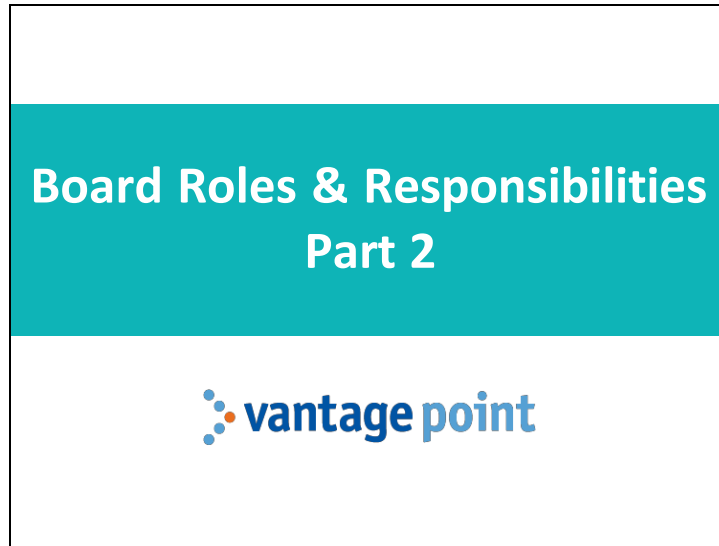


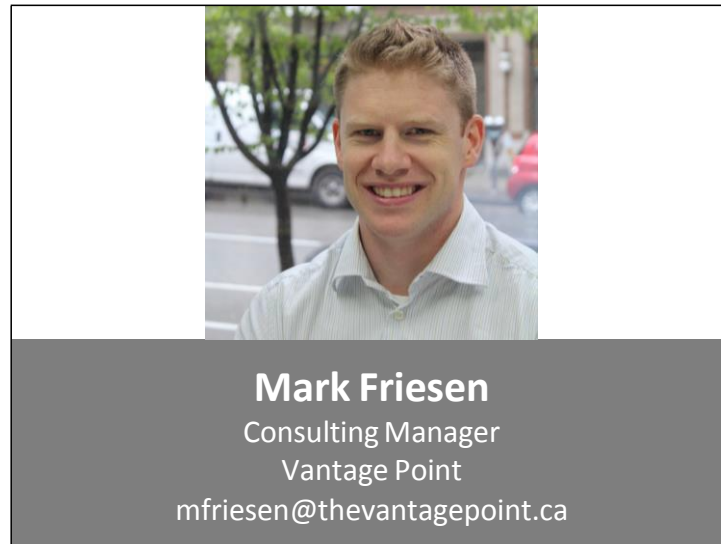
Slide 1



Hello! And welcome to this e-learning session on Board Roles & Responsibilities, brought to you by Columbia Basin Trust, and presented by Vantage Point.

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Slide 3



My name is Mark Friesen and I'm the Consulting Manager at Vantage Point. Vantage Point is a not-for-profit organization that supports other not-for-profits by providing foundational, advanced and online learning opportunities. We work with more than 500 organizations and nearly 3000 not-for-profit leaders across BC.

Today, I'll be your e-learning facilitator, sharing some best practices and tools to strengthen your board.



In this e-learning, we will continue our focus on what a board of directors is, what they do and why it is important – this is the realm of governance.

A highly effective and engaged board is clear on their key roles and responsibilities. Boards that are effective connect their work with organizational values and vision. Boards with a shared understanding of their responsibilities are more engaged, effective, and accountable to the organizational mission and vision.

So, we will begin by exploring the eight roles of the board in taking care of the organization. Then, we'll talk about the ways the board can take care of itself in order to strengthen governance. And we'll wrap up by looking at the critically important piece of knowledge building – the board orientation.

Let's get started!



In our previous session, we've talked about the type of conversations boards need to have and what individual board members can do to support strong governance.

Now, we're going to look at how the board works together to support strong governance. So, let's look at the two key responsibilities of the board as a whole. These are:

- To take care of the organization
- To take care of itself – this is easy to forget about, but we'll talk about ways to stay focused in this area a little later.

We'll start with exploring ways to take care of the organization first.



These are 8 core responsibilities or duties of the board. In other words, this the *what* of a board role.

