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Towards New Norms For Governance

IN THIS ISSUE:

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FEATURED

JANNICE MOORE
PRESIDENT

This issue is all about reflection, and learning. When I look back over the last several years, there are things I wish hadn't happened. However, as the saying goes, every cloud has a silver lining. For me, that has included:

~ A technology learning curve in 6 months that normally would have taken me several years.

~ An even greater appreciation for our consulting and administrative team, who stepped up to do whatever was necessary.

~ A greater appreciation for and admiration of our clients, who have persevered through difficult times.

~ Recognizing the importance of staying connected, in whatever ways possible, with family, friends, neighbours, inventing creative ways to make that happen.

As you think about your organization and your board, what are the silver linings for you? On reflection, what can you learn, and take forward into whatever life brings next? I hope the dialogues in this issue will trigger some thoughts for you, and challenge you to make some plans for how to retain and enhance that learning.

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Jannice Moore

Editor's Note

Summer is great time to relax and rejuvenate....please enjoy and we hope to see you at one of our fall events or virtual workshops!!!

Marian

Marian Hamilton
Editor

Towards New Norms For Governance

In this issue we asked some of our consultants to look back on the past two years, living and working through the COVID pandemic. They've observed the impact on boards, what effect that impact might have on what they do in the future, and how they handle their governance responsibilities. These articles are in the form of questions and answers.

The contributors to the articles following are listed here:

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Board Meetings

How have you seen board meetings affected by being forced into the virtual world?

Rose Mercier: In the past two years, I see board meetings as having been affected by working online in two ways. It has been much harder to build and sustain the interpersonal relationships that are essential to effective teamwork. Board meetings have become more perfunctory.

Boards were still able to attend to the work that was needed, but meetings seemed to be "all head." There has been less engagement at the emotional/social level. Gone were the casual conversations over lunch or coffee, the exchange of family news, relaxing over an evening meal, although Jackson College got creative. Prior to the pandemic, board meetings included the college's fabulous fresh baked cookies. When the pandemic required virtual meetings, the College restaurant delivered those treats to each Trustee in advance of each meeting.

Board members in their virtual meetings saw each other in their home working setting, but it's been somewhat two dimensional. Think about the number of times that a board member turned off their camera because of internet instability. Meetings have been effective but have lost some of the soul that lifts the satisfaction of working out of the ordinary.

Jan Moore: It seems the pandemic has exacerbated the prevalence of hackers, and cybercrime in general. I think boards are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of establishing secure methods of communicating online, whether it be using a commercial board portal, or developing their own, to avoid board business being conducted by email and less secure methods.

Rose: Boards have found ways to conduct meeting evaluations and provide board education. Finding ways to make sure these processes continued is a real credit to boards' commitment to govern effectively on behalf of their owners.

Have you observed any positive outcomes from the enforced move to the virtual world that can continue as a "new norm" for board meetings?

Rose: I think boards have discovered an upside of this extended period of figuring out the virtual world. Boards that might not have considered virtual meetings in the past have realized there are benefits from effectively using online technologies. Meetings can be efficiently managed without being face-to-face and there are cost savings when boards forgo travel and accommodation expenses, savings which can be applied to events which are better in person, board retreats, for example.

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BOARD EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

How have boards that are interested in learning more about effective governance been able to move ahead in the last while?

Eric Phinney: I currently sit on a board that is not yet using Policy Governance®, but interested in improving.

After two years of not meeting face to face there is a big need to find a way to do some of the things that need to be done. This board was desperate to begin developing better governance. It was not ready to engage in a full transition to Policy Governance but it was ready to take some baby steps.

I suggested it respond to the desire to "update the strategic plan" by talking about strategic direction and how that is more what the board needs to be thinking of. I did some preliminary teaching with the executive committee around the responsibility of the board to set direction and talk about the benefits that it provided to various beneficiaries and in what order or priority. They agreed that this was a new way of thinking for them that would prove refreshing and creative.

The next step was to get buy in from the rest of the board. I developed a Google survey that asked a number of questions that would bring forward the true Ends of the organization. In the survey were questions that would help everyone understand the difference between the "what do we do" and the "how will we do it." The survey revealed that while there was a good amount of clarity around what the Ends were, there was some confusion around who sets the "program."

Our next step will be a face-to-face meeting where we can continue to teach a bit about Ends and Executive Limitations while we develop a Strategic Direction statement (Ends) . This may motivate the board to take the step to full implementation of Policy Governance.

Jan Moore: In the first 6 months or so of the pandemic, I think education was the farthest thing from many boards' priorities. Attention was given to ensuring staff and client safety took priority and that was appropriate. Then my sense was that education was postponed because the desire was to just "wait until this is over" and get back to the usual approaches to education.

However, as the pandemic dragged on, a significant number of boards recognized that they couldn't put off education forever. Interest in virtual education increased, with positive results. While there are obviously some aspects of education that would be preferred in a face-to-face setting, there is a lot that can be done virtually.

Richard Stringham: Online, work at your own pace learning works better for some than others. Consequently, some boards opted for other forms of online delivery. For example, both De La Salle Collegiate and McGregor Clinic chose to have four 90-minute live webinar sessions for an introduction to Policy Governance. Because there were no travel costs involved, breaking the delivery into a series of shorter sessions was not only more economical, it was also preferable to a full day of video-conferencing.

As many boards became increasingly comfortable with video-conferencing, they looked at other ways of enhancing their understanding of Policy Governance. The board of Hanover Consumer Co-operative Society held Q&A sessions which were dubbed: "The Governance Coach's Office Hours." Board members used the scheduled real-time sessions to seek out answers to their thornier challenges in applying Policy Governance.

Not all of the education innovations were virtual. With more frequent and shorter board meetings, the Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of New-foundland and Labrador started to include short 10 to 15-minute recordings of Policy Governance presentations in their regular meetings.

As pandemic restrictions began to loosen, the demand for in-person training has picked up and we are now
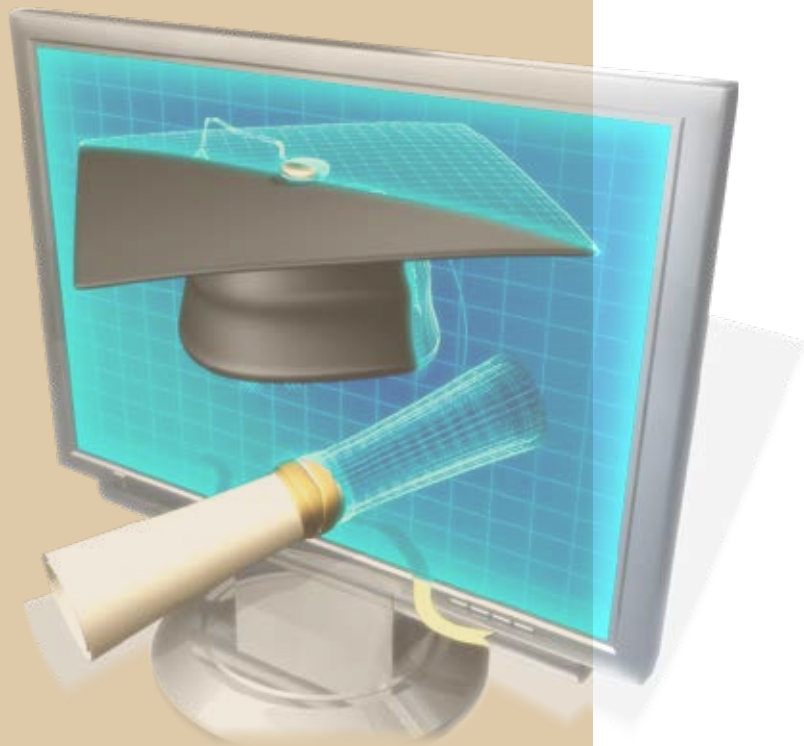
getting back on airplanes and into hotels. At the same time, we've observed boards using a prudent combination of online training and in-person delivery. For example, the boards of the Community Associations Institute and the Red Deer Polytechnic each opted to participate in The Governance Coach Online virtual programs. However, instead of the live webinars which normally are a part of the online training, each board held in-person sessions which not only took the place of the live webinars, but also enabled the participants to explore deeper concepts and issues.

