



# A New Lens On Board Engagement

## MN Public Transit Association Oct 24, 2022

©INspiringSIGHT2022. All Rights Reserved



**Contact me at:**

**Mary Kay Delvo**

[marykay@inspiringsight.com](mailto:marykay@inspiringsight.com)

612-750-0814

[www.inspiringsight.com](http://www.inspiringsight.com)

# Board Engagement Formula

Board members need to understand:

**Why**

does it matter?



**What**

can I contribute?



**Where**

can I contribute it?



**ENGAGEMENT**

Understand why your participation matters to the organization

Skills, Expertise & Perspective  
Recognition of the value I bring to the table

Opportunity.  
Processes that make it easy for me to share my skills/expertise

*"Your association members are the tentacles throughout the industry that help ensure its organizations can continue to operate."*

# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Engagement Needs Are Different

*"In a world that is on fire...we can no longer afford to spend our time being stuck anywhere"*

## Highly Engaged Board Members

- ~ Share industry perspectives
- ~ Are **thought leaders** & **forward thinking**
- ~ Come **prepared** with questions and having read the materials in advance
- ~ Bring **curiosity** & problem solving to the board
- ~ Volunteer to serve on/lead committees
- ~ **Look ahead, out & around** the organization
- ~ Take leadership in areas of expertise & interest & serves as a **champion of excellence** in their functional area
- ~ **Identifies pro bono resources** that support the organization

# Core Reasons Boards Are Not Engaged

1

## Limited Understanding of role

why boards exist & their importance for the organization

Board members tend to respond only to the level of expectation persistently articulated to them

2

## One-time event approach to engagement

Board Building-Cycle

3

## Process & structure fail to leverage what the board has to offer

Infuse engagement in all processes

# Core Roles of a Board

## Foundational

- Alignment of Vision, Mission, Strategic Directions
- Oversight & Accountability-executive director & financial
- Board succession and engagement

## Strategic & Adaptive

- Constructive partnership with the chief executive
- Thinking & leading strategically
- Intentional board practices

## External Leadership & Ambassadorship

- Fundraising
- Community Outreach
- Advocacy

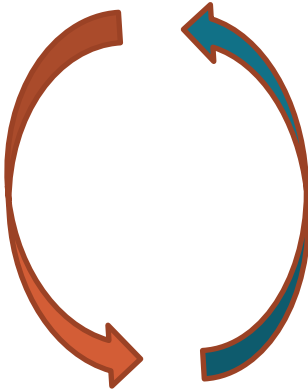
# If on this list, bother the board with it!



- Controversial** - contentious with 1 or more stakeholders
- Directional** - if connected to strategic directions, consult board
- Essential** - board owns vision, mission & values
- Financial** - big departure from budget
- Permanence** – long implications of decisions
- Positional** – if has the endorsement of the organization

