

# The Nonprofit Board Leader's Planner

Nanette Fridman



**FRIDMAN**  
STRATEGIES

# Welcome to The Nonprofit Board Leader's Planner

Almost everyone who works in a leadership capacity with a nonprofit board — from the board chair to the committee chair to the volunteer board member and the professional staff — feels a sense of apprehension. This feeling is a good sign. It means you're taking the position seriously.

You're not alone.

I wrote my most recent book, *Holding the Gavel*, as a masterclass for nonprofit board leadership. It will teach you to get past the initial apprehension and develop your best practices for working with the volunteer and professional partners who drive your initiatives — because nonprofits truly are team efforts.

Use this guide to record your thoughts, ideas, and next steps for leading your organization to successfully accomplish its mission and maximize its impact.

Ready to really dig in? [Grab a copy of \*Holding the Gavel\*](#) to dive deeper into the ins and outs of working with nonprofit boards.

Please feel free to [drop me a line](#) with any questions, comments, or ideas as you work through the following exercises.

To your success,

**Nanette Fridman**  
**Fridman Strategies**  
**Author, consultant, and coach**

# 1. Answering the Call to Serve

## By Any Other Name...

Trustee vs. director: The term “trustee” is more often used in charitable trusts, while the term “director” is usually used in nonprofit corporations.

Chair vs. President: President is used commonly when no one else has the title and the CEO is not an officer of the corporation. If there is a CEO, typically the title of “chair” is more appropriate.

**Which titles does your organization use?**

---

---

---

## What You Bring to the Organization as Board Chair

The job of the board chair is to oversee the activities of the board members and the executive director and to ensure that the nonprofit fulfills its mission and remains financially healthy.

*Reynold Levy, the President of Lincoln Center, to **The New York Times**,  
“We are looking for time, talent, and treasure. A board is the institution’s  
intelligent memory. It is the institution’s conscience and it comprises the  
institution’s principal support.”*

What special talents do you possess that may be of particular use to your organization? Have you had a discussion with the nominating or leadership development committee to understand why you were asked to serve in this role? Write down why they think you will be a strong leader and what else you bring to the nonprofit.

---

---

Before you accept the role of board chair, it is critical you understand your responsibilities, including your financial commitment.

“Board Giving Policy”: Many organizations expect that board members will either give personal financial contributions to the organization and/or solicit donations.

**What is the board giving policy of your nonprofit? Are you prepared to meet this obligation?**

---

---

---

## Responsibilities of the Board Chair

As the board chair, your most basic task is to understand and promote the fundamental legal duties of each individual board member. They are commonly written as the three duties:

1. Duty of Care—Each board member is legally required to be an active participant and to use his or her best judgment when making decisions on the nonprofit’s behalf in order to further its mission and goals.
2. Duty of Loyalty—Each board member must put the nonprofit’s interests ahead of their own, both personal and professional, when decision-making or acting on the organization’s behalf.
3. Duty of Obedience—Board members are legally accountable for making sure that the organization complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and that all actions undertaken by the nonprofit support its mission.

**How will you support and ensure that your board carries out their legal duties?**

---

---

---





## 2. The Real Scoop

While writing *Holding the Gavel*, I reached out to a group of my friends and colleagues who either are or have been board chairs. I asked them these two questions:

- “What advice would you give a new board chair?”
- “What would you like to have known before you accepted the position for the first time?”

They offered many salient insights which you can read in Chapter 2 of *Holding the Gavel*. These came together to form some clearly defined themes that I have listed below.

Review the following and score yourself on a scale of 1/disagree through 5/agree.

### As a board chair, I...

	1	2	3	4	5
...have a plan to overcome feelings of isolation					
...am comfortable with delegation					
...know my board members on a personal level					
...am the mediator of ideas, not necessarily the source of new ones					
...am familiar with the hidden time commitments					
...am comfortable as a ‘jack of all trades’					
...know the skills I bring, & how those skills are helpful to the organization					
...understand how to lead through learning					
...understand how to be intentional with the culture I create					
...know how to set realistic goals					

**Now review your list. Any statement that you scored three or lower needs some attention! How will you develop with respect to these lower-scored areas?**

---

---

---

### 3. Nonprofit Laws, Bylaws, and Policies

As the board chair, it's your job to understand and implement the processes by which the board conducts its business and the nonprofit operates.

