Fostering and Accelerating Generative Governance

Presented by: Frank Martinelli
The Center for Public Skills Training

Session Topics

- It's the Mission!

- Overview of Generative Governance
    - A Closer Look at the Governance as Leadership Model

- What's Coming Around the Bend for Your Nonprofit: Spotting Generative Challenges

- Tools for Incorporating Generative Governance into Board Work

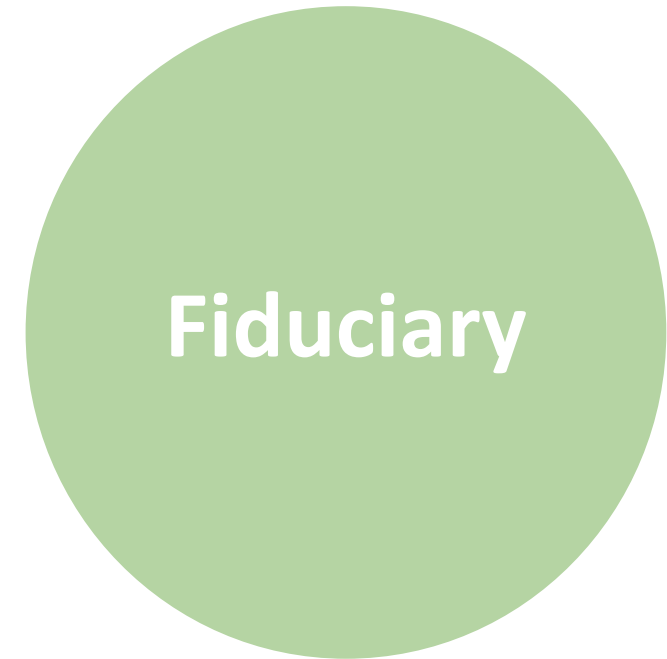- Your Next Steps

Governance as Leadership

Chait, Ryan & Taylor

How: Governance as Leadership
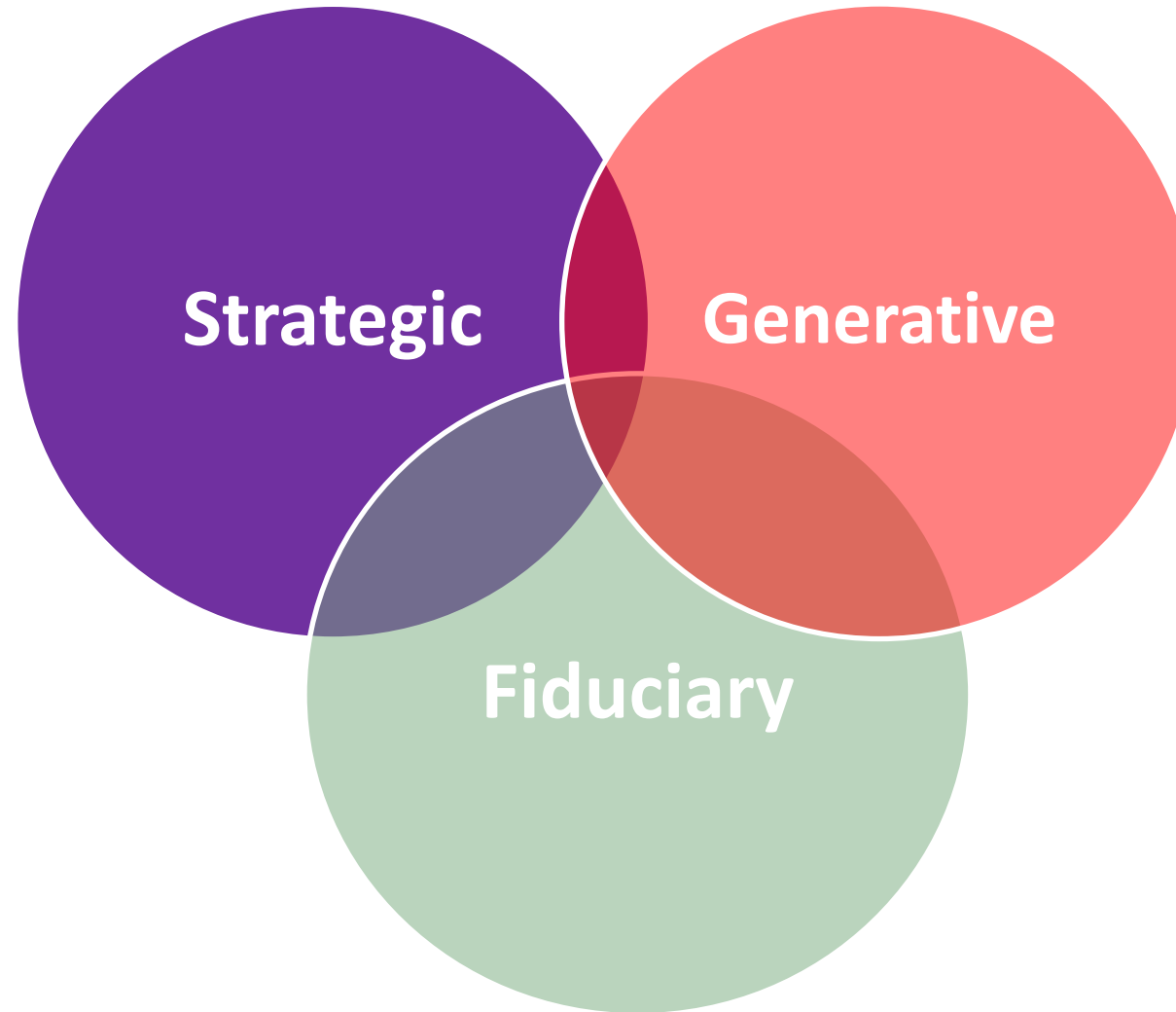
Fiduciary Mode – Board as Sentinel

