

CHALLENGING THE NOTION OF EFFICIENT MEETINGS

Sara A. Peterson, JD, Management Consultant



THREE SESSIONS

Demystifying Generative Governance

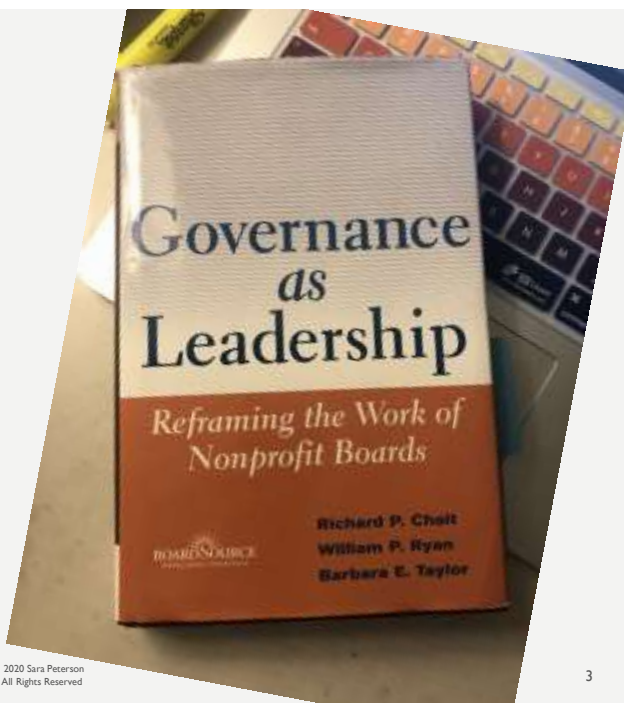
12–12:30 pm, Monday, Regency T

Challenging the Notion of "Efficient" Meetings

11–11:30 am, Tue, Regency T

(Re)Setting the Table for Generative Thinking

10–10:30 am, Wed, Regency T



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CHALLENGING THE NOTION OF EFFICIENT MEETINGS

Conventional wisdom doesn't serve when it sacrifices deep and relevant conversation.

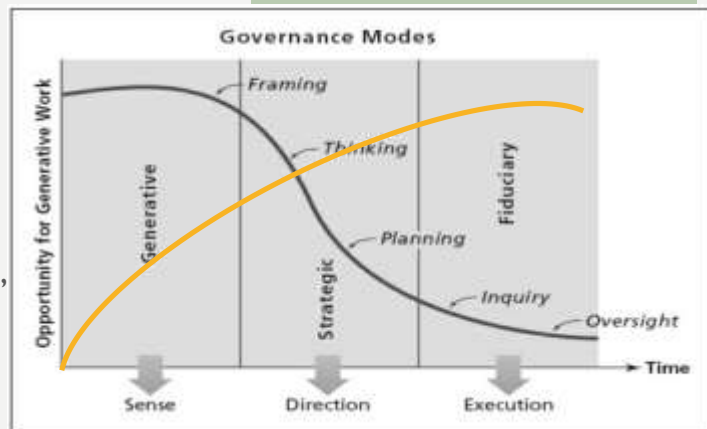
- Tradeoffs effective / efficient
- Identify your needs
- Flip the script for more conversation, time, and reflection
- Tips for slowing down

BACK TO YESTERDAY

Consequential Governance

Bringing GENERATIVE thinking to our fiduciary duties, strategic direction, and organizational learning and insight

Asking questions to make sense / meaning together



Governance Modes or Mental Maps Source: Richard Chait, Trower, Cathy A., The Practitioner's Guide to Governance as Leadership.

MODES & MINDSETS OVER TASKS & MECHANICS

Even more significantly, we should have highlighted that generative work serves to **generate the understanding, meaning, and insight that create a shared perception of the problems and opportunities** at hand and on the horizon. Generative work means think first and think hard about what's at issue and what's at stake. In shorthand, we urged boards to **Find, Frame, and then Focus** on **matters of paramount importance** to the organization's current and future welfare.