Rose Mercier: I think boards should give themselves credit for taking advantage of online courses for orientation or board education where boards would likely have hesitated to use such tools prior to the pandemic. Here at The Governance Coach™ we've found that a well-designed hybrid course, with virtual video instruction, readings, and interactive questions, combined with live Zoom meetings with a consultant, offers a very robust learning experience. Our courses include an Introduction to Policy Governance, Writing Monitoring Reports (for CEOs and admin teams) and Assessing Monitoring Reports (for boards). Three or four years from now when they look back on these two years, I believe they will see this as a time when they became more flexible and open

to doing things differently. Boards will hopefully appreciate the flexibility they gained in the way they employ a variety of approaches to conducting board business.

Richard: I agree. The flexibility of multiple delivery methods, combining shorter segments, multiple on-line sessions, and in-person sessions enables a board to customize education content to best fit its needs.

. . . .

"...when boards look back on these two years, I believe they will see this as a time when they became more flexible and open to doing things differently."

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Community Engagement

One of the jobs of an accountable board is making connections with those on whose behalf it governs (what we call "moral owners" in Policy Governance® jargon) to understand their values and perspectives. How have boards been able to handle this responsibility?

Rose Mercier: Early in the pandemic when everyone was rethinking how to carry on with what was important, I saw boards, metaphorically anyway, throw their hands in the air. Any plans for linking with owners, particularly where it involved meeting face-to-face, were reluctantly shelved. It was disappointing after having spent a lot of time identifying the groups with whom they wanted to speak and the questions they wanted to ask. Then suddenly, everything came to a halt. Some boards have put ownership linkage on the back burner. Not unexpectedly, it seemed less pressing than figuring out how the board was going to function.

We know now that boards adapted to the online environment. Some boards experimented with online focus groups but it was complicated by varying levels of comfort with the technology - by both board members and focus group participants. However, even though ownership linkage activities were put aside, boards did not lose sight of the importance of connecting with those on whose behalf they govern. Most were anxious to begin again once restrictions began loosening.

Yet it wasn't a case of carrying on with previous plans. It seems cliché to say, but wise boards realized the "world had changed." The context in which they were operating was very different and they realized it was necessary to rethink their linkage plans.

One of the threads in ownership linkage planning has been developing questions that explore how perspectives have shifted for the various segments of an organizations' owners. It has been essential for boards to seek to understand how values have evolved or shifted in the past two years. In addition, boards realized their questions had to elicit responses about how the past two years have shaped what owners see as the most important impacts the organization should be creating and for whom.

Richard Stringham: What's the most common phrase uttered during the pandemic?
"You're muted!"

Of course, each of us has been the subject of that comment. At first we all scrambled to fix the problem, then later we laughed about it. Have you noticed it hardly happens anymore? It's a sign of how comfortable so many of us became with the technologies during the pandemic. The opportunity to connect with owners using virtual platforms grew exponentially.

The basics of linkage continue regardless of the technology. Ask ownership questions rather than customer questions. Use methods suitable for open ended questions, such as online focus groups, to expand the board's understanding of the range of ownership perspectives. Use methods that are suitable for determining priorities from the range of perspectives such as surveys with closed ended questions, ratings, and rankings to get a representative sampling of perspectives.

Rose: Moving forward, wise boards will keep front and centre the need to continuously collect and reflect on input from their owners. Boards that take the time to reflect will truly appreciate the impact that context and shifting values can have on strategic direction, One hopes that there are no future seismic shifts like the one we have been experiencing since 2020; its lessons have been profound and have reinforced the essential nature of connecting with those on whose behalf the board is governing.