As we quickly go through each of these, think about your current board: where are you strong and what are you looking to improve? These 8 responsibilities will be the basis of most of your board work. Which of these gets you excited most? We encourage you to build on your strengths and share them with the board!

One: Determine the organization’s mission and purpose.

A fundamental board responsibility is to establish the mission of the organization. In addition, the board will review the mission periodically and revise it whenever necessary.

It’s important that all board members are familiar with the current mission statement and remember that it is not static. Ideally, the current mission statement looks forward to the next two to four years and will be revised periodically.

Two: Select and support the leadership staff for your organization and review their performance.

For boards that have paid staff, perhaps the most significant decision a board makes is who to select as their leadership staff person – whether that is their administrator, Executive Director, Manager or Coordinator. An effective board will draft a clear job description that outlines the

duties of the senior staff person, and will have a carefully planned search process whenever the position is vacant.

In addition, the board will **support** its leadership staff person by providing that person with frequent and constructive feedback, and by regularly conducting an evaluation to review and develop their strengths and skills.

Three: Ensure effective fiscal management.

Making sure that income is managed wisely is especially important for a tax-exempt not-for-profit that is operating in the public trust. The board will approve an annual operating budget, and then monitor it throughout the year. In addition, the board will require an outside and independent opinion on the finances once a year to verify to itself and to the public that the organization is reporting the sources and uses of its funds accurately. This may take the form of an audit committee made up of volunteers who are not otherwise connected to the organization, or a notice to reader provided by an accountant.

Four: Engage in planning strategically.

One of the major contributions that a board makes to a not-for-profit organization is to consider how the organization's role will evolve over the next three to five years, and to recommend stretch goals. Given the amount of time the staff has to concentrate on day-to-day operations, the board will focus on the future. For example, while the staff is appropriately concerned with an upcoming mailing to members, the board can be considering how the organization's education strategy might improve to reflect changes in the local environment.

At least every one to three years, the board will engage in a planning process to better understand the changing external environment in which it is operating, and to then decide what changes should be made to function more effectively in that environment.

Five: Approve and monitor programs and services.

A not-for-profit organization carries out its mission by offering specific programs. The board, though not responsible for managing or administering these programs, is responsible for deciding which programs, among the many that an organization could offer, are the most consistent with the mission. In addition, the board is responsible for monitoring the programs to ensure that their quality is as high as possible. Such monitoring can be done, for example, by determining key performance indicators, reviewing performance data, seeing the programs first-hand, or ensuring the program leaders conduct a survey of program participants.

Six: Embrace fund raising.

The board can take a role in resource development for the organization, in consultation with the senior staff person. Board members can, for example, make personal contributions to the

organization, ask friends and colleagues to consider supporting the organization, and recommend to the staff or fundraising committee particular individuals, businesses, and foundations that might be asked for support. In addition, the board can help participate in the fundraising committee and help develop the organization's fund-raising strategy.

Seven: Ensure sound risk management policies.

Similar to resource development, the board needs to provide checks and balances to ensure sufficient oversight to manage potential risks. This has a financial component, such as creating balanced budgets, but this also includes risks that may relate to public reputation, workplace hazards or privacy. In these instances, the board plays an important oversight role, but also takes a lead in creating thoughtful policy and direction for the organization to follow.

Eight: Enhance the organization's public image.

Board members are ambassadors for their organization in the broader community. This goes beyond being able to recite the mission and vision to being able to tell the story of their organization and connect the organization with a larger network of support. It could also include speaking to media, like your local newspaper or radio station.



Okay.

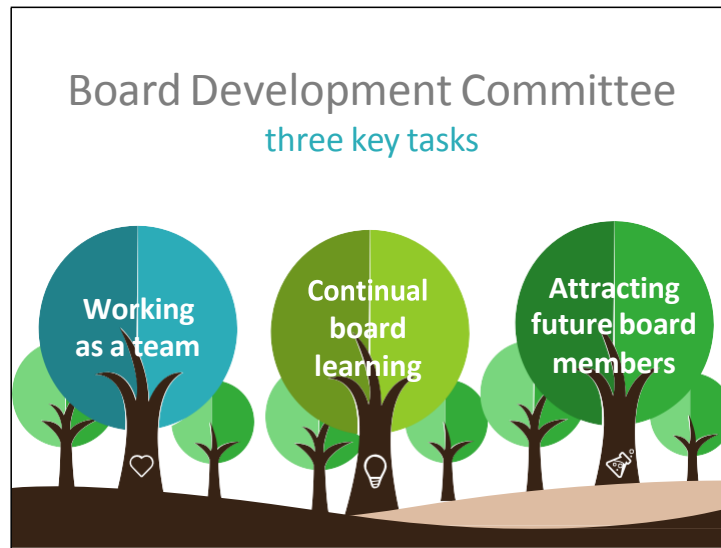
So far, we've talked about ways that the board takes care of the organization. Now, let's focus on ways that the board can take care of itself.



