Webinar Transcript

The board management dynamic - A blueprint for clarity and high performance

Fantastic. So hi everybody. Welcome to our Governance Made Easy webinar today titled The Board and Management Dynamic A Blueprint for Clarity and High Performance. We're joined with Lisa Cook, Stephen Moe and Fiona McKenzie.

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

Firstly, thank you for attending our webinar today. We always appreciate the effort you make to be here for our live events. During the session, if you have any questions, please try and use the Q and A button on your toolbar as against the chat.

It just enables us to keep a track of things as we're going through things and we'll try and get through as many questions as we have time for.

And finally, if you stay through till the end, which of course we hope you will do and as is very customary for our webinars, we have a special treat for you by answering a one minute survey. It's a really short survey at the end of the webinar, you'll go into the draw to win one of our beautiful gift hampers worth over four hundred dollars Now for those not too familiar with BoardPro, we are a board software provider sometimes called a board portal and we serve just over thirty two odd thousand users across about thirty four different countries these days.

We enable organizations to prepare for and run their board meetings more efficiently and effectively with less time and deliver more impact and value for the organization.

And as much as we are a board software provider, part of our wider mission is to make the fundamentals of governance free and easy to implement for all organisations, but especially those organisations with resource constraints.

And one of the many ways we do this is by providing access to hundreds of governance templates guides and resources which you will find funnily enough in the resources section of our website.

And these webinars also that we host are a great way of accessing great governance knowledge without the time commitment and costs associated with in person events.

So for the next forty odd minutes, sit back and relax. Add to the discussion by asking as many questions as you would like. A full recording of the webinar along with the slide deck and transcript will be sent to you tomorrow.

So let's get into it. I'll start our team by introducing themselves, starting with you first, Lisa.

Kia ora and good day everyone. My name is Lisa. I'm the founder and managing director of Get On Board Australia, where I support emerging and aspiring board members to get on board and thrive in the boardroom. I myself have been sitting on boards of various shapes and sizes for over fifteen years.

So Fiona, welcome to you.

Thanks Lisa. Good morning everybody. It's morning here. I'm dialing in from Sydney Australia. I'm excited to be here today. The topic about board and management dynamics is all about negotiating control and power.

And that's why I'm here. I'm a negotiation and conflict expert, and I speak at conferences. I train people how on how to negotiate. I help people navigate conflict, and I help boards and leadership teams with collaborative agreements. And, yeah, this is gonna be a great topic. Over to you, Steven.

Well, Kia ora, everyone. Great to see you all. Yeah, it's such an important topic. I'm really looking forward to this.

As you can hear from my accent, I'm from America originally, but moved to New Zealand when I was only eight years old. So I actually grew up in Crestridge, and I have worked as a lawyer for twenty five years now. I was based in Wellington, but I've also worked in London for three years, in Tokyo for four years, and in Sydney for four years. And I came back to New Zealand ten years ago.

So I have a practice. I focus on impact and purpose, and I help people with their governance issues and help them with making decisions as business owners. But I also wear another hat is that I'm a director myself. So I'm on more than ten boards, and the one I'll tell you about is I'm the chair of a company called Community Finance, and we've now raised, about four hundred million dollars for social housing projects.

So as the chair of the board, I have the dynamic down of how do I relate with management, with the CEO, and my fellow board members. So really looking forward to this session and grateful for the chance to be here.

Great. Well, thank you. And we'll draw on all of that wealth of experience and knowledge that you both have.

But let's start at the beginning. A healthy relationship between a board and the management really is the engine of a successful organisation. We all know that. But oftentimes that dynamic, healthy, effective, efficient relationship is elusive to us for a number of different reasons.

What we will go through today is not just some theory, because I think we all kind of get a bit tired with that, but we really are going to draw on those practical experiences that I've had, that

Stephen has, and of course, that Fiona has with her lens of conflict resolution, which we can all feel this is kind of where this issue that many of you have is sitting. So what we're going to do to give you a bit of an oversight is that we'll talk about that line. As you can see, the slide on the screen will be where we're starting about that line between the board and the management and how is it going to vary? What are the things that are happening inside and possibly outside the organisation that's impacting on that line moving?

And how that's going to then impact some other important things that we'll get into. We'll close off by covering what I'm calling the four C's framework about really building that unified high performing team, not just the board, not just the management, but that team that you are together.

