The Naming—Diagnoses—Action Worksheet

A shopping list of ideas

"Blocks" to better decision-making

1. Too much time spent on routine, low-value decisions

2. Board reworks committee/ED recommendations

3. Big decisions rushed, poorly thought through, or ineffective

4. Board wanders, loses focus

5. One person monopolizes discussion

6. Difficult topics are avoided because people get emotional, angry, run down others

7. Major decision taken without board knowledge/approval

8. Some board members are disengaged; don't contribute

9. Decisions don't get implemented

10. Board always putting out fires; not proactive

Possible Diagnoses

Individual

A. Board members unaware of their expected roles /lack leadership experience

B. Long-serving board members have not grown with organization/using old assumptions of governance

C. Board chair not facilitating conversation; maintaining order

D. Poor fit of person to organization

Group Process

E. Insufficient preparation for decisions; no advance board briefing or consulting

F. Board members have limited/bad experience with candid discussions

G. Exec Director not partnering with board in agenda planning

H. Need norms for decision-making

Structure

I. Limited delegation to committees or staff

J. Accountabilities are unclear; no one responsible

K. No agreed upon priorities

Example Tools

Individual

I. Training/coaching for Board Chair and/or Exec Director

II. Counsel underperforming/ disruptive board member to improve/resign

III. Annual review/self-assessment

Group

IV. Team building workshop to establish & follow positive group norms

V. Governance 101 training session

VI. Plan learning activities; build board knowledge on key decision items

Structure

VII. Formalize accountabilities and decision-making authority for committees/officers

VIII. Establish board recruitment goals to get capabilities needed for the future

IX. Annual strategy and priority setting sessions to set expectations for Board & Exec Director

X. Formalize Board-Exec Director relationship (reporting, deliverables, required supports,…)