

Spring/Summer 2003
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Look out for our Fall Issue
August 1, 2003

Governing Excellence

The Voice of the International Policy Governance Association

News Headlines

6th International Symposium – October 2003

Join colleagues in Toronto, Ontario, Canada from October 16 - 18, 2003 for the 6th International Carver Policy Governance Symposium. The symposium theme is "**The Ends Cycle**" and will include in depth exploration of the following parts of the cycle: *Board Ends Policy Development* - group processes that work; critical examination of Ends policies; *Implementation of Ends Policies* - what staff do with Board Ends; how Ends policies impact the organization, & *Monitoring Ends Policies* - challenges in measuring;. The format of the symposium will be highly interactive, thought-provoking and collegial. The registration fee will be \$795 Cdn. More details will follow shortly.

New Book

Some readers will be familiar with the concept of **governance rehearsal** introduced by Miriam Carver at the June 2001 International Policy Governance Symposium. The good news is that in February 2004 you will be able to 'read-all-about-it' for Miriam and IPGA board member Bill Charney are co-writing a book that will help us all to get involved using a wealth of practical examples.

IPGA Conferences - 2004

IPGA will be sponsoring two regional conferences (east and west regions) in 2004 for users of Policy Governance,

consultants and others who support or are interested in Owner-Accountable, Effective Governance. Further details of these events will be provided throughout the remainder of this year. Susan Mogensen is coordinating these events. Members are requested to provide any thoughts on conference content directly to Susan at susan@browndogconsulting.com.

IPGA Board Update

The IPGA board met on December 15, 2002 and by teleconference on March 11. In December the board conducted an Ends review and revised its Executive Limitations policy on Management and Treatment of Membership. Subsequent ownership linkage resulted in much useful comment which the board will be considering at its next in-person meeting in the Fall 2003. The next IPGA board teleconference meeting is being held on August 12.

Public Conferences Coming Up

May 16 and 17: '**Reinventing Your Board**' sponsored by the Adams 12 Five Star Schools Board of Education, Thornton, Colorado. Featuring Miriam Carver, Peggy Burns, Bill Charney and Caroline Oliver. Call: (720) 972 4007

May 22: '**Boards That Make a Difference**' sponsored by York University's Nonprofit Management and Leadership Program, Toronto. Featuring John Carver. **SOLD OUT.**

May 27, 28, 29: '**Policy Governance Seminar Series**' sponsored by QNET, Winnipeg. Featuring Miriam Carver. Call (204) 949 4999

June 2: '**Policy Governance as Applied to Corporations**' sponsored by QNET, Winnipeg. Featuring Caroline Oliver. Call (204) 949 4999

Collective Capacity

"In the end, an organization is nothing more than the collective capacity of its people to create value."

— Louis V. Gerstner Jr., in *'Who Says Elephants Can't Dance: Inside IBM's Historic Turnaround'* Harper Collins Nov 2002 -



And Another Thing From the General Editor

I recently had the privilege of acting as a 'Thought Leader' for a program on Ethical Governance run by The Banff Centre in Canada.

The aim of the program was to explore leaders' responsibility to create a

climate of integrity using creativity processes including theatre-based methods. One of the many great things I came away with was the following definition of leadership that to me speaks volumes about board work and the importance of policy:

"Leadership is about making shared meaning out of complexity".*

** From 'The Leader's Edge: Six Creative Competencies for Navigating Complex Challenges' by David Magellen Horth and Charles J. Palus, both of The Center for Creative Leadership, Greensboro, North Carolina, USA*

Policy Governance® in a Very Tiny Nutshell

And ... talking of making meaning out of complexity ... how about this attempt to explain Policy Governance as briefly as possible?

....how about this attempt to explain Policy Governance as briefly as possible?

Policy Governance® is a system that any board can use for owner-accountable governance while allowing the fullest possible delegation to others.

And ... going to the next level of explanation

Policy Governance captures board expertise in specially formatted and succinct controls covering all possible owner concerns.

