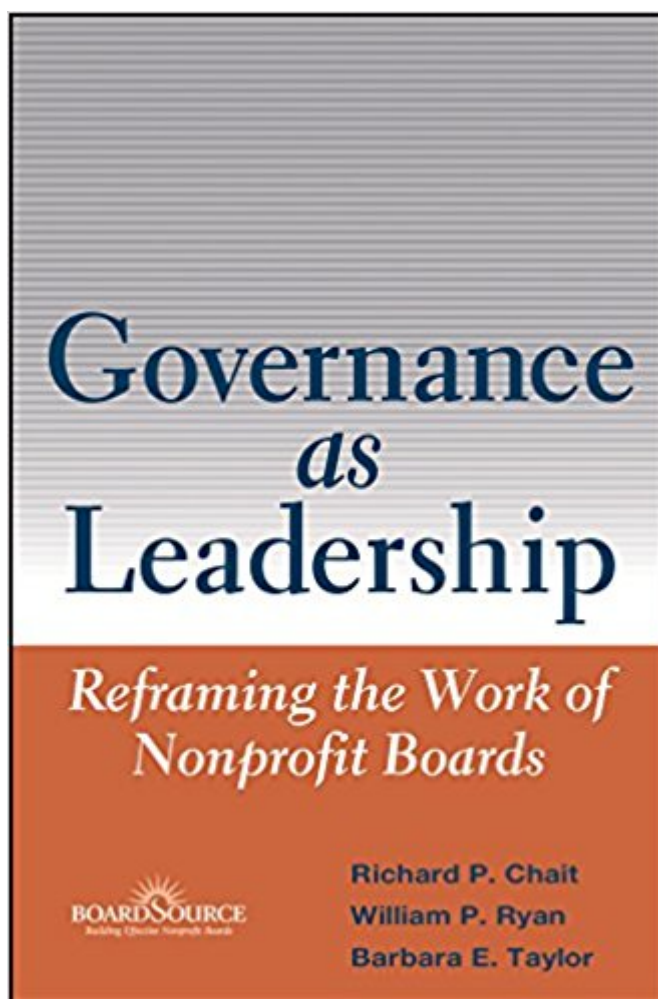


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# Governance As Leadership: Reframing The Work Of Nonprofit Boards



## Synopsis

A new framework for helping nonprofit organizations maximize the effectiveness of their boards. Written by noted consultants and researchers attuned to the needs of practitioners, *Governance as Leadership* redefines nonprofit governance. It provides a powerful framework for a new covenant between trustees and executives: more macrogovernance in exchange for less micromanagement. Informed by theories that have transformed the practice of organizational leadership, this book sheds new light on the traditional fiduciary and strategic work of the board and introduces a critical third dimension of effective trusteeship: generative governance. It serves boards as both a resource of fresh approaches to familiar territory and a lucid guide to important new territory, and provides a road map that leads nonprofit trustees and executives to governance as leadership. *Governance as Leadership* was developed in collaboration with BoardSource, the premier resource for practical information, tools and best practices, training, and leadership development for board members of nonprofit organizations. Through its highly acclaimed programs and services, BoardSource enables organizations to fulfill their missions by helping build effective nonprofit boards and offering credible support in solving tough problems. For the latest in nonprofit governance, visit [www.boardsource.org](http://www.boardsource.org), or call us at 1-800-883-6262.

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## Customer Reviews

"Governance as Leadership remains necessary reading for its intended audience as well as for the academic audience at large." (The Journal of Higher Education; Nov/Dec 2007)

