



# THE BoardCoach

helping leaders put the pieces together

## Governance Resource Books and Commentary

**The Corporate Person**, Harold Everson, 1998 by Lutheran Services in America, Augsburg-Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN.

Everson is an ELCA pastor who was responsible for the “Board Development Services” division for the ELCA from 1988 to 1997. He was commissioned by Lutheran Services in America to author a resource that I feel has become the “Governance Bible” for camp boards and congregation councils. It is an easy read after a cumbersome first chapter where Everson introduces the corporate person model. Six chapters overview the model: 1) Body - systems and the model; 2) Soul - vision and mission; 3) Mind - decision making, 4) Behavior - culture, conflict and meetings; 5) Voice - to each other, staff and the public; and 6) Health - evaluation and assessment. I recommend camps and councils gift a copy for each new board member and use the book as an ongoing training resource.

**A Spirituality of Fund Raising**, by John S. Mugahgah, Series Editor, 2010 by the Henri Nouwen Legacy Trust, Upper Room Books, Nashville, TN.

The book contains a series of lectures by Henri Nouwen, and it was compiled by John Mugahgah, after Nouwen’s death. Many know Nouwen as a contemplative, but the book contains a series of gems on the importance of giving and a theology for fund raising. Just 58 pages in length, the book is must reading for every board member and development volunteer if you are seeking to establish a “development culture.” I suggest you give the book to board members and development volunteers as a gift.

**Governance as Leadership**: Reframing the Work of Nonprofit Boards, Richard P. Chait, William P. Ryan and Barbara E. Taylor, 2005 by the Board Source, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., Hoboken, NJ.

“Governance as Leadership” describes three models of governance: 1) fiduciary, 2) strategic and 3) generative and helps board members distinguish between the three means of governance. The book has also proved to be very helpful for boards to understand the importance of generative thinking, which focuses on “sense making” and understanding a situation before trying to solve a problem. There is a very helpful chart, figure 5.2 on page 98 that illustrates four styles of board and staff leadership, which I recommend boards use to understand their leadership style in relation to the Executive Director.

**The Practitioner’s Guide to Governance as Leadership**, Cathy A. Trower, editor, 2013 by John Wiley and Sons, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, CA.

The guide offers a resource with numerous practical ideas on how to utilize the Governance as Leadership model, including practical guidance for optimizing practices to improve organizational performance. Trower is a PhD from Harvard, so you have to wade through her cumbersome verbiage, but the information is sound and helpful.

**Boards That Make A Difference**, John Carver, 1995 by Jossey-Bass Inc., San Francisco, CA

Policy governance (the Carver model) is a governance model developed by John Carver in the mid 1990’s

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where boards develop comprehensive policies that guide activities, provide ethical standards and focus on results that support long-term goals. The model clearly differentiates between board and staff roles through four sets of policies: 1) Ends to be achieved (results); 2) Executive limitations policies (keeping staff out of the ditches); 3) Board-staff linkage (defines the relationship); and 4) Board self-governance guidelines. I think the strength of the model is setting executive limitations for staff and the board focusing on ends/results. However, since the board is less involved, there is the danger the board can become disconnected from the ministry.

**Reinventing Your Board**, John Carver and Miriam Mayhew Carver, 1997 by Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, CA.

A step by step guide to implement the policy governance model. The book includes sample policies developed by Carver that boards can use as a beginning point in developing their own policies, along with helpful and practical resources for boards.

**The Policy Governance Fieldbook**, Caroline Oliver, General Editor, 1999 by John Wiley and Sons, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, CA.

Practical lessons, tips and tools that are taken from the experiences of boards that have implemented the policy governance model.

**Joining A Nonprofit Board**, What You Need to Know, Mark J. Epstein, F. Warren McFarlan.

I only skimmed this book, but I think chapter three would be especially helpful in helping boards who are wondering if their camp is really delivering on its mission and not just meeting the budget and to answer if the camp is getting the maximum from its expenditures.

**Chief Executive Transition**, Don Trebbe, 2008 by Board Source, Washington D.C.

This is a very helpful guide for boards to understand how to hire and support a Nonprofit CEO. I found the distinction between an acting director, interim director and transition director to be very helpful and I recommend a board president read this book and use it as a guide during an executive transition.

**The Practice of Adaptive Leadership**, Heifetz, Grashon and Linsky.

This book will help you and your Board think more clearly and strategize better in what we all experience in our constantly changing contexts. It offers a comprehensive and systematic approach to assessing situations and then taking action.