Once you're aligned, as you know, on your shared purpose and your roles, you can really turn that friction that exists into fuel that helps you be an effective and efficient board and organization. But I want to pose a question to the audience to kick us off. On a scale of one to ten, with ten being perfect alignment and one being constant friction, what number best describes the current relationship between your board and management? And feel free to drop your responses in the chat box below. That would be really awesome to get a bit of a snapshot to see where you're at. Wow, there's a ten in there. Fantastic.

We might come to you and ask some questions about what are you doing to really get that perfect alignment.

These are fantastic. Oh, a two. Glad you're here, Gail. We hope to help with that as three zooming by. Fantastic.

Now those who popped in the Q and A, just a reminder, questions that you want us to answer, jump those in the Q and A box. Sean will help moderate those and call us to the attention of those questions if we're missing it. But any responses otherwise or additional commentary, please use the chat feature. And that will really help us to really moderate this effectively.

All right. The slide on the screen that we see now is talking about that line between the board and management. And it's going to vary based on a range of different factors, primarily your organisation size and resources.

If you think about a local sport club versus a large national charity versus a large listed company, you can tell very quickly and easily that those organizations that are probably in the larger side, on the listed side of things, have many more resources that they can put towards activities and other things they're doing. They have money for high quality staff. They have money for high quality board members.

They have money for consultants and advisors and they have assets to invest in or leverage for returns.

And you can imagine that what that means for each of those different boards, when you have a bit more resource constraint on, say, a local sport club through to an ASX listed company, that's going to have a great impact on the board, on the management as well. The organisational activities, including those seasonal fluctuations, of course, are going to impact the level of work at certain times of the year. So if you think we'll use that local sport club example, when it's on season, it's really busy. There's a lot of stuff that the board's probably across and doing meeting more regularly versus the off season where you may not meet as regularly. There's not as much going on in the organization.

Think also of the end of financial year, depending on when that is for you, going to impact that level of work that maybe some or all of the board members going to do. Of course, there'll be a lot more work inside of the organization, particularly if they're working through an audit, that's going to impact on that as well.

The purpose and the role of the board and pardon me, I've missed something very important that needs to be said here.

The activities can make the role more complex as well. If you think about a geographic expanse of what the organization's covering. So if we're just local, much more easy, much more simple. If we're now going to a whole country, to a whole region, to the whole world, we've got added complexity into that. And that's going to impact that line between the board and management. And I invite my panelists to jump in and add this if they've got any personal experiences that they've had in these types of situations.

Steve?

Yeah, I'm happy to go first. I think, can we just start with one? This is going back slightly, but I think it's a really important thing to be clear about. Because for some people listening, they're like, what are you talking about?

We do everything. You know, I'm on a board where I'm doing the work as well. And I found a metaphor is quite helpful to begin this, if that's okay. And that is imagine there's a ship on the ocean and it's moving up on, and somebody needs to be in charge of there's a leak over there, quick fix it.

There's a rip in the sail, go fix it. That's the management function. That's the day to day running and operations.

Governance isn't even on the ship. It's in a helicopter, which is flying three kilometers above the ship and which is looking out. Can they see the leak? No.

Can they see the rip? No. They're looking out to the future and they're charting where we headed. So that's the strategy.

And what can you see from the helicopter flying above? You can see the iceberg which is dead ahead and if you don't move the ship now you will crash and you will sink. And I think that's a helpful way of framing it for everybody. The other picture of course is there's a beautiful tropical island up ahead.

Let's go there rather than just the negative. But for everybody, I think it's important when we're sitting in our boardrooms and as management, just to be clear, where are we? Are we on the ship? Have we become too involved in as governance?

Or are we up here in the helicopter looking out? Because of course you know where I'm going is that sometimes you end up being both of those roles at different times. But we need to be clear about what is the boundary between day to day operations and management and strategic thinking and governance. So I think that might be a helpful metaphor for people to just be clear about what are we talking about.

Great. Thanks for that, Stephen. I've never heard that one before. That's awesome. Fiona, something to add?

Yeah. Thanks, Lisa. I like the way that you framed this, that we've got a boundary and we need a boundary, but it's a little bit blurry depending on the circumstances. And I would see that as something that we can navigate or negotiate almost on an ongoing basis as as as circumstances dictate.

