



THE SOURCE¹² – Twelve Principles of Governance That Power Exceptional Boards

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The twelve principles presented in this book, when implemented, allow boards to work at a high level and as a strategic asset to the organization with a focus on vision and mission; in other words, as an exceptional board. Governance by an exceptional board is a creative and collaborative process that supports the Chief Staff Executive (CSE), engages board members and supports the mission and vision of the organization. Good governance requires the board to balance its role as an oversight body with its role supporting the organization. This allows the CSE to lead the daily operations of the organization while regularly utilizing the board members' talents and expertise when and where appropriate.

12 Principles (The Source of Power):

When responsible boards use the 12 principles listed below as a "source of power" they can operate as exceptional boards:

1. **Constructive Partnership:** Exceptional boards govern with the CSE by recognizing that the effectiveness of the board and chief staff executive are independent.
2. **Mission Driven:** Exceptional boards shape and uphold the mission, articulate a compelling vision, and ensure agreement between their decisions and core values.
3. **Strategic Thinking:** Exceptional boards set aside specific time to what is most important to the organization and continuously engage in strategic thinking in order to better define the organization's direction.
4. **Culture of Inquiry:** Exceptional boards make inquiry, mutual respect, and constructive debate a part of the organization's culture which allows for sound and shared decision making.
5. **Independent-Mindedness:** Exceptional boards put the interests of the organization above all else.
6. **Ethos of Transparency:** Exceptional boards ensure that all of the organization's key stakeholders have access to appropriate and accurate information regarding finances, operations and results.
7. **Compliance with Integrity:** Exceptional boards promote strong ethical values and disciplined compliance by establishing appropriate mechanisms for active oversight.
8. **Sustaining Resources:** Exceptional boards link bold visions and ambitious planning to financial support, expertise, and networks of influence.

9. **Results Oriented:** Exceptional boards measure the organization’s advancement towards mission and evaluate the performance of the organization’s programs and services.
10. **Intentional Board Practices:** Exceptional boards intentionally structure themselves to fulfill essential governance duties and to support organizational priorities.
11. **Continuous Learning:** Exceptional boards are committed to learning about themselves and improvement by evaluating their own performance and assessing the value they add to the organization.
12. **Revitalization:** Exceptional boards energize themselves through planned turnover, thoughtful recruitment, and inclusiveness.

Formula:

Responsible Boards X Source of Power = Exceptional Boards

Formula Example:

STRATEGIC THINKING

Responsible Boards	X	Source of Power	=	Exceptional Boards
Set direction		Considerable time spent on consequential issues		Become a strategic asset & source of leadership
Establish & review Strategic Plans		Constant strategic thinking		Sharpen direction, address difficult issues, and identify opportunities
Monitor performance against plans		Joint board-staff efforts to frame and explore issues		Generate solutions that are understood and supported
		Alignment of agendas and CSE’s goals with priorities		



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