

So hi, everybody. Welcome to our governance made easy webinar today titled creating a strategic board culture. Today, we are having a discussion with our international guests, Miranda Flurry, president of Hawkeye Strategy, their senior consultant, Michael Leonard, and, of course, Simon Telford of Appoint Better Boards in Wanaka, New Zealand.

My name is Sean McDonald, and I shall be your moderator for the next forty odd minutes.

Firstly, though, thanks for attending today. We really appreciate the effort you make to be here for our live events. I know you all have busy days.

During the session, if you have any questions for the panel, please use the q and a button on your toolbar.

We'll be answering as many of these as we have time for during the session. So it's all about remember, it's all about a conversation rather than a presentation.

And finally, if you stay through till the end, which we hope you will do, and as is customary for our webinars, we have a special treat for you. By answering a really short one minute survey at the end of the webinar, you'll go into our draw to win a beautiful gift hamper worth over four hundred dollars.

Now for those not too familiar with BoardPro, we are a board software provider that serve or we serve just over thirty thousand users now around the world, and we're represented in about thirty two different countries.

And we enable organizations to prepare for and run their board meetings more efficiently and effectively with, you guessed it, clever software, namely ours, with less time and deliver more impact and value for the organization. And as much as we are a board software provider, sometimes called a board portal, Part of our wider mission is to make the fundamentals of governance free and easy for all organizations, especially those with resource constraints.

Now for this afternoon's webinar or this morning's webinar, depending on where you're dialing in from, I'm going to have Simon and Michael introduce themselves first starting with you, Simon.

Kia ora, everyone. Thanks for joining.

I run, board recruitment is is my mainstay. So I run the, fifteen thousand member community, of appoint better boards, done a lot of board placements, and I've been a director mostly on privately owned business boards, well known within the governance community within New Zealand and, a champion of diversity on boards and, yeah, ensuring that, everyone gets equity within board placements as well. So looking forward to joining the panel today.

Awesome. Always great to have you with us, Simon. Michael, over to you.

Yeah. Thanks, Sean. Hi. My name is Mike Leonard. I spent thirty five years working in the financial services sector, the last ten of which was as CEO of the regional central bank for credit unions in four provinces on East Coast of Canada.

Also served on several national boards of directors for the credit union system and specialized in developing strategy at the regional and national levels in Canada. And over the last two years, I've been working with Miranda at Hawkeye Strategies Consulting in the financial services space, offering support for strategy and governance development. And very happy to be here, so thanks for having me.

Fantastic.

So now I have the great pleasure to present to you our lead presenter for today's webinar, Miranda Flurry, who has been listed as a top rated speaker for multiple conferences around the globe.

Miranda's reputation as a governance and strategy expert has spread, and she's become one of the go to consultants for boards and executives around the world. She has clients in the United States, Canada, Ireland, England, and, yes, even New Zealand, to name a few countries.

Miranda's been on a board director on one of the largest, most complicated co op boards in North America, which means she not only consults on governance, but she practices what she preaches at the boardroom table.

And when she isn't working, you'll find her traveling with her family and exercising, but she says be careful as she might invite you to a CrossFit class.

So welcome, Miranda.

Thank you, Sean.

I shall hand over to you. I'll stop sharing my screen if you wanna take over.

You bet. Okay. Wonderful. Super happy to be here. Thank you for having me. I'm just gonna move all of your pictures over to here.

Awesome. Okay. So Sean gave me what I like to call the impossible task of taking what I could talk about probably for a couple days and condensing it into a really, really short window of time. So I'm gonna jump right to it and start talking about why are you even here today talking about fostering strategic board culture.

And so I think all of us as directors in the room know that the board has a responsibility for strategy, and you know that developing winning strategies are incredibly difficult. But it's actually not enough to just build winning strategies. Your strategies actually have to be aligned with the corporate culture if you want to be successful.

And so when you think about your culture, I don't actually want you to think about whether you have a bad culture or a good culture. I want you to think about whether your your culture is actually aligned with your strategy.