Below are the basics that you'll need to understand as the board chair. Rate your level of familiarity for each area on a scale of 1/Not Familiar through 5/Very Familiar. Also note specific questions that you need to follow up on for each area.

#### Laws, Bylaws, and Policies to Focus On:

	1	2	3	4	5
State Governance of Nonprofit Organizations					
The Federal Government and the IRS Requirements					
IRS Form 990					
Directors & Officers Liability Insurance					
Your Organization's Bylaws					
Name and location of the organization					
Purpose or mission of the organization					
Size of the board					
Designation of officers of the board					
Election, roles, and terms of directors and officers					
Number of directors required for a quorum					
Process for voting – when a majority or super majority is required					
Prescription of board committees					
Process for removing a director from the board					
Membership structure and the rights of members, if applicable					
Compensation and indemnification of directors, if applicable					
Process for amending the bylaws					
Minimum frequency of board meetings required					
Conflict-of-interest policy					
Process for dissolution of the organization					



## Notes on areas you need to become more familiar with

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Robert's Rules of Order & How to Run a Board Meeting

There are a number of tools that have been developed to conduct orderly board meetings, with Robert's Rules of Order being one of the most well-known. See page 41 in *Holding the Gavel* for a detailed description of each of the following well-known meeting procedures:

- Robert's Rules of Order
- The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure
- The Consensus Process
- Martha's Rules of Order

**Note which set of rules your organization is currently using and any study or research needs you might have in this area. How will you ensure board members are knowledgeable and comfortable with these rules?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## 4. The Executive Director and Staff

Unity is strength...  
when there is teamwork and collaboration,  
wonderful things can be achieved.  
~Mattie Stepanek

The nonprofit staff has a special responsibility to carry out the mission of the organization and to complete the innumerable everyday tasks that are needed to keep the doors open and the lights on.

The relationship between the board chair and the executive director is a special one and needs to be based on a personal rapport as well as a shared vision for the organization.

### Where the Magic Happens — Achieving an Ideal Balance Between the Board and the Executive Director

In some nonprofits, the board chair is the driving force, and the executive director is little more than a glorified administrative assistant to the board. In others, the executive director has the institutional memory and the deep social connections, while the board is weaker, making the executive director seem irreplaceable.

Neither situation is ideal.

Successful professional and lay relationships are based on four key components. Rate your relationships in the following four areas from 1/agree to 5/disagree.

	1	2	3	4	5
Mutual respect and trust exists between the board chair and the executive director.					
The board and executive director have shared vision and plans.					
The board and executive director have clear roles and responsibilities.					
The board and executive director enjoy clear, open, and continuous communication.					

**List ways to strengthen and improve on any of the above areas that scored three or below**

---

---

---

---

---

---

## **Setting Annual and Strategic Goals**

When setting institutional goals with the executive director and other stakeholders, be sure to answer these seven questions:

- Why is this the right goal for this organization?
- Does this goal further the organization’s mission and long-term vision?
- If the organization had no limitations or obstacles, what would the steps be to achieve this goal?
- What are the organization’s limitations or obstacles that could keep it from achieving this goal?
- What are the organization’s resources that could be applied to this goal?
- Does the organization have sufficient resources to achieve this goal successfully, or does the goal need to be reevaluated?
- Does the organization have the experience and expertise to accomplish this goal?

**List the top three organizational goals then consider each of the above questions relative to your goals.**

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Common Board and Staff Challenges

These are some common challenges in board–staff relationships to keep in mind and to look out for. Check for any of the following scenarios in your organization, then note your action plan to clarify the situation.

