


# Highly Effective & Cohesive Boards

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## We don't believe:

- ◊ We have all of the answers
- ◊ There is only one right way
- ◊ There are not demographic differences
- ◊ Everyone always has to agree
- ◊ Decisions will always be unanimous

# We DO believe:

- ◆ Relationships are foundational to effective and cohesive boards
- ◆ Each board has their own best practices
- ◆ Each person can improve
- ◆ Each board can improve



“Cohesive” Defined:

The action or fact of forming  
a united whole.

(Harmony, Oneness, Unification)



# Expected Behaviors

Competence	Trust	Respect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make decisions and own them</li><li>• Stick to expertise</li><li>• Keep commitments</li><li>• Continuous learning</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• United</li><li>• Open and authentic</li><li>• Keep confidences</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assume good will</li><li>• Listen</li><li>• Mutual purpose</li><li>• Mutual respect</li><li>• Two and who....</li></ul>



# Competence

## **Keep Commitments**

- Follow through on commitments/assignments
- Be prepared for meetings

## **Deliver Results**

- Make decisions and own them
- Stick to expertise when communicating with others
- Follow clear processes

## **Get Better – seek feedback, continuous learning**

- Culture of growth mindset
- Regular board assessment
- Master Board Certification
- Onboard new members
- Conferences

# Trust

- **Create Transparency – open and authentic; no hidden agenda**
- **Keep confidences**
- **Be united on decisions once they are made**
- **Can't keep a commitment – let others know**
- **If something comes up, give a “heads up” as soon as you can**
- **Right Wrongs – restitution; apologize**
- **Extend Trust**





# Respect

- ❖ Honor the diverse talents, viewpoints, perspectives, and contributions of all
- ❖ Assume good will
- ❖ Listen First – create:
  - ❖ Mutual purpose (I care about your interests)
  - ❖ Mutual respect (I care about you)
- ❖ **No independent contractors**
  - ❖ Two and who . . .
- ❖ **Demonstrate Respect – how you treat folks**
- ❖ **Confront the brutal facts appropriately**



# “Cohesive” Thoughts:

- ◆ Cohesive = Harmony, Oneness, Unification
  - ◆ Not unanimity or sameness
- ◆ Relationship Foundation
  - ◆ Competence – Trust – Respect
- ◆ Always Demonstrating, Developing, Diminishing
- ◆ Establish a Board Code of Conduct
  - ◆ Consider reviewing through these lenses

“Effective” Defined:

Successful in producing the  
desired or intended result.

# Customer or Owner?

“Imagine walking into a national restaurant chain and buying a sandwich. You sit down, eat your food, and leave. When you do this, is your behavior that of a customer or an owner?”

“Most people would answer that this is the behavior of a customer – and they would be correct. The entire interaction is a transactional exchange of value, where you exchange an amount of value you own (money) for a product with a value that you want (a sandwich). That is classic customer behavior.”



# Customer or Owner?

“Now let’s assume that you enjoyed your food so much that, when you go home that evening, you decide to go online and buy stock in the company. The moment when you purchase the restaurant’s stock, is your behavior that of a customer or an owner? You are behaving as an owner because you’re making a long-term investment in the organization. This behavior is neither transactional nor episodic; you’re interested in seeing growth of value over time.

“The day after you buy stock, you go back to the restaurant, buy another sandwich, and eat it. Is your behavior that of a customer or an owner?”

Great on Their Behalf, airick journey crabill, p.141-142.



# Customer or Owner?

Discuss the question with an elbow partner for 2 minutes.



# The board member conundrum

“What this illustrates is that someone can be *both* an owner and a customer. In fact, this is an incredibly common scenario.”

“Many of the people who are *owners* of the organization (community members) are also *customers* (parents/staff).”

“If someone is both an *owner* and a *customer* of the school system, the challenge for the board is to determine who the person is being *in the moment*.”

# How to figure it out...

“The way to figure out how someone is behaving at the moment is to refer back to the restaurant example. If they are **behaving in a way that is transactional** and seeks value from the organization, themselves, or their family, it is **customer behavior** and the issue needs to be **handled by staff**.”

“If they are **behaving** in a way that’s more **long-term** and involves **investing** in increasing the value of the organization, then it is **owner behavior** and the issue is appropriate for the school **board to address**.”

“You may be **talking to an owner**, but if they’re **behaving like a customer**, you need to **direct them to the staff**.”





# Why are these distinctions important?

1. Improved customer service
2. Less chance that issues will fall through the cracks
3. Less risk of duplicating efforts and wasting resources
4. Improved decision-making
5. Improved fairness



# How can owners respond to customers?

- ❑ Express gratitude
- ❑ Listen
- ❑ Connect
- ❑ Invite



# Whose work?

Owner Work	Customer Service Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Set vision and goals</li><li>➤ Develop and approve budget</li><li>➤ Policy development</li><li>➤ Superintendent/BA hiring and oversight</li><li>➤ Accountability for student achievement</li><li>➤ Advocacy</li><li>➤ Community engagement</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Communicate vision and goals</li><li>✓ Budget management</li><li>✓ Policy implementation</li><li>✓ Focus on student achievement</li><li>✓ Address employee issues</li><li>✓ Attend to student issues</li><li>✓ Resolve patron concerns</li></ul>



# Building Blocks

Highly Effective and Cohesive Board

Owner Work

Customer Service Work

Competence

Trust

Respect



# Student Success

Highly Effective and Cohesive Board

Owner Work

Customer Service Work

Competence

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Thank  
You!