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What about Board Management?

How Do I Manage My Board?

The American Hospital Association put together these 10 basic practices to create a great board. These are relevant for any type of board, whether it's a formal advisory board, a nonprofit board of directors, or a corporate board.

- **Accountability:** Directors understand they have a fiduciary responsibility to see that the organization fulfills its mission and acts in the best interests of its primary stakeholders.
- **Governing, not managing:** Boards have an oversight function, but great boards govern, they don't try to run operations. They are careful not to "get into the weeds" with overly detailed operational questions and micro-managing day-to-day decisions.
- **Competency-based and diverse board makeup:** Great boards select members who are committed to the mission, possess leadership skills, and exhibit personal integrity. They also bring specific competencies needed for effective governance, such as experience as a chief executive or high-level professional in finance, strategy, quality, human resources, audit, or law.
- **Continuous learning:** The great board must be a "learning organization" with specific activities to integrate education and real-time learning into its work.
- **Accountable partnership with the CEO:** The board selects, evaluates, and provides for compensation of an outstanding chief executive, and, if necessary, replaces the CEO. An effective partnership is characterized by shared goals, candid communications, mutual respect, and accountability.
- **Streamlined structure:** The board is a workable size; it is large enough to include a range of needed competencies but small enough to interact and learn as a cohesive team. The board establishes working committees to assist it with oversight and deliberation of recommended decisions prior to full board consideration.
- **Governance (not operational) information:** The board relies on accurate, objective information, not anecdotes or predispositions, when it oversees performance and makes decisions.
- **Participative and efficient meetings:** Meetings are informative, interactive, and action-oriented. They follow written agendas, and questions and discussion are encouraged.
- **Personal integrity:** Directors act in the best interest of the mission, the organization, and the stakeholders, not on personal, economic, or other self-interests.
- **Board self-renewal:** The great board seeks to continuously improve its performance and its connectedness with the community and stakeholders it services.