That boundary kinda looks simple, but it will change. So in addition to the the examples that you've given, most of my work is with government and big corporates, but I've done some work with small family companies, and that boundary is so unclear. When you've got everybody together for a Sunday lunch and then the next day is Monday's board meeting, that is a very blurry boundary. And the other one's smaller, a little bit like Steven mentioned, where you've got smaller companies where you've actually got directors who are acting in the business as well. So and risk, I find, is the other area. Risk appetite. Sometimes that's a real blurry boundary.

Yep. Definitely. Thank you for that, Fiona.

Pushing forward, so we keep to time as well, very conscious of that. The purpose and the role of the board and board members' expectations that come from that is going to be impacted on these different organisational specific attributes and as they shift as well during certain things. And we get to that in the next slide in a moment. But sticking with this, you've also got things that are going to impact this line from people capabilities, not just within the organisation, the management team, but the people on the board as well.

And that's going to impact it as well.

What are those things Can I throw in one thing just on that point?

Because I think it's really essential that the role of the board members and the people involved, because if there's miss you know, expectations are not the same, then of course you're going to lead to some of our respondents saying we only have a two or we only have a three out of a ten. And I think one of the documents, so I work as a lawyer helping people get policies right, helping documents. And one of the things is called a board charter. And a board charter is a document which basically sets out in a way the culture of the board.

Here's how we do things. Here's the role of the chair, which I would love to talk about a little bit later. Here is the role of the board members. Here's the role of the management.

If we have a problem, how do we handle it? And I think, one of the things I love about BoardPro is that you can upload documents that are helpful for people, so they're a reference. So I'm on a number of boards, as I said, and BoardPro is what we use for all of them. And I really like the fact that you can go and find these documents.

So the point of this is my challenge to everybody is, do you have a board charter? Do you have a document which sets out the expectations for everybody? Because that's something that's good to be really clear about, I think.

Absolutely. And we'll get more into that, I think, as we move on in this conversation. But definitely important to capture those implicit rules of engagement and expectations so that they are really clear for everyone. And we can actually then do what we're expected to do.

But we'll get to that in a minute. Once you've got all these fantastic plans, along comes a crisis, right? Which just throws everything up in the air. And that could be a financial crisis that you're facing.

It could be people. So a key employee, your CEO is suddenly unavailable. What do you do then? How does that change?

I've been in that circumstance where in the organisation the CEO was gone and the chairman actually stepped in as CEO for a short amount of time. That might happen. That's going to change a whole dynamic as well. And any other crisis that you can think about, the one that's most, I guess, recent in all of our minds is COVID.

That would have really caused everyone to get a lot more involved in what's going on in the organization than perhaps ideally what we would like the board to be at that high level. These things will happen. Sean, let's progress forward in the interest of time. Onto the next one.

So We just have one question, This one's from Sue.

Sue writes, I'd be keen to understand respective roles of the board and management and setting strategy. There seems to be a role of a person in the helicopter.

Right.

I'm happy to go first.

My I think the best way to approach setting the strategy is a combination between management and the board, with management being the key driver of what then comes to the board for the board to deliberate at most times with management, but perhaps deliberate in in camera board only session. But it is a true partnership.

Stephen, what would you want to take?

Yeah, I agree with you. I just came from a two days strategy session, strategy days with a board that I'm on. And it was really well done.

And the reason is that the first day, it was the board only. And they were talking about things. And management had prepared materials so that we knew what the issues were. We knew we had a bit of blue skies strategy setting.

And I think that's important twenty years from now, fifty years from now, what is this market going to look like? But then the next day we did get management to come in as well and be part of it. The CEO was there the whole time but the second day we had the CFO, we had the marketing person, we had and the reason it was so important is at the end of that day we all felt really aligned with where we headed and the CEO didn't have to go back and say well here's what the board decided. I guess we have to implement it.

It was much more integrated and so we were able to then be like we're on the same page, we're headed in the same direction. And then I'll hand over to Fiona but the final thing is that was an in person strategy time and I think that's important in the days of online. We do lose something when it's just purely online. So I'd encourage you to think about maybe we need to actually get away together, have dinner, you know those informal connection points are so critical to be able to talk about the really important things.