	Current Issue
A board member gets “in the weeds” when, in fact, it’s a board member’s role to stay focused on big-picture strategy for the organization.	
A board member adds to the work of a staff member without considering other projects or their priorities.	
A board member micromanages.	
A board member pushes his or her own agenda.	
A board member acts like a staff member.	
A staff member doesn’t communicate enough with a board member or committee.	
A staff member has his or her own agenda, separate from that of the board.	
A staff member overburdens a board member with requests.	
A board member and a staff member are friends and lines get crossed.	
Other	

### Identified Issue and Action Plan

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

## Staying in the Governance Lane

The board should be primarily focused on governance while the professional staff focuses on management. Below are the key roles of the board:

### **Governance (Board Driven)**

- Mission | Vision | Strategy
- Desired results/impact
- Policies
- Fiscal oversight
- Policies on internal controls
- Budget approvals
- Fundraising implementation
- External relationships (shared)
- CEO selection, support, and evaluation

Conversely, the key roles for professional staff include the following:

### **Management (Staff Driven)**

- Operational decisions and policies
- Program development and implementations
- Legal compliance
- Day-to-day management
- Personnel management
- Fiscal management
- Fundraising implementation
- External relationships (shared)
- Measurement of evaluation and outcomes
- Educating and informing the board
- Supporting the board's policy-making, decision-making, and oversight responsibilities



# 5. Board Committees

## The Goldilocks Rule

If there's one thing you need to know about committees, it's this: An organization must have neither too few nor too many. The number and size of board committees must be just right—just like in the Goldilocks story.

## Types of Standing Committees

Note below which standing committees are already in existence (add any that we missed) and rate each committee's effectiveness from 1/needs help to 5/functions well. Also note any committee that your organization does not currently have but may benefit from, or any standing committee that is not consistently needed and should be converted to an Ad Hoc committee.

	1	2	3	4	5
Executive Committee					
Finance Committee					
Leadership Development or Governance Committee					
Fundraising or Development Committee					
Marketing and Communication Committee					
Facilities or Building Committee					
Other:					
Other:					
Other:					

## Notes on Effectiveness of the Standing Committees

---



---



---



---

## Types of Ad Hoc Committees

Note below which Ad Hoc committees are already in existence (add any additional) and rate each committee's effectiveness from 1/needs help to 5/functions well. Also note any committee that your organization does not currently have but may benefit from, or any Ad Hoc committees that might be more effective if converted to a standing committee.

	1	2	3	4	5
Special Events Committee					
Executive Search Committee					
Capital Campaign Committee					
Crisis Committee					
Strategic Planning Committee					
Personnel Committee					
Other:					
Other:					
Other:					

### Notes on the Effectiveness of the Ad Hoc Committee

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



# Committees Success Checklist

To be effective, each committee must have the following:

- A clear charge or purpose
- Articulated goals
- A work plan that outlines how the work will get done, when, and by whom
- A volunteer chair or co-chairs
- Board and non-board volunteers as necessary
- One or more staff point persons or liaisons, assigned by the executive director
- Onsite and virtual work spaces, as needed, coordinated with the staff person
- Meeting dates and times, coordinated with the staff person
- A clear understanding of when and how to report to the board
- Sufficient budget and a mechanism to pay expenses, coordinated with the executive director

**Review the list of committees you created on the prior page. Does each of these committees have these elements in place? Identify gaps and action steps to remedy those gaps.**

Committee Name \_\_\_\_\_

Gap \_\_\_\_\_

Action Steps \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Name \_\_\_\_\_

Gap \_\_\_\_\_

Action Steps \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Name \_\_\_\_\_

Gap \_\_\_\_\_

Action Steps \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Preparing for Board Meetings

If we have a clear agenda in advance  
and we are fully present and fully contributing,  
the meetings do go much faster.

~Arianna Huffington

A person who leads any type of meeting of volunteers should think of himself or herself as a project manager and think about how each meeting moves their project closer to completion. Remember, unlike a boss who convenes a meeting of his or her subordinates, the board chair can't compel anyone to do anything.

Instead, the chair must create an atmosphere where the volunteers' optimistic expectations about their service are fulfilled.

Complete the Board Meeting Planning Questionnaire on the next page for your next meeting and review recent board meetings. Do your meetings generally run well, or are there problems? Are your members engaged, or do just a few take up a large share of the meeting? Are you focused on reviewing what has happened in the past or are you focused on the future?

### The No Surprises Rule

The rule is simple: During every board meeting, as the board works through its business, there must never be any surprises. You should always have a good idea of the outcome of every discussion and initiative.