Boards using Policy Governance:

- 1) *Always make big decisions before smaller ones.*
- 2) *Separate ends (desired organizational results and their relative worth for owners) from means (all other matters).*
- 3) *Separate essential board means from means that can be delegated.*
- 4) *Clearly delegate authority for all non-board action through one or more persons.*
- 5) *Create Ends policies which instruct delegate(s) about what to achieve, for whom with what relative worth.*
- 6) *Create Executive Limitations policies which prohibit delegate(s) from using unacceptable means.*
- 7) *Give delegate(s) the power to take actions and make decisions within any reasonable interpretation of board policies.*
- 8) *Establish a rigorous policy monitoring schedule.*
- 9) *Continually evaluate performance (their own and others') against board policies.*
- 10) *Never, never consider any issue without first examining what they have already said in policy!*

The Best of Policy Governance - Thames Valley Children's Centre -

Based on an interview with James Bennett, Board Chair and John A LaPorta, Chief Executive Officer www.tvcc.on.ca

The TVCC Board adopted Policy Governance in 1995. The Board recognized that it had not been functioning as effectively as it could and had become too involved in the day-to-day operations of the Centre. A special governance committee was struck to explore governance models and options, and to recommend a preferred approach.

The Board was totally united in its final decision to adopt Policy Governance. The governance committee performed an outstanding job of educating Board members on the benefits, rationale and behavioral elements of Policy Governance.

They have maintained a strong commitment by continually reviewing Policy Governance principles and asking themselves (aloud and within), whether or not they should be dealing with specific issues, what information they need to make a decision, and how to best provide the environment for initiative and leadership. (See their "Board Member Mindset" which is a helpful tool they use during the orientation of all new Board members.)

The biggest challenge for the Board has been to understand the day-to-day issues but stay out of the day-to-day decision making. The biggest challenge for the CEO and management team has been condensing a wealth of information into the essential aspects necessary for the board to fulfill its responsibilities while also making sure that the Board feels in touch with the Centre's operations.

Mr. Bennett stated "the biggest benefit for the Board has been that Policy Governance has allowed us to be

forward thinking and focus on the Centre's vision. This has served us very well in the current environment. TVCC would be a vastly different organization, and possibly one serving significantly fewer clients if the Board had spent the previous years focused on reacting to external pressures and operational issues."

Dr. LaPorta voiced that the "biggest benefit for the CEO and management team has been a strong partnership and synergy with the Board. This integrated, bonded leadership has provided a very solid foundation for all the Centre's staff.

They both point out that the attention to the Centre's clients, vision and mission has been striking in its intensity and clarity. "There is a remarkable single-mindedness of purpose in our organization which was noted specifically in our last survey by the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation".

They see their Policy Governance path as having been very positive. Their experience suggests that initially it is a good idea to give Board members more information than they require until they can be comfortable with delegating decision-making. To integrate this philosophy into your Board's approach, they recommend that you educate everyone on the elements and benefits, reinforce it a lot in the first two years, and keep it alive with new Board members.

To other boards considering Policy Governance they would say "do it now – don't wait". Policy Governance allows boards to focus on the organization's vision, and provide more effective and efficient board and management dialogue and interaction.

They see their Centre's future very positively as "TVCC does not rely on one or two strong board members to set priorities or effect change. Every board member is focused on the vision, which drives and focuses every decision and action taken".

Thames Valley  Children's Centre

BOARD MEMBER MINDSET*

- 1) We are unpaid representatives of the community. Our allegiance is to the community.
- 2) The community has allocated significant funds to TVCC.
- 3) Our responsibility is to ensure that these funds provide optimal benefit to the community.
- 4) We are here to learn, monitor and prescribe the direction of the Centre.
Learn: Time and effort are required to understand the key elements of the Centre.
Monitor: Decisions and decision-makers must be held accountable through diligent monitoring of outcomes.
Prescribe: The Board is charged with guiding the Centre's direction for optimal community gain.
- 5) While **prescribing and monitoring the ends** we will **stay out of the means**.
Ends: Goals and results – set and monitored by the Board. What we want.
Means: Method of achieving ends – at discretion of the Management. How it is accomplished.
The Board's only responsibility regarding means is setting ethical and legal parameters within which the means must be accomplished.
- 6) We are cognizant of our delegation / accountability model. We communicate for the community, through the Chief Executive Officer.
Community – Board - C.E.O. - Staff
- 7) Amongst Board and Management, there is a spirit of cooperation and an assumption of trust.