Yeah, love that. I mean I don't have anything particulars to interaction and engagement. All of those things are tied tightly together. So I agree with both what Lisa and Steven have said that the board and management need to find a way to work on strategies together because of, you know, the helicopter what the helicopter is seeing one thing and the seeing another if we continue with that metaphor. We need to understand both sides of that.

So yep. Definitely. Definitely.

So we've learned that organizational context, all of those different things that are happening that are not just discrete one off events, they're all happening all the time. And it's impacting then the key role of the board and the key roles of the management as well.

One thing I want to make abundantly clear is that there is no such thing as the role of the board. There is only the role of your board at this point in time.

And it will be unique to you and your organisation. So don't fall into the trap that just that throwaway line that we say the board needs to be strategic and management stay operational. We've learnt that that's going to bend and flex. It needs to.

The board just can't go, Oh, the crisis, that's for you to manage, not us. Or, Oh, you're under resourceful. That's your problem.

You know, it's not something we just step back from if we deem it to be operational or expect management to just abdicate to the board if it's something significant as well. And leaving that understanding up to everyone to assume what the purpose and their role is, that opens the door to frustration and unhealthy friction.

We really need to put it out there, make it explicit, talk about it, so that everyone knows what the purpose of the board is and therefore what the expectations are on the board members. Just as a side note, we talk about the board as if it's kind of like this entity on its own, above and beyond each of the individuals that make up the board. A board is a group of people, of individuals, of board members. So we always need to remember that and keep that in mind. And I think that for me, my whole approach to governance to effective boards is really keeping that humanness part of board work of governance in sharp focus for us. We're dealing with humans, not just with this kind of conceptual being of a board member.

That to say, thank you for listening to my TED talk.

Just because your board has also done it one way doesn't mean it needs to stay the same. Doesn't mean it will stay the same.

It needs to be dynamic. It will be how we ran the organization, how that line looked ten years ago, one month ago. It needs to change. It needs to evolve in line with expectation.

So the most common ideal that we hold in our minds is what David A. Nadler describes as the engaged board. And really in that idea is that the board serves as the CEO's partner or as management's partner, providing insight, advice and support on key decisions. It recognizes its responsibility for overseeing the CEO and organisational performance. And the board conducts discussions of key issues and actively defines its role and boundaries.

That framework that David Nadler approaches looking at different types of boards could be really beneficial for all of us to go through and assess. And I'm sharing a link two links in the comments right now.

One is to that article around building better boards and another is to a book by Ram Choran. Because Ram Choran's idea is that boards are partnering with management in certain spaces and places in some spaces and places. They're just leaving it up to the organization and in some places and spaces, they're leading the way they take charge. So, Ram's is called boards that lead When to Take Charge, When to Partner, and When to Stay Out of the Way. And even if you take that idea forward into your board and use that as a framework for a conversation, can be really helpful to then shaking out what are our key roles as the board, as board members, and what are the key roles of management?

Fiona, I would love to hear from you.

How does misalignment on these things manifest as relationship conflict and how do people go about fixing that?

Have you got an hour?

That's a big question. I tend to think of conflict as either task relationship or value.

And task is the sort of, you know, what we're doing, how we're doing it. Relationship is the who. That's the when when somebody we've got a history and everything they do then triggers us. And the values conflict, that's about what it's about, like, why we're doing this, the why conflicts. And so the question if there if, you know, if there is misalignment between the board and management, I I suspect that will might feel like a relationship conflict, but it's more likely to be a values conflict.

And so if it's if it's about competing core values, why we're doing this instead of that, sometimes, you know, is that approach even ethical? I've seen that I've been involved with that. And so sometimes for values conflict, say between coworkers, you actually the goal isn't convert sort of conversion, but coexistence. That's not the case here with board and management.

And so my approach as a navigator, is to understand beyond what what the what the what people want, but to actually understand why they want it. Why do they want it? Why do they value it? That's the first step.

So I would be asking, why does management want that? Why does the board want that? And if you understand why, you'll move closer to a resolution. And you can actually map out stakeholder interests.

That's a previous board pro webinar I did back in September of twenty twenty four. The next thing to consider is building trust. So that's essential to correct misalignment.

The board and the management team need to establish really transparent channels of communication to exchange and compare and debate their different ideas.

Possible, actually want vulnerability is a really important concept. People need to make themselves vulnerable to engage in robust conversation.

