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Consulting

Laying the Foundation to Sustain Your Mission

Foster a learning culture that emphasizes appreciation and evaluation. Forge a healthy partnership between the executive director and board chair in which each is willing to challenge and support the other. Assure that all staff, including the executive director, receive regular feedback on their performance. Assure that the board, too, engages in evaluating its performance. Integrate evaluation within all programs, and routinely reflect on accomplishments and lessons learned. Take time to celebrate significant personal and organizational milestones.

Create systems to transfer knowledge with ease.

Document processes and procedures. Assure that crucial information does not reside solely “in the executive director’s head.” Pay special attention to documenting financial management policies and procedures.



Make leadership development a priority. Encourage and support board and staff members in developing their leadership, e.g. through on-the-job assignments, training, mentoring and participation in professional and peer networks.

Stay up-to-date with strategic planning and assure that planning is participatory.

Planning engages the board and staff in assessing the organization’s strengths and challenges, examining trends in the operating environment, articulating a shared vision, and developing/readjusting/affirming priorities. Issues of organizational development—including succession—can be addressed naturally within this framework. Participatory approaches to planning enable many people within an organization to understand the “big picture” and feel a sense of responsibility for the whole organization.



Make sure the executive director job is “doable.” Review and update the job description. Delegate and/or provide cross-training in some aspects of the executive director’s job and other key positions.

Invest in adequate salaries and benefits.

Provide fair compensation to all staff, including the executive director.

Create an emergency succession plan.

Test the plan before you need it and evaluate the results. An executive director sabbatical or vacation provides an ideal opportunity.