# Intersection of Governance & Management

**Management**



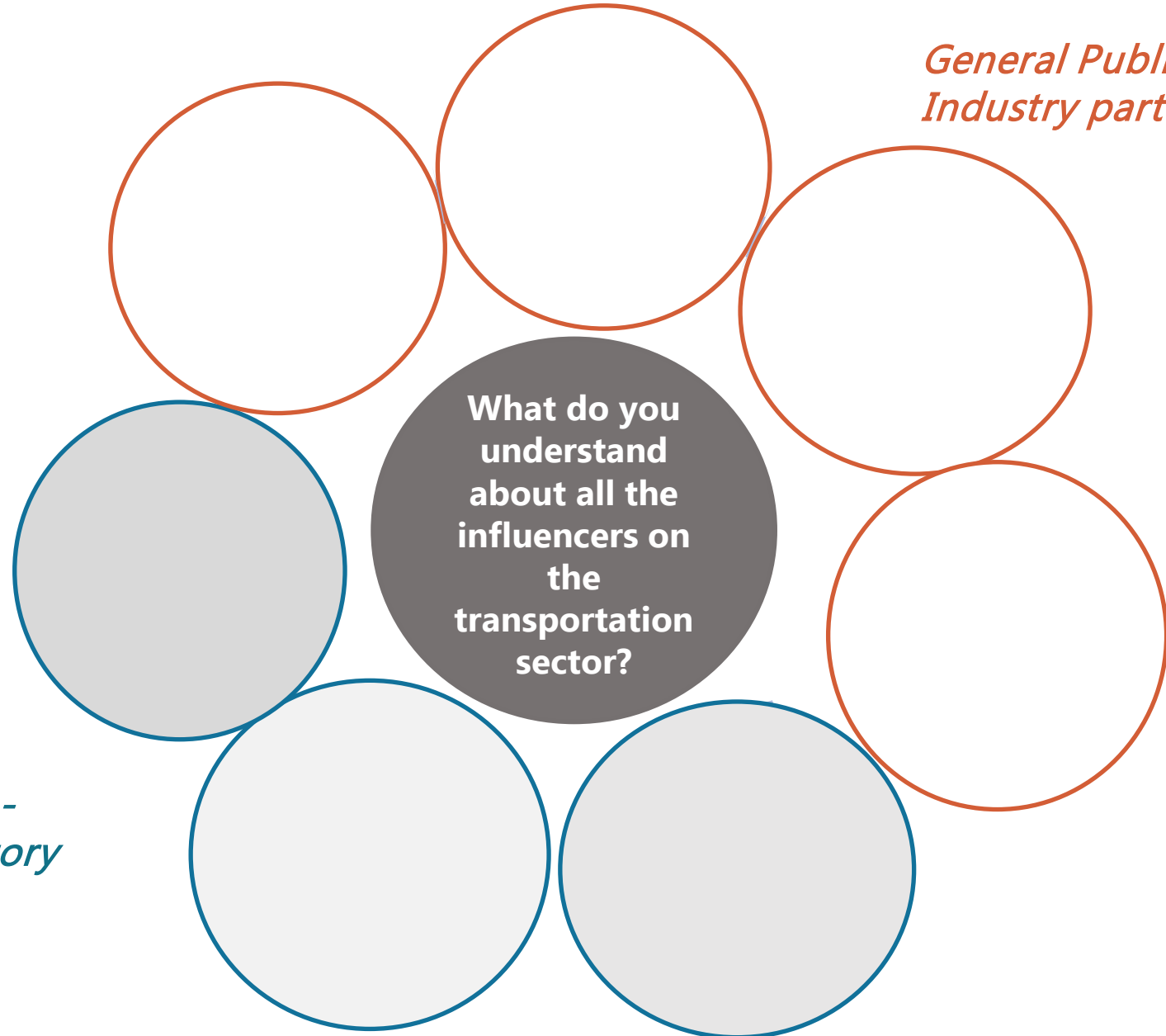
**Governance**



# Identify Transportation System Influencers

The value of board members to the organization is to look up, out, and around & communicate those observations & experiences to staff, industry leaders & policy makers

*System -  
Regulatory*





# Three principles for effective boards

1

Your board will only be as effective as its individual members

2

Board members tend to respond only to the level of expectation persistently articulated to them

3

A well-balanced & functioning board depends on the sustained hard work of the governance committee

