DEVELOPING THE CAPACITY OF THE BOARD CHAIR:

Role of the Board Chair

Jan. 10, 2013
Key Topics of Discussion

• Job description: desired skills and qualities
• Leadership roles of the Chair
• Chair as mentor and advocate
• Delegation and coaching of Vice-Chair
Leadership = Strategy + Vision

Visionary
- Innovation
- Imagination
- Courage
- Non-attachment

Strategic
- Impact and Value
- So What? Question
- Risk Assessment
- Competitive Analysis

Fiduciary
- Monitoring
- Stewardship
- Oversight
- Reporting
4 Roles of the Board Chair

- Visionary
- Leader
- Public Advocate
- Facilitator
• Inspire others to the vision and mission
• Develop a culture of strategic planning and strategic thinking
• Focus on possibilities rather than challenges
• Build organizational capabilities
Leader

- Lead the Board in effective governance
- Provide coaching, support and guidance to Executive Director
- Respond proactively to issues e.g. non-performance of Directors
- Build the Board team – get to know your members
- Develop the leadership skills of other Board members
Public Advocate

• Seize opportunities to communicate the vision to the community
• Ensure that the voices of the community are heard
• Seek to secure funds and expertise
• Leverage Chair’s role for advocacy, influence and access
Facilitator

• Take charge of Board meetings
• Manage group process and dynamics
• Ensure participation of all Directors
• Use clear decision-making process
• Manage conflicts
• Seek feedback on meetings and implement change
Delegation and Coaching of Vice-Chair

- Don’t keep the Vice-Chair on the waiting list – get them active and engaged
- Make them Chair of the Board Development or Nominating Committee
- Delegate small tasks where possible
- Invite them to your meetings with the ED
More Delegation and Coaching

• Invite them to your meetings with funders, government officials, etc.
• Ask them to periodically substitute for you at these meetings as appropriate
• Have them chair Board meetings towards the end of your term
Food for Thought

Satisfaction in Governance

- **Actual work**: what work does your Board spend the most time on?
- **Valuable work**: what aspects of the Board’s work are most important to your organization’s success or mission?
- **Meaningful work**: what work would you miss the most if the Board decided not to do it?