- How are we doing to date?
- Are we in compliance?
- Anything wrong?

- **Ensure** effective and efficient use of resources
- **Ensure** legal compliance and fiscal accountability
- **Monitor** organization results

Fiduciary

Source: BoardSource

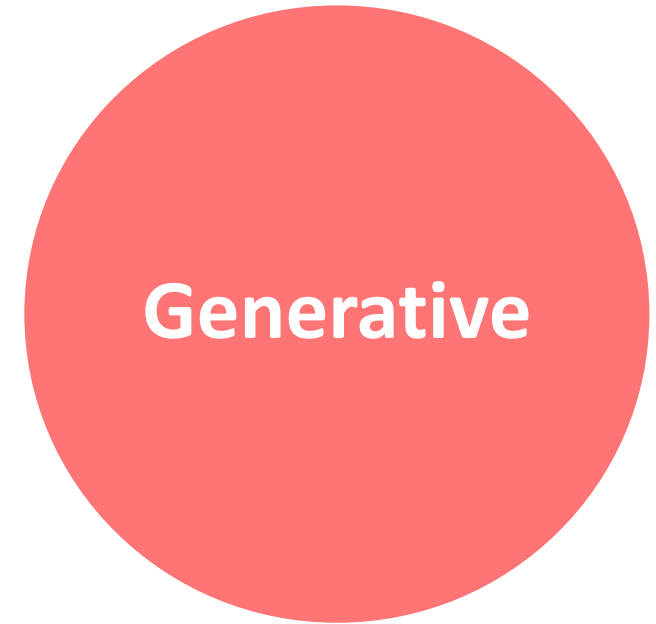# Strategic Mode – Board as Strategist

- What should we be doing?
- Where are we going?
- What's the strategy?
- What's the plan?

- **Ensure** mission is relevant
- **Scan** internal and external environments
- **Monitor** outcomes & impact
- **Review and modify** strategic plan

Strategic

Source: BoardSource

Generative Mode – Board as Sense-maker

- What's coming next?
- What's unclear/unknown?
- What's are the new questions?
- What are the new possibilities?

- **Perceive and better frame** problems and challenges
- **Encourage robust discourse** not quick consensus
- **Discover** strategies, priorities, and realities
- **Suspend the rules** of logic to tap intuition and intellectual playfulness

Generative

Source: BoardSource

Libraries AI & Big Data

Google™ self-driving car

Applying the Three Modes of Governance: Where Are We Now?