**Use this board meeting questionnaire on the next page to identify gaps in your current meeting planning, structure and dynamics and create more efficient and enjoyable meetings in the future. A Board Meeting Planner is also available as a free download with purchase of *Holding the Gavel*.**

## Board Meeting Planning Questionnaire

What is the meeting date and has it been communicated to and confirmed with board members?

---

Is the meeting open to anyone, or is it only for board members?

---

Have the logistical arrangements (room, set-up, a/v, food, etc.) been made?

---

How will attendees touch the mission of the organization at the meeting or be inspired?

---

Is there an overall theme for this meeting?

---

What learning will take place at the meeting?

---

Do we want to bring in any outside speakers or guests?

---

What are the agenda items?

---

What committees will be presenting? Have the committee chairs been asked in advance, and have they confirmed their participation?

---

---

---

What are the key governance issues being presented, and what are the actions required by the board (for example, approve the budget, hire a new executive, or adopt a strategic plan)?

---

---

---

Does the date of the meeting allow enough time to make a decision before an action based on that decision needs to take place?

---

When will the agenda and materials be sent out?

---

What materials are required to be sent out prior to the meeting? These materials often include the minutes from the prior meeting, committee reports, financials, a dashboard, and anything you want board members to have time to read.

---

What materials will be handed out at the meeting? These materials may include dashboard numbers, fundraising lists, or other information.

---

At the meeting, will the secretary be present to take notes?

---

When will the minutes be distributed?

---

After the meeting, how will follow-up items be addressed?

---

---

# 7. Conducting Board Meetings: Working with Your Team

For your board, engagement means that each member of your team is actively working to advance the mission of the organization.

Review the following ideas to foster board engagement and choose the top three ideas you'd like to put into action.

- Meet with every board member
- Circulate a board list with bios
- Pair each new member with an experienced “board buddy”
- Provide orientation
- Use name tags or place placards
- Create social opportunities
- Be inspiring
- Use your board committees
- Try new facilitation techniques to encourage broad participation.

Engagement Strategy #1

---

---

Engagement Strategy #2

---

---

Engagement Strategy #3

---

---

# 8. Recruiting and Onboarding New Board Members

## Identifying Gaps

It's important that your board has diversity in skill sets/competencies, individual attributes/characteristics and networks, as well as representation of all the stakeholders involved with your organization.

Review this list of key skills that most boards require. Analyze which skills your board has, which you are missing, and which you don't need at all. Then note members who have those skills. Circle the skills that are missing and start the search for new board members who can bring those skills to the organization. Check out chapter 8 in *Holding the Gavel* for an expanded board matrix.

	Current Board Member Expertise <small>[note the name of the board member]</small>	Unmet Organizational Need
Accounting		
Finance		
Fundraising		
Grant Writing		
Governance		
Healthcare		
Human Resources		
Leadership		
Legal		
Marketing		
Policy		
Program		
Risk Management		
Strategic Planning		
Technology		
Other		

## Develop an Ideal Candidate Profile

The secret to a great board is being crystal clear about the strengths and weaknesses of current members as well as the needs of the organization. In order to keep a constant pipeline of candidates, it's a great idea to build a profile so that all current board members can be working to identify suitable candidates.

### Prospective Board Member Criteria

- People who are knowledgeable and interested in the mission and activities of your organization.
- People who will attend meetings and events.
- People who work well with others.
- People with expertise in areas including law, accounting/financial, fundraising, marketing and communications, and human resources.
- People who will donate, solicit, or provide in-kind financial support, and it's a bonus if they have access to donors—individuals, corporations, and foundations.
- People who are connected to the community and have knowledge of how to get things done in the local environment.
- People who are enthusiastic about the organization's cause and want to be ambassadors and "friendraisers."
- People with past experience on nonprofit boards or who have participated in leadership training programs.
- People with skills to meet strategic needs.
- People who bring diversity to your board.

**Using the criteria above and the skills assessment, list three to five potential board members that might be a great fit for your organization.**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# 9. Finances and Human Resources

## Financial Management

As the board chair, it's your job to manage the board. And arguably the most important responsibility of the board is to keep the lights on, the doors open, and the programs running—in short, to ensure fiscal stability. Growth is a good thing too, but for many nonprofits increasingly bigger budgets are not as important as they are in the for-profit world. The main focus is continued existence.