BENEFITS

- 1) Ensures that we, as a Board, are all approaching issues from common ground.
- 2) Ensures that our appropriate perspective is maintained as we address various issues.
- 3) Creates an environment that attracts, retains and fosters strong managers.

**Based largely on the Carver Board Management Model.*

Analogies That Communicate - The Right of Way

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Introduction

Understanding Policy Governance® is both easy and difficult. Its concepts are not particularly difficult to grasp, but their implications are not always easily seen. Part of this difficulty comes from Policy Governance® being viewed through a management framework, which doesn't quite catch or represent the uniquenesses of the model well. Therefore, analogies that use traditional management structures tend to reinforce biases rather than change them. New perspectives or analogies that draw from non-management and non-governance situations may be better in the long run for helping others understand how the model works.

An Analogy

An analogy that seems to work is the rule about the right-of-way when driving.

In recent years my kids have all reached driving age and I have had to revisit the rules in my efforts to help them pass the written and practical parts of the exam.

Somewhere in this process, I realized that either the rules had changed or I had reinterpreted them to fit my own perspective.

I had always thought that pedestrians had the right-of-way over automobiles. This is almost right, but not quite. The actual law, at least in Missouri, is that automobiles are to "yield" the right-of-way to pedestrians. This doesn't sound like a big difference but it is.

Take the example of a pedestrian starting to cross the street at a corner with a stop sign. A car pulls up to the stop sign, stops, but then rolls a few inches ahead. The pedestrian, not being sure what the car is going to do hesitates. The car not being sure what the pedestrian is going to do, hesitates. The pedestrian moves; the car moves. They both stop again. There is now a dilemma about who shall go first even though the law is clear that the car should yield the right-of-way.

If you interpret the law the way I used to, then the pedestrian had the right-of-way and should have kept moving. Easy to say, but in real life cars tend to win in collisions with people even when the person had the right-of-way, just as Boards tend to win in collisions with the Executive. My new perspective on the right-of-way being more correctly seen as "yield the right-of-way" says that the car should have stopped, and stay stopped until it was clear what the pedestrian was going to do and completed that action.

Policy Governance® Implications

This analogy sets a framework to better understand the role of limitations and the relationship that it constructs between a Board and Executive.

Limitations apply as much to the Board as they do to the Executive, if not more so. The Board, just as the car, must allow the Executive to operate within the limitations. For Policy Governance® to work well, and avoid herky-jerky movements, the Board has to "Yield the Right-of-Way." Boards making comments, suggestions, and even asking non-monitoring questions, can all be akin to rolling ahead a few inches.

Does this mean that the Executive can do whatever he or she wants? Emphatically "NO." If the Executive decides to jaywalk, crossing where there is no crosswalk, he or she is likely to be sideswiped as the Board goes about its own business or enforces its limitations. In any case the Executive must always "Yield the Right-of-Way" on all items that do not fit within a reasonable interpretation of Ends and Limitations, or are clearly Board prerogatives – such as Board Self-Management.

One final point is about what happens if the Executive decides to "not" cross the street or fails to cross the street, therefore not accomplishing the Ends of the organization. When the car has clearly stopped and stays stationary, the pedestrian cannot blame the car for not being able to cross.

The choice to cross or not cross is now clearly the pedestrian's, and its accomplishment is based on the pedestrian's ability and desire. To not cross means that the pedestrian is lacking ability, desire, or both and probably means that the Board has the wrong Executive. Yielding the right-of-way is a powerful tool in allowing true executive performance to show through.

Lynn A. Walker



HOT TIP!! WORKING WITH POLICY TEMPLATES

from

Richard M. Biery, M.D., MSPH, FACPM
President, The BroadBaker Group, Ltd.

Faced with facilitating my first policy blitz fresh from the Academy, my natural inclination to find faster, easier ways of doing things led me to use a laptop and a projector to lead the board through the template policies. I have never since done otherwise. Here is what I have learned.

