



**Center for
Nonprofits & Philanthropy**
THE BUSH SCHOOL • TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Strategic Board Leadership

February 4, 2021

Prepare your organization for life after COVID

Will Brown – Center Director

Angela Seaworth – Director of Philanthropic Initiatives and Capacity Building

Center for Nonprofits and Philanthropy



Our Mission: The CNP supports a vibrant nonprofit and philanthropic sector in Texas and beyond, through high quality research, professional outreach and engaged learning.

Founded in 2017, the Center operates with the belief that that nonprofits are instrumental in creating opportunities for all. This happens through capable leadership, excellent governance, and engagement of stakeholders. We also recommit to the principles of *public service and democracy* and the value of *diversity of thought and expression* that have helped The Bush School since its inception.



Educational Opportunities

- [Master of Public Service & Administration](#)
- [Executive Master of Public Service & Administration](#)
- [Certificate in Nonprofit Management](#)
- [Continuing & Professional Education Courses](#)

Our Values

Nonprofits
Opportunity for all
Board governance
Leadership
Engagement



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AGENDA



- Challenges of board governance
- Topics for board consideration
- Partnership with staff
- Why strategic board
- Levels of strategy
- Promising Practices
 - Agenda Setting
 - Information
 - Stakeholder Analysis
 - Portfolio Analysis



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CHALLENGES OF BOARD GOVERNANCE

CHALLENGES

- Limited time
- Paradox of executive/board leadership
- Large decision-making groups
- Inconsistent engagement and capabilities
- Limited controls and influence
- Realities of an extended period of time in crisis



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TOPICS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION

BOARD-LEVEL CONVERSATIONS

As we are thinking about the future of organizations, it is important to remember the division of board and staff responsibilities.

- Revenue and Fundraising – be willing to take some risks
- Program Delivery – consider changes in demand and new options
- Technology – evaluate your long-term needs
- Human Resources – review policies, demand, and new ways of working



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GROUP DISCUSSION

What are some of the elements you adopted during COVID that have been particularly effective and make sense to keep as your organization moves forward?



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TOPICS TO CONSIDER

Human Resources

- Retain employees in more competitive environment
- Review policies to ensure they are updated to new
- Focus on innovation in staff wellness and training

Fundraising

- Evaluate revenue streams and consider role for events
- Take risks to expand database and retain new donors from pandemic
- Consider new ways of work in fundraising

Technology

- Evaluate what technology efficiencies the organization gained
- Identify needs moving forward, after evaluating all functional areas
- Develop a technology plan for the next few years

Programming

- Compare pandemic demand to pre-pandemic numbers
- Identify any changes in demographics and service demand
- Analyze which programs the organization will deliver in the future



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GROUP DISCUSSION

How might your human resources needs and policies change?

How can the organization be more flexible and focus on employee well-being?



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PARTNERSHIP WITH STAFF

WHO IS REALLY IN CHARGE?



The Board Confronts

- Conflicting realities
- High levels of trust and confidence
- Lack of clarity about how to “make a difference”
- Frustrations about board’s role



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EXECUTIVE CENTRALITY



- Everyone thinks: the ED makes good things happen
- The ED thinks: he/she is mostly responsible for things that go wrong
- Is the board “rubber-stamp” or “cash cow”?
- Somehow the executive has to encourage the board to be more



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BOARD-CENTERED LEADERSHIP



Key Behaviors

- Facilitating interaction with board relationships
- Showing consideration and respect to board members
- Initiating and maintaining structure for the board
- Promoting board accomplishments
- Envisioning change and innovation with the board
- Providing useful information to the board



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WHY A STRATEGIC BOARD

10 RESPONSIBILITIES OF A NONPROFIT BOARD

1. **Determine mission and purpose**
2. Select, support and evaluate CEO
3. **Approve and help create strategic plan**
4. Monitor programs and services
5. Financial management/ oversight
6. Ensure adequate resources
7. Advance public image
8. Recruit new members and evaluate own performance
9. Ensure legal Compliance
10. Serve as arbitrator/ support staff