And so if you want a core purpose that everyone can rally about, you're only gonna get there by embracing that discomfort of the uneasy exploration of why there's a difference.

So long answer, but I hope that makes sense. Embrace the discomfort, try and understand why, and actually, yeah, bash it out. Really important.

Yeah, I kind of feel it's a bit of pick your hard. Is it hard to have the conversation or hard to put up with the misalignment and the frustrations and the issues that come from that?

Absolutely. Absolutely. Steve?

Yeah, I've got just two thoughts on this particular topic. I do a podcast called Seeds, and I interviewed someone who's a general practitioner. So they meet with people and they talk about the health side or the physical body side around conflict.

In the chat, I'm just going to put a link to that episode because I think it might help people. The point of that whole discussion conflict isn't a bad thing.

Conflict can lead to good outcomes if you approach it in a constructive and positive way. So I think sometimes particularly in our cultures where we want to avoid conflict, just don't make but the whole point of the board is that we bring diverse perspectives, and we might disagree. And that's Okay, because then we're going to get the best results.

If we're all just saying the same thing, if management bring a proposal, sounds okay? Okay, good. Yeah, let's do it. Where is the tension?

Where is the let's refine it? Let's make it even better? So that's the one comment on that point. And then we're talking about the word purpose.

I just throw in are we clear as a board what our purpose is? I know that sounds basic but it would be surprising maybe to go around a boardroom and say, why are we here as a company or as a charity or whatever we are? What is our mission statement? What is our purpose?

And I've done this exercise with boards before and you go around the board and everyone has a different purpose. So that's probably going to lead to misalignment when it comes to working out strategy. If we're not all here thinking we're here for the same purpose, of course there's going to be tensions. And that might be why there's number twos and number threes in the chat.

So I think there's a couple of helpful things that it's good to just reflect on, and it will help the dynamics of the board.

Yeah, absolutely. Thank you for that, Stephen. Pressing on, Sean. Thank you. Let's talk about aligning expectations for high performance. This might answer some questions I've seen pop up.

A lot of, I think now what we've talked about so far today is going to be encapsulated in here. How do we start aligning these expectations that are there inherently, explicitly, but not explicitly said. So as Stephen said, there is this agreed upon purpose and role of the board and management. And stemming from that, expectations are formulated and then made clear.

If you're not sure on this, those two links that I popped into the chat, I think Sean ended up making the public. Thank you, Sean.

Go to those. The David Nadler article has a self assessment quiz in that that could be really valuable for your board if you are getting those lower scores that we talked about at the beginning of this.

When you've agreed upon those, you can encapsulate that in a board charter, as Stephen said, you can go as far as to create position descriptions for board members that may be necessary if your board is currently a little bit more dysfunctional than not.

The next one is to really talk about it. Well, that's probably first.

You've really got to put these out there, make them explicit, don't have them hidden, don't leave it up to assumption, don't think that board members, which are people at the end of the day, are going to come in and just be magically able to figure things out and know what to do straight off the bat.

They might have a vague idea. It's going to take them much longer to pick up on those subtle cues versus having it explicitly in a position description, in a board charter and really emphasise through the onboarding process that I'm sure you all have and have ensured is current and up to date and really does help them navigate the culture and all of those unspoken rules, unwritten rules that are in there as well.

Individually, so I've talked about board members. They are people at the end of the day. It is us as well. We have a responsibility to pay attention to those unwritten rules of how your board does things.

That means, and we'll talk about it more next in the 4C framework, is that you have to work at fitting in with that. Only if they're effective and efficient though and if they're helpful to the board making high quality decisions. I don't want you to just integrate into a dysfunctional culture and think this is how boards are and this is just what it's like.

You need to work at being a contributing high performing member of that team and that requires you to more than just show up and warm a seat.

Anyway, I won't harp on that too much.

Individually, oh sorry, intentionally create an environment where the board has what it needs to reach high quality decisions and the management can effectively and efficiently implement those high quality decisions. So that means that we have to actually think about it, test things out, implement them, create those things, do the work on us as individuals and a board to help the team and the organisation be high performing, whatever that means to you. And I'm not advocating that we just push peace, love and moonbeams and everyone's sitting together holding hands singing Kumbaya. There still needs to be friction constructive friction. You cannot have that if you don't have trust. If you don't have trust, you have dysfunction.