# High Performing Board-Building Cycle

## PHASE I Strategic Recruitment

- ✓ Identify
- ✓ Cultivate
- ✓ Recruit

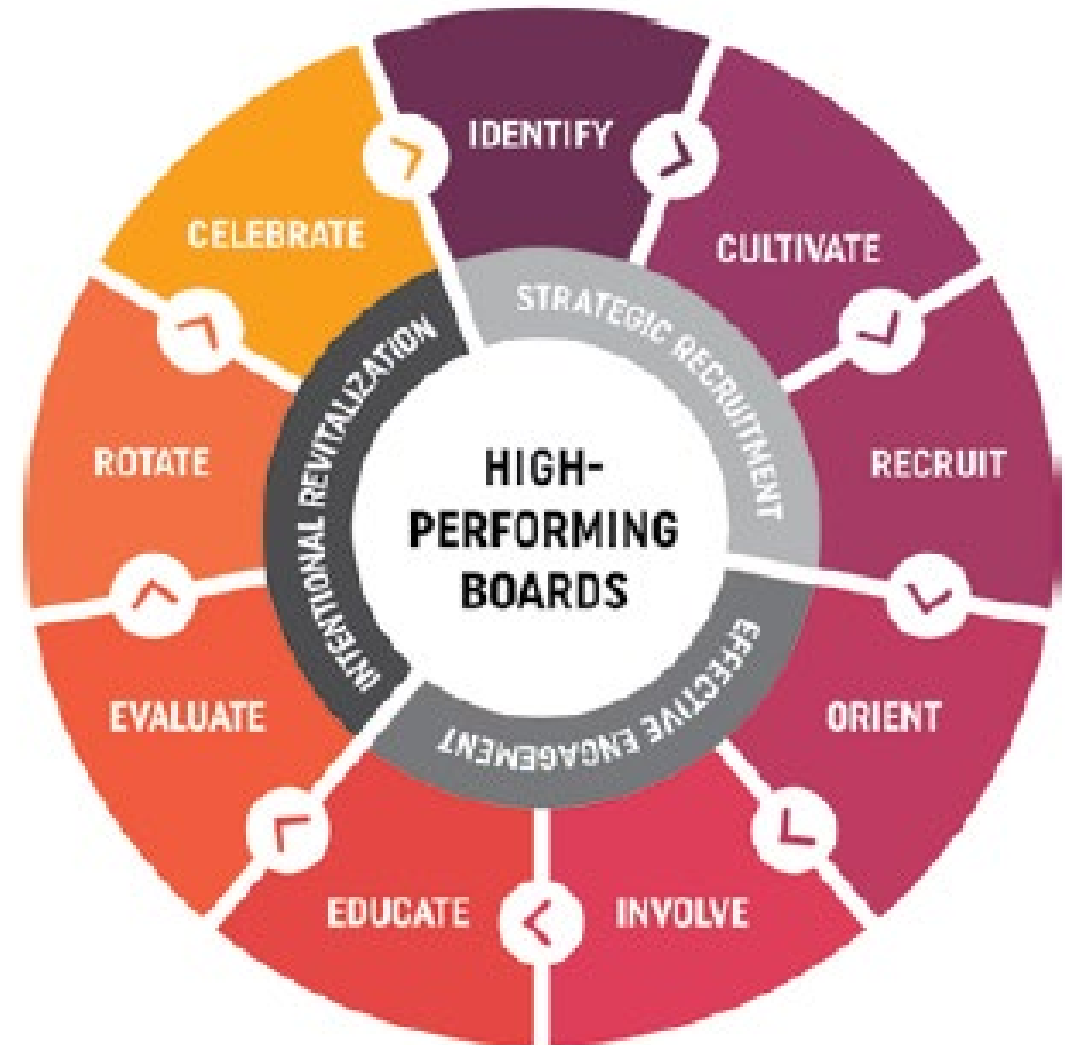
## PHASE 2 Effective Engagement

- ✓ Orient
- ✓ Involve
- ✓ Educate

## PHASE 3 Intentional Revitalization

- ✓ Evaluate
- ✓ Rotate
- ✓ Celebrate

## THE BOARD-BUILDING CYCLE



© 2019 BoardSource, The Board-Building Cycle, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

# Board Agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century



## Traditional Board Agenda

Welcome approval of last meeting minutes-vote	15 min
Treasurer's Report- vote	15 min
Executive Director's Report	15 min
Finance Committee Report	15 min
Nominating Committee Report	15 min
Program Committee Report	15 min
Fundraising Committee Report	15 min
New business	15 min
Adjourn	
<b>Length of meeting:</b>	<b>Two - hours</b>
<i>Traditional board agendas are designed for unprepared board members who want to be read to instead of doing their pre-work on their own. This format drives dis-engagement.</i>	

## Strategic Board Agenda (sample)

Introduction of strategic discussion by chair	
Generative discussion of a Strategic Direction	20 min
Generative & strategic discussions: ahead, out & around	15 min
Board training topic or industry topic	15 min
Questions about consent agenda items	10 min
Approval of Consent Agenda: minutes, ED report, finance committee report, other committee reports	5 min
Carry-over questions/topics for next meeting	5 min
Assignments & announcements	5 min
Adjourn	
<b>Length of meeting:</b>	<b>75 minutes</b>
<i>Board members spend time reading reports outside of meeting time. Meetings are saved for robust &amp; strategic discussion &amp; voting</i>	

# Powerful Questions

...are open-ended  
...driven by curiosity,  
...don't have easy answers

- I wonder if...
- I'm curious about...
- Walk me through...
- It occurs to me...

How...

- would you describe...
- might that change things?
- would you go about...?

What...

- about this feels different?
- would you like to happen?
- difference might it make?
- is going on for you?

1 HOW

2 WHAT

3 WHERE

4 WHO, WHEN, WHY

©INspiringSIGHT2022. All Rights Reserved

# Generative Discussions

- ④ Engage the expertise, experiences and perspectives of the entire board
- ④ Keep the conversation at a strategic and forward-looking level, and away from jumping to a solution too quickly.
- ④ Are about strategic thinking and resiliency, not about quick fixes
- ④ Inform staff about the environment outside the organization so they have what they need to move forward in the most relevant way
- ④ Assist staff and board in responding in alignment with your organizations' mission and work when dealing with issues in the public eye & press

It occurs to me...

I'm curious about...

What if we were too...

In what way does...

Walk me through that...

What difference might it make if...

If we started over, what might we do...

What if...

©INspiringSIGHT2022. All Rights Reserved

# The Engagement Formula Worksheet

**Why**



does it matter?

**What**

can I contribute?



**Where**

can I contribute it?



**ENGAGEMENT**

Understand why your participation matters to the organization

Skills, Expertise & Perspective  
Recognition of value I bring to the table

Opportunity.  
Processes that make it easy for me to share my skills/expertise

Things to explore with my board chair & staff: