Supporting Boards to Shift Mindsets and Habits

Meredith Emmett, Valerie Stewart, and Heather Yandow
Technical Challenges
Adaptive Challenges
## Technical vs. Adaptive Challenges

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*From The Practice of Adaptive Leadership* by Ron Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linksy
Five Flags of Adaptive Challenges

1. **There is no known solution:** Is there an issue that you/your team/your organization continually talks about but can't solve?

2. **People would rather avoid the issue:** Does working on the challenge create tension and conflict?

3. **Recurring problem:** Have you tried fixing the problem multiple times, but it keeps coming back?

4. **Moving forward feels risky:** Does making progress on this challenge require putting your reputation, relationships, or job at risk?

5. **People are required to work across boundaries:** Can no one person or group can fix this problem alone?

From Cambridge Leadership Associates
Mixed Challenges
What are some of the adaptive challenges your board faces?
What shifts are required in mindsets and habits?
Productive Zone of Disequilibrium

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Results based on 83.9% board member response and 63.4% staff member response

STRENGTHS: Your board and staff identified the following top 5 strengths of your organization:

1. The organization has a clear sense of its desired impact. 3.60
2. There is agreement on who benefits from the organization's actions. 3.60
3. Programs and services are designed and delivered with awareness of who else is delivering similar programs and services. 3.35
4. The organization has agreed upon values that guide the decisions and actions of both the board and the staff. 3.35
5. Organizational leaders stay abreast of the trends and driving forces with have the potential to influence the organization and its mission. 3.32

CHALLENGES: Your board and staff identified the following top 5 challenges for your organization:

4. Technology and information systems allow for optimal performance and are
Nonprofit Leadership Academy
Building Blocks

Data about the organization’s performance

Time away to reflect and learn

Concrete tools and frameworks

Resources to explore new experiments

Ongoing support from peers and experienced coaches

BoardSource
Empowering Boards. Inspiring Leadership.
What are the ways that you might create a holding environment as the board addresses the adaptive challenges?
Thank you!

Meredith Emmett  
Third Space Studio  
meredith@thirdspacestudio.com

Valerie Stewart  
BlueCross & Blue Shield  
of NC Foundation  
valerie@bcbsncfoundation.org

Heather Yandow  
Third Space Studio  
heather@thirdspacestudio.com