Below are common financial statements that you may be called upon to review. If one of the items isn't familiar to you, check it off and make sure you connect with the treasurer, CFO, a financial advisor or board member that can give you an overview.

<b>Financial Report</b>	<b>I Need a Refresher</b>
The Annual Budget	
The Treasurer's Report	
Cash Reserves	
The Endowment Fund	
Tax Filings	
Annual Audit	
Statement of Functional Expenses	
Statement of Financial Position or Balance Sheet	
Cash Flow	



# Management of Human Resources

In its governance role, the board has varying degrees of oversight over five areas relating to human resources. In general, the board is accountable for ensuring that the organization has a well-crafted set of employment policies that comply with applicable laws and regulations and minimize organizational risk and exposure. The executive director, in turn, has responsibility for creating, disseminating, and implementing the policies for the staff.

Review the following list with your Executive Director and note specific action steps to be taken.

- Hiring and Compensating the Executive Director
- Professional Staff Compensation
- Workplace Policies
- Grievances and Whistle blowing
- Layoffs

## Action Steps

---

---

---

---

---

---

# 10. Fundraising

As chair, you should be integrally involved in fundraising. You will want to meet regularly with your board development committee chair and the lead professional. Be sure to ask to see the financial resource development plan and the analysis of the prior year's campaign.

What are the key fundraising activities in your organization's financial resource development plan?

- Annual Appeal/Campaign
- Events
- Capital Campaign
- Endowment Campaign
- Planned Giving

People give money to a nonprofit because they believe in its mission and they're engaged with the organization. It's your job to build excitement and foster engagement, and if you do this, the money will come. Focus on relationships!

## The Annual Appeal Process (Simplified)

Timing is important. Experts say that 30% of charitable giving is done in December, and many organizations launch their annual appeals in the fourth quarter of the calendar year: October, November, and December.

This is a general checklist of the steps to a standard annual appeal campaign. Review and make notes as to how to fine tune your campaign next season:

1. Schedule meetings with all major donors for face-to-face asks.
2. Let's say your annual appeal mailing date is November 1. In early October, you will ask the development director to print your master mailing list.
3. The development office will give a copy of the list to each board member.

4. You'll ask each board member—including yourself—to “claim” names of prospects they know and feel comfortable writing a note to.

5. The development office will sort and cross-reference the “claims” and resolve any issues of duplication.

6. The development office will print the letters. Then they will create a mechanism whereby each board member—including you—can find the letters you've claimed and write a personal note at the bottom. Even if you are shy about asking for money, it's easy to do because it's a letter, not a face-to-face meeting.

7. The letters are mailed.

8. During the campaign, the development office will notify board members if a gift has been received from someone to whom they have written. For example, if you wrote a personal note to Mrs. Donor and she then made a donation, the development office needs to tell you, so that the next time you see Mrs. Donor, you can thank her for her generous gift or you may drop her an email or note.

9. A phone-a-thon or a text-a-thon may be scheduled to make calls or texts to donors who you haven't yet heard from.

10. An email and social-media campaign will accompany and support the annual campaign.

### **Action Steps for your next Annual Appeal Campaign**

---

---

---

#### **Quick Tip: How Many Times Should You Try to Meet with a Prospect?**

Assuming the prospect is well-qualified (refer to chapter 10 in *Holding the Gavel* for qualifying questions), then we suggest three tries in one quarter before scheduling another attempt in the next quarter, or even later, with a new hook.

# 11. Board Evaluation and Development

## Mission vs. Performance Goal

It's important to understand the difference between Mission and Performance Goals. As a board, a majority of focus should be on mission goals.

Mission Goals tend to be more outward facing and relate to the organization's impact on its constituencies. Common nonprofit mission-centric goals are things like feeding every hungry person who walks in the door; creating greater religious tolerance; wiping out a communicable disease; or reducing the rate of drug addiction in a community.

Performance goals are operational and can generally be measured. Common nonprofit performance goals are to increase enrollment by 8%, increase the annual appeal by 10%, or lower patient readmissions by 5%.

### Quick Tip:

**The Board Should Focus on Mission, Not Performance Goals**

**Improper (performance) board goal: increase program attendance by 10%.**

**Proper (mission) board goal: formulate new ways to reach out to the community and raise awareness of the organization and its mission is a board goal.**

List your current board goals below and note if it is mission or performance based. If performance based, try to reposition as a mission based goal.