WHAT EXECUTIVES SAY

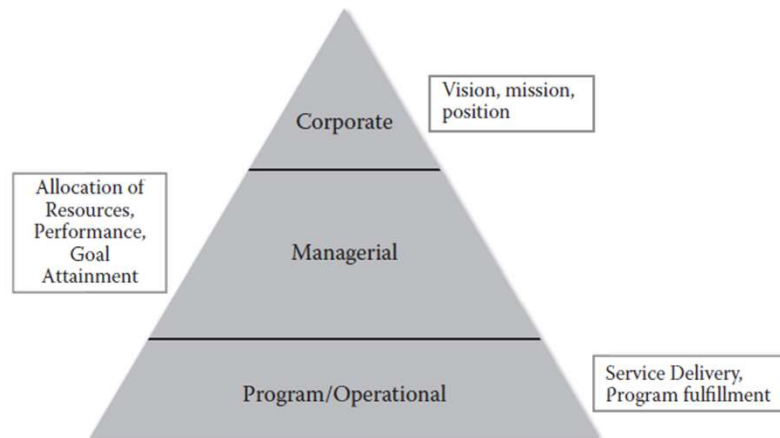
1. Fundraising
2. Strategy
3. Oversight
4. Public relations
5. Board member vitality
6. Operational policy
7. Relationship to executive
8. Guidance and expertise



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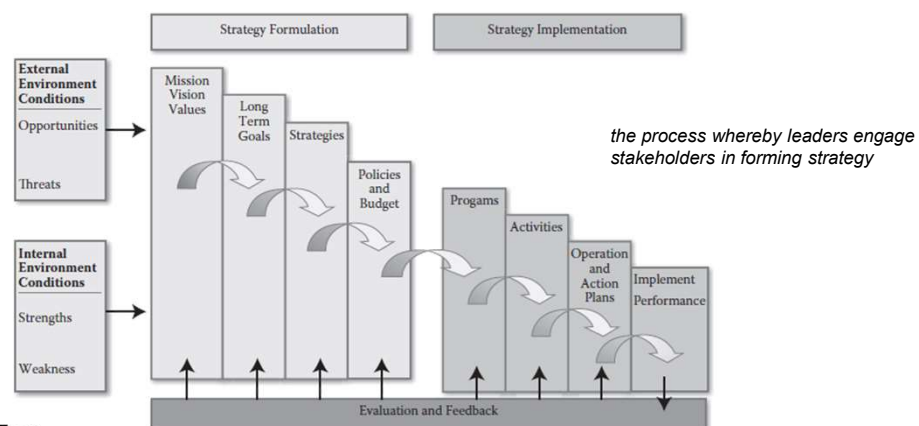
LEVELS OF DECISION-MAKING

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PLANNING



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PLANNING PROCESS

Inputs

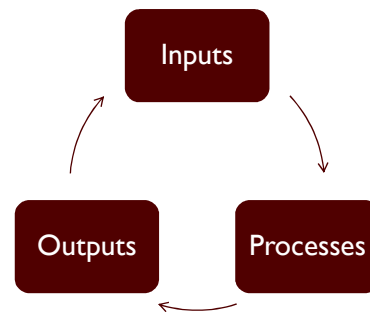
Information
Framing

Processes

Analysis
Review
Interpretation
 Deductive
 Inductive
Assess risk
Consider alternatives

Outputs

Mission/Vision
Values
Strategic priorities
Goals
Improved cause & effect
understanding
Guidelines/Policies



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PROMISING PRACTICES

- Agenda Setting – Framing
- Information Needs
- Stakeholder Analysis
- Portfolio Analysis

INPUTS

Agenda Setting

- Clarify purposes
 - Outputs
- Setting/reviewing mission
- Creating priorities
- Discussion vs. decision-making
- Regular and consistent



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Information

- External information
 - Threats/Opportunities
 - Program participants
 - Funding streams
- Internal information
 - Strengths & Weaknesses
 - Programs
 - Accomplishments
 - Capabilities
 - Challenges

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS



THOSE WHO CAN AFFECT THE ORGANIZATION AS WELL AS THOSE AFFECTED BY THE ORGANIZATION

STEPS IN STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Identify specific stakeholders in context

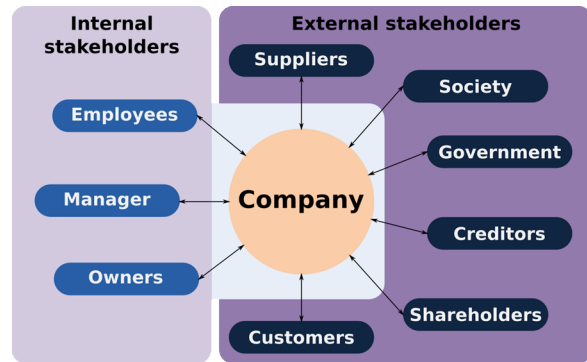
- Why are they important?
- What is the basis of power?
- What are their interests?

Explore interactions among stakeholders

- Recognizes networks and interactions

Prioritize actions through the lens of organizational objectives

- What can we do for who?