Three Governance Modes in Action

	Fiduciary Mode	Strategic Mode	Generative Mode
Board's Role	***Sentinel***	***Strategist***	***Sense Maker***
Board Activities In This Mode	▪ Financial oversight ▪ Legal responsibility & accountability including liability and risk management ▪ Board role as permanent entity for the nonprofit ▪ Board role on behalf of public, ensuring effective use of resources	▪ Policy making for governance policies ▪ Problem solving ▪ Strategic planning ▪ Strategic decision making	• Noticing cues and clues. • Looking at issues from different perspectives • Seeking different frames of reference • Considering alternate futures • Thinking to uncover patterns & recognize compelling organizational stories

A Closer Look at the Governance as Leadership Framework

WHY GENERATIVE THINKING IS THE KEY TO FOSTERING & ACCELERATING GENERATIVE GOVERNANCE

Strategic — Board as Strategist

Generative — Board as Sense-maker

Fiduciary — Board as Sentinel
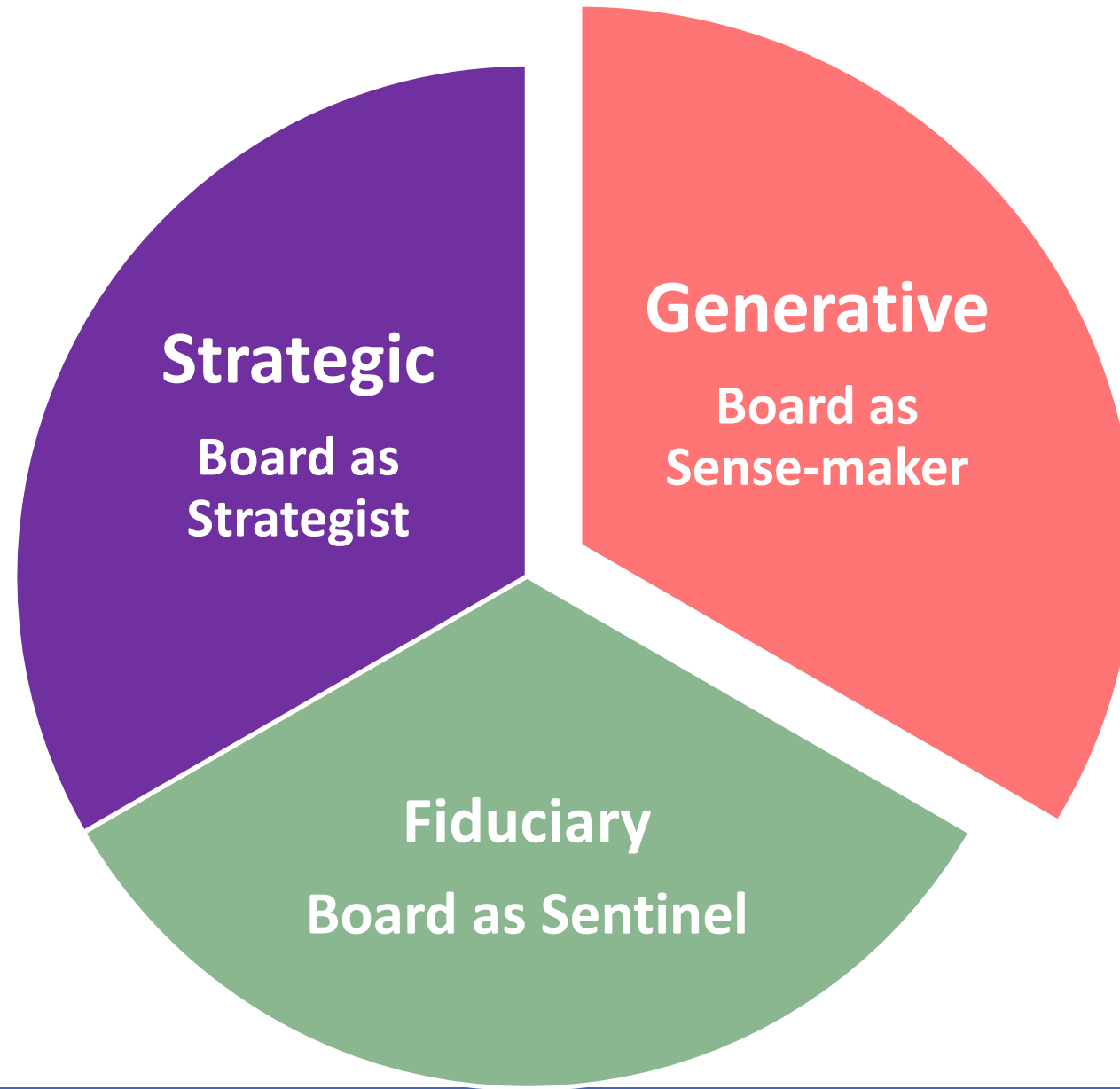
What is Generative Thinking?

