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Do you believe that an excellent board can make a difference to sick patients, student success, profits achieved, safe travel, hungry citizens, and beyond? At Govern for Impact we do!

by Karen Fryday-Field, Govern for Impact, CEO

We believe that a group of capable, well-oriented people using an owner accountable systematic approach to governance focused on outcomes cannot only change the results an organization chooses but also if many boards are effective we can change our world. Hence, we talk about *Good governance for a better world...* [\[Read more\]](#)

Myths that We Have Encountered Concerning Policy Governance[®]

By Richard M. Biery, The BroadBaker Group, Ltd.

Misperceptions of Policy Governance are much like the parable of the blind men and their encounter with an elephant. The blind men reached out with their hands and felt different parts of an elephant and drew erroneous conclusions of what the elephant was. As they felt different parts of the elephant they even misunderstood those parts that they did encounter because they failed to be able to see the elephant as a whole... [\[Read more\]](#)

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We believe that a group of capable, well-oriented people using an owner accountable systematic approach to governance focused on outcomes cannot only change the results an organization chooses but also if many boards are effective we can change our world. Hence, we talk about *Good governance for a better world*. It's a far-reaching goal we set at the June 2018 launch of the

new Govern for Impact. I am writing to you in this article because we need your full engagement to generate even greater momentum for a more powerful impact. Please help us spring forward this spring.

I'm pleased to share with you that, recognizing the enormous potential ahead, members of the Govern Board and the Leadership Team along with anonymous donors have challenged us to raise \$25,000 USD for Govern by the end of 2019 with the promise of collectively matching these funds dollar for dollar. We welcome this challenge and will stretch to meet it with your generous investment in our shared efforts.

As you know, 2019 is Govern's first full year and a critical one as we expand operational capacity and grow our community, our research, and our program offerings. Together, we are building a vibrant learning and service organization, a rich governance resource center, an effective global advocacy movement, and an interconnected network of people and organizations mobilized around the purpose of advancing principled, accountable and impactful board governance, as exemplified by Policy Governance[®]. We do so alongside you and on behalf of board members, CEOs, governance coaches, administrators, researchers, moral owners, and aspiring leaders.

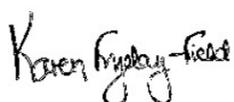
Achieving Govern's ambitious ends and agenda depends entirely on your continued interest, involvement, and support—moral, intellectual, and financial. Together, we are called upon to promote excellence in governance, as our vision statement affirms, to help build "thriving organizations, businesses, and communities in service to our common humanity."

Through Govern and its Affiliates, we will endeavor to expand and integrate our programs in service, advocacy, and research. We will effectively prepare the next generation of competent, diverse governance professionals, elevate the global dialogue on board governance, and inform and energize the governance discipline through robust empirical and case studies.

We simply cannot achieve this without your engagement and support to sustain momentum. Among us, we have the requisite knowledge and creativity; we need the funding to make it possible. **We invite you to contribute to our 2019 Building Greater Momentum Campaign.** Please help us meet our \$25,000 USD matching-gift challenge by contributing at <https://GovernforImpact.org/donate>.



Thank you for your ongoing friendship, loyalty, and contribution. You can make a difference.



Govern for Impact, CEO

P.S. Please note that 100% of donations will support the "Caroline Oliver Fund for a New Vision", 25% of which is strategically designated for endowment purposes. Govern for Impact is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization incorporated in the U.S. Donations made in the U.S. will be tax deductible to the full extent of the



law.

Myths that We Have Encountered Concerning Policy Governance®

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Misperceptions of Policy Governance are much like the parable of the blind men and their encounter with an elephant. The blind men reached out with their hands and felt different parts of an elephant and drew erroneous conclusions of what the elephant was. As they felt different parts of the elephant they even misunderstood those parts that they did encounter because they failed to be able to see the elephant as a whole.



The parts take on meaning when the whole is understood. This is an important systems principle. The parts have meaning only in context with the whole and with what the whole is designed to accomplish! Describing a part of something does not give it meaning. It derives its meaning in context with the whole and with the whole's meaning. Even describing all the parts does not lead to meaning. The meaning is not found through the parts of an entity. One must transcend the thing to an even greater context to discover its meaning. (Russell Ackoff) Hence, a "best practices" understanding of Policy Governance is an erroneous paradigm.

The following are myths we have encountered, many directly quoted from the individual who stated them.

1. "A board must be willing to reorganize with the necessary qualified board members."

While it prudent to have qualified board members and avoid errors in board composition and structure, there is nothing in Policy Governance that says anything about the structure or composition of a board, much less stating that a board must reorganize for any purpose.

2. There must be a delegation to a "central management" using "guidelines" for his/her responsibilities and for evaluation.

Policy Governance does not stipulate a CEO or equivalent. There are many Policy Governance boards that delegate to more than one authority under it. John Carver has observed that life is much simpler when a board has a single delegatee, but it is not required under Policy Governance. The beauty of Policy Governance is that it provides a way to handle the situation of multiple delegates.

3. Referring to policies as "guidelines:"

Policies are not "guidelines." They are definitive instructions from the board to the CEO (or top operating authority) concerning expectations of values and/or conditions to be maintained or met by the organization.

4. Policy Governance requires "refraining from involvement with the staff."

Again this is not true, unless one defines "involvement with the staff" as the right to direct or critique the staff by a board member. Policy Governance provides for role clarity as no other form of governance does, and role clarity,

in fact, enables a healthy relationship with staff without muddling authority and roles. I chair a Policy Governance mission organization, and I and our board members have wonderful, and even some, close relationships with staff. We just don't violate our roles (nor do they). Therefore, we are trustworthy for both the President and the staff!