And so oftentimes, people think that this is kind of a softer topic. There are several articles that indicate otherwise, including an article from the Harvard Law School, which actually indicates that approximately fifty two percent of the company's market value is tied to talent and culture and can be even upwards of ninety percent through the research that they did. And there are several articles like that. And so when an organization strategy actually shifts, so too should your culture.

And it is the board's responsibility to be able to oversee and ensure that culture is having the right resources attributed to it. And so you might wanna ask your, directors, your fellow directors, and your management team a couple different questions at your next strategic planning session, which could be, how does our current culture need to change to enable the strategic shift that we've just made, and what metrics will demonstrate that to us that the shift has actually been successful. So those are just a couple tidbits that you can take away on that one.

I would also say that culture as a why here, culture has the power to overcome a bad strategic choice. So the reality is you're setting strategy, which is perspective. It's forward looking. It's probably in approximately a three year window.

Hopefully, you're directionally correct, but you're not gonna be entirely accurate, which means mistakes are going to be made. And as you start to foster a strategic culture throughout the organization, you will actually see the ability of your team to be able to speak up, speak up early, and actually have leaders respond as a result when you have a strategic culture that's built.

The next part of the why here is actually creating what I like to call this tension tolerance. And so when you start to practice really deep discussion at the board table with frequent debate, you start to create this tension tolerance. And you need tension tolerance in order to get through some of the most challenging times that you have as a director. So think about for those of you who sat on a board long enough or have sat on multiple boards, you will know that some of your more challenging conversations come from whether you have business line closures to closing physical locations, to hiring a CEO, to making decisions on multibillion dollar projects. And I know I have made decisions around all of those before as a director myself, and those create this tension.

And and the reality is when you have that tension, you're gonna have very opposing views between directors.

And when you have a strategic culture around the table, you start to view that as a strength, those opposing views, as opposed to looking at people who are detractors or derailers. And you sit back and you roll your eyes and you say, here we go again. They're always speaking up against what we're talking about.

And and so what I would also say when you're talking about attention tolerance is it's really helpful from both a board, and a management point of view in terms of that dynamic because then your management team actually expects you to ask specific questions as well to get after their, you know, understanding and thought process around their their recommendations.

The last piece that I have here on your slide is, boards have two key roles associated with with culture.

So an oversight of cultural risk, which typically shows up through board accountability and the enterprise risk management framework, but also setting the tone from the top. So the dynamics that you have around your board table to the decisions that you make, send a message to management as well as other key stakeholders about what's important and what type of culture that you wanna have. And it's absolutely critical as boards that you're assessing against that cultural lens that that you're trying to create. And if you disagree with this statement, the Institute of Corporate Directors actually has a beautiful article on this that talks about not underestimating the value of cultural oversight and how incredibly important it is, and they actually reference some of the famous businesses that I'm sure all of us know on the call here from Wells Fargo to the Volkswagen emissions fiasco to Boeing seven thirty seven MAX eight disasters, and they link how cultural, implications can result in specific, you know, business outcomes.

So that is your why.

Yeah. Maureen, let's really you've really set the scene really well and encourage people who've got questions to ask about in the q and a. And, you know, you are talking about billion dollar companies, but I think these principles apply whether you're running a a small not for profit or you're running a private your own business or or a, an indigenous organization.

One question I've got for you, Miranda. When Drucker said strategy, a culture eats strategy for lunch, Do you subscribe to everything that Drucker sees around that, or was that just slightly simplistic? Or, you know, what do you think of Drucker's quite well known sort of phrase, culture eats strategy for lunch?

I I think it's a really great phrase. And and what I would say to that is, like, so so, yes, if you like I said, if you have an absolutely beautiful strategy and you have a culture that fights against it, you will not be successful. But I think at the end of the day, you also need to have a successful strategy and a successful culture. So I think, like, you you need to be able to have both, but the reality is you can't you can't just have a successful strategy. So I can subscribe to that notion. And, Mike, I don't know what your thoughts are on that one too.

Yeah. I was just gonna add. I I think, you know, having organizations talk about culture is becoming more and more common place, but usually that culture's focused at the organizational level. And so ask yourself how many times if you sit on multiple boards, if you've sat on multiple boards, how many times have you had the opportunity to talk about the culture at the board table and actually try to define it? Talk about what kind of behaviors do we want, what kind of

discussions do we wanna have, how how open do we wanna be for challenging each other and what respectful challenge looks like. And and if once you start having those conversations, that opens the door, I think, to everything Miranda's gonna talk about over the next few minutes.