Chait in Trower, Cathy A., The Practitioner's Guide to Governance as Leadership

TRADEOFFS

RUTHLESS EFFICIENCY

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WHAT IS AN EFFICIENT MEETING?

How many decisions
you make?

How quickly your
governing body
navigates an agenda?

Whether it is done
in an hour? Two?

**WHEN IS THIS
QUESTIONABLE
GOVERNANCE
ADVICE?**

HEADLINES

Say no to meetings!
Why your meetings stink
...

TIPS

Use a timer, watch the clock
Use standing meetings, 10-minute huddles
Be brief and concise, silence = assent
Don't kick the can down the road
Always have action items

EFFICIENT, EFFECTIVE OR...

"capable of producing a result," but

Effective "producing a result that is wanted"

Efficient "capable of producing desired results without wasting materials, time, or energy"

<http://www.learnersdictionary.com/qa/How-to-Use-Effective-and-Efficient>

Good Governance

Consequential

principled leadership

durable, clearly defined

decisions based on

shared meaning

STARTING POINT #1 EVERY BOARD HAS...

Deciders pushing
everyone to
SPEED UP

Process folks
trying to
SLOW DOWN

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STARTING POINT #3 EVERY BOARD HAS...

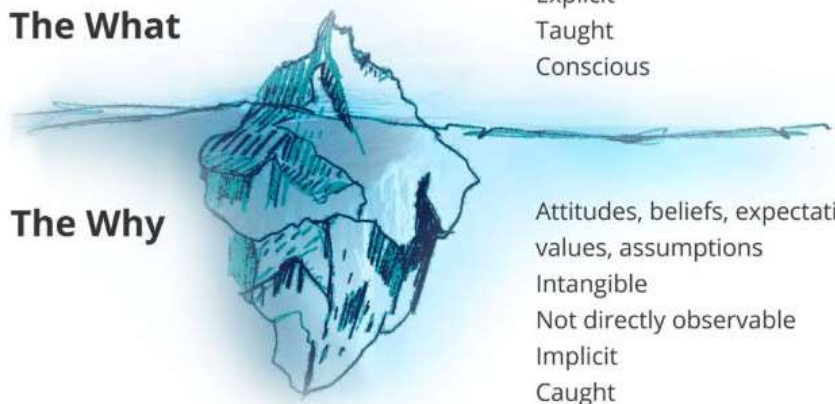
**A room full of
acquaintances
hardwired for
their day jobs**

What kind of thinking do your
board members engage in all day,
every day?

- Elected Officials
- Public Entity Administrators
- Financial Directors
- HR Directors

The Cultural Iceberg, adapted by Sheri Lazarus (2016) from work by Edward T. Hall (1976). Art by Anna Seeley and Abby Smith.
<https://emiworld.org/inside/emi-tech/cultural-iceberg-communication>

The What



Behaviours and artifacts
 Accessible to the senses
 Observable
 Explicit
 Taught
 Conscious

The Why

Attitudes, beliefs, expectations,
 values, assumptions
 Intangible
 Not directly observable
 Implicit
 Caught
 Subconscious

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**STARTING POINT #4
 EVERY BOARD HAS A
 SHARED CULTURE**

SPEED THEN CREATES TRADEOFFS

Opportunity Costs

- Your Board's full intellectual, technical, reputational, political, social capacity (and capital)
- *Biased*, short-sighted, even fragile decisions
- Failure to learn
- Real oversight

RISK !

<<< Those things

- Not on the same page
- Future conflict
- Missed cues
- Decision churn, recreating the wheel, the waste trying to avoid

TYPICAL COMPLAINTS

ABOUT BOARDS

- Group dysfunction
- Disengaged, disinterested
- Micromanage
- Misunderstand role
- Lack content expertise

FROM BOARDS

- Frustrating, boring
- Time consuming
- “Just tell us what we need to know”

BUT WHAT IF WE

- Have oversimplified
- Overscheduled
- Discouraged
- Retained too much
- Rewarded the wrong things
- Forced just-in-time decision-making

YOUR BOARD

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

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SO, PICTURE YOUR POOL

BOARD

- Number and tenure
- Day-job composition, life experiences, education/ training, style, patience
- Competing interests, cohesion
- Meeting style, frequency, travel distances
- Representation, alternates

MEMBERSHIP

- Number
- Entity type/diversity
- Internal risk sophistication
- Risk retention
- Stability, health
- Contentment

STAFF

- Number, structure
- Employee / contract
- Time availability

Not to mention

- Pool health, reputation
- Conflict, crisis
- Data quality
- Regulation intensity...

