### Stages of Board Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Founding Board</th>
<th>The Governing/Managing Board</th>
<th>The Governing/Fund Raising Board</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Board is the organization</td>
<td>Assumption of responsibility for well-being and longevity of the organization</td>
<td>Focus on fund raising and recruitment of prestigious board members, increased expectations of staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strong sense of ownership, power shared, consensus leadership, reluctance to release power to staff, often entrepreneurial staff emerges from the founding board</td>
<td>Balancing of power between staff and board</td>
<td>Formal or informal levels of boardsmanship cause an “in” group or an “out” group, heavy reliance on the expertise of staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informal, consensus decision-making; sometimes “rubber stamping”</td>
<td>Formalized decision-making process, increased reliance on staff recommendations</td>
<td>Decision making delegated to committees and executive committee, formalized process, often “rubber stamping”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strong mission focus, little distinction between policy and administration.</td>
<td>Focus on policy, planning, and oversight responsibilities; focus on building management systems and structures; micro-management often a problem; beginning to embrace fundraising responsibilities</td>
<td>Pre- and Post operations focus (planning and evaluation); strong commitment to fundraising</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small group, few committees</td>
<td>Committees more important, more delegation of work to committees, add board members</td>
<td>Add more board members, executive committee often functions as governance board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Passion for mission</td>
<td>Passion for mission decreases with focus on building internal capacity</td>
<td>Passion high (especially among leading fund raisers)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Composed of individuals with close ties to the mission of the organization</td>
<td>Recruit board members who are specialists in management, computers, finance, etc.</td>
<td>Recruit board members of high visibility and with “money” connections, members gain certain amount of prestige by sitting on this board</td>
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**Transition:**
- Due to growth and crisis
- Tension between board and staff
- New board members (new ideas)
- Painful
- Due to growth or crisis
- Need for change mutually recognized
- Less traumatic
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Early</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>Mature</th>
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<td>Focus</td>
<td>Organizing Board</td>
<td>Governing Board</td>
<td>Institutional Board</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| Characteristic | • Small  
• Involved in everything  
• Homogeneous  
• Informal  
• Committed | • Board accepts responsibilities  
• Board is enlarged & diversified  
• Committee structure allows some tasks to be delegated  
• Staff gain new responsibilities & decision making power | • 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 | • Shift to more business like operation  
• Board/Staff must redefine roles  
• Open up to new people  
• Development of systems  
• Clearer job descriptions | • Established organization becomes increasingly "professionalized"  
• Fundraising function of Board increasingly important | • Ability to delegate governance of the institution to an executive or management committee  
• Becomes an institutional fundraising board |
| Challenges | • Find it difficult to hire or trust first staff members and share power  
• Some founding members will choose to leave | • 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 | • 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