Okay. We'll keep going. Thanks for that question, Simon.

Okay. So now that I've told you your why, why don't we talk about the what? So what exactly is board culture? And when you think about culture in general, it's typically you've heard you've heard the line, it's comprised of common behaviors and norms and expectations associated with individual actions, that, you know, each person has.

And and at a board table, you can actually think about this from the individual behaviors that a director has versus the group of of the board directors itself and the board dynamics. So the best way to explain this relationship between these two is think about a brand new director that has just sat on on your board. They come in. They don't know that necessarily the board norms and behaviors that exist.

If they start asking a bunch of questions and you have a board dynamic that typically doesn't ask a lot of questions, they have the ability to actually influence the entire board to start asking more questions, which can go one way, or the board as a whole might actually shut them down from from asking questions and change their individual behavior as well. And so there's an interrelatedness between the two, between the individual behavior and the board dynamics, and and they have quite a relationship between one another.

Okay.

Do you think Christian, just, I'll just jump in there if that's okay, Miranda. Is do do you think boards use values as a proxy for culture? What's the what's the interrelationship for boards between values, organizational values typically, and and board culture?

Julia, that's a really great question. I think I think values are the start of which you start to define culture. In my mind, there's so many different elements of culture, and you can get down to the nitty gritty behaviors that you actually wanna see. But I think at the highest level at the board table, that that is how you're defining culture around the board table.

Mike, do you think there's what sort of practical actions do you think, there's been a question asked around practical actions for, you know, defining culture or overseeing cultural risk? Is there things other than your standard, probably your board review, process that might be happening on an annual basis? Other tools that you've seen, Mike?

Yeah. So I know, in one board that we sat that I sat on, we we actually spent, as part of our strategic planning, we actually spent a couple of hours talking through the culture that the organization wanted, and then how the board should contribute to that. And as Miranda said, that tone from the top. But what did that how did that translate into actual into actions when we were sitting around the board table?

And I thought it was a really helpful exercise to help set the stage for everybody to understand, you know, what was acceptable and what wasn't. And I I just wanna touch really briefly on something Miranda said a minute ago about the new director that comes on board. And so if you're watching this this webinar and you're thinking about actionable takeaways, give some thought to, do you have an effective onboarding program for new directors? You know, do you give them the board handbook and then tell them when the meeting the next meeting is, or do you actually spend time with them?

And as part of that, do you talk about board culture?

And I think, you know, starting that from the very first meeting with a new director helps them assimilate in, helps them feel more comfortable, and helps, you know, lead to a to a better outcome.

Nice.

Okay.

So we just talked about board culture in general, but I've actually been talking about how do you foster strategic board culture. So I wanna make a bit of a differentiation here is that a strategic board culture is actually focused on connecting engaged individual directors towards that collective purpose. So the purpose of the role of the board, but also the purpose of your organization itself.

And it contains robust processes for decision making, a focus on the future, and board dynamics of genuine trust and resilience. And we're actually gonna touch on a number of these points coming up.

So what I want to start off with is these are some of the key elements that feed into strategic culture. So we're going to talk about individual competencies, systems and processes, and board dynamics. And with a very short window of time that I have here with you today, I'm actually going to only cover just a few different examples underneath each one. And these examples should be something that hopefully you don't talk about necessarily on a regular basis. They're just meant to make you think a little bit differently about some of the common topics that we see in governance.

So if I jump to individual competencies, just thinking about who's making up, who is actually the what's the makeup of your board? What are their individual skills and capabilities? What do they actually know about the organization and the industry?

What I want to do on the next slide here is I want to actually give you three different examples. I could have I could have gone to probably fifty different examples in terms of how you increase individual competency, but but let's look at these three. I think all of us on the call can sit here and acknowledge that a skills matrix is important, But I'm here to tell you, you should probably look at your skills matrix a little bit differently than what you're currently doing. I think we all know that you need competent directors, and who have skills and experience that's actually

commensurate with the organization's strategy and that level of complexity so that you can ask the appropriate questions and effectively oversee and govern the organization.

