1. Defined Purpose

2. Talent to Task

3. Compelling Direction

4. Focused Execution

5. Ongoing Growth

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The Board’s Role

The nature of your nonprofit board’s role and responsibilities will depend on your organisation — the nature of its operations; its size; its lifecycle and how long it has been running; and many other factors.

Whatever role your board fulfils, it is essential that all board members and your chief executive understand what that role is. Recent research has found that “role ambiguity” has a significant effect on board members’ engagement with their organisation and commitment to their work.(1)

Discussion of the board’s role generally falls into categorising it into 3 or 4 areas:

- **Control role** - this is an essential monitoring role, overseeing management's actions in carrying out operations - generally taking a broader and longer-term view than that of management.
- **Strategy role** - articulate the organisation's mission, determine strategic direction and act as driver for strategic change
- **Resource provision role** - i.e. act as essential link to key sectors of the external environment, including building relationships, representing the organisation and facilitating access to resources.
- **Service role** - e.g. providing knowledge, counsel and advice to the CEO and senior management, which may include expert advice for the purposes of formulating strategy; enhancing the organisation’s reputation and representing the organisation in the community

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Useful Resources

- Governance resources — on Community Door website, managed by QCOSS
- Nonprofit Governance and the Work of the Board by David Renz (2004) of the Midwest Center for Nonprofit Leadership (U.S.)
- Nonprofit Risk Management Center (U.S.) free fact sheets on crisis management - while clearly framed for the U.S. situation, there is still some useful guidance and information here. The Center also publishes a newsletter.