WHY DO THESE THINGS MATTER? THEY AFFECT...

Time

- Speed with which MUST decide
- Time to prepare and follow up

Permission

- To NOT know the answer
- To engage in operational detail
- To gather information, educate, reflect

Space

- Literal (distance, agenda...)
- Figurative (head, interpersonal...)

Distraction

- Ability to disengage and focus

A COUPLE EXAMPLES

Small Pool

- 20, 30, 50 members
- Directly representative
- Small staff
- Tight geography
- Engaged in settlement decisions
- Greater fluctuations because of the numbers

Huge Pool

- 500, 800, or more members
- Indirectly representative
- Large staff
- Long distances
- Delegated settlement decisions
- Averages absorb a lot of variation

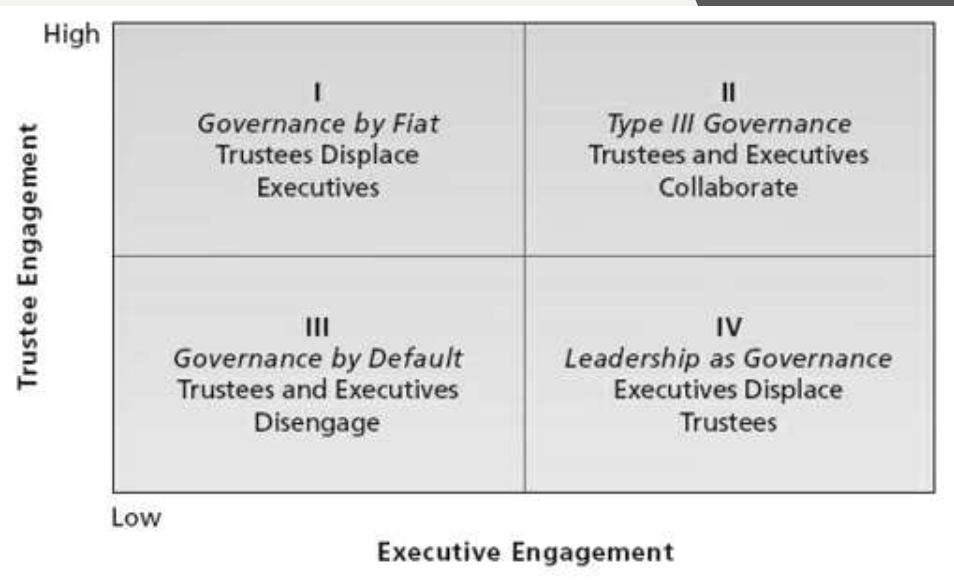
FLIP THE SCRIPT

S L O W I N G

DOWN TO ASK THE QUESTIONS

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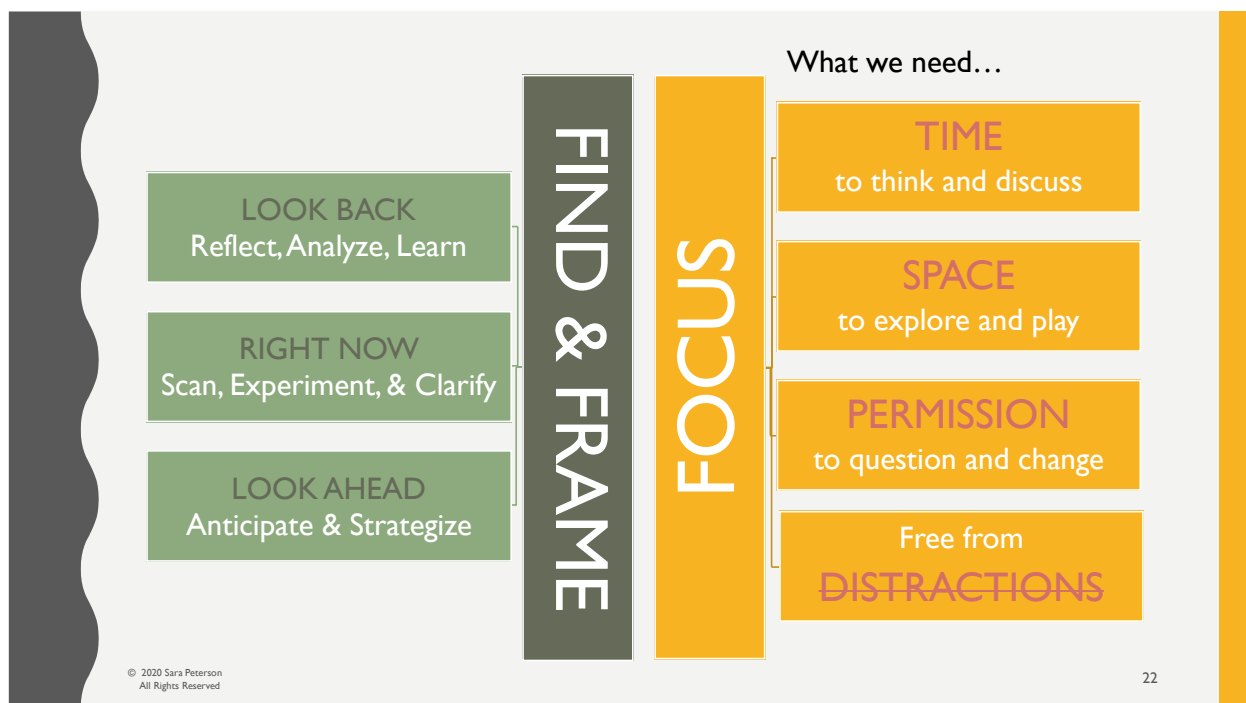
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**TYPICAL BOARD
SCENARIOS**

SMALL STEPS

1. Start somewhere, anywhere
2. Yes, and...
3. Parking lots for future conversations
4. Select a few reflective questions
5. Experiment



WIDEN YOUR OPTIONS

Narrow framing leads us to overlook options. (Teenagers and executives often make “whether or not” decisions.) We need to uncover new options and, when possible, consider them simultaneously through multitasking. (Think AND not OR.) Where can you find new options? Find someone who has solved your problem. Try laddering: First look for current bright spots (local), then best practices (regional) and then analogies from related domains (distant).

REALITY-TEST YOUR ASSUMPTIONS