So let's just start. Think about as your strategy starts to shift, what are some of those new skills that you require at the board table? So are you stopping at the end of your strategic planning session after you've made a pivot and saying, okay we've got a new direction. Do we actually have the right skills at the table?

How do we need to update our skills matrix? How does that feed into the different systems around nominations and recruiting directors and so on and so forth? And then that actually feeds into thinking about the specific skills on your skills matrix as well and thinking about what are some of those non traditional skills that you might be needing around your boardroom table. So I look at a bunch of board skills matrix when I'm helping out with board evaluations and assessments and I see the very common ones from financial acumen to risk oversight to strategic planning to, you know, your very typical technical ones.

But you might wanna think about other nontraditional skills, and these these could be things like having a global lens. So maybe your strategy is actually shifting and you're trying to go international or a cross cultural competence could be an example. Think about your customers, your clients, your members, your patients, whomever it is that you're serving. If you're serving across a diverse group of people, you probably want to have a diverse group of people around the board, but also people who have that cross cultural competence.

Even to change management, especially as organizations are undergoing significant change, and even a director's learning agility. These are ideas that you can actually put onto a director skills matrix that augment some of those technical skills that we see.

And a last example here for you as well is we know that directors are under increased scrutiny. So their ability to have effective oversight, acumen, and even their liability is under scrutiny.

And so it's really, really important that we add more rigor to evaluating director competencies.

And there are different ways in which you can do that. I often walk in and I see boards that are using a self assessment. They're typically using a scale of one to five and saying where do I rate myself on risk oversight? I rate myself a four and I call it a day.

But you can actually be moving your boards towards measuring skills and assessments in a much more rigorous approach. So you could take your self assessment and instead of just circling four, you can actually say I'm circling four and then have a statement as evidenced by and you can demonstrate your work experience, your board experience, the education that you've taken in order to actually justify the self assessment rating that you have. Another way to look at this is you could define your competencies using what I call the BARD model, where you've got competencies that are described in escalating strength.

So if you take risk oversight, then you could actually say, at a basic level, this is what a director would possess. At a good level, a director would possess the following, strong level and expert

level, and you describe it in more detail so that it's easier, identified for a director to select which one is appropriate.

And then lastly, on this one is I've actually built director knowledge questionnaires for for boards before where they have to actually write long answer questions that identify and get at specific competencies that they have to demonstrate through an exam. And how that's administered and what that looks like is very delicate, but but it also really gets at the competencies for individual directors.

Right. Miranda, great points. And, An has has highlighted something really interesting as well. So it's it's really that that different way of appointing directors when you have some influence over it.

You can sort of curate your board, but when they're elected and you're sort of or they are appointed by third parties, it makes it really difficult to get that mix out there. So I think that's a really good point there. And a lot of movement in, in New Zealand, particularly with sporting boards, is to move from the completely elected, model to make sure there was a balance between elected and appoint appointed primarily, almost, yeah, almost exclusively. The reason being to make sure that you get that that good mix.

Are we gonna be talking about tension culture later on, that around around that culture of tension? Can we just cross that off now? Marco's asked a really good question around, you know and when we talked about it in our webinar last year about the different types of conflict, you know, productive versus pointless conflict. And, you know, you talked about some tension there.

Is there a a way of having healthy tension and how you ensure that fine balance between it getting into constructive versus destructive tension?

Yes. And so we're gonna be touching on that briefly in a few slides from now. And if I don't go deep enough, I would encourage you to ask your question again, and then we can have a bit of a conversation when it comes up if that's okay. It's under four four zero eight.

Comply, it will prompt you for that. Great. Thanks, Marco.

Okay.

Okay. So that was our individual competency.

Now if we look at our second key element, that's looking at systems and and processes, and these are what we use to make our boards much more effective.

And so let's let's jump in. When I think about there are very typical systems and processes that I could have referenced here. And, actually, bikes started just naturally speaking to one, onboarding. That is such an incredibly important component.

