

From Ratchet to Revived: Engaging a Disengaged Board

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Greetings



- 13+ years nonprofit sector
- Former executive director, finance /development director and events manager
- 3.5 years supporting charter school boards on path to better governance
- 2015 Co-Chair National Charter School Conference Programming Committee
- Trustee, Wheaton College (MA)



Vocab Lesson

ratch·et

'raCHət/

Noun

a situation or process that is perceived to be **deteriorating** or changing steadily in a series of irreversible steps.

re·vive

rə'vīv/

Verb

1. restore to life or consciousness.
2. give **new strength** or energy to.



Learning Objectives

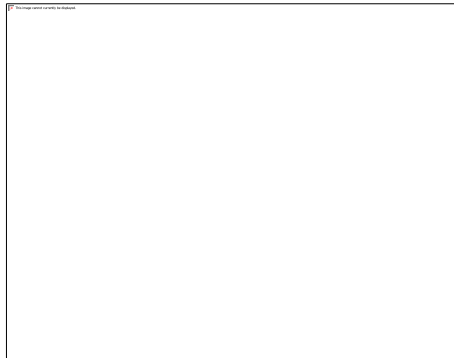
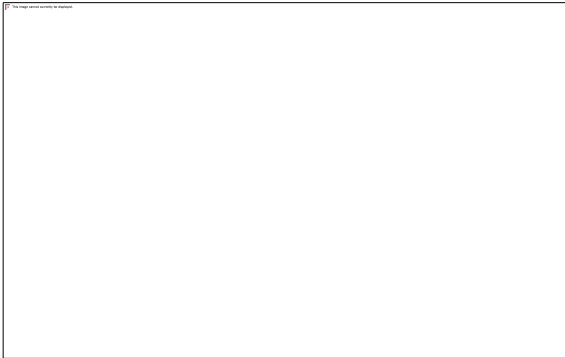


- ✓ Provide a framework for board engagement through Relational Leadership;
- ✓ Identify barriers to board engagement; and
- ✓ Discuss strategies / behaviors to reset a ratchet board.

Pulse Check

The engagement level of my board is like:

- a) An erupting volcano with lots of action.
- b) A stalled car lacking motivation and momentum.
- c) A roller coaster with inconsistent spurts of activity.
- d) None of the above.



Relational Leadership Framework

Leadership is a process



One Band, One Sound



What Does Active Engagement Look Like?



How to Spot Low Engagement

- Low attendance / absenteeism
- Poor punctuality
- High turnover
- Low productivity
- Crickets / lack of discourse
- Deliberations focused on trivial matters