Engaging in activities that help the board take a critical look at emerging challenges from a fresh and broader perspective. Generative thinking creates a new understanding of complex and ambiguous situations that leaders may have never had to consider before; also referred to as "sense-making" or "problem-framing".

Source: CentrePoint Non-Profit Management

14

Why Generative Mode?

- In periods of deep, rapid change, goals can become ambiguous, if not contested
- The future is uncertain
- The way executives and board members make sense of facts matters as much as the facts themselves

What's Coming Around the Bend for Your Nonprofit

SPOTTING GENERATIVE CHALLENGES

Five Markers for Spotting Generative Challenges

1. **Ambiguity** - Multiple interpretations of what's actually going on
2. **Saliency** - Issue means a great deal to a great many
3. **High stakes** - Outcome of the discussion and decision leads to questions about core values and organizational identity
4. **Strife** - Confusion and conflict need to be resolved
5. **Irreversibility** - Decisions cannot be easily revised or reversed

Source: Cathy Trower

Examples of Generative Challenges

- **Public library –** the impact of AI
- **Workforce development agency –** impact of automation
- **Educational foundation –** the rise of alternative educational pathways challenging traditional reliance on 4-year college degrees
- **Community development corporation –** success in neighborhood stabilization challenges the dream of affordable single family home ownership for residents
- **Women's religious order –** a future without nuns

Using the Five Markers to Identify a Generative Challenge Facing Your Nonprofit

HINT: WHAT ARE THE GAME-CHANGING DISRUPTIONS COMING AROUND THE BEND?

Spotting Generative Challenges: First Steps
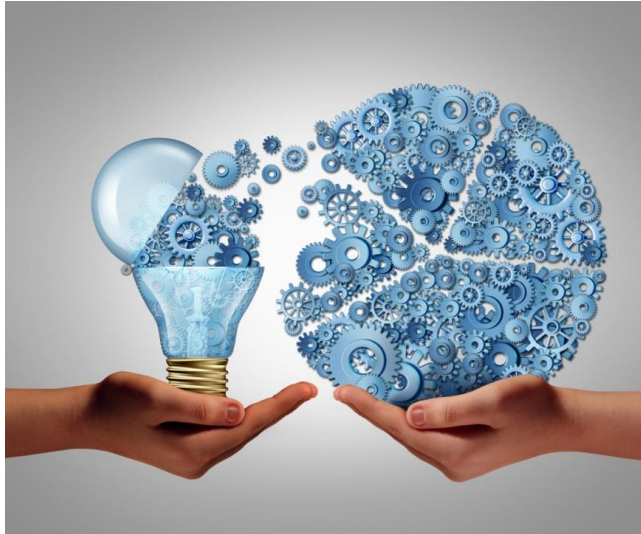
In Small Groups . . .