Other very common ones, that you would have known about with systems and processes, you know, thinking about when you have your in camera meetings, are they before and after board meetings, and even, you know, how often does a chair meet with their individual directors? These are systematic ways by which you reinforce specific items at the board table. And so what I want to do is I want to give you three examples on the slide here about how you can actually reinforce strategic culture at the board table using different systems and processes.

So the first one that we've got on the slide here is what I'm calling a hindsight and foresight agenda assessment. So what I'd love for you to do at your next board meeting, take your board packet and actually look at the agenda itself. And beside every line item that you have on your agenda, write an h for hindsight or write an f for foresight.

And what you'll be doing is when you think about hindsight, these are agenda items that you're talking about that are historical. So your financial statements, by the way, are in a hindsight mode. And then you can write an f for foresight if you're actually thinking about it from a futuristic point of view. And the act of doing that will tell you where the majority of your time is being spent and give you a really nice visual and an opportunity for additional discussion around how do I actually push the board to be able to go into a more foresight perspective and focusing on on strategy. And oftentimes, our regulators, pull us into the hindsight piece, and it's actually so much easier to be in the tangible hindsight piece than it is into the more abstract strategy piece. So really interesting exercise to do.

The next, the next thought that I have here for you in terms of systems and processes is to first off define what an operational question looks like. And I will sit here and tell you if the answer to your question takes me three seconds or less, it's operational by nature.

And and so that is one way that you can define an operational question. There are several ways in which you can do it, but I would encourage your boards to define what is an operational question, which we know is inherently gonna come up at every board meeting. And then how does the board actually delicately get yourselves out of an operational discussion while being able to balance the fact that you're not trying to stifle somebody from asking questions and balancing that dynamic that exists.

And the last piece that I have here for you as an example of a system or a process is what I call real time assessment questions. And so at the end of every board meeting or at the end of every committee meeting, you can actually do a really quick evaluation and do a bit of a roundtable with everybody present. And you can ask what I've typically seen is, you know, what's what went well, what would you change, or, you know, any other feedback. But if you really want to reinforce strategic culture, you can ask questions like, how did each of you contribute to strategic discussion today?

What did we do that actually showed visible examples of strategic culture? And that continues to reinforce how important it is as you talk about it, especially if it's an expectation that you're talking about it at the end of a board meeting.

Microphone.

Yes. Simon, can I just add on top of that? And I've been on boards where these three tools were really well entrenched and worked really well. And I've also been on boards where these were introduced and it's awkward.

Right? Because you're used to doing something. It's, you know, you've been entrenched in a way it's typically lag indicator. You're typically looking backwards.

So, you know, and I think I noticed in the chat, Julia mentioned around, KPIs and lag indicators.

We actually structured the agenda, when we were first introducing this idea to be hindsight and foresight. So we had a section of the agenda that was about looking back over the last quarter, and then after that, everything was built to be forward looking. So they're really you know, was really orienting the entire meeting around those two distinct, dynamics. And so if you do that, I think setting the agenda specifically about this is when we're gonna look back and how we did, and this is now it's all about looking forward.

We had great reaction from directors to that. And I think the other piece around real time assessments is really helpful. And I worked on a board with a chair who at the end of every meeting would send a quick questionnaire to everybody on the board to say, tell me what worked well, tell me what you thought we could have done differently. And then if there was any specific item that he wanted to ask about, he'd ask about that as well. And then we would get the responses back, in our next board package. And so it's really helpful way for him to take a real time gauge in how we were doing, but for all of us to see, you know, maybe I felt something didn't go well, but I might have been the only one. And so that was helpful for me to know as well.

Good point, Mike. And the challenge here is not to do it once, but to do it regularly because you can as you, you know yeah. Keep keeping that consistency.

Miranda, I've got a question from Adrian. Do you want to move to the next slide, or we got time to, to ping one general question? What would you like to do?

You can go for it. Yeah. Go for it.

Well, I think it relates to the previous slide when we talked about board composition and culture. And, Adrian, I think it's a really poignant point here is that shouldn't the board culture be an inevitable subset of organizational culture, which is in turn driven by brand? Because otherwise, with the turnover and they coming in and out of the board, you'll get a different board culture constantly happening. So how do you marry organizational culture and board culture versus board culture always being fluid because of changing directors?

