

Comparison Chart of Maturation Cycle of Board of Directors

Element	Founding	Early Governing	Mature Governing	Hybrid	Institutional
Driven by	Founder(s)' personality, vision and definition of needs and purpose.	Founder(s)' personality shifting to defined mission and structure.	Well defined mission, more formal structure, group ownership of vision and mission.	Can be in any phase. Many are governing, too, beyond founding phase.	Long established mission and acceptance of needs. (universities, hospitals, etc.)
Description	<p>"I' saw that xyz was needed, so I started a group. Will you help me?"</p> <p>Decisions are faster, more fluid and based on intuition or whim.</p>	<p>"We have a group that created a new charity and please get involved with us on our board."</p> <p>Decisions still rapid, fluid, start to have data to support them.</p>	<p>"We need your knowledge and contacts. Join our board, if you accept these responsibilities."</p> <p>Decisions based on data and analysis by committees, can be slower.</p>	<p>Can be any of the phases, but likely mature. If mature, also adds....</p> <p>"We are a small board with a small (or no) staff and we switch between or governing roles and hands on duties."</p>	<p>Being on this board is appointed, or very political based on what you bring to organization.</p> <p>"We need you and you are are honored that we chose you."</p>
Organizational phase	<p>Informal – may be using another group's 501 c 3</p> <p>Usually founder acts as CEO. If staff hired – very fuzzy role definition!</p>	<p>Starting to understand legal and fiduciary requirements and meeting them. May hire CEO. Roles still may be fuzzy.</p>	<p>Fiduciary to strategic and eventually more generative.</p> <p>Clear role definition of CEO and Board.</p>	<p>Can be early or mature governing phase.</p> <p>Board acts as staff for key roles in running organization.</p>	<p>Very mature, staff with clear role definitions, supports board working committees. board governs at a strategic and generative level.</p>
Bylaws	Prepared by attorney as "requirement".	Start to have terms, structure, board expectations – guidance.	Short, succinct, big picture framework, clearly defined expectations.	Can be at any phase.	Very clear. In depth.

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Orientation or Onboarding	Not likely to have one, if does, its very informal.	Tour, overview, board meeting list, a little more formal.	Overview budget, services, structure, strategic plan, formal.	Can be at any phase – may need improvement in this area.	Very formal and detailed. May take days.
Board selected by	Founder(s) and friends, others connected by social context – usually homogenous to founder(s).	Founder, friends and maybe “outsiders” as new people based on contacts, etc.	Selected for passion, professional expertise, geography, ethnicity, gender, etc. Structured selection process.	Tries to balance mature governing with demands of organizations operational needs for specific talents.	Appointed by governor, or other authority figure, or selected by peers.
Strategic Planning	Non-existent, live day to day, event by event, crisis by crisis.	Starts trying to introduce planning. May not connect it to metrics and reporting.	Fully integrated into every committee and staff work with metrics and reporting.	Can be at any phase, hopefully moving to mature	Very sophisticated and far reaching. Drives everything.
Committees	Everyone does everything or founder(s) delegate tasks to individuals.	Start to have defined committee roles and outcomes.	Committee work driven by strategic plan and formal reporting of metrics.	Can be at any phase, likely needs improvement in this area.	Formal, based on skills and reach.
Meeting style	Loose, conversational and can be somewhat autocratic based on founder’s rulings.	Begins to use agenda, minutes, committees, starts to be more democratic.	Written agenda, formal minutes, board package in advance, structured meetings, more democratic, less autocratic.	Tries to demonstrate best practices of mature governing, may occasionally slip.	Very formal. Can be public, depending on the organization.