

Mid-Year Check-In: Is Your Nonprofit Board Leading or Lagging?

By Elise Woodworth, Board Relations Coach

As we reach the *midway point* of the year, nonprofit leaders must ask a crucial question: Is your board actively leading your organization toward impact, or passively holding space without driving change?

The difference between an engaged board and one that is coasting through the year can be felt across every aspect of your nonprofit—fundraising, strategic direction, governance, and overall mission success. If you've experienced low participation, recruitment struggles, or disengaged members, now is the time for a board check-in (or full-on board assessment if that is already on the agenda) before heading into year-end planning.

This is where the Board Growth Blueprint comes in—a structured framework designed to assess, develop, and strengthen nonprofit boards for long-term effectiveness.

Signs Your Board Is Lagging

Many nonprofits struggle with board engagement, but it's important to recognize warning signs before they impact sustainability:

- **Board meetings feel uninspired or unproductive** – Low participation, limited discussion, rubber-stamping decisions.
- **Members rarely engage outside of meetings** – No fundraising, advocacy, or strategic involvement.
- **Recruitment is stagnant** – Struggling to bring in new, mission-aligned board members.
- **Decision-making feels reactive** – The board waits for crises rather than planning proactively.

If these challenges sound familiar, your board needs an intentional strategy to regain momentum.

What Leading Boards Do Differently



Board members engage in a detailed discussion to evaluate performance metrics, while seated in a well-lit meeting room.

Boards that drive impact don't just show up—they actively contribute to the nonprofit's success. They:

- **Network, advocate, and elevate** the organization's presence in the community.

- **Foster a culture of engagement** where board members feel personally invested.
- **Recruit strategically**, ensuring new members align with the mission and bring value.
- **Set clear expectations**, holding themselves accountable for strategic leadership.

Shifting from passivity to engagement requires an intentional framework, and that's where structured board development becomes key.

The Board Growth Blueprint – Your Path to a Stronger, More Engaged Board

The **Board Growth Blueprint** is a **structured, strategic process** that spans **4 months**, helping nonprofits **strengthen governance and engagement** through four key phases:

Phase 1: Clarity – Define board expectations, establish recruitment goals, and ensure alignment with the organization's mission.

Phase 2: Visibility – Market board opportunities effectively to attract mission-aligned candidates who bring valuable skills and perspectives.

Phase 3: Engagement – Host an interactive Board Information Session, allowing candidates to learn, connect, and assess their fit within the organization.

Phase 4: Commitment – Onboard new board members with structured orientation, clear responsibilities, and long-term sustainability procedures to ensure continued engagement.

This intentional process allows nonprofits to move from passive governance to active leadership, ensuring boards are fully equipped to drive impact and strategic growth. Each phase builds upon the last, ensuring a progressive shift toward a high-functioning, mission-driven board.

How to Get Started

Taking the first step toward board development doesn't have to be overwhelming.

Start with a simple evaluation:

- ✓ Where does your board stand today?
- ✓ What barriers exist to engagement?
- ✓ What immediate actions will create the most impact?

For nonprofit leaders ready to create lasting change, a Board Growth Blueprint consultation, workshop, or coaching program can guide your team through the process step-by-step.

So, ask yourself: Is your board leading or lagging?

If board engagement has stalled, now is the time to take action. The Board Growth Blueprint offers a clear, structured path to board growth and sustainability—because your nonprofit’s mission deserves leaders who drive progress, not just show up for meetings.