I love this, and I see Mike is smirking and, like, waiting to jump. I'm gonna take it, and then, Mike, you can jump right in.

And and so so what I would say is, first off, if you want like a practical way of of dealing with the fact that you have turnover and that influences the type of culture that you have at the board table, number one, which we've we've already both of us have actually mentioned, which is defining what is the type of board culture you're looking for. I've actually seen documents put together that explain what the board norms are. I've seen those board norms explained at every board meeting. So maybe you pull out one and you talk about the importance to try and reinforce what norms you're looking for around the table.

At the end of the day, the board does set the tone from the top. Like I said, the decisions that they make to how they interact, to how they handle the CEO, and and the rest of the executive team is indicative of what will potentially flow through the rest of the organization. And so there are ways to reinforce the specific culture that you're looking at at the board table irrespective of the turnover that's happening. And that's an example of one of those systems.

I just don't have that system up there, but is is having board norms set and defining that culture. But, Mike, you look like you were jumping, so go for it.

Yeah. I so it's just such a great question. I think if you've done the work to define the organizational culture and then done the work to define how the board culture supports it, and as Miranda mentioned earlier, what board norms are and what directors should expect and be expected to do, then you you've got that documented. Think about the power of being able to go out and recruit specifically for people that not only have all of the technical backgrounds that you might want to have on your board, but also have that behavioral skill set that's going to integrate well.

And then being able to do background checks on potential new directors and talk and say, you know, when it they were on your board, did they behave this way? How did they react to being challenged? And were they open to, you know, moving quickly and changing quickly in in the dynamic? I think that's a really powerful way to make sure you get the right people on the board at the right time.

Let's kick on, Miranda. And, and then I've got some really interesting questions about what happens if you cheer the problem with board culture. So we'll come on to that after the, the next section.

I saw that.

So so, Simon, yes, I'll keep going. But if you want me to just pause and we can just literally address the questions, I can do that too. So you just let me know. Okay?

Just click on, and, we'll do this to your question because, I'm formulating an answer as well while we, while you present.

I love it. Okay. I so our last key element is looking at board dynamics and understanding how the way in which people interact actually influences strategic culture. And what I wanna get across here is that every every board is a group of people.

That's a fair statement, but not every board is a team. And so if you actually increase your focus on board dynamics, you can build a team. And the best boards are teams that actually know how to leverage one another's strengths. So what I want to do is I want to speak to some behaviors of boards in general and individual directors and what that looks like and how that hinders strategic culture and how that actually builds strategic culture.

So I'm gonna give you a few different examples starting with, with what hinders strategic culture.

And so our first one is, blocking progress. I am sure everybody has seen directors do this. I personally have seen this on almost all the boards that I have sat on where one director holds up an entire discussion because they are digging in on a topic that has literally already been agreed upon. They just won't let it go. And then they take up airtime. They block additional progress.

And so that is one of the behaviors that you can identify.

The second behavior that hinders strategic board dynamics is digressing, which is actually kind of similar to the blocking progress, but it's something new that somebody has brought up. And maybe they're very, verbose in the way in which they're describing it, and it could have been really, really short. Or they're bringing up a really important topic, but it's the completely inappropriate time, and it requires a separate section on your agenda.

And all of these pieces start to actually hinder some of your strategic board dynamics.

The last behavior that I have on here that hinders strategic board dynamics is what I'm calling withdrawing.

And so there are two different elements of withdrawing. Number one is a director in themselves actually shows up to a board meeting and doesn't realize it's their job to actively participate, show up and ask questions. They're waiting for somebody to prompt them. That's actually not that's not the way you should be functioning. You should be actively ready to go. And the second withdrawing is what I like to call professional sulking, where you at the end of the day, you didn't get your way in a particular debate, then you go a little bit more reclusive and you start having sidebar conversations with people. And, you know, on break and after the board meeting, you make a phone call to somebody and then you start to really rip apart at some of the strategic board dynamics because you're starting to break down some of the trust that's within the board itself.

So those are the hindering behaviors for strategic. Last one, sort of passive, aggressive, going to aggressive, aggressive.

