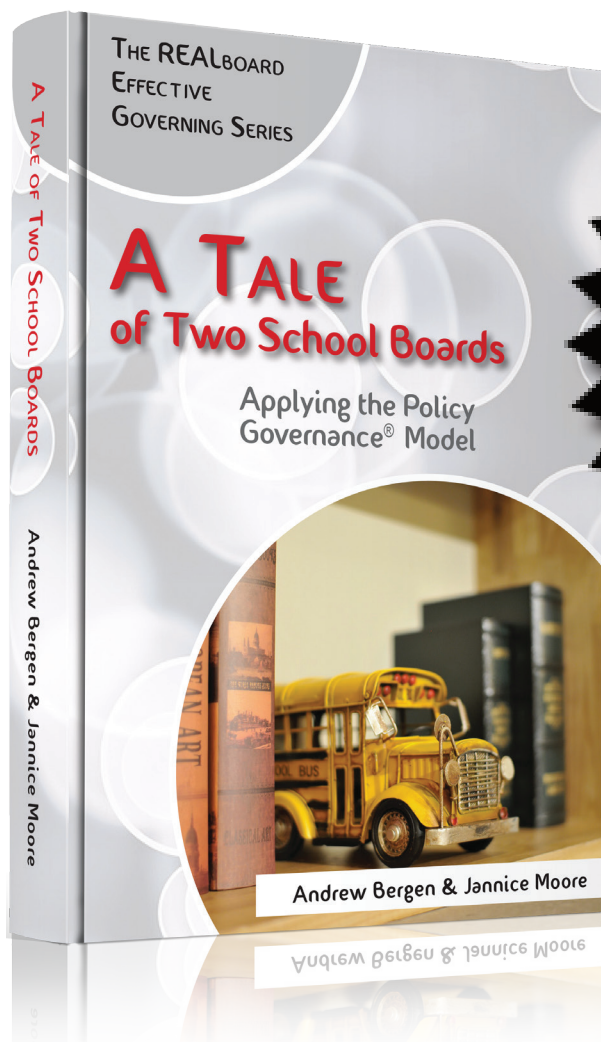
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DISRUPTION, RISK AND STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

by Joseph Inskeep

This newsletter is dedicated to strategic foresight. Interestingly, human beings are not as inclined to this activity as one might wish. There may be a simple reason for that. During nearly all of human history the pace of change has been glacial and strategic foresight was simply not a requirement for success.

Our ancestors were well adapted to respond to age-old risks: lions, weather events, clan conflict and the occasional aggressive neighbor. The events Paleolithic societies faced were mostly those they had experienced for millennia. But in the last few thousand years, just a blink of the eye, human culture began a turn toward complexity and change. We can blame it on the rise of agriculture. Grain surpluses and large city-states resulted in the division of labor and a rich exchange of ideas. In these settings, ideas built upon each other and the pace of cultural learning quickened. Human beings became very good at problem solving and collective learning.

The onset of world travel brought a first phase of globalization, linking information, goods, disease and people in a single global network. Within the last 300 years, a mind-boggling array of changes began that would transform our entire globe.

Nearly every graph that measures human output is essentially flat for thousands of years before beginning a precipitously steep rise in this recent era, whether charting population growth, species extinctions, the number of mega-cities, pollution, scientific publications, world travel, trade, energy consumption, GDP or atmospheric carbon. These accelerations fueled tremendous innovation as well.

Just several hundred years ago, the quickest way to move information from community to community was by courier, covering at best 250 miles per day using perhaps 25 different horses. The thought that anyone on the planet could talk to virtually anyone else instantaneously, or visit in person within 24 hours, would have been unimaginable fantasy. That we could each share data through a powerful computer linked to a global information network of searchable data would have been astonishing just a few years ago. This network of instantaneous information exchange, only a few years old, now drives global innovation.

I was on business in the Midwest recently, where I talked with someone who had just toured a relatively new auto assembly plant (founded in 1986). She found a diverse and apparently contented workforce at stations along a partially automated assembly line, humans and machines at work together. However, the next generation plant, a huge facility under construction nearby, will incorporate an additional 1500 robots, offsetting much of the human workforce.

Robots are jumping from a narrow band of military and industrial uses (and vacuuming our houses) to ubiquitous commercial applications like surgery, telepresence, delivery, agriculture, drone applications, human transportation, and mining. We had better get ready; the bots are already coming to our homes and workplaces, with more on the way.



Current trends in information technology include the Internet of Things, Big Data, Mobile, Cloud Computing, and Artificial Intelligence. Gary Grossman, futurist at Edelman says “each of these leads to massive changes in how fast information flows and brings about new applications and services. Taken together, they constitute ... a new information age.”

While in the Midwest I met with a newspaper board. The industry has been deeply impacted by losses in circulation and ad revenue as content moved from print to online platforms. Few in the industry saw those developments far in advance of their onset. On the visit I used Uber for one airport run and listened to a disgruntled cab driver on another. Newspapers and Uber: these disruptions are the old news. What lies ahead includes driverless cars, global warming, voice activated home automation, migrations, and concierge medicine with genetic profiling.

We must become students of emerging trends, friends of the horizon.

Although many of us feel inclined to continue the trajectory we are on, the pace of change will not allow it for long. What may be an unimaginable fantasy for us today will quite possibly be reality for our children and grandchildren. Rapid innovation and disruption are the new normal, as are the threats and opportunities they bring. Every disruption brings a threat; for every threat there is an opportunity. We must become students of emerging trends, friends of the horizon. Boards must develop their capacity for foresight, and executives fine-tune a process of continual planning.

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INTRODUCTION TO POLICY GOVERNANCE®

*with Jannice Moore
& Dee Incoronato*
October 19, 2017
Helena, Montana
9:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.
Hosted by
INTERMOUNTAIN

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- New board members or executives of a board using Policy Governance, to help you get up to speed with the governance process used by your board.
- Board members or executives of an organization not currently using Policy Governance, who would like to know more about how it works.
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- The different types of information a board needs and being clear about expectations
- How to structure the board and its committees to govern most effectively
- How to structure board agendas so that the board controls its own agenda and uses it as a method of governing proactively.

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Register Online at:

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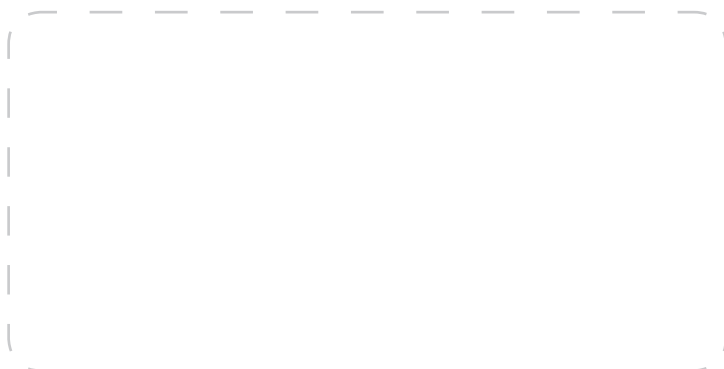
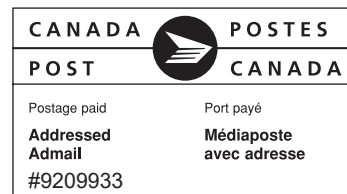
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