



**TAKE ON
BOARD**

KickStarter 2026

GET BOARDROOM-READY



Helga Svendsen
FACILITATOR • COACH • MENTOR



Hi, I'm Helga

I'm your KickStarter 'Connector in Chief'

Just a little bit about me before we get started...

Who I am:

- I grew up in a community-minded environment that encouraged me and my sisters to consider the world around us. [Read my story.](#)
- I'm a keen bushwalker, a volunteer and a former dance instructor. I love my work yet I aim to put aside time to be outside and with family and friends.



What I'm proud of:

- I'm the host of the [Take on Board podcast](#), where we talk about all things boards and governance.
- Take on Board has evolved beyond a podcast into a supportive [community of women and gender diverse people](#).

What I do:

- I've held leadership roles in government, not-for-profit and membership organisations. Read more on [LinkedIn](#).
- Working with individuals or organisations, I provide [governance](#), [facilitation](#) and [coaching](#) services.
- I specialise in strategy and planning, governance and stakeholder engagement. [Find out what it's like to work with me](#) (testimonials).
- I'm on a number of boards and committees, including chairing the Workplace Injury Commission. Let me know if you would like to see my full board CV.

Why I created KickStarter

When I established KickStarter in 2013 there was very little around to help women and gender diverse potential directors find the practical tools to apply for their first board role.

I wanted to help people gain clarity about their strengths and provide the kind of supportive and encouraging environment that would set them up for success in governance.



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Before we start

What to expect...

The modules in this fast-moving program require *very* active participation. It's not the kind of program where you get to sit back and listen.

You'll be expected to:

- Actively engage with the group
- Bring your enthusiasm and open mind
- Ask questions and discuss ideas
- Share your wisdom and experience

After using this playbook, you'll know how to:

- Identify and promote your board skills and strengths
- Search, find and apply for your first board role
- Prepare for the interview and board role

And you'll have:

- A succinct pitch to promote board strengths
- A targeted board resumé
- Your own Take on Board cheer squad!

Stay in touch

By now you should have received your KickStarter online introductory booklet. It's where you'll find your KickStarter cohort's bios and contact details.

You can also keep in touch with your group through:

- [The Take on Board Facebook group](#)
- Your Take on Board Signal group

You'll need to download the [Signal](#) mobile or desktop app through the App Store or Google Play Store to keep in touch with your Take on Board group.

Let me know when you have downloaded the app and I'll invite you to the group. If you're already on Signal, you may need to update to a newer version. I won't be able to invite you to the group unless you have the most up-to-date version.





Ground rules

Before we get stuck into the first module, let's set the group ground rules together.

Discuss what you think we need to do and how we need to be to make sure these sessions are as constructive as possible?

Don't forget to take notes. We'll write up the ground rules together.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO?	HOW DO WE NEED TO BE?

AGREED GROUP GROUND RULES



Module 1: Skills

Governance vs operational

Handout (link): The *Distinguishing Governance from Management* (2008) edition of the Great Boards journal says:

'What is the difference between governance and management?' is by far the question that not-for-profit executives and directors ask most often. Effective boards understand the difference between governing and managing; dysfunctional boards do not.

Look at the difference between governance and operational, and the different issues each face.

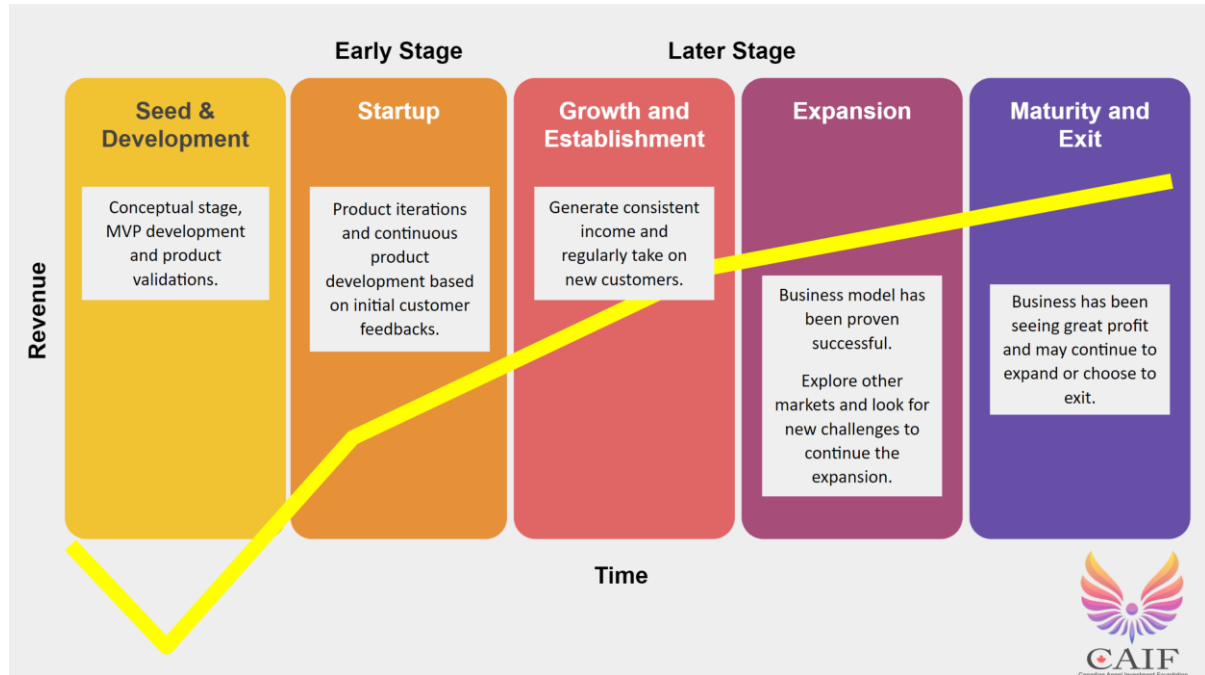
WHAT DOES THE BOARD DO?	WHAT DOES MANAGEMENT DO?