And all of these things will contribute to building that high trust environment as well.

And really, this is foreshadowing the four Cs framework we're about to cover next. But Fiona, Steven, is there anything you'd like to add at this stage?

I'll jump in quick and then you can go Fiona. Just, I think there's a role that we haven't yet discussed in enough detail, which is the role of the chair. And I think that the chair, you've mentioned culture, which is such an important thing. Because in a way, everything we're talking about is the culture of the board. It's going to be different for every single person listening. But the role of the chair is really critical. If you think about it, something goes wrong, who gets the phone call?

Management is calling the chair. If something goes wrong at the other side, if a board member has an issue, the chair gets the call. So it's a really important liaison role between management and the board. So I just want to emphasize that that tone, the culture is really set by the chair.

So you need to think carefully about who is fulfilling that role. Have they had some training on what it's like to be a good chair? And there's some basic things I mean I'm hoping that you all know this but a chair needs to make sure that everybody is being heard, that there's vulnerability around the boardroom, that we're free to speak our mind, that we're not they're not dictating saying this is what we are doing, they're listening, interpreting and coalescing what the mood is of the board. So there's some I think it's the most critical role to be honest because if you have a chair who is has too much ego, is you know not willing to listen to others, it's going to cause problems to the culture and the dynamic of the board.

So the other thing that I would love it if everybody could get out your phone and text. If you're on a board, text your chair and say, thank you for what you do.

Because it's very rare that anybody says thank you to the chair. And it would take you literally twenty seconds to do it. I guarantee you, they'll write back and say, I appreciate that you noticed. So yeah, we need to lift up our chairs and support them. Thanks.

Absolutely true. I love that. And it cuts both ways too, I think.

Look, there's a lot that we could say about chairs, just thinking about the aligning expectations that that, you know, you've, you know, you've presented this stuff, Lisa. My my experience is that on a lot of boards, friction is actually needed, not less.

There's a a job called a tribologist which is someone who studies friction and you don't want no friction. You want some friction. And so if you think about an artificial hip a tribologist wants that hip to move but not dislocate. And it's the same on our boards. You want some friction because you wanna explore diverse opinions.

You want a chair that makes sure everybody has an opportunity to speak. But healthy boards don't grow in comfortable environments. They actually grow where there is some friction. And I think we're short on time.

But I worked really closely with a board of management for about six months building some of those skills, and it was an absolute transformation.

So we might talk about that another time or if there's questions. Back to you, Lisa.

Thanks, Fiona. That's a really important addition as well. And I think it's up to us individually as board members to know or to put in the effort to build that environment where it enables that friction to happen and that we know when and how, which is probably more important, to be that sort of friction implementer, I guess, when to be that devil's advocate or when to bring up the contrary view. But when and how that happens is really dependent on a range of factors.

That's why you need high emotional intelligence in the boardroom as well. But that's a whole different conversation. Let's look at the four C's framework that I've put together here. So we start with conversation.

I think that's kind of been really explicit today that all of this can't happen if we're not having meaningful conversations. And it is around being clear and getting that clarity. And you can't have clarity without candor. And candor is about being open and honest and frank, Not disrespectful, but really just bringing the unwritten rules, the implicit nature of that context to reality, to the real world, making explicit, shining a light on it so that we're all knowing, we're all seeing.

And this is probably driven by my own preferences where I need really clear communication because I'm not going to read between the lines. I'm not going to pick up those subtle things as quickly as maybe I should and others can. So I need that. Some people may call blunt, but really direct, clear communication, making that really obvious to people.

So we're not leaving it to chance. And so we're not leaving it to happen organically. It won't or it's going to happen slower, which will bring in unnecessary, ineffective friction that we don't want.

The next one is around conformity. And I don't mean conformity that we're all falling into line to think the same way and we have group think and there's the Kumbaya holding hands.

This is really about the chair. Stephen, you brought it up. I have it here. The chair bringing everyone back in line, not letting those issues fester.

I've seen a fantastic chair on a board that when there was the beginning rumblings of a particular board member creating that friction in the wrong way about the wrong things at the wrong time, nipping that in the bud, confidentially, appropriately, so that board member didn't feel that they were picked on, ostracized, trying to be forced off the board, but really bringing them back into what is the most important things that we're working on at this time and how can you really contribute and enhance those and how can we help you achieve what you're talking about in a better way, in a way that fits in.