Policy
DEVELOPMENT

How have boards adapted to the challenge of developing or refining policies that they were used to doing in face-to-face meetings?

Rose Mercier: I can share some experience related to the initial development of Ends. Like many board members, I believed that Ends policy development was best conducted in person, that discussions about the results that should be produced by the organization required heart-to-heart conversations. But in reality, boards still wanted to adopt Policy Governance and needed to develop Ends policy to move forward, so it was necessary to find other ways.

I began using a three-part process: we began with a large question on Survey Monkey such as, if you were looking back five years from now, what would have had to have happened or be different in order for you to be satisfied with the results your organization has produced? We allowed board members to input as many responses as they wished.

Then it became a matter of downloading and organizing the responses – either in breakout rooms or with a small board committee. There was always a need to sort out means from Ends statements and statements that might become Ends.

Eventually, after two or three drafts were produced through an iterative process where the board provided input, the result was a set of Ends policies that the board felt expressed their values about the strategic direction of their organization. Boards that used this approach were pleased with the results. They did not think the policies they developed were of any lesser quality because they weren't developed while sitting together. I saw participants in the process pay very careful attention to the words that were written on the Word or Google Doc file. Seeing the policies take shape on the screen in front of them without distraction resulted in some very thoughtful discussions. Having time between each session also provided helpful reflection time. As with all of a board's work in the past two years, boards have learned that they are able to govern effectively using available tools and that if you focus on the result to be produced, there are approaches that will work.

Richard Stringham: My experiences and observations in working with virtual online development of Ends policies are much the same as Rose's. With the right combination of collaborative tools, boards can craft well-constructed Ends policies.

The challenge is to ensure that, at some point, all board members are engaged in a meaningful manner in real time. This is critical. Ends are such important decisions that the board cannot afford to delegate this to

a committee to develop Ends and then come back to the board for rubber stamp approval. It needs board members to be fully engaged in deliberating every line of policy. As Rose pointed out, careful attention is needed by all board members.
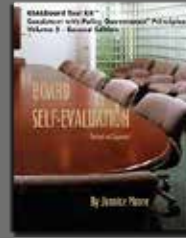
By the way, this isn't unique to online policy development. Prior to the pandemic, I learned that having a committee prepare a draft of Ends which gets little more than a cursory review and revisions by the full board will be viewed by board members as a side-piece. The risk of that taking place is higher when doing virtual policy development, so the methods used must avoid that outcome.

Eric Phinney: There is also routine policy review and the development of other Executive Limitation and Governance Process policies. In one organization that I was chairing, prior to the pandemic, we had begun to utilize Google Docs to do most of this work prior to a face-to-face meeting. This really worked well, in that the Policy Review Committee could do a review, suggest some changes and then put the document out to the rest of the directors for input and discussion. By using "Suggest Mode" in Google Docs we could easily track the changes and accept or modify changes.

When we were no longer able to meet face to face we simply added a colour coded master control document that would indicate what stage a particular policy was at. The hyper linked policy titles were coded with a colour that indicated if they were in discussion, ready for an online vote, approved by the online vote, or finally ratified by an online meeting. If there was a point that required more discussion it could be dealt with during a Zoom or face-to-face. Overall, this process cut down the amount of time needed for policy review and development during Zoom and face-to-face meetings, while still enabling active input from the whole board. Most routine reviews and new policy documents all go through this process now, and likely will not return to a lot of face-to-face work.

Rose: Going forward, we hope that boards will not opt for a return to 'old ways'. Rather they should consider how and what they were able to accomplish and apply it going forward. For example, technology should not be seen as an "add on" but used to its fullest potential.

EVALUATION OF CEO PERFORMANCE

How did boards handle evaluating the CEO's performance in relation to staff safety and other issues during the pandemic?

Andrew Bergen: A couple of the boards I worked with really struggled in this area - particularly related to staff safety. These two boards began to wonder if their Executive Limitations policies relating to staff safety were sufficient enough as they didn't mention COVID or, more generally, pandemic response of any kind. One of these two boards in particular then believed that since they perceived a gap, it was their duty to step in and direct and monitor staff safety related to COVID-19. They made decisions about office design, work from home procedures, etc.