Skills for each stage of the organisation’s development

The skills you need to govern an organisation might vary depending on what stage of development an organisation is at. For example, the governance skills required for a start-up might be different to the skills required for a mature organisation.

The Canadian Angel Investment Foundation describes these stages as:





Let's think about these board skills...

Considering these slightly different development stage categories, write down what governance skills are required and where they align to the stages of development of an organisation.

STAGE	GOVERNANCE SKILLS REQUIRED
Seed and development or startup	
Growth and expansion	
Maturity	
Exit	





Hard vs soft skills

One tool a board uses (or should use) to make sure it has ‘the right mix of competencies to meet the company’s evolving needs’ (AICD’s *Board Recruitment* factsheet) is a ‘board skills matrix’.

A board skills matrix often has a mix of hard (or technical) and soft (or EQ) skills. Your hard skills (e.g. stakeholder engagement, law, finance, people and culture) might get you the interview for the board, but your soft (EQ) skills (e.g. critical thinking, collaboration) are likely to secure you the role and lead to success in the boardroom.

Industry knowledge / experience	Director A	Director B	Director C	Director D	Director E	Director F	Director G	Director H
Industry experience								
Knowledge of sector								
Knowledge of broad public policy direction								
Understanding of government legislation / legislative process								
Technical skills / experience	Director A	Director B	Director C	Director D	Director E	Director F	Director G	Director H
Accounting								
Finance								
Law								
Marketing experience								
Information technology								
Public relations								
Experience in developing and implementing risk management systems								
Human resource management								
CEO / senior management experience								
Strategy development and implementation								
Governance competencies	Director A	Director B	Director C	Director D	Director E	Director F	Director G	Director H
Director – medium organisation (10 to 99 employees)								
Director – large organisation (100+ employees)								
Financial literacy								
Strategic thinking/planning from a governance perspective								
Executive performance management – management of the CEO								
Governance related risk management experience								
Compliance focus								
Profile / reputation								
Behavioural competencies	Director A	Director B	Director C	Director D	Director E	Director F	Director G	Director H
Team player/collaborative								
Ability and willingness to challenge and probe								
Common sense and sound judgment								
Integrity and high ethical standards								
Mentoring abilities								
Interpersonal relations								
Listening skills								
Verbal communication skills								
Understanding of effective decision-making processes								
Willingness and ability to devote time and energy to the role								

Source: Kiel, G., Nicholson, G., Tunny, J.A., & Beck, J., *Directors at Work: A Practical Guide for Boards*, Thomson Reuters, Sydney, 2012.





Your hard and soft governance skills

Discuss examples of hard and soft **governance** skills. Answers to be discussed as a group.

HARD SKILLS EXAMPLES	SOFT SKILLS EXAMPLES
YOUR HARD SKILLS	YOUR SOFT SKILLS



Skills quadrant

This self-knowledge exercise can help you to identify the skills and competencies you have and those you would like to develop in the pursuit of a new role with a board or organisation.

Homework 1: Fill out the VIA Signature Strengths Questionnaire to work out your top strengths (it takes 20 minutes).

Homework 2: We'll touch on the skills quadrant today, although you'll need to put in an extra hour or two to finish it off properly.

Step 1: Skills and competencies you have

Consider the skills and/or competencies you currently have. Of these skills, determine which skills are the ones you would like to use in your new role – those you won't need to actively market. Write them down in quadrant no.1.

Write down the skills you have but don't want to use in quadrant no.3. For example, you have excellent financial audit skills but don't want a treasurer role on a board.

Step 2: Consider the skills you would like to develop or enhance

Of these skills, determine which skills you would like to use/develop in your future role or plans. Write them down in quadrant no.2. There might be a number of skills you'd like to develop but don't want to use in the future role. Write these down in quadrant no.4.

