



Attention all directors.

A Newsletter from Jean Pousson, Board Evaluation Limited Managing Director

In conversation.....

For this month's insights I have asked three of our Consultants to share some views and this is summarised below. Martin Allison, a former senior Banker and now Entrepreneur with considerable Board experience, is joined by Sherril Kennedy and Anna Bateson who both have immense leadership insights and experience.

Why do you think that Boards do not work as well as they should? Some even have a habit of malfunctioning!

- Too operational.
- Wrong mix.
- Key functions underrepresented or not represented at all.
- Everything considered a priority with little discrimination between the important and the immediate, or awareness of the impact this will have on the organisation.
- Insufficient attention paid to the long-term consequences of any decision.
- The balance of challenge and support for the Executives is wrong.
- Egos allowed to dominate. (Don't put all your egos in one basket!)
- Decisions not sufficiently clear and consistent, or conveyed to the organisation in a timely and understandable manner.
- Acquiescence not genuine commitment to the decision or its implementation.
- A blame culture rather than clear and constructive accountability.
- Supporting documentation not focussed on the right issues.
- Inappropriate behaviours not addressed.
- Boards are a collection of human beings assembled with a view of sharing accountability and responsibility.
- Therein lies the potential problem. Human beings do not always behave as expected.
- Just like religion identifies the seven deadly sins, Board members do regrettably commit one or more sins in their Board life.



- Decisions are not taken.
- Ritualised agendas crowd out strategic discussions.

A good Chair:

- Is respected by Board members, the organisation, and key stakeholders.
- Has a professional relationship with the Executives, is able to challenge, support and coach as appropriate.
- Is a facilitator who encourages a diversity of opinion before summarising the final decision.
- Is open-minded; doesn't come to the table with a pre-determined decision to impose.
- Is able to differentiate the important strategic issues from the immediate operational concerns.
- Is clear on the work needed to support the Board discussion, and is prepared to take time out rather than take decisions against an artificial deadline.
- Shapes and plans the agenda to address the key issues rather than adopt a ritualistic routine.
- Is able to secure professional behaviour at all times but is also prepared to challenge inappropriate behaviour.
- Is like an Orchestra Conductor who has the confidence to bring together a diverse group of Directors and ensure that they all have the opportunity to contribute alternative insights and expertise to Board discussions.
- Like a diplomat, has the ability to build consensus around the Board agenda, strategic decisions and Board behaviour.
- Is a person who plays a pivotal role in influencing Board behaviour.
- Sometimes has to wear his/her UN Blue peacekeeping hat when differences begin to grow.
- Recognises the hard challenges that Boards sometimes face. (Hard on the issue but soft on the individual.)
- Should not relive his/her executive role.

A good Non-Executive Director:

- Has corporate perspective, and not parochial self-interest.
- Is willing to share expertise with the Executives without imposing his/her views or approach.
- Comes to the table with a clear understanding of the issues, and is prepared to ask questions in advance if necessary.
- Displays active listening and patience, and a preparedness to modify his/her position to support the business.
- Shows genuine commitment to the decisions taken, even where those decisions do not reflect his/her personal preference.
- Remains independent, objective, dispassionate, to analyse Board intelligence and maintain an independent mind when making strategic decisions.
- Challenges constructively.
- Is passionate about the organisation's purpose and values.
- Shows a healthy coefficient of curiosity.



- Never tries to relive his/her executive role.
- Is not scared to be a minority of one.

If you would like more information on this subject and would like to talk to us at Platinum Compliance (Guernsey) Limited, or for us to put you in contact with Jean Pousson, please contact lindsay@platinumcompliance.co.uk or visit our website <https://www.platinumcompliance.co.uk/>

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