



# BOOSTING BOARD EFFECTIVENESS

It is common for companies to form a board of directors based on professional skills, diversity, financial investment, and ability to network to valued resources. In the article “A More Effective Board of Directors” from Harvard Business Review (HBR), it is portrayed that there are five (5) disrupters that tend to hinder the progression of boards toward self-actualization and high performance: lack of clarity, poor process management, lack of alignment and agreement on company strategy, poor team dynamics, and board composition.

HBR author, Ana Dutra, states that classic dysfunctional examples include organizations where the company founder dominates board discussions and stifles all attempts to change and modernize the company or alter the composition of the board (i.e., poor team dynamics). In other cases, highly compensated boards literally run a company into the ground by churning through CEO after CEO (lack of strategic alignment). Other low-performing boards focus on recruiting “big-name” directors — typically high-profile CEOs — who are simply too distracted by operational and financial issues facing their own companies to make any significant contribution (poor board composition).

Unfortunately, boards often lack the ability to objectively evaluate their makeup to determine if they have the right people and skills at the table. Now, what if we take into consideration assessing board member character strengths, which are based on core values and are the foundation of emotional intelligence to improve team dynamics and board composition. Might a board of directors balanced in their character strengths be better positioned to make well-aligned strategic decisions?

Evaluating individual board member’s character strengths to better understand the overall board’s strengths, areas for improvement, meeting dynamics, and overall board functioning is critical. Exploring the board of directors’ interplay of character strengths can help to create synergy and a positive work environment, which can lead to high performing boards and greater engagement.

Board members’ character strengths are more likely to influence the culture of the team. These character strengths, referred to as the team’s “Character Strengths Culture,” will affect the tone, feel of the board, and will suggest action tendencies. The team’s “Character Strengths Culture” will influence which character strengths are most encouraged and therefore what kinds of behavior the board will tend to express with enthusiasm. For instance, a board in which a majority of members possess curiosity may be most energetic about exploring new ideas and possibilities, whereas one high in self-regulation and perseverance may be most enthusiastic about issues of implementation such as meeting deadlines and staying on budget. The character strengths that the board members have in common can be an important source of cohesion as people with the same character strengths can have an affinity with one another. Yet, character strengths’ similarities and overlaps can sometimes become areas of conflict when people

with similar character strengths compete with one another for roles and assignments.

According to the VIA Institute on Character, character strengths enable people to connect with what they are doing and with whom they are doing it. Scientists have identified 24-character strengths that you have the capacity to express. Although talents enable people to do things well, it is when work connects with their core character strengths that they feel that their work matters. Character strengths refers to what people CARE about doing and WHO they ARE.

Consideration of character strengths humanizes organizations. Is your organization ready to adapt and boost your board effectiveness?

Please feel free to contact AlliancesHub to receive more information about this article. ●



## ABOUT JOE

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