As I worked with them through this, we examined the policies to discover that staff safety during a pandemic was addressed, even if the word "pandemic" wasn't used. They did indeed have values about staff safety that would apply across the board, regardless of what the particular threat to safety might be (flood, violence, pandemic, etc.) even if those specific words aren't named. For example, their Executive Limitations policy placed it off limits for the CEO to provide a work environment that is unsafe for staff. This was further defined in lower policy levels by stating the CEO shall not allow staff to be prepared to deal with emergency situations.

The first step is to examine policies not necessarily for specific words, but for the values that are expressed there.

Do the values in current policy address the board's concern in the area under discussion? Of course, if more specific wording is deemed necessary for clarity those specific values should be expressed. But recognize first that the values the board is concerned about are likely already expressed at some level.

Jan Moore: I agree with Andrew. Several of my clients instituted a special monitoring report related to any aspect of the policies that could be impacted by the special circumstances of the pandemic. The boards found this approach kept them up to date and feeling confident that values related not only to staff safety, but to client safety, and financial stability, to name a few more, were being adhered to, without the board having to become involved in operational details.

Andrew: Further, if the board is worried about how its current policy is being applied in *any* emergent situation, , it would be appropriate for a board to ask the CEO for a special monitoring report, rather than stepping in and directing the work. The board I was working with indeed did ask the CEO to return with their interpretation of relevant policy statements as they apply to the current safety challenges (global pandemic, or potentially any other concern that arises at any time in the future). The board had the assurance that the CEO is ensuring the board's values about staff safety are being satisfied.

This process of special monitoring reports can apply to any board concern or current board policy .Concerns about

finances, treatment of staff and customers, achievement of Ends can all be addressed by: 1) identifying the board has captured its values in current policy and 2) asking for monitoring data to ensure there is compliance at any given time.

Do you have any thoughts about how boards might mitigate effects of the Great Resignation?

Jan: Although it's always been true, one of the things we see highlighted now—and it's partly to do with the pandemic, being isolated, and rethinking how life could be different—is people want work that has meaning. They're more likely to stay at an organization if they can connect with its purpose. In organizations with boards that practice Policy Governance well, CEOs are empowered with more freedom and creativity in determining how best to achieve the desired results, and this makes the CEO's job far more meaningful. The CEO can help that connectedness permeate the entire organization, so people can see how the work they do, whether it's accounting, program management, or IT ties into and supports that greater purpose. I think organizations where this feeling of being connected to the organization's purpose, and it aligning meaningfully with their own values, can result in more stability for CEOs and employees overall.

Toward New Norms

What might be the consequences for boards that don't reflect on what they have learned in this time?

Jeffery Schau: Two words - Missed Opportunities. Growth is often accelerated during times of struggle as it is through these struggles we are challenged, pushed out of our comfort zone, and have our current ways put to the test. I have seen this play out in my personal life countless times. Even though some of those challenges were so rough I would never want to repeat them, I cherish what I was able to learn through the process.

The same opportunity for growth through challenging times exists for boards as well. The past two years will have tried the board - CEO relationship, tested the quality of policies and how they are monitored, and for some, even challenged the very nature of why the organization exists – the benefit it provides and to whom. Each of these challenges will provide opportunities: opportunities to re-evaluate, celebrate, learn, adapt, and refocus. We may not have been able to control much during the challenges of the last two years, but we can control what we learn from it.

If boards wanted to evaluate their performance over the past two years, what three questions do you think would help a board discuss what they have learned and how they could apply what they've learned?

Richard Stringham:

• What has been the impact of the changes we had to make to our previous way of doing board work on our ability to fulfill our expectations of ourselves as stated in our policies? Are there ways that we've improved in fulfilling those expectations? Ways that we have been less effective?

• How might we combine the benefits of what we had to do during the pandemic with what we did prior to the pandemic for greater effectiveness?

