

## Partnering to make a Difference The Board and Manager Relationship

Traditionally, the generally accepted rule of thumb is that boards are primarily to **“govern and support”** and managers primarily to **“manage”**. The new work of Boards is to foster a partnership among the board and the community, clients, management, and frontline staff to fulfill the mission

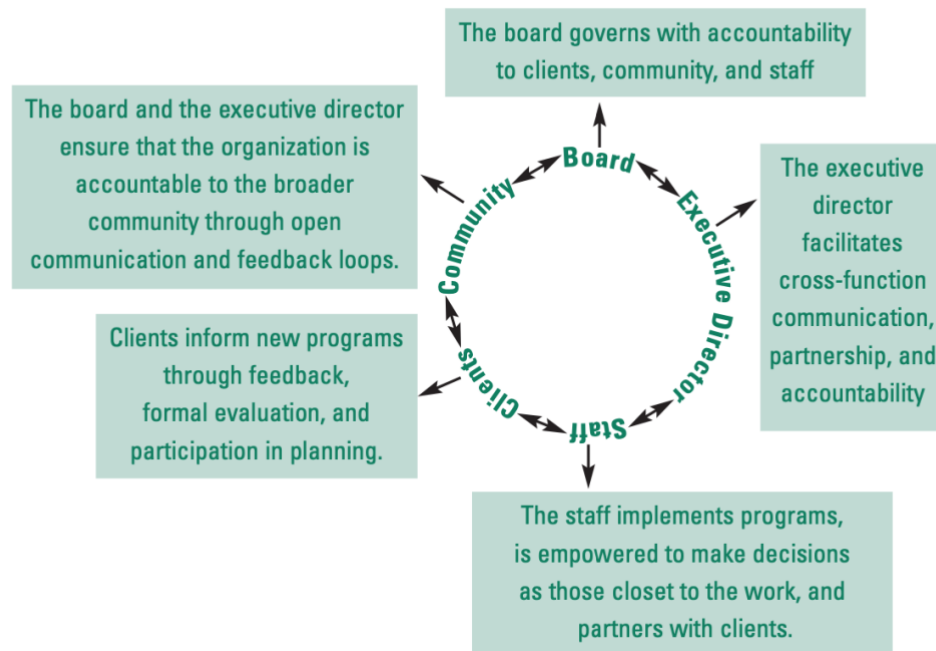
### A Traditional Hierarchical Model



**SOURCE:**

*The Executive Directors Guide: Deborah Linell, Zora Radosevich & Jonathan Spack; Third Sector, New England, Boston. 2002. United Way of Massachusetts Bay*

### A Partnership Model of a Mission-Focused Nonprofit

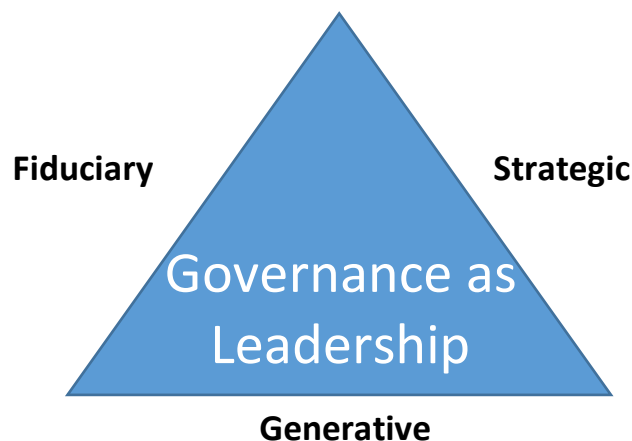


1. Fulfill the Board's core duties
2. Hire wisely and anticipate succession
3. Be clear about roles
4. Commit to building a strong relationship
5. Be clear about the manager's mandate
6. Jointly determine what to include in regular board reports
7. Jointly determine the preferred communications formats
8. Evaluate manager performance regularly
9. Focus on governance as leadership
10. Learn together

*Ten Things Series for Nonprofit Boards*  
*Strong Relationships Building an Excellent Working Relationship between the Board and Executive Director*  
*Jan Berry and Gary Stern (2010)*

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## The New Work of Boards



The **fiduciary mode**: a basic and fundamental requirement of good governance – protect the assets of the business, ensure resources are deployed efficiently and effectively and for everyone, both the board and management, to always act in the best interests of the organisation. Nothing unusual here and sound principles upon which to build a sustainable organisation.

The **strategic mode**: the board and management think together to identify strategic priorities and drivers; the external as well as the internal environment is reviewed and assessed; enquiring minds are encouraged, strategies and decisions are open to challenge based on thoughtful consideration and the focus is on the “ends” rather than the “means”.

Both these modes of governance are fundamental to maintaining relevance and a sustainable business model. However these are another, the **generative mode** (Governance as Leadership, Chait, Ryan & Taylor; Boardsource) that can take governance and leadership to another level, all within the confines of the existing board and management structure.

In a **generative mode**, the board's work is more creative, challenges the norms, applies a robust deliberative process and plays a key role in the framing of issues and the development of strategic options and plans. That is, the board gets involved sooner rather than later and becomes a valuable part of the solution.