

# The Board Type Continuum

Operational boards < ----- > Governance boards

Both types of boards can be effective depending on the life phase and the size of the organisation

An operational board involves itself with the hands on operations of the organisation. It often has committees and subcommittees made up of volunteers. It can employ a manager who coordinates organisational activity and carries out fairly detailed board directives. These are sometimes referred to as boards of management	The governance board concentrates on setting policy and making decisions about direction, values, mission and vision. It delegates the management and leadership of the organisation to a professional director who is empowered to lead the organisation forward.
The board implements the strategic plan of the organisation	The staff implement the strategic plan of the organisation
The board manages staff	The director manages staff
The board gives month to month direction	The board manages by policy and accountability
The board plans the program based on the vision and values	The staff plan the programs based on the vision and values set by the board
The board sets and approves the budget	Staff set the budget and the board approves and holds staff accountable for income and spending
Board concerns itself with details of operation	Board concerns itself with principles of operation
Tendency to large board numbers and subcommittees and few staff	Tendency to streamline the board to people with experience and expertise who delegate to skilled staff
Tends to lower levels of freedom in decision making – long meetings, difficult decision making processes	Tends to higher levels of freedom in decision making – more effective meetings, easier decision making processes
More meetings per year (8-12)	Less meetings per year (2-6)
Knows the organisation in detail (positives and negatives)	Knows only what it needs to know to govern effectively (positives and negatives)
Slower organisational growth due to detailed involvement	Faster organisational growth due to staff freedom to operate
Relates to manager as the detail implementer of board directives	Relates to director as the leader of a professional staff team
Does not work well with a leader of vision and independence.	Does not work well with a manager who needs leading.