I prepare the template policies in a word processing file (I use MS Word) with the client board's name in the header field and the date and signature lines in the footer field, (along with pagination, etc.). I like to divide the policies into 4 document files – a file for each Policy Governance quadrant. I arrange for a laptop and projector (and screen or light colored wall) and often e-mail the template policies to the contact person with whom I'm working for preloading onto the laptop. I also take a template back up floppy disk – something I've never regretted doing.

I arrange for or designate a "scribe," e.g. the board's recording secretary, who knows word processing. When the time comes to begin we project the template policies and use the 'zoom' command (under the 'View' tab in MS Word) to enlarge the view until a line of words will fill the width of the available screen (about 125% on my screen). This scale always has been readable by all the participants.

I have also learned that the use of a mouse, rather than touch-pad,

greatly eases things for the scribe and hence I always carry a small travel size mouse.

As I take the board through each policy all eyes are on the wording on the screen. The board quickly gets used to viewing the policies in this manner, as well as the way in which they are formatted, and begins to react constructively to the policy wording. The scribe is happy to have the benefit of automatic spell-checking and the viewers are glad that the text is legible so that they can concentrate on its meaning. Changes that seem to capture consensus, or make sense for further trial, can be made and the board can see the effect instantly.

MS Word can also be configured to show the changes using the 'track changes' command under the 'Tools' tab. If the board wishes to refer back to a previous policy quadrant, a second window can be opened and the two policies can be compared, even side-by-side!

In my experience boards very quickly find agreement around wording, provided there is agreement on the underlying value in question. However, even when there are some differences in values, I have found that this policy consideration method accelerates finding agreement in the form of acceptable wording.

The best scribe I ever had was the corporate counsel for one of my clients who sat in and then agreed

to be the scribe. Attorneys of course work with words all the time and this person did an excellent job – not leading the board (always a danger) but suggesting possible wording through difficult semantic situations.

Be sure the scribe saves to the hard drive frequently, and when the board is done, save also to a floppy. Any wording left for reconsideration should be highlighted. The policies can be passed out on floppies, (I provide a floppy and ask for a copy as well), sent by e-mail or printed and mailed. Except for final editing for typos and addition of a numbering system the policies are ready for the manual. No retyping; no checking notes - what the board saw when they came to agreement is what they get.

The same method can also be used for Ends development after the board has created a general structure using a flip chart or white board. As chair of a Policy Governance board, I also ask committees to prepare policy language options for projection.

I believe that several things make this process successful. People are now used to word processing and computer projection; projectors are now very light and very bright – no need to turn off room lights; and, last but not least, anything that saves time is always much supported and appreciated.

Best of luck!



Susan Mogenson of Brown Dog Consulting shares with IPGA members some observations garnered from her recent participation in corporate governance conferences in Toronto and Ottawa.

Susan is based in Ottawa, Canada and can be reached at: susan@browndogconsulting.com

What Policy Governance has to Offer Corporations

In two recent cases when I was invited to speak at conferences on corporate governance, I was originally asked to deliver a workshop on a topic other than Policy Governance. However in both instances the conference organizers changed their minds when they learned a bit about how relevant and practical the model is for boards of all kinds.

The demand for a solid governance model became much more apparent when listening to the presentations of the other speakers and when chatting during breaks and meals. At both conferences, high-level speakers from all walks of life brought their experience to the podium. We need greater clarity around the roles of directors vs. CEO and management, they said. We need clear relationships, stronger accountability, and better auditing processes, they said. Principles are the best way to go, said one. Written policies organized in a manual are wise, said another.

On and on it went, with never a mention of Policy Governance as the model that brings it all together. I could barely contain my anticipation as so many speakers seemed to bring the audience to a point somewhere after all heads began to nod but then stopped just short of mentioning or describing a real system everyone could use to implement all the good advice.

Luckily, I suppose, the role of pulling back the curtain to reveal Policy Governance fell to me in the delivery of my workshops, where model concepts were greeted with a mixture of interest, appreciation, surprise, and sometimes disbelief. Participants actually grappled with the idea of boards creating their own agendas, and crafting and adhering to their own policies. The “any reasonable interpretation” rule was readily accepted, but some struggled with framing executive limitations using proscriptive language. Clearly, the three-hour time allotment was enough to give an overview of the model, but little more. Many of the concepts and assumptions we take for granted have not yet taken root in the corporate world, despite the widespread similarity of thought that seemed to emerge from the other speakers’ presentations.