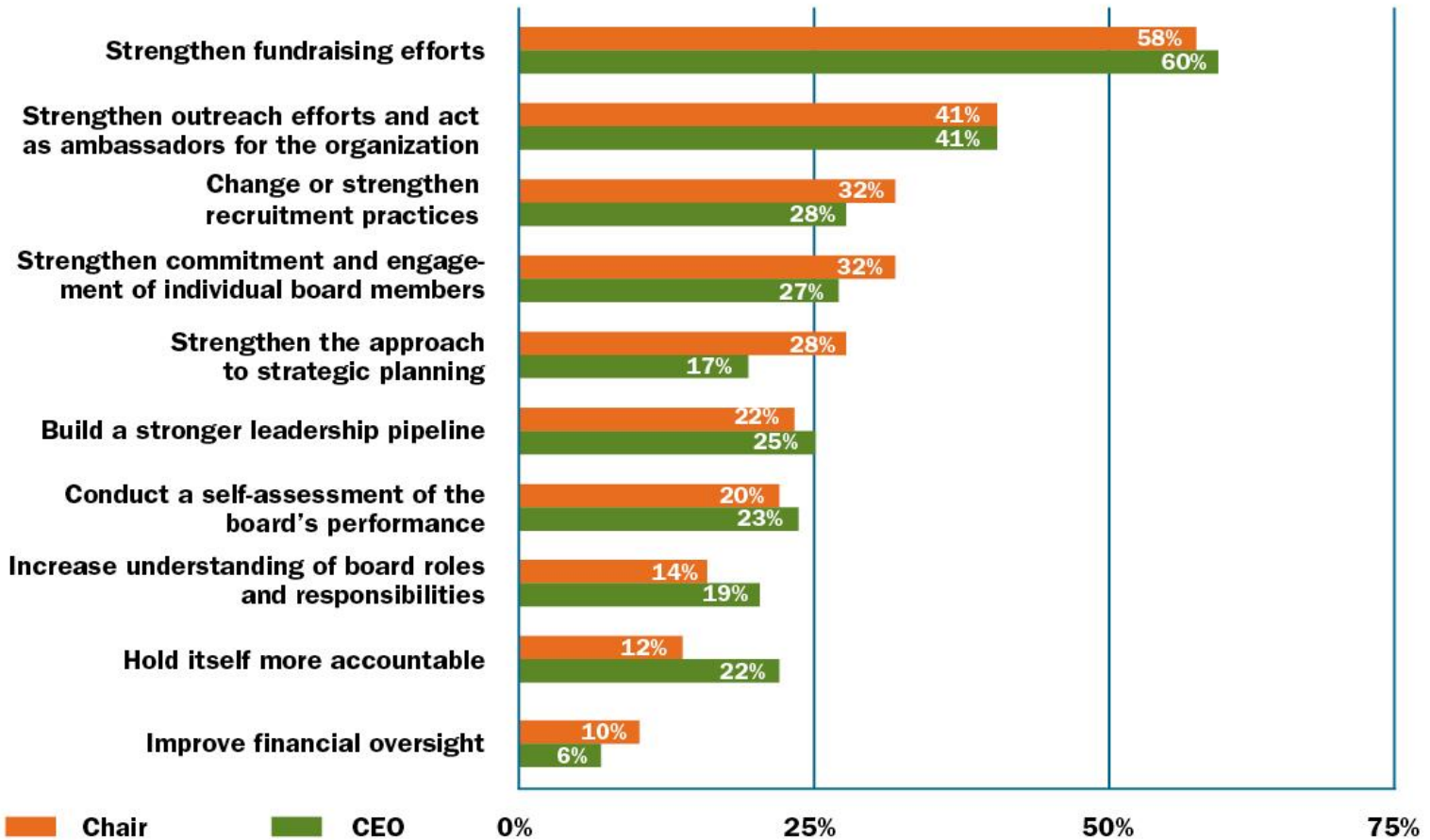
Enabling Low Engagement

- **Mismatched expectations** – not being explicit about expectations
- **Inept processes** – not enforcing the norms agreed upon by board members upon joining
- **Negated empowerment** – lack of structure to keep board members informed, communication silos



Figure 16. Top 10 Areas for Board Improvement (Q8.5 CEO; Q5.3 Chair)

In your opinion, what are the three most important areas the board should address to improve its performance?