1. Review the five markers
2. Identify possible generative challenges facing your nonprofit
3. Apply the five markers → select a generative challenge for focused attention
4. Prepare to report back on one generative challenge

Overview of Tools for Incorporating Generative Governance into Board Work

Generative Governance Tools

- Moving from generative mode to strategic mode
- Test different meeting approaches
- Build a board leadership talent pipeline
- Develop generative challenge briefing papers for sense-making and learning

Moving From Generative Mode to Strategic Mode

Moving from Generative Thinking to Strategic Planning

Phase 1: Identify Major Generative Challenges

Phase 2: Make Sense of the Generative Challenges

Phase 3: Translate Generative Challenges into Critical Strategic Issues

Phase 4: Engage in Strategic Planning to Address the Critical Issues

Translating Generative Thinking into Critical Strategic Issues | An Example

- **Generative Challenge:** What will artificial intelligence (AI) mean for libraries in the future?

- **Potential Strategic Issue Statement:** What kind of information and training will best equip Library leadership to explore and pilot applications of AI to enhance library workforce and service provision in the future?

Translating Generative Thinking into Critical Strategic Issues | An Example

- **Generative Challenge:** Given the deep changes in the metal casting industry, high school/secondary/post-secondary education, and the future learning needs of students, how will the Education Foundation partnership model need to evolve over the next 10+ years?

- **Strategic Issue Statement:** How can we increase knowledge and awareness of metal casting industry career opportunities among high school age students?

Effective Board Meetings

New Thinking About Board Meetings

From a Focus On The Past

Board meetings emphasize one-way transmission of information and reports

Same agenda structure

To a Focus On The Future

Meetings are outcome driven

Emphasis on participation and action

Deliberation on critical emerging issues

Meetings used for strategic and generative thinking

New Meeting Techniques

- Silent starts, 1-minute memos
- Counterpoints, role plays, simulations
- Surveys & prep activities
- Small breakouts
- Ways to deliberate differently

Ways to Deliberate Differently

Catalytic Questions	**Retrospective Thinking**
What is the biggest gap between the case we make for community support & actual actions and accomplishments? What does that say about our nonprofit?	What are our nonprofit's successes or setbacks? How and why did they happen? What does this mean for the future?
Future-Perfect History	**Dominant Narratives**
It is the year 2030 and we have achieved desired recognition! This achievement could not have happened if our board had not ...	How do you trace our nonprofit's past history or story? What does it mean? What does it suggest about what to do next?

Source: Cathy Trower

Board Succession Planning: Building the Leadership Pipeline
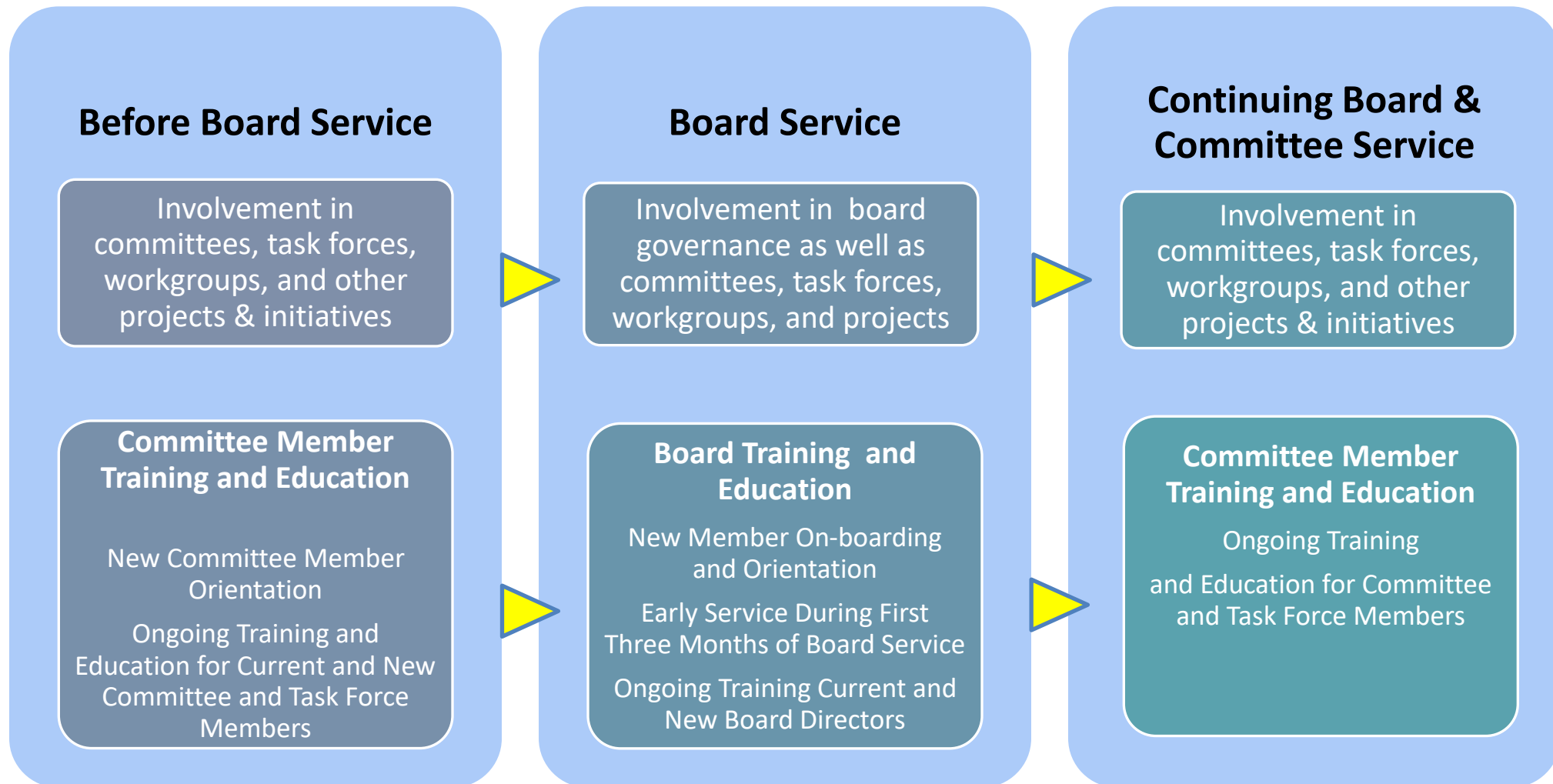
Board Leadership Succession Planning