In assessing our options, the confirmation bias leads us to collect skewed, self-serving information. To combat that bias, we can ask disconfirming questions (What problems does the iPod have?). We can also zoom out (looking for base rates) and zoom in (seeking more texture). And whenever possible we should coach, conducting small experiments to teach us more. Why predict when you can know?

ATTAIN DISTANCE BEFORE DECIDING

Short-term emotion tempts us to make choices that are bad in the long term. To avoid that, we need to attain distance by shifting perspective: What would I tell my best friend to do? Or, what would my successor do? (Or try 10/10/10.) When decisions are agonizing, we need to clarify our core priorities—and go on the offensive for them. (Remember the stainless steel bolts on the Navy ship.)

PREPARE TO BE WRONG

We are overconfident, thinking we know how the future will unfold when we really don't. We should prepare for bad outcomes (premortem) as well as good ones (preparade). And what would make us reconsider our decisions? We can set tripwires that snap us to attention at the right moments. (David Lee Roth's brown M&M, Zappos' \$1,000 offer)

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DECISIVE

THE WRAP PROCESS

To make better choices, we must avoid the most common decision-making traps. Being aware of these biases will help us to avoid them, and a process can help. The WRAP process can help us make better, wiser decisions.





Sara Peterson Consulting

effective strategy, governance and management
for nonprofits, foundations, government, & community groups

P 812.822.2122 C 651.260.0273
www.sarapetersonconsulting.com