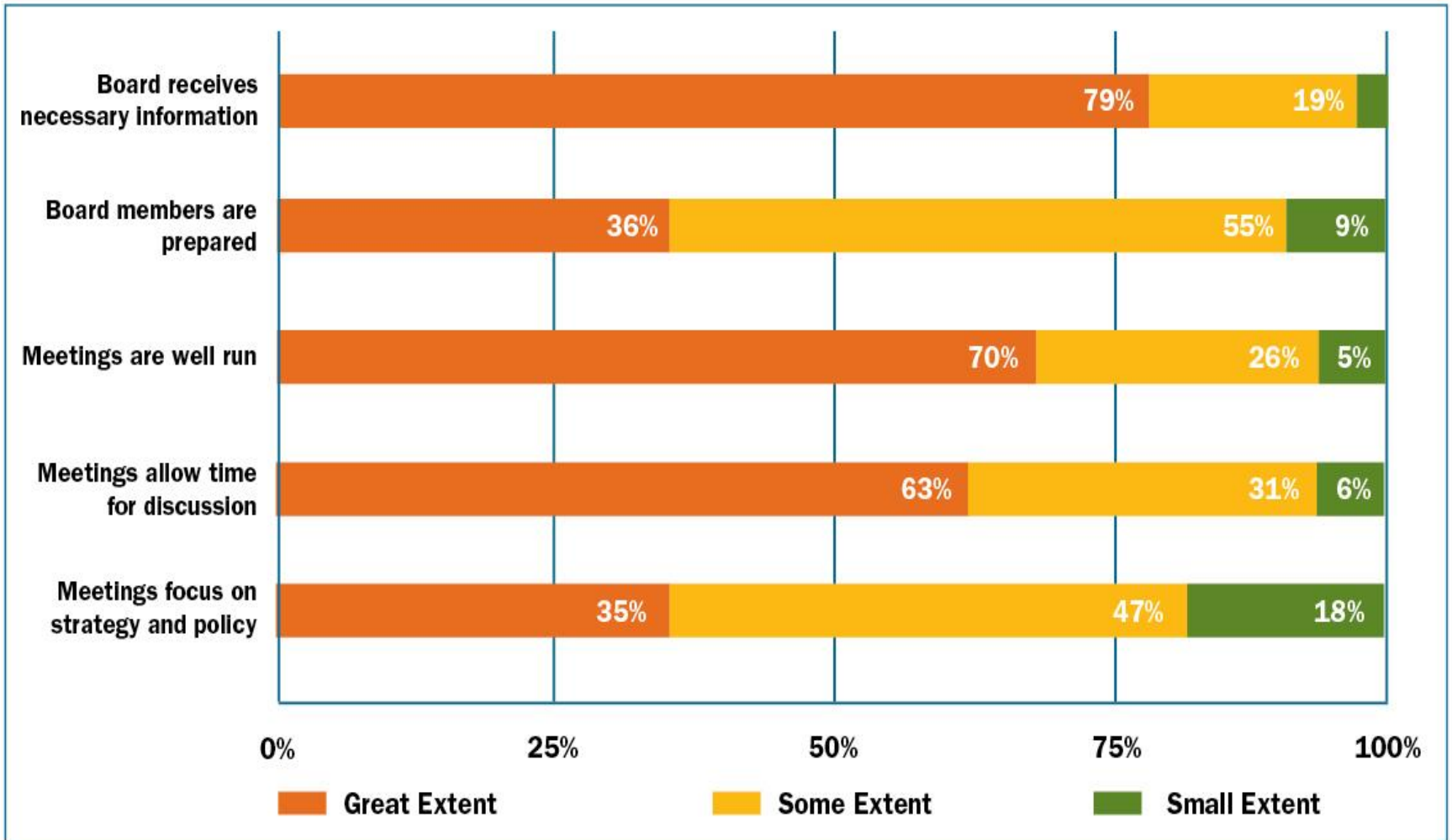


How to Ignite Discussion at Board Meetings

- Silent Starts
- Future Perfect History
- Counterpoints
- Role Plays
- Surveys



Figure 14. Indicators of Board Meeting Quality (Q6.8 CEO)



Collective Work and Responsibility

Leadership is a process



Resources

BoardSource, *Leading with Intent: A National Index of Nonprofit Board Practices* (Washington, D.C.: BoardSource, 2015).

BoardSource, *Wrestling with Board Dilemmas: Case Studies for Nonprofit Leaders* (Washington, D.C.: BoardSource, 2011).

Trower, Cathy A. (2010). *Govern More, Manage Less* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: BoardSource.

Trower, Cathy A. (2013). *The Practitioner's Guide to Governance as Leadership: Building High-Performing Nonprofit Boards*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

Board Resources @ LAPCS



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