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STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS GRID

		Power	
		Low	High
Interests	Low	Crowd	Context Setters
	High	Subjects	Players



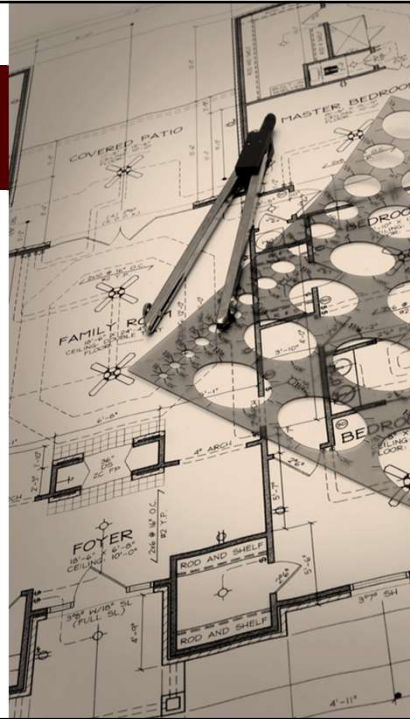
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MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

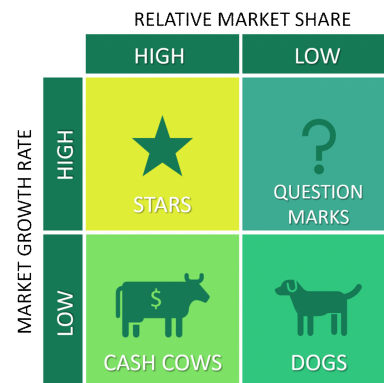
- What do stakeholders want?
 - Interests
- How do they get it?
 - Power base
- Supporters vs. Detractors
- Reflect on capabilities and objectives
- Players – make sure they are satisfied
- Context Setters – try to increase interest
- Subjects – attend to interests, but limit commitments
- Crowd – maybe raise awareness of selected



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PORTFOLIO ANALYSIS



PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES ACCORDING TO IMPORTANT QUALIFICATIONS

PORTFOLIO ANALYSIS

		Profitability	
		Low	High
Impact	High		
	Low		



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Bell, et al., 2010, p. 93

STEPS TO MATRIX MAP

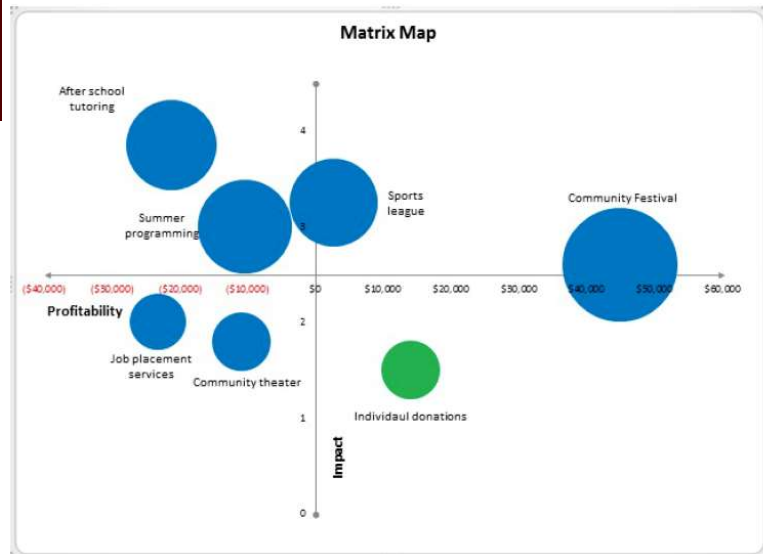
1. Identify your “lines of business” or activities
2. Assess relative mission impact
3. Determine profitability and
4. Map the results



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MATRIX MAP

Sustainability Mindset
Jeanne Bell and Steve Zimmerman



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<http://www.nonprofitsustainability.org/>

Upcoming Board Offerings



Strong boards are not accidental. We know that excellent governance requires attention year-round, so we offer governance programs in the spring and fall. Additionally, we do board research, offer board training, and individual board consultations. Let us know how we can best serve you and your organizations.

Leadership in Board Service

Thursday, February 11, 2021
9:00-11:00 a.m.
Virtual via Zoom
Facilitators: Dr. William Brown & Dr. Kenny Taylor
Registration open online, and fee is \$49

Nonprofit Board Governance for Executives

Continuing Education course toward the Certificate in Nonprofit Leadership
March 3 to March 23, 2021
Asynchronous online
Instructor: Dr. Angela Seaworth
Registration open online, and fee is \$349



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QUESTIONS? THANKS!

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