If there were a way to make an existing, fully functional system like Policy Governance a more prominent component of the conference agendas, and to include more time for deeper discussion of the basic principles, it would be a very good thing. Therefore, I would encourage fellow IPGA members to take full advantage of any public speaking opportunities they can find (even if a bit of explaining and arm-twisting is required to get the model on the agenda) and to participate whenever possible in governance conferences or workshops. Simply asking questions of the speakers and chatting with attendees at coffee breaks helps to raise the profile of the model, and despite not knowing what the Policy Governance is, exactly, rest assured everyone is asking for it. As avid supporters of owner-accountable effective governance, I am sure IPGA members are quite happy to fill that need.

FROM THE CEO

Our Challenge

My purpose for this article is to leave you in an inquiry, an inquiry into a challenge that impacts all of us - IPGA and all others who support *Owner-Accountable Effective Governance*. Many of you are already aware of this challenge in your own work. I am bringing this to the forefront, because I see meeting this challenge is critical to our being successful in achieving *Owner-Accountable Effective Governance*.

From my view our challenge is at least two-fold. One, we must engage the public in distinguishing owner-accountability as a crucial issue that underlies the effectiveness of our organizations and institutions. Two, we must dismantle and overcome the barriers hindering the widespread use of the only existing solution providing for owner accountability, Policy Governance®. It is this second part of our challenge that I am addressing in this article.

IPGA and its members see Policy Governance as a system of principles that makes sense and is usable by any organization interested in achieving the results it exists to achieve. We see Policy Governance as simple in concept and straightforward to implement and sustain when accompanied by an appropriate dosage of knowledge, commitment and discipline. Others, without our knowledge and understanding, may see it differently and therein lies our challenge.

When organizations implement Policy Governance without having full knowledge of its principles and design, they often experience Policy Governance as hard, time-consuming, demanding and not a good fit for their organization.

Faced with that experience, organizations may either discard Policy Governance or tailor their use of it, using those parts, which they perceive best serves their needs. This latter approach may provide some success for an organization, but it leaves them without ready access to achieving all that is truly possible. It also creates and perpetuates myths and misinterpretations of Policy Governance.

These are issues IPGA must address if we are to be successful in having *Owner-Accountable Effective Governance* realized worldwide and in all sectors. We must understand and address why Policy Governance is perceived to be difficult and what is needed to simplify its implementation and use and have organizations sustain being owner-accountable and effective over time. We must also look into whether the possibility of being owner-accountable and effective is attainable for those boards that are not formally educated or trained by those who are. And if it isn't, what can be done to get them the resources they need.

John Carver speaks to the promises and challenges of Policy Governance in his introduction to *The Policy Governance Fieldbook* (page xvIII). In it he states that "The model promises great gains in the integrity of accountability, servant leadership, clarity of values and empowerment, if its tenets are strictly honored."

He then asks "But what of real organizations, real boards and real people. Do they actually implement the model completely? If so, are the promised gains realized? If not, why not? Does the model simply fail to serve their needs or does it demand more discipline than board members



Howard Stier

have? Are certain parts of the model more difficult than others? As to completeness of implementation, is it better to have half a loaf of Policy Governance than none? Is it possible that board members chosen for the skills appropriate to conventional governance are not the right board members for the new paradigm? If so, what should give way for better governance in the long-term - the people or the paradigm? Is such a transition best made swiftly with transitory pain or slowly with more gentle moves?"

We, IPGA and its members, must do all we can to answer these questions and more, for I believe that such difficult questions represent the main challenge we have in achieving *Owner-Accountable Effective Governance*.

But the biggest question of all is who will we need to be in our roles as members of IPGA, users, or trainers, if we are going to be successful in finding the answers? An inquiry worth having!!

What would you say?

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GIVE IT AWAY!

Feel free to give your fellow board members or clients a copy of this newsletter. You will be helping to spread the word and encouraging more new membership growth.

Remember there are membership categories for all supporters.