Yes. And I Simon, I don't know about you, but I have seen that in particular on some of the more sophisticated boards that I have sat on where the decisions feel like the magnitude is so big that that people start to have these cliques that form, and it's absolutely ridiculous, and it feels like high school almost.

Shall we bring in that question around chairs in that we you know, we what what hinder strategic board dynamics? I mean, I would have to say sometimes it's the culture of the chair because if the chair who is conducting the orchestra of the board is, was gonna say, the problem or not aligned or created that unconstructive tension, dominating conversation, being verbose, what can we do about it when it and when the chair is the is the issue, Miranda?

I I love this question. I feel like I have a few different ideas that come to mind. So so number one, understanding typically, you have a terms of reference associated with the board chair and being very explicit about what their roles are. There's also typically an evaluation or some sort of feedback mechanism that feeds into the board chair's role themselves and how they're executing on that.

And I think at the end of the day, you have a board chair that you've elected typically done on an annual basis, and so the way in which you provide the ultimate feedback is by who you vote for, but there's nothing wrong with a group of directors potentially coming from your governance committee as an example or even individual directors passing on feedback to say directly, hey, I think we need to hear from so and so a little bit more. I think we need to be able to do this. And so I think that there are structures in place that allow you to have some checks and balances and the ultimate check and balance is just simply not voting them back in.

But there's nothing just because of their chair doesn't mean that you can't provide them with feedback. Call it coaching up as you see it in in an organization itself.

And we don't have in in New Zealand and Australia that concept of the lead director, but I think there is that role there. So there is, you know, there's all mostly, there's a senior director around the table that isn't the chair, and I think they have to have that responsibility. If there's felt to be a power imbalance or there is, you know, there is other sorts of imbalances there, then I think it's that role of that senior director to be able to have those offline conversations with the chair and bring them along as well. It's you know, you can't aggregate yourself from there. Should we go on to that next slide and then bring Mike in for a couple of other questions that have come through on the q and a, Miranda?

We'd love to. So I'm just gonna quickly flash up on the slide. Remember we're talking about board dynamics. That's the last key element. We just talked about behaviors that hinder board dynamics and now I want to jump to what builds strategic board dynamics. And so if you recall what I said a few minutes ago, I said, if we know that the best boards are a team and they know how to leverage each other's strengths, then how do you actually turn a team, how do you turn a group into a team itself?

And and I want you to start with with some of these behaviors, which might seem like, oh, like this, you know, seems a bit basic, but the reality is it is so integral to be able to build a team using these approaches. So number one, think about on your boards. Are you spending any time having social connection?

On the board that I sat on, it was a requirement that you came in for the board supper the night before. And if you stayed overnight because everybody flew in the following day, then you would have more social time as well. And we know that compared to employees who spend, you know, forty, fifty, depending what country you're in, hours a week working, that you don't get to spend that that type of time with with your director group.

And yet you actually make the most impactful decisions.

And so in order for these decisions to be well made, you need to have effective working relationships with one another and you do that through socializing outside of the purpose of which you're there. You get a better understanding of personalities and styles. It helps to make you feel like part of the team and that sense of belonging and that psychological safety in order to speak up. And that's where part of that tension tolerance becomes acceptable, to to enact.

And so when you're making these social connections, by the way, I would encourage you to fight the urge to go and socialize with people that are like you and to actually find people that are unlike you, to challenge the way in which you're thinking and to get to know them on on a different level. And that actually feeds into the second recommendation, the second behavior that I've got here, which is humanizing the people that are are sitting at the board table. We often have what I like to call as these fancy director facades that sit at the table. But underneath the facade is an actual human being.

And the way in which you can get and trying to better understand instead of having, you know, the small talk that, quite frankly, everybody doesn't like is to actually have questions that help you go a little bit deeper. So examples of some questions could be, what would your younger self say about you today? Or tell us about a time where you said to yourself, wow. How did I get here?

And you start to better understand the people that are sitting at the table. And the last behavior that I've got here on the screen is actually balancing airtime, which helps to cure some of the the behaviors that we just talked about, with hindering. And we know that, in you know, whether it's the lead director or the chair or whomever, has a special role in that. But the reality is every single director has a role in balancing airtime.