Goal #1

---

---

---

---

---

---

Goal #2

---

---

---

---

---

---

Goal #3

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Board Member Self-Evaluation

As board chair, you want to set a culture of learning. Part of this is evaluating the board's functionality as a whole, you as board chair and board members to evaluate themselves.

Self-assessments can create valuable insights not only into the mind of the individual board member who's completing the self-evaluation but also into how the board is perceived by that member. A sample self-evaluation form is presented here in a condensed form. An expanded version of the assessment is available with purchase of *Holding the Gavel*.

### Self-Evaluation Form Board Member:

1. Do you feel properly prepared to sit on the board? Were you informed of board members' responsibilities and expectations?
2. How do you assess your contribution to this organization? (You might want to include such things as attendance at board meetings and events, participation, promotion of program, fundraising, committee work, or any other areas on which you would like to comment.)
3. Do you feel that your financial contributions to this organization are at a level that's personally significant for you? Why or why not?
4. How would you like this organization to invest in and facilitate your personal development as a board member?
5. What projects or questions would you like to contribute to or involve yourself in for the remainder of your term or if you were to serve another term?
6. If you're not presently an officer, would you be interested in holding an officer position in the future?
7. As a board member, what changes would you suggest in the operation and involvement of the board?
8. Any additional comments:

## Board Development

Based on the evaluations and other inputs, you will want to work with the Leadership Development committee to design board trainings and retreats.

What are some topics your board could benefit from training on? Do you have a regular retreat? What are goals for your retreat?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Quick Tip:** The three most important components for an effective board retreat are a set of goals, an agenda, and enthusiastic participation.

## 12. Big Undertakings!

While your term as board chair might be very pleasant with little conflict or 'emergencies,' you may end up facing challenges. One of the most significant tasks that any board faces is when the executive director leaves and a new one must be hired. Other big undertakings include long-term projects of which major fundraising campaigns are a subset, such as capital and endowment campaigns (which I discuss in Chapter 10 of *Holding the Gavel*), and strategic planning.

### Succession Planning for Your Executive Director

As part of your role as board chair, it's important to think ahead so you are not caught unaware if your executive director chooses to leave the organization during your term.

Here are some initial guiding questions to consider. Review and fill out to the best of your knowledge. If necessary sit down with your executive director for a frank discussion around long term and succession planning.

What is the most likely time frame for retirement and succession?

---

---

---

Are there people currently on staff who might be interested and able, with training, to take over the executive position?

---

---

---



Are there identifiable external people who might be potential fits for the organization? What are their relationships to the organization today? What outreach or engagement should happen now, if any?

---

---

---

Should we proactively hire and groom an associate executive director?

---

---

---

When (if) we need to hire, should we hire an outside executive recruiting agency?

---

---

---

### Quick Tip: The Executive Director who Won't Retire

As retirement begins to look less appealing and often less financially feasible, many long-serving leaders want to hang on to their jobs longer. This is often an unhealthy situation for the organization.

To avoid the threat of litigation, a wealthy nonprofit can try to entice the executive director to leave earlier than he or she had planned by offering a generous severance package. You can also create a role that lets him or her stay involved but not as the chief executive. The board must decide when the organization needs new leadership.

# 13. Board Leadership Succession Planning

Planning for your successor is one of the most important tasks you will undertake as the board chair. Do you have a successor named such as a first vice president or vice chair? If not and you cannot identify an appropriate successor, then it's time to work with the executive director and your fellow board members to determine the best next steps.

## What to do if you can't identify a successor to the board chair

If there are no clear successors, here are recommended steps to take:

- Consider if you would extend your term while the next board chair is identified.
- Let the nominating committee or leadership development committee that asked you to be board chair know that you will be stepping down at the end of your term and that you are not open to extending your term. Ask for their help with succession planning.
- Conduct individual board evaluations each year as discussed previously and specifically ask if board members are interested in a leadership position on the board in the future.
- Schedule meetings with board members who have indicated an interest in leadership as well as with members whom the nominating committee recommends for a leadership role to discuss how they might want to use their skills to benefit the organization, what position might be of interest, and what they would need to feel ready to assume a leadership position.
- Once you have identified a potential successor, bring the name to the nominating or leadership development committee. Assuming the committee agrees with your recommendation, and if the person is not currently a member of the Executive Committee, think about bringing him or her aboard. Ideally, your potential successor would become vice-chair in advance of assuming the role of chair.
- Provide your successor with the training and skill-building they need, whether through conference attendance, online training, or coaching.
- Include your successor in regular planning meetings with your executive director.
- Ensure your successor is visible at board meetings and organizational events.
- Introduce your successor to key stakeholders and donors.
- Discuss with your successor what role he or she would like you to play after your term.
- Be a mentor to your successor (if your successor asks).

**What is your succession plan? What are your next steps?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# 14. Challenges

Rough waters are truer tests of leadership.  
In calm water every ship has a good captain.  
~Swedish Proverb

## Managing a Difficult Board Member

These are the thirteen different archetypes of “challenging board members” and strategies for managing them that are discussed in Chapter 14 of *Holding the Gavel*. Are any of these familiar to you? Circle those and review the recommended strategies.

Category I: Redirect and Counsel	Category II: Move off the Board in a Gentle Way	Category III: Formally Warn and Remove if Necessary
The Over Promiser/Under Deliverer	The Clique Artist	The Gossip
The Egoist	The Rogue	The Messenger
The Ghost	The Dinosaur	The Denigrator
The Ally	The Oxygen Thief	
	Royalty	
	The Pot Stirrer	

Quick Tip: How to Deal with a Difficult Executive Director  
No surprises | Identify the problem | Look in the mirror

**Check chapters 15 - 17 in *Holding the Gavel* for first-hand accounts of the rewards and secret pitfalls when serving as a board chairperson.**



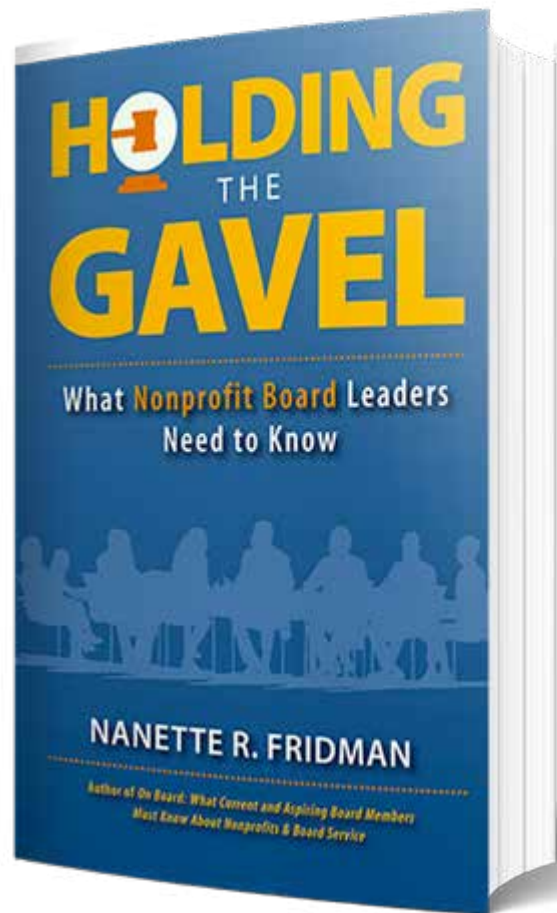


# Want More?

Get the candid, inside scoop and learn from experienced board chairs.

With *Holding the Gavel*, current and prospective board leaders and the staff they work with have the real information needed to succeed.

**ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY!**



*“Nanette Fridman has written the perfect book for board chairs. She provides a comprehensive outline of the role and succinctly and smartly describes exactly how to tackle what can feel like an overwhelming job. It is the indispensable guide for a difficult job.”*

—Allison Fine, National Chair, NARAL: Pro-Choice America Foundation, co-author, *The Networked Nonprofit*

*“Finally, someone has put everything you need to know about holding the gavel in one place! This is the book every board chair needs to keep close at hand. Fridman provides invaluable information and guidance to help both novice and veteran board chairs manage just about any challenge.”*

—Julie Marcus, President, Board of Trustees, Brookline Community Foundation