It's also about you, all of us as board members, taking personal responsibility for our own behaviors and conforming to those rules of engagement that have been established as a group because we've had the conversation and we're falling in line with that. We're really contributing towards building that high performance culture and environment that we want.

But don't conform to these things if they're ineffective, dysfunctional and causing other issues as well. That's not what I mean either. But we all have that role to play towards building that high performance team. Collaboration. This is really important around seeing management and the board not as an us versus them kind of scenario.

That adversarial approach rarely fosters effective trust based open relationships that's going to cause a world of issues if we keep coming to the board trying to catch out people that they've done something wrong or haven't been good enough or they're always a pain in our butt because they're not doing certain things and they probably think of the board in the same way and if that exists, we have some issues there as well.

And lastly, we have the other C which is consistency.

So effective relationships, as we all know from our personal life, from our work life, they are rarely a set and forget. Boards are a really high stakes environment. They need probably more work, more effort to be high performance, to be effective, to be efficient.

And that requires work, regular communication between the chair and the board members and vice versa, and between the chair and the CEO and the management team and vice versa. So everyone's having these regular conversations, whether that means the management team come to the board meetings, whether that means you all have dinner together before the day before a board meeting or the night of or lunch or whatever. If there's those things in place that help really build those relationships, that's really beneficial as well. But what are we doing to add to, to keep that relationship wheel really well greased so that we're getting the benefits of that?

And when there are issues that crop up, which we know we will, because we saw those in that first slide, the issues are going to come up that we have this trust based relationship that we can go, Hey, this is not working at the moment. Like we need to redo our rules of engagement because we're dealing with COVID. We need to redo our rules of engagement because we're dealing with a short term financial crisis. What are we doing?

It's a state where everyone could be panicked and really reactive. If we have that trust based relationship because we've consistently worked at it, we can do something effective going forward. Steve, what would you have to add to that?

I think it's a great summary. I always love it when there's like the same letter for each of the four, right?

Yeah I think from my perspective, so this is me as a lawyer speaking, it's about getting your legal documents right as well. We've talked about purpose a lot. If you're a charity then where is your charitable purpose written? Is it still up to date?

Does it need some updating? I deal with lots of charities that their rules were written twenty years ago, forty years ago, so you need to upgrade and update things. And then for companies, have you written and articulated your purpose clearly so that your board is moving in the same direction? And the same thing, I help companies that sometimes you look at it and you go, this was written in nineteen ninety seven.

Maybe the world's changed a little bit you know. So just don't treat legal documents and founding documents and purpose statements as they're in concrete, we can never alter them. Part of the role of the board and management is to work together to keep things organic, up to date, moving, contemporary. So that would be my encouragement is if your documents were written on a typewriter, they probably need a bit of an upgrade. So yeah.

Love that. Thank you. Fiona. I know Sean has us has us at time, but I just wanted to do a quick comment on collaboration. So that last c there from Lisa.

Real collaborative leadership isn't conflict avoidant. It's actually searching for the deeply held views of everyone. So I like to think about that quote from Patrick Lencioni. He's well known for a book called The Five Dysfunctions of a Team. He says that a lack of healthy conflict is a problem. If opinions aren't aired in passionate and open debate, people never rarely if ever buy in and commit to decisions. So it's really important.

And look, stay curious. Don't be judgmental. Don't interrogate. Ask questions and stay curious.

Lovely. Love that. Sean. Thanks, Lisa.

So we are at the end of our webinar.

Thank you very much, team. Please feel free to connect with our presenters on LinkedIn, everybody. I'm sure they'll look forward to your connection. If you'd like to be put in touch with Lisa, Steven, or Fiona at the end of the session please indicate your interest on the survey form at the end as you leave the webinar.

So you'll receive an email from me tomorrow which will include a copy of today's webinar, the slide deck and the transcript as well.

As you leave the webinar everybody don't forget to complete our really short one minute survey going the draw for our hamper. I'll announce the winner for that tomorrow as well. So thank you again everybody for attending today. I hope you enjoyed the session. Thank you Lisa, Stephen and Fiona for your conversation today. Fantastic.

I look forward to seeing you all at our next webinar. Everybody have a great day.