**Governance Committee**, Sandra Hughes, Board Source 2004. Washington DC

Comprehensive guide to the work and importance of a Governance Committee. It may provide more information than is needed for those starting a Governance Committee, but the book is very well done.

## Website Resources

### Board Source

Board Source is name for the former "National Center for Non-Profit Boards." [www.boardsource.org](http://www.boardsource.org). I recommend Executive Directors and Governance Committee chairs review the website which provides practical information, tools and best practices, training resources and leadership development support for board members. Board Source also offers a semi-annual conference for boards and executive directors. I'd like to highlight three resources that are offered:

1. Topics include board-staff partnership, roles and responsibilities, structure and committees and member orientation and education;
2. Board Support coaching and consulting services of which two seminars seem particularly helpful, but are pricey with a fee of \$6000 - "Board Leadership and Engagement" and "Creating a Fund-Raising Culture"; and
3. Resources on Critical Issues, which includes "The Board Café," a free monthly electronic newsletter for board members and executives.

### **National Council of Nonprofits**

[www.nationalcouncilofnonprofits.org](http://www.nationalcouncilofnonprofits.org). The council is a resource and advocate for nonprofits and includes a network of state associations with over 25,000 members. The council serves as a central coordinator and mobilizer to help nonprofits achieve greater collective impact in their service area, identifies emerging trends and shares proven practices and promotes solutions that benefits charities. I suggest you review the "Boards and Governance" section which is included under "Tools and Resources." I think two articles would be helpful to most boards, "Annual Board Tune Up Checklist" and "How to be a Great Board Member."

### **Minnesota Council of Nonprofits**

[www.minnesotanonprofits.org](http://www.minnesotanonprofits.org). This is one of the subsidiaries of the National Council of Nonprofits (listed above). Several articles could be helpful to some boards: "Recruiting and Training Great Board Members," "Unlocking Innovation in Board Development," "The Boards Role in Risk Management," "The Executive Director and Board Relationship," " Roles and Responsibilities of the Nonprofit Board," and "Board Basics."

### **Center for Nonprofit Excellence**

[www.centerfornonprofitexcellence.org](http://www.centerfornonprofitexcellence.org). The website provides numerous resources for board member development, member accountability, board operations and roles and responsibilities of members. Two training sessions could be helpful to some boards "Leadership Development" (\$35) and "Building Your Board" (\$35). They also provide numerous webinars including "Executive Director-Board Relationship" (\$299); Building an Inclusive Board" (\$145); and "My Board is Driving Me Crazy" (\$50).

### **Grant Space**

Grant Space is a service of the Foundation Center. [www.grantspace.org](http://www.grantspace.org). The primary focus is on grant writing and fund raising, but I did notice a couple of webinars that I think could be helpful to boards: "Organizing Your Board to Get Things Done" and "Digital Fund Raising."

### **Bridgespan**

[www.bridgespan.org](http://www.bridgespan.org). Bridgespan is a global nonprofit that supports mission driven leaders, organizations, philanthropists and investors to seek to break the cycle of poverty and dramatically improve the quality of life for those in need. Even though the focus is on poverty, some of the website resources could be helpful to boards and executives.

### **Blue Avocado**

[www.blueavocado.org](http://www.blueavocado.org). Blue Avocado is a magazine sponsored by the Nonprofits Insurance Alliance Group. The electronic magazine provides practical, provocative and fun food for thought with board

members as one of many topics. I wouldn't spend a lot of time with Blue Avocado but there is at least one article that merits review, "What to Do with Board Members Who Don't Do Anything."

### **Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (LOM)**

[www.lomnetwork.org](http://www.lomnetwork.org). LOM is the association of all the camps and retreat centers affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Individual members are the year-round staff and members of the Boards of Directors of its organizational members. Its mission is to join all its members in a network of encouraging, educating, equipping, and empowering one another in order to ensure strong and vibrant outdoor ministry throughout the whole church. LOM offers resources and services that are especially aimed at supporting Boards in their quest for excellence, such as:

- Consultation with Boards and Board Development Retreats with Lutheran Outdoor Ministry organizations.
- Consultation with Lutheran Outdoor Ministry organizations planning for and experiencing executive transition (LOM should be your first contact upon learning that your executive director is retiring or moving on to a new position).
- Access to the LOM Intentional Interim Executive Director process
- LOM Consultation Teams: Upon the request of the Board of Directors of a LOM member organization, LOM will recruit a Consultation Team consisting of three to five persons to help the Board and staff assess its current operations, management, administration and governance. These persons will be chosen because of their successful experience as outdoor ministry professionals and /or members of the Boards of outdoor ministry organizations.