Governance as Leadership Reframing the Work of Nonprofit Boards Governance as Leadership offers trustees and executives a new and practical framework to govern nonprofit organizations more effectively. The book provides ideas, tactics, and examples that enrich the work of trustees and enhance a board's value to the organization it governs. The authors reframe the purpose and practice of nonprofit governance by drawing on theories that have reshaped the concept and practice of leadership. In contrast to conventional advice that unwittingly urges trustees to think and govern like managers, the authors' new approach invites boards to think and govern like leaders. Governance as Leadership describes three modes of governance—fiduciary, strategic, and generative—that together enable effective trusteeship. While the first two are more familiar to most boards, trustees often overlook opportunities to be a source of leadership as well as a source of advice, expertise, and fundraising. Most important, the book explains the power and payoff to organizations and boards when trustees govern in the generative mode—the most neglected yet most consequential type of work a board can do. When trustees gain proficiency in all three modes, the board practices governance as leadership. The trustees discover and do meaningful work, and the organization derives maximum benefit from a previously underutilized resource. Written by noted researchers and consultants, Governance as Leadership introduces a fresh way to think about governance with sensible guidance to turn these ideas into concrete actions. It will be particularly valuable to trustees and senior staff of professionally managed nonprofit organizations, as well as many others, including foundation officers, donors, consultants, and students of nonprofit organizations who are interested in improving nonprofit governance.

I have served on numerous non-profit boards while either being employed by a large US company or running my own small company. This book is good at pushing stale boards who know they're stale and want to change into fertile areas of meaningful activity. It even has some "how to's" at the end that the authors refer to as "parlor games", but such things work. It is a fast read, but one needs to re-read it a 2nd time to get the flow, and I'm not sure I have it down yet. My complaints are: 1) the book is overly erudite, academic, pedagogical. Too much like it was written for other scholars to critique. I wish the authors would have told stories about their own board experiences to humanize the concepts. 2) Many of the labels and much of their invented terminology, such as "cues and clues", "fuzzy front end", "sense-making", and in particular "generative leadership" are almost invented words. A little more common language and basic definitions would have helped. If you look up "generative", it is the adjective form of generate, which is defined as bring into existence,

produce, engender. Somehow, those terms all come off as consultant-speak. The concepts seem right, but one almost needs to wrestle it to the ground before digesting the meaning. Heavy slogging for a lowly board member. Needs a bit more Hemingway and less Faulkner.

Governance as Leadership was a great book in looking at how to constructively build a more effective board. I read this for a class on Vestries and Church Governance. This book really helped break down the main modes of governance so that I could more constructively look at what is necessary to make more effective conversations. The break-down of the fiduciary, Strategic and Generative models was really great in looking at how these types of boards thrive with their strengths, as well as how this can hinder a board's abilities to govern well and roundly. Outlining these traits I think is really nice in being able to identify the strength of your board and vestry, while also looking forward to what you can include and work on to build your board. I thought this book was really important and effective in looking how to reframe how a board views its work for the nonprofit.

I found this book to be a breath of fresh air. It offers a new way of looking at nonprofit boards, in a relatively short, easy to read manner. There is a wealth of information designed to help nonprofit boards of directors become more effective. Unfortunately, existing approaches have been less than successful with most boards. This book identifies the problem as one of purpose rather than performance. The book identifies three modes that boards of directors can operate in: the traditional fiduciary mode, the strategic mode and the generative mode. The authors emphasize the importance of encouraging board members to engage in generative thinking. Engaging board members in this way makes their work more meaningful and satisfying, while at the same time benefiting the organization through more creative, committed leadership. It suggests signs to look for to identify opportunities for generative thinking. Another interesting new concept discussed in the book is considering directors as a form of "working capital". This is further broken down into intellectual capital, reputational capital, political capital and social capital. Again, this new framework for looking at what board members have to offer increases the opportunities for them to make meaningful contributions to the organization.

I really like this book. It has answered so many questions and guided me down a successful professional path of starting and operating a nonprofit organization. I highly recommend this book to anyone out there. David Fairall, principle founder and Director of Redeeming Hope Foundation, Inc.

Just as described!

Tends to be a little dry and theoretical but really an excellent and thought-provoking book. It's helping one of the boards I serve on get past some issues. If you are looking for anecdotes, quick fixes, or ice breakers, keep looking - this would not be the book for you.

This book is easy to follow and implement. It's a great review of the nuts and bolts of non profit board work and effectiveness. Was a great book study for our Board. Eight chapters were easy to review in eight 30 min monthly sessions. Great instructional tool.

Great product as advertised!

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