Succession Planning is the use of a planned program to ensure that high performing board leaders are developed to successfully replace board and committee leaders whenever needed to carry out the mission, vision and goals of your nonprofit.

Source: Society for Human Resource Management

Life Cycle of a Board Leader

Before Board Service

Involvement in committees, task forces, workgroups, and other projects & initiatives

Committee Member Training and Education

New Committee Member Orientation

Ongoing Training and Education for Current and New Committee and Task Force Members

Board Service

Involvement in board governance as well as committees, task forces, workgroups, and projects

Board Training and Education

New Member On-boarding and Orientation

Early Service During First Three Months of Board Service

Ongoing Training Current and New Board Directors

Continuing Board & Committee Service

Involvement in committees, task forces, workgroups, and other projects & initiatives

Committee Member Training and Education

Ongoing Training and Education for Committee and Task Force Members

Succession Grid Example

Position	Current Leader	2024 Projection	2025 Projection	2026 Projection
Board Chair				
Vice-Chair				
Treasurer				
Secretary				
Committee Chair				
Committee Chair				
Committee Chair				

Generative Challenge Briefs

Tools for Sense-making and Learning

Generative Briefs as a Sense-Making Tool

- It *is* an opportunity to . . .
    - Begin to make sense of generative challenges
    - Learn what's at stake for the organization
    - An exploratory warm-up for strategic planning that follows

- It's *not* about making early decisions about goals and strategies

Generative Challenge Brief

1. For this challenge, what are some of the emergent developments that prompt new questions we will need answers to?
2. Based on your research, readings, and discussions, are you making sense of this challenge? What are you discovering and learning?
3. Are there any barriers, obstacles or ways of thinking that will impede our ability to make sense of this challenge?
4. Does your sense-making about this generative challenge enable your team to frame more focused critical strategic issues to address in our strategic planning? If so, what are they?

Bringing Generative Governance to the Board: Your Next Steps

- Think about the ground we covered during this training
- What are some ways to bring generative governance into the work of the Board?

Board Governance Resources

Fostering and Accelerating Generative Governance

Presented by: Frank Martinelli

The Center for Public Skills Training

frankmartinelli@createthefuture.com