



**WGOB Chairs Forum-Key Takeaways
Cohort 2 Session #1-October 23, 2024**

GREAT CHAIR's Checklist Cultivating Professionalism

1. The Meeting is your “showtime.”
2. Be in the Moment-Ask good questions, Reserve judgment
3. Watch for cognitive biases
4. Take Notes on CEO and director behavior for subsequent coaching
5. Advocate assessment, cross training, professional development
6. Focus “in-camera” sessions on good/bad meeting elements, advice for CEO
7. Debrief with CEO immediately on the meeting and what was discussed “in-camera”
 - Seek opinion on meeting.
 - Confirm understand on decisions.
 - Build trust through sharing.
8. Be-self aware
 - Seek feedback on your own performance,
 - Reflect, diagnose, plan.
 - Remember “WAIT”-Why I am talking.

Reference: The Great Chair-by Brian Hayward-page 194-195

Question from Group Discussion:

What is the biggest challenge you face as Chair of a Board?

Key Takeaways in the Group Discussion:

1. Board Dynamics:

- Discussion on the experience of being undermined by a more experienced woman on the board, which gave permission for men to act with disrespect.
- Social skills are required to navigate board dynamics and the challenges of being perceived as less serious if one is friendly, smiles or is cheerful.
- Discussion on setting the tone at the top and improving understanding among board members, a board diversity policy was suggested as a starting point
- Do not confront the person in the middle of a meeting but to focus on building common ground and recognizing their contributions & Build a relationship outside of meetings to address undermining behaviour
- Keep the focus on the conduct of the meeting rather than personal attacks.

2. Being an Industry Outsider:

- Discussion on being invited to step in as chair of a board despite not being an industry expert, feeling like a fish out of water and how to build knowledge and confidence.
- The importance of building trust and confidence.
- Focus on the governance processes and ensuring that all board members are aligned and contributing effectively.
- You don't have to be the subject matter expert, you are the conductor, you bring governance structure/processes and make sure your board members are all aligned and singing from the same page

3. Encouraging Board Members to Speak Up:

- Discussion on creating your voice and being the voice for others
- The importance of breaking the mold and being forthright in governance roles, as well as getting to know the people and issues in the room.
- Encourage board members to ask questions and feel comfortable contributing in large boards where management takes reports as read.

Confidential -October 23, 2024