

# Being an effective Chair

Annette Schneider rsm

March 26, 2021



INSTITUTE OF  
SISTERS *of* MERCY  
OF AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA

# Reflection on your experience of effective and ineffective Chairs

Think of **an effective Chair** with whom you have worked:

- Identify 2 things which made that person effective as a Chair.

Think of **an ineffective or less than effective Chair** with whom you have worked:

- Identify 2 things which made that person ineffective or less than effective as a Chair.

# Overview of the AICD article provided as pre-reading for our seminar

**Two key responsibilities of the Chair are identified:**

- 1. Ensuring effective Board processes;**
- 2. *Creating a cohesive Board.***

**Some key questions are explored in the article:**

- 1. What skills and qualities does a Chair need in order to be effective?**
- 2. *How have Chairs adapted in a COVID 19 environment?***
- 3. How do we chair effectively in an online environment?**
- 4. *What can Board members do if the Chair is ineffective?***
- 5. How does the Chair provide leadership in an uncertain future?**

# Skills required to be effective as a Chair



In addition to **governance knowledge** and **an ability to ensure the Board remains focused on governance and strategy-related issues**, 8 additional skills are listed

1. Did any of these skills surprise you?
2. *What skills, if any, are missing from this list e.g. relating to mission-led governance?*

From your experience of your Board's operations **in a COVID 19 environment**

3. How important to the effective functioning of the Board are the 3 additional skills listed?

# The leadership of the Chair in challenging times



INSTITUTE OF  
SISTERS of MERCY  
OF AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA

- In what ways have you seen Board Chairs, sub-committee Chairs, Advisory Council Chairs or Deputy Chairs **'step up'** over the past year?
- Of the 7 points listed on p. 3 of the article, which one do you think is **key to the ongoing effectiveness** of your Board, Advisory Council or sub-committee? Why?



# Personal qualities of an effective Chair

**As you reflect on the personal qualities identified on pp. 3-4, and your own experience of being a Chair or Deputy or sub-committee Chair:**

- ❖ **Identify 2 qualities which are *well-developed* in you;**
  - ❖ **Identify 2 qualities which you would like *to develop further*.**
- 
- a) **Has the COVID environment enabled you to *enhance particular personal qualities*?**
  - b) **What possibilities exist for you to have *a mentor* to assist you to grow in confidence and competence as a Chair?**

# Chairing an effective meeting

**Three key areas on which attention needs to be focused are identified:**

- 1. Purpose** – the Chair is an important ‘face of the organization’ and its purpose
- 2. Preparation** – thorough preparation by the Chair for each meeting
- 3. People** – relationship building ; achieving consensus among Directors, Council members or sub-committee members
4. The **online meeting environment** has particular challenges, as well as benefits, so these need to be acknowledged and addressed **AT THE START, DURING** and **AFTER** the online meeting.

# Working effectively with the CEO

The relationship with the Board Chair and the CEO is critical for the ministry's effectiveness. Success comes from:

1. Honest, respectful relationships
2. *Open and transparent discussions*
3. A healthy respect for each other's abilities and experience
4. *Visible alignment*
5. **What additional 'success' factors could be added from the perspective of a faith-based organization?**



# Dealing with an ineffective Chair

**Some approaches which can be taken:**

- 1. Speak with peers to test your personal bias or perspective**
- 2. *If necessary, confront the issues***
- 3. Be prepared to step away from the Board**
- 4. *Establish and nurture a culture of evaluation and review within the Board e.g. regular performance reviews***
  - a) Based on your experience, what approaches to addressing this issue would you add?**
  - b) *In what ways could the points in this article form the basis of a performance review of the Chair?***

# Q and A

**We have engaged with some significant matters this morning and now have further opportunity to make a comment or ask a question ...**