• What was lost, if anything, in our board dynamics during the pandemic that we should regain?

Things to Think About in Moving toward the New Norm

by Rose Mercier, Richard Stringham, Jannice Moore

Board Meetings

• The importance of having secure ways of storing and sharing board documents and communicating online, such as board portals.

• Consider the potential for hybrid ways of handling board work in the future, potentially utilizing online pre-meeting preparation.

• Ensure relevant documents such as bylaws enable new meeting options.

• Ensure that board members, both current and candidates, have the technical know-how to work with online methods and tools.

• We are social beings! Find ways to take full advantage of in-person interactions. Balance the demand of in-person meeting with informal time.

• Make greater use of online tools to enable pre-meeting preparations by individual board members as well as collective information gathering and idea generation outside of real-time meetings.

• Ensure that decisions, especially those that require meaningful deliberation, are made in real-time meetings, whether in person or virtual.

• Be sensitive to tech fatigue. For example, online meetings should be shorter. People can be overwhelmed by the barrage of requests for online input and interaction.

• Carve out time to consider various possibilities of alternative futures in which your organization may have to function.

Board Education and Development

• Deliberately plan board education related to identifying and understanding new areas of risk such as cybersecurity, unanticipated events (the pandemic being one example that everyone seems to have known "could" happen – sometime - but very few were prepared when it did happen).

• Create an annual comprehensive education plan to address risks and explore potential futures in depth.

• Use online options to provide a standard orientation to incoming board members. It alleviates the variability of this important first introduction to Policy Governance® that happens when the responsibility for it changes hands each year. It also avoids having to add an extra meeting day. Because learning takes place over a longer duration, quick reviews improve the retention of ideas.

Community Engagement

• Develop questions which explore the shift in values and perspectives that will continue to evolve over the next few years. It is reasonable to assume that the pandemic's effects will affect the social and economic context in which many organizations exist.

- Given that most people have become more comfortable with online activities, develop plans for engagement that utilize the advantages of online approaches, and virtual sessions to gain fuller scope of input.

Policy Development

- Take advantage of asynchronous tools such as Google Docs that facilitate opportunities to participate in policy development. There is an advantage to considering a document on your own time outside of a meeting. When the policy arrives at the board meeting for approval, board members can be confident that there has been time for input.

- Incorporate the lessons from online policy development to strengthen the policy development process. Ends development can benefit from collecting online input and organizing ideas prior to face-to-face deliberation. This optimizes the values of in-person board time.

CEO Evaluation

- Stick with the basics for areas of concern, even if they are very specific concerns . What has the board said in its policies? What is the CEO's interpretation of those policies as they apply to the specific concern? Is the interpretation reasonable? What is the evidence of compliance?

What actions will YOU take?

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PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON A CAREER IN POLICY GOVERNANCE®: AN INTERVIEW WITH JANNICE MOORE

In a recent Zoom interview, Jannice Moore answered questions about her career of nearly 30 years in Policy Governance®. She revealed why this form of governance first captured and then sustained her interest, spoke candidly about the origins of The Governance Coach™ and her early lessons as a new consultant, and reflected on her impact as a coach and leader.

Can you tell us about how and why you started The Governance Coach to focus on Policy Governance?

That's a long story. I first heard about Policy Governance at a provincial health association, where I directed the department that provided education to the board members and CEOs of our membership. A colleague in another area told me about John Carver, and I invited him to speak at a trustee conference. John later told me that it was the first time he'd spoken in Canada—does that give me bragging rights about the influence of Policy Governance here? I sat in on his session and was blown away by the potential of the model. In fact, I was hooked, but I also enjoyed the job I was doing, and had no incentive to make the leap to start a consulting business. I invited John back for other courses, and by a process of osmosis, Policy Governance became part of me. Every now and then, I'd think about hanging out a shingle, but I was too comfortable. Then, in 1994, the government initiated a major change in the organization of health services, and suddenly, I was out of a job. I knew Policy Governance could make a difference for boards, but was I prepared to take the risk of no guaranteed income? I have a strong faith, and I could tell a separate story about how I clearly knew that this was the direction God had planned for my life. The bottom line is that I started The Governance Coach that year. Clearly there was a need, because within three months, I was busy full time, and I've never looked back.

