CONCEPT

Non-Profit Board and Trustee Effectiveness: Governance Models, Evaluation and Renewal

Non-Profit Board and Trustee Effectiveness: Governance Models, Evaluation and Renewal

Technical depth: Conceptual · **Practical mode:** Role-play

Introduction

Many non-profit boards were assembled from founders, donors and committed volunteers and have never been deliberately designed. The results are familiar: meetings consumed by operational detail, missing skills, trustees who stay for decades, and chief executives who either dominate the board or are micromanaged by it. This Core Concept course equips chairs, trustees and chief executives to judge and improve how their board works, drawing on recognised governance models and board evaluation methods. Through boardroom role-play, participants build a Board Development and Renewal Plan for their own board.

Course Objectives

- Distinguish the governing role of a non-profit board from management, using trustee duties and the ISO 37000 oversight principles
- Choose a board governance model, from Policy Governance to Governance as Leadership, that fits the organisation's stage and size
- Evaluate board composition, skills and committee structure against the organisation's mission and funding model
- Structure board meetings, agendas and board packs so that trustee time goes to strategy and oversight
- Lead constructive challenge, conflict of interest handling and difficult conversations with trustees and the chief executive
- Produce a Board Development and Renewal Plan for discussion with the chair and the full board

Target Audience

- Chairs and members of non-profit boards of directors and boards of trustees
- Chief executives and executive directors who work with and report to a non-profit board
- Board committee chairs responsible for finance, audit, nominations or fundraising oversight
- Board secretaries and governance leads who organise board business and evaluations
- Founders and board members of family, corporate and community foundations

Course Outline

Day 1: The Non-Profit Board and Its Current Effectiveness

- Board of Directors versus Board of Trustees: Roles in Associations, Foundations and Endowments
- Trustee Duties of Care, Loyalty and Obedience to Mission
- Charity Governance Code 2025 Edition: The Board Effectiveness Principle
- Board Lifecycle Stages and the Founder Syndrome Diagnostic
- Board Effectiveness Baseline Using the BoardSource Board Self-Assessment

Day 2: Board Governance Models

- Carver Policy Governance Model: Ends and Executive Limitations Policies
- Governance as Leadership: Fiduciary, Strategic and Generative Modes
- Working, Governing and Hybrid Board Models Compared
- ISO 37000:2021 Oversight and Accountability Principles for Trustees
- BoardSource Recommended Governance Practices: Essential, Leading and Compliance Practices

Day 3: Board Composition, Structure and Meeting Practice

- Board Skills and Diversity Matrix
- Trustee Recruitment, Induction Pack and Term-Limit Policy
- Committee Terms of Reference: Finance, Audit, Nominations and Fundraising
- Annual Board Calendar and Consent Agenda Design
- Board Pack Standards and a Mission and Financial Indicator Dashboard

Day 4: Board Dynamics, Risk and Problem Cases

- Chair and Chief Executive Partnership and Annual Chief Executive Appraisal
- Board Dysfunction Patterns: Groupthink, Rubber-Stamping and Micromanagement
- Trustee Conflict of Interest Scenarios and Recusal Protocol
- Board Oversight of Fundraising, Reputational and Safeguarding Risk
- Chief Executive Succession and Emergency Leadership Plan

Day 5: Boardroom Role-Play and the Board Development Plan

- Boardroom Role-Play: Challenging a Chief Executive Proposal
- Boardroom Role-Play: Managing a Declared Trustee Conflict of Interest
- Board Evaluation Feedback Conversation with an Underperforming Trustee
- Board Development and Renewal Plan Drafting
- Peer Review Panel and Plan Defence

Skills You Will Gain

- Board Performance Evaluation
- Board Composition Planning
- Trustee Recruitment and Induction
- Board Agenda Design
- Constructive Boardroom Challenge
- Chair and Chief Executive Partnership
- Chief Executive Succession Planning
- Generative Governance

Why Attend This Course

- Leave with a Board Development and Renewal Plan that covers composition, evaluation, committees and succession
- Rehearse the boardroom conversations trustees find hardest and receive feedback from peers
- Spot the early signs of a board drifting into rubber-stamping or micromanagement and know which lever to use
- Exchange board practice with chairs, trustees and chief executives from non-profits in several countries and sectors

Conclusion

A non-profit board adds value only when it has the right people, spends its time on the right questions and is prepared to both challenge and support the executive. This course moves from trustee duties and governance models, through board composition, structure and meeting practice, to the dynamics and succession risks that weaken boards. The final day rehearses the conversations that effective boards depend on and produces a Board Development and Renewal Plan that participants can take directly to their chair.