

Carver Board Governance Model

A model for non-profit boards

History and Overview

- Board Leadership Model
- Created by John Carver
- Big Idea → Truly Lead
 - Focus on Larger Issues
 - Planning
 - Delegate with clarity
 - Evaluate Results
 - Revisit Planning

Before We Get To The Model

- Model Created for boards with paid employees.
- We will assume the volunteers are as much or more motivated than paid employees.
- Model assumes board had the trust of the members (Owners)

Carver Model Principles

- **Principle #1**
 - **The Trust in Trusteeship**
 - Must have a clear purpose
 - Vision and Mission
- **Principle #2**
 - **Board Speaks with One Voice or Not at All**
 - All members must be of same mind
 - Encourage vigorous debate
 - Minority have voice
 - Side not prevailing must accept and support majority

Carver Model Principles – Cont'd

- **Principle #3**
 - **Board Decisions Should be Mostly Policy Decisions**
 - Ends. What, for who, what cost?
 - What is staff role?
 - How to evaluate?
 - Determine own philosophy and accountability

Carver Model Principles – Cont'd

- **Principle #4**
 - **Board Policy Should Address Broad, then Narrow**
 - In each category, address all broad before any narrow
 - When addressing narrow, don't skip levels
 - Allow leadership to act on boards behalf as long as in keeping with board policies.
- **Principle #5**
 - **Define/Delegate rather than React/Ratify**
 - Beware of trivia

Carver Model Principles – Cont'd

- Principle #6
 - Ends Determination is Pivotal Duty of Governance
 - The Ends of an Org are the reasons for existence.
 - Wise selection of ends is highest calling as trustees
- Principle #7
 - Best control of staff means is to limit, no prescribe
 - Two board functions: Ends, and Conduct
 - Strong conduct limits allow to focus on Ends

Carver Model Principles – Cont'd

- Principle #8
 - Explicitly Design Its Own Products and Process
 - Board must define conduct, how it will perform, how it will evaluate own performance.
 - National Charter
 - Association Bylaws
 - Roberts Rules of Order
 - Policy and Procedure Manual
 - Vision and Mission Statements

Carver Model Principles – Cont'd

- Principle #9
 - Board must have good relationship to management.
- Principle #10
 - Management must be evaluated, but only against policy criteria
 - Did the organization achieve its goals?
 - Were Vision and Mission followed?

Implementation

- **Nine Steps**
 1. Board and Mgmt understand model
 2. Full board commitment to adopt model
 3. Commit to moving ahead on paper
 4. Develop all polices except Ends
 5. Adopt single temporary Ends policy
 6. Do administrative check
 7. Prepare agenda for first few board meetings
 8. Design first few steps to connect with membership
 9. Set inauguration date

Continuous Improvement

- Most boards to 6-12 months to implement
- Completing the 9 steps only means work can begin.
- 3 Things take most time and energy
 - Ends need attention into perpetuity
 - Gathering owners input (listen to members)
 - Sufficient self-evaluation and redevelopment