What's the first change you typically see when boards move to Policy Governance?

The first major change is that they stop spending most of their time reviewing reports about operational activities and trying to "help" management, and they start focusing on setting and expecting actual results. This shift requires role clarity. They often start out not being entirely sure of what's the board's role and what belongs to the CEO, and then through Policy Governance, they define clear, mutually-exclusive roles.

What about other changes and impacts?

When boards stay with Policy Governance, they spend much more time thinking strategically, and thinking about the future, so they can set the organization on a path that will be relevant in the future. And not just be relevant, but influence and even shape a future that's meaningful for the organization and those it serves.

I also see boards move from reactionary, fire-fighting approaches to risk management, to becoming proactive, through setting good Executive Limitations, and then tying those limitations to the board's understanding of the environmental factors that affect the organization's future. Then, they're *governing* risk management rather than d*oing* risk management. When they're proactive, they can proceed with confidence that they're protecting the organization's assets.

How has Policy Governance changed or advanced?

The principles of Policy Governance haven't changed since the model was developed, but as more boards are using it, I've seen a shift in what's considered best practice for *application* of the principles. For example, there's more clarity about what good monitoring of executive performance looks like, with clear measures and evidence to demonstrate compliance with policies. They understand that the first key question about a monitoring report isn't, "Do I agree with this interpretation" but "Could a reasonable person have made it". There's also a better understanding of ways to do ownership linkage, and now, how to do it in a time when much work is done virtually.

What is the change in approach you see in boards that use Policy Governance?

Although often boards come to us asking for governance training, the work that really needs to be done goes much deeper. Initially, they think they need to be hands-on or super-managers, or else they just say yes to whatever the CEO suggests. After they understand their role, they realize they're there for the people on whose behalf they govern. With practice and commitment, that leads to a higher-functioning role in which they're future-focused, proactive, and actually designing a legacy that shapes the future. That's why I am so passionate about it. It's knowing—and having seen the results of—that kind of long-term legacy-creation that continues to keep me working with them.

Can you talk about some of the most striking before-and-after examples of Policy Governance?

Too many to discuss in one sitting! The chair of one board I've worked with has described their board's before-and-after transformation as "from problem child to poster child."

I'm thinking, though, of a school board that was a textbook example of death by micromanagement. They were literally issuing detailed operational instructions to the CEO, and there was minimal internal accountability. But they committed to Policy Governance, and after defining their policies and setting up a proper monitoring system, they let management manage. They spent a lot of time talking with the people on whose behalf they were governing. In the end, there were huge positive results, for students especially. Their learning outcomes and progression through school improved dramatically. Really, what's a school about, if not to help prepare students for success in life?

Can you share a few things that have been particularly meaningful in your consulting work?

One of the great pleasures of consulting is watching the light bulbs go on in people's heads when they "get" the potential of how Policy Governance can help their board excel. I truly believe

boards can make a huge difference in the effectiveness of their organizations, and thus make a difference for good in the world. It's the satisfaction of knowing that, in a small way, I can help make that happen, that has kept me continuing to do this work.

Besides, it's fun! I get to know so many fascinating and amazing people, and there's so much collective wisdom in the boards I've worked with. As a coach with a long-term connection with them, I find it very rewarding and exciting to watch that energy come to life in a new way, with positive results for the people they serve.

A side benefit has been the opportunity to travel to beautiful parts of the world that I likely wouldn't have visited otherwise. I've had the privilege of being invited to share in cultural activities in small communities and experienced everything from 5 a.m. fishing trips in northern Canada (followed by a board meeting later in the day), to a helicopter landing in a private vineyard complete with a tour of the owner's wine cellar, to a European dinner in an everything-on-the-menu-has-truffles restaurant.