You can say, I have a question, but I'd actually like to hear from Bob first before I ask my question because I haven't heard from him yet. There is nothing wrong with you helping to balance that airtime. So those are the three behaviors that will help to build strategic board dynamics.

Mike, before I answer one of the questions about here, anything you'd like to add to, the the positive side of building?

Yeah. I I think Miranda just hit on the point I was gonna make, which is that I think there's a unique role. Everybody has a role to play, but I think there's a unique role here for the chair to to really set that tone from the top and show leadership. And, you know, if if people aren't making it

to the social portion of the board, the board session, just just take them aside and say it's important that you show up.

And then especially in terms of balancing airtime, nobody has a role like the chair in ensuring that everybody has a chance to speak and actually encouraging people who aren't participating to share their views. So I think there's a real opportunity for the chair to show some great leadership in building that dynamic. And then the last thing I'll say is the chair has an opportunity to to lead a conversation about what board dynamics look like. Right?

So think about what Miranda's just talked about on the screen here. The chair has an opportunity to show the leadership and lead the group through what do we want the dynamic around this board table to look like. And then from there on to try to lead that by demonstrating it themselves and then also calling out when somebody either doesn't exhibit that or does. And I think it's really powerful reinforcement for the chair to say, hey, some so and so, this director, just just, brought up, this issue that created tension around the board table.

That's what we agreed we would do, and I just wanna thank them for bringing that showing that leadership around the board table. That that makes it okay for others to do it as well.

Nice. We don't have time for one more question. I was gonna answer that now, and then, Miranda, we're heading towards the quarter to the hour, so we'll be looking to to wrap up. But I I it was an anonymous, question or a comment.

And you yes. You are in a fortunate position that you've just established a charity yourself, and you're forming that board and drawing on our experience, how would you help see culture as the board emerges? Well, I think you've already hired the chair. So you've already put a key pillar in as to what your board dynamic would look like.

And what I'd suggest is maybe to take stock rather than saying, look, I need five on the board. I'm gonna quickly get five together. Take stock after three. Bring that group together.

Get them to know each other. As Mark has pointed out one of the questions, you could use the board charter, the formulation of a board charter, the process to talk through things like conflict and expectation and attendance. Now that could be a nice soft way of eliciting conversation and getting the understanding of what the dynamic is and then coming out with that to your document that is relatively helpful. So there there there's some guidance.

You've chosen the chair. Use the board charter as a way of doing that, and and leave some space in your board composition.

Or once you've had that saying, actually, we are all thinking in a similar way. Let's make sure that fourth and fifth board member comes on, exhibits different approaches, different styles, more of a challenger, more of a listener, more of a consensus builder, whatever we need there. Miranda, over to you as we we get to the close.

Excellent.

So I think we have covered a ton of information in what feels to be a very, very short time. And and we've talked about how important it is for boards to understand that strategy and culture are interrelated. They are inextricably linked. You cannot decouple them. That boards play a role in overseeing cultural risk and also setting the tone from the top. And we talked about these different elements, that feed into strategic culture from individual competencies to systems and processes and to board dynamics themselves.

And then I've given you examples which you actually have up on the slide here. I just pulled some of the top examples in my mind for you. But what I will say is that all of this is incredibly important because strategic board culture really sets that tone from the top, which helps an organization to remain resilient in the face of uncertainty. So thank you so much, Simon.

Perfect. Sean, over to you with, I think we've had a really engaging session.

Fantastic. No. It's been a fantastic session. Thanks, Miranda. Thanks, Mike, and thanks to you, Simon.

So, look, feel free to connect to, to any of our presenters today on LinkedIn.

We'll be sharing that information again on the send out tomorrow, which will also include a copy of the slide deck from today and a recording of the webinar.

If you wanna just flick to the next slide, Miranda, we have some fantastic webinars scheduled for this quarter.

There's no time to read them and take a look at them here. But if you just go to our website on our webinar page, you'll find them all listed there.

We'd welcome you to attend those.

So, thank you, everybody, for attending today. Really appreciate it. Michael, Miranda, Simon, thanks again. We look forward to seeing you again on our next webinar. Take care.