5. “There is confusion over ownership” and what the board does concerning understanding ownership. “For a hospital or community organization it is the community” but what about self -perpetuating boards - self-standing not-for-profits?

People regularly confuse ownership with “stakeholders,” staff, volunteers, customers, etc. (These may be the same people, but the role and perspective are profoundly different.) But aside from people being confused due to lack of learning or understanding, what is the point? Does that confusion or lack of understanding meanings and definitions fault the model? No... it just means boards and board members need to spend some thoughtful time learning about this concept.

6. “The work of the board is Ends policies and activities, delegating all activities (called)...means to the CEO/staff.” Or “Management is free concerning the means.”

This statement is untrue. These kind of comments lead one to think that Policy governance gives carte blanc freedom to the CEO, which is absolutely not true. The purpose of the governing board is the provision of both direction and protection to its organization. The board does craft ends policies but not ends *activities*; nevertheless, it has quite a bit to say comprehensively about activities by the organization that create the ends and those activities required to protect the organization as well.

However, the policy approach to the activities/means areas is different than the approach to ends; the *nature* of the policy depends on the nature of the issue. (Prescriptive language is used for Ends policies, proscriptive language for means policies addressed to the organization, whether dealing with ends “activities” or with other activities within the organization. The board also uses prescriptive language for policies regarding the board’s own means.)

Proscriptive language (limits) is used in order to create a clear and enabling fence line *within* which management is free to execute to create the desired results. It is the only consistently reliable way to delegate accountability, empower, and appropriately limit power to acceptable actions all at the same time. Prescriptive language, when used regarding means/activities, tells a person what to *do* (duties); ends language, on the other hand is prescriptive language and tells the person what to *accomplish* in terms of results.

2019 GOVERN FOR IMPACT ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Pre-Conference Sessions and Speakers

Want to learn more about our exciting **Pre-Conference Sessions!**? Read below.

Pre-Conference sessions:

Date: **Thursday, June 20th**

Time: **10:00am-4:30pm**

Location: **Quebec City, Canada**

Introduction to Policy Governance

A full day workshop, that offers you the opportunity to learn about the Policy Governance® model. Through presentations, interactive small group exercises and shared experiences deepen your understanding of the practices that enable a board to effectively use this system of governance and appreciate how Policy Governance can positively affect the way your board operates and overall organizational effectiveness.



Speaker: **Rose Mercier**

Rose is a Senior Consultant with The Governance Coach. [Read Rose's full bio here!](#)

Speaker: **Richard Stringham**

Richard is a Senior Consultant with The Governance Coach.

[Read Richard's full bio here!](#)



How Ends Policies Result in Real Impact in the World

CEO Ends Policy Interpretation is a critical component within the Policy Governance system. It is one of the primary tools that the Board has to press the organization to translate the Board's big Ends ideas into real impact in the world. The Policy Governance system includes specific components for the CEO Ends interpretation. These elements include an operating definition which qualifies or describes the good to be done for what groups of people; in other words, what the specific return on investment or value is expected to be. Rationale must also provide justification for the operating definition. This workshop will share new learning from in the field of Policy Governance advanced practice on key concepts, techniques, and lessons learned from effective CEOs and Boards related to Ends Policy Interpretation.



Speaker: **Karen Fryday-Field**

Karen is the Senior Partner of The Meridian Edge Management and Governance Consulting in London, Ontario, Canada. [Read Karen's full bio here!](#)

For more information and complete conference pricing, or to register, click below!

[More Information on Conference](#)

[Register for the Conference](#)

Hotel Information:

Hotel PUR, a Tribute Portfolio Hotel

395 Couronne St., Quebec City, QC G1K 7X4, Canada

Hotel: 418-647-2611 | Reservations 800-267-2002

The Govern for Impact Conference rate is CN\$199/night.

[Online Hotel Room Rate & Reservation Link](#)



ONLINE ADVANCED PRACTICE FORUM: Sustaining the Integrity and Discipline of Policy Governance in Today's Climate

Thursday, May 9, 2019

11:00 AM - 2:00 PM (EST)

Presenter: **Jannice Moore**

Moderator: **Karen Fryday-Field**

Join **Jannice Moore** for a forum that will examine the factors that have been found through experience to be helpful in sustaining the use of Policy Governance and maintaining the integrity of the system! Below you will find more information on Jannice and a summary of what will be discussed at the forum. **You won't want to miss this!**

Sustaining Policy Governance Integrity

While Policy Governance® is over 30 years old, it is still relatively new in the timeline of the bigger governance picture. It is also significantly different from more traditional approaches to governance. How does a board sustain the self-discipline needed to effectively govern using this system? Board member turnover, changes in CEOs, expectations of external funders, the surrounding culture - all of these can conspire to a board losing its momentum, or losing the system entirely.

In this session, we will examine some of the typical trouble spots that create the danger of losing momentum. Then we will discuss some habits that have proven effective in maintaining the integrity of the system, while still allowing for customization to meet the unique needs of different boards. Finally, we will think together about some of the sources of influence that boards and consultants can use to influence lasting change in their board's behaviors.

Jannice Moore,
President of The Governance Coach.

[Read Jannice's full bio here!](#)



Cost:

Affiliate Fee: \$120
Non-Affiliate Fee: \$150

[**Register Here**](#)



**SAVE THE DATE:
Face-to-Face: Advanced Practice Forum**

**February 21-22nd, 2020
Orlando, Florida**

Check out the Save the Date flyer [here](#)

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