What would the Jan Moore of 2022 say to the Jan Moore of 1994, the year you founded The Governance Coach?

I'm afraid I'd have a lot to say—experience is a great teacher! Number one, I'd tell 1994 Jan to offer coaching from the start. When I started, I'd work through policy development with a board and then basically say, "Good luck!" Checking back a few months later, it didn't take long for me to see that they'd gotten off-track without even knowing it. I quickly realized that coaching and ongoing support were essential to help clients continue in the right direction. They needed practical tools that worked, to help them apply key principles. That got me started on developing "Tool Kits" and writing accessible reference materials. I also started offering regular coaching, to give them a chance to build up their Policy Governance muscles under expert guidance. And even after, just like the most high-performing teams always have a coach, governance boards need a coach

to help them excel. I guess you might say I changed my practice from just facilitator to coach.

Number two, I'd tell 1994 Jan that she should roll out Policy Governance in a different order and at a different pace. When I started out, I'd help clients develop policies, then learn how to do monitoring, and then maybe in the middle of Year 2, we'd work on ownership linkage. Now, we still do the first part, but we bring in ownership linkage right away. When boards are used to getting involved in operational details, and then Policy Governance has them stop doing that, it creates a vacuum. We fill it with ownership linkage work, because connecting with owners is the most meaningful, high-value job the board can ever do. Also, I'd tell 1994 me to work closely at the start with the CEO on developing good monitoring reports to build trust. Boards can move forward more quickly with Policy Governance when they know they haven't just given away the farm. It helps them avoid getting stuck in the mechanics of Policy Governance, as they fine tune their agendas to have more of a future focus.

Number three, I'd tell 1994 Jan to build a support team and a consulting team sooner. We share ideas and bounce ideas off each other. The sum of all of us working together is greater than the sum of all of us working solo.

On the lighter side, I'd tell the 1994 me to be sure to wear comfortable shoes. After a workshop, the questions can go on for a long time!

Looking back on your career, how were you able to live true to your values?

As a person of faith, my two key values are integrity and servant leadership. They form the foundation of the commitment I make to clients, and that I expect everyone on the team to make. I try never to over-promise, but rather to over-deliver, to provide true value. I see my role as a coach to be that of serving my clients, respecting the work they've done in the past, even if some of it needs to change.

I'm also committed to excellence in whatever work our team members do. This means continuous learning, which is why

my desk is usually piled with articles and books to keep up with what's happening in the world relevant to governance. Our team shares perspectives and experiences to maintain a level of excellence in our work. I learn from them, and from my clients.

As a coach, applying the value of servant-leadership means starting where my clients are and walking alongside them. If a board is willing to commit to Policy Governance, and not just dabble in it or cherry-pick principles, I'll work at their pace. But sometimes being a servant-leader means having to say, "No, I won't work with you." I learned through a few spectacular failures that even if a board chair is adamant about the need for Policy Governance, if a majority of board members are against it or not prepared to commit to it, then it won't work. On the other hand, if there's buy-in from a majority of the board, often the most vocal critics become the most vocal proponents when they see that Policy Governance actually works!

What impact do you think Policy Governance has had?

Earlier, I mentioned a couple of before-and-after examples. Other examples include a college that attributed increased staff morale and student enrollment directly to Policy Governance; credit unions that are providing increased benefits for members; a social services agency whose CEO and team had the freedom to innovate and provide new housing for people with disabilities; churches with a new sense of urgency around results; an agency that transitioned from membership association to regulatory body with a harmonious relationship between the board and management throughout the transition; and a small company that generated increased returns for shareholders because the CEO had authority to act quickly in a changing market.

My team and I have worked with more than 500 boards since I started The Governance Coach. Most boards are truly responsible and genuinely seek to shape meaningful futures for their organizations, but they aren't sure how to go about it. The Policy Governance system is an amazingly powerful tool to help them achieve that, which I believe clients who've stuck with coaching would corroborate. I feel privileged to able to contribute to this work.

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