The board exercising self-care is like putting on an oxygen mask. The metaphor behind this is probably a familiar one: if you've ever been on an airplane, you know that you're always instructed that you must put on your own oxygen mask before you try to help others put on theirs.

And it's no different in a not-for-profit: if you don't have clear roles and responsibilities, if you're not investing in ongoing skill development and if you don't engage in proactive recruitment and training, you'll end up spending all your time dealing with leadership deficits, and you won't be able to work on guiding your organization to fulfill its mission and achieve its greatest impact.

This is often neglected, but is vitally important. The board governs as a team, and therefore developing that team to be high-performing and self-sustaining is as important as carrying out meetings and making decisions.



One of the best ways to accomplish this board self-care is through a board development committee, although this sometimes gets overlooked.

This committee is responsible for continuous education, skill development, evaluation, recruitment and onboarding of board members. They help the board function better as a team.

What do I mean by that? Well, think about whether your board functions more like a team or a group. To understand the difference, think about a school bus taking a high school basketball team and a morning commuter bus. Both vehicles provide the same function, but in the first case, you have people with a shared purpose, with strong relationships, who know each other's roles and strengths. In the other case, the commuter bus, you have people that are simply occupying the same space.

The board governs as a team. This means the development of each individual is as important as the development of the board as a whole. Do your board members know each other? Do they feel like they are on the same team? Are they working towards the same goal? What do you know about your other board members? What are their strengths and skills?

This is one of the reasons why it's very important to have a board development committee.

Do you have a board development committee? If not, who takes care of the education, orientation and recruitment of board members?

One tool you can use to help with this is a strengths inventory of your current board composition: What strengths and skills do you have? What outside board experiences do your members bring to the table? What mode of governing are they most familiar with?

This type of inventory can help you identify areas where skills and training can be further developed.

Board Member Orientation
focus on the process

Orientation is *process*, not an event. It begins with an **orientation session**, but most board members need **6 months or longer** to feel like they are up-to-speed.

One thing to emphasize when your board brings on new members is that orientation can take a while. It really is a process, and your job in bringing new board members up-to-speed is not done in a single meeting. It takes time – sometimes about six months – for new board members to really feel like they are comfortable in their role. So be patient, and think about ways you can support your new members. Maybe it's having an informal buddy or mentor system where each new member is paired up with a senior board member so they can ask questions. Maybe your board chair will reach out to each of the new members a few months into their terms to do a check-in and see how things are going and answer any questions that they might have.

Board Handbook

<p> Mission, vision & values A copy of the organization's mission, vision and values should be front and center.</p>	<p> Summary of programs & services Remember that board members are not always familiar with your programs before they join the board.</p>
<p> Strategic plan If you have a strategic plan or goals for the next year, include it here – it will help new board members get familiar with priorities.</p>	<p> Financial & legal information Include your current year's budget, previous financial filings such as auditor's reports, as well as the budgeting process.</p>
<p> Organizational structure This can help your board members understand who reports to who within the organization. This can also include a history of the organization.</p>	<p> Board structure Try to outline the board member's individual roles, the structure of any board committees and any other board development information such as a board calendar.</p>

So, before we close, we'll leave you with one last tool to help you develop your board: create a handbook for board members.

Some ideas of what to include are:

- mission/vision/values of the organization
- strategic plan
- history of the organization
- copy of Directors and Officers liability insurance
- summary of programs and services
- organizational structure
- board members' roles
- committee structure
- board development process
- current financial statement
- current year's budget/ budget process



Organizations rely on their boards to look to the future and set direction. Working together, board members need to understand the eight key roles of board members, and create a culture where teamwork, ongoing development and self-care are board priorities.

Join Us Again
info@thevantagepoint.ca

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