PG ON THE WEB, IN THE PRESS, AND IN PRINT

Since the last newsletter -

Articles about Policy Governance have appeared in:

- **Corporate Governance Review** 'Crafting a Theory of Governance' by John Carver and Caroline Oliver Vol 14, No 6 Fairvest 2002
- **Christian Management Review** 'The Problem with Boards: Achieving Accountability Through Policy Governance' by Richard M. Biery February 2003
- **Atlanta Journal-Constitution** 'Boards of directors too often are clueless' by John Carver Dec 18, 2002
- **Ivey Business Journal** 'The Strange World of Audit Committees' By Caroline Oliver March-April 2003
- **Canadian Fundraiser** 'Carver Model Principles Deserve Second Look' by Susan Mogenson Nov 30, 2002
- **Nonprofit Boards and Governance Review** 'Simplifying the Board Policy Manual Through Policy Governance' by Caroline Oliver, Charity Channel, Dec 12, 2002

- **Chartered Financial Analyst** 'Financial Oversight Reform: The missing link' by John Carver and Caroline Oliver, ICFAI Press, India, De 2002
- **Boardroom**, Boardroom Advisor Services, 'What's Really Missing?' by Caroline Oliver, Vol. 10, No. 7, Januar 2003, pp. 4, 7.
- **Institute of Corporate Directors Newsletter**, Canada 'Rules Versus Principles: Comments on the Canadian Debate', Issue 105, November 2002; 'Boards Should Add Value: But which Value and to Whom?' Issue 106, January 2003; 'Shareholder Value Is Not the Problem: Corporate Misdeeds Cannot be Blamed on Putting Shareholders First' Issue 107, Februar 2003; all by John Carver
- **www.corporateknights.ca** 'Democracy in the Boardroom' 2002 b Caroline Oliver
- **Association and Meeting Management Directory**, 'Do Unto Others: Cultivating Good Board Manners' February 2002 by Caroline Oliver

Reviews of Policy Governance Book have appeared in:

- **Canadian Investor Relations Institute Newline** review by Jim Osborne
- **National Investor Relations Institute Bookstore** - www.niri.org
- **CA Magazine** - March 2003
- **Investment Advisor** - Nov 2002
- **Globe and Mail** - Harvey Schacter Review of Best Books of 200 - Globe and Mail, Canada, December 2002

Presentations about Policy Governance have been given to:

- **Corporate Governance conference**, International Quality and Productivity Center, Toronto, November 28, 2002 - Susan Mogenson

- **Corporate Governance for Crown Corporations Conference**, Federated Press, Ottawa, March 26, 2003 - Susan Mogenson
- **GSB Business Book Roundtable** (An alumni club of the Business School of the University of Chicago) January 20, 2003 - Caroline Oliver
- **BioQuebec Rendez-vous Capital 2003 Symposium** February 25, 2003 - Caroline Oliver
- **Thought Leader Forum Ethical Governance: Creating a climate of Corporate Integrity** The Banff Centre, February 21 - 24, 2003 - Caroline Oliver
- **Association of Colleges /ACRA National Governors' Conference** 'John Carver and the Policy' Church House, Westminster, London, UK, March 13, 2003 - John Carver

A Cartoon about Policy Governance has appeared in: The Association Magazine www.axi.ca

A University Seminar Course has been Conducted at:

- The University of Georgia over the Spring Semester: 4 intensive sessions Jan - March 2003 'The PG Model and its application in nonprofit orgs'. John Carver.

COMING UP:

- John Carver is working with the Corporate Secretary's office of BP Amoco in early June
- John Carver will be presenting to the Western Australian Local Government Association in August in Perth.

New Members Welcome

New members who have joined IPGA since Nov 30, 2002 are: Lynn Walker in St. Louis, Missouri, Teresa Durham in Battle Creek, Michigan, and Anne Porter Day in Lansing, Michigan.

About The Association

The International Policy Governance Association was launched in June 2001. It is committed to 'Owner-Accountable Effective Governance' and is a 501c3 not-for-profit corporation.

PUT YOUR OAR IN!!

Submissions for Governance Excellence are welcome and should be emailed to coliver@policygovernanceassociation.org

We do not publish REPRINTS because we want to encourage NEW writing.

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