Step 3: What have you left off?

What would your mentor add in if you were to ask them? What would your friend or partner suggest you add? What would an admired work colleague advise you to include?

Step 4: Interpreting your skills quadrant

- a) **Skills I have / skills I want to use:** Use these to promote to organisations or boards.
- b) **Skills I want to develop / skills I want to use:** This quadrant represents your opportunities. Can you offer other skills and learn/enhance this new skill at the same time? What would you need to declare to yourself/the organisation/board to follow this path with integrity?
- c) **Skills I have / skills I don't want to use:** Is this open for negotiation? How does this equate with skills demand from the sector? Would you be willing to use these skills if a particular role included all other factors you are seeking?
- d) **Skills I want to develop / skills I don't want to use:** These skills aren't related to current plans and goals.

Step 5: You may now want to consider how this aligns with your signature strengths.

Step 6: Use this enhanced self-knowledge in compiling a 'statement of interests and competencies' which you could use to guide your search and in application processes.





Skills I want to use	1. Skills I have / skills I want to use	2. Skills I want to develop / skills I want to use
	3. Skills I have / skills I don't want to use	4. Skills I want to develop / skills I don't want to use
Skills I do not want to use	Skills I have	Skills I want to develop



Module 2: Alignment

Your governance purpose statement

At the end of this module, you will have a short governance purpose statement. It will be written yet designed to be spoken. It will help you identify aligned organisations and boards in your search for a director role. To help you write your purpose statement, we'll look at:

- **Step 1:** Past successes
- **Step 2:** Core values
- **Step 3:** Contributions
- **Step 4:** Goals
- **Step 5:** Write your governance purpose statement

First... what are you proud of?

PROMPT:

YOUR ANSWER

Something I'm proud of from the last
10 years

Something I'm proud of from the last
two years

Something I'm proud of from the last
month

The governance purpose statement process

Step 1: Your past successes

Individually, write down four or five examples of personal success in recent years – at work, in your community, at home. Check your 'I'm proud of' list for ideas.

Discuss your successes to see if there are any themes.

PROMPT: YOUR ANSWER

Success 1

Success 2

Success 3

Success 4

Success 5

SUCCESS THEMES



Step 2: Your core values

Circle the ones that apply to you. Use this list or come up with your own. Once you've circled all the ones that apply, try to narrow down your top 10.

Accomplishment	Ethics	Participation
Accountability	Excellence	Partnership
Accuracy	Fairness	Patience
Achievement	Family	Peace
Acknowledgment	Financial security	Performance
Adaptability	Focus	Perseverance
Adventure	Forgiveness	Personal development
Aesthetics	Forward the action	Personal fulfilment
Authenticity	Free spirit	Personal power
Balance	Freedom to choose	Personal relationships
Beauty	Friendship	Physical exercise
Being liked	Full self-expression	Positive energy
Being the best	Future generations	Power
Belonging	Generosity	Pride
Career focus	Growth	Productivity
Caution	Harmony	Professional growth
Coaching	Health	Quality
Collaboration	Honesty	Quality of life
Commitment	Human rights	Recognition
Community	Humility	Reliability
Compassion	Humour/fun	Respect
Comradeship	Image	Responsibility
Conflict resolution	Inclusive	Risk taking
Conformity	Independence	Romance
Connectedness	Innovation	Security
Contribution	Inspirational	Self-discipline
Control	Integrity	Service
Cooperation	Interdependence	Societal common good
Counselling	Intuition	Spirituality
Courage	Joy	Status
Courtesy	Knowledge	Success
Creativity	Lack of pretense	Sustainable
Determination	Learning	Teamwork
Dialogue	Lightness	To be known
Different	Logic	Tradition
Directness	Making a difference	Trust
Diversity	Material assets	Vision
Ease with uncertainty	Meaning	Vitality
Education	Mission focus	Wealth
Efficiency	Nurturing	Wisdom
Elegance	Nutrition	Zest
Empowerment	Open Communication	
Enthusiasm	Openness	
Environmental awareness	Orderliness	

Your top three values

Now, let's narrow your list down from 10 to three values.

You may find it useful to combine values as long as the distinctions are not lost. For example, 'honesty/integrity/truthfulness' has a single theme, however 'honesty/integrity/freedom' mixes concepts.

YOUR TOP 10 VALUES

YOUR TOP THREE VALUES

Value 1

Value 2

Value 3

Step 3: Your contributions

Individually, write down how – in an ideal situation – you would best contribute to the world, family, current/future employer, friends and community.

Discuss these contributions to see if there are any themes.

PROMPT:	YOUR ANSWER
Community	
Family	
Friends	
Employer or future employer (or board/future board)	
The world in general	
CONTRIBUTION THEMES	





Step 4: Your goals

Write down your short, medium and long-term goals.

Discuss these goals to see if there are any themes.

PROMPT: YOUR ANSWER

Short-term

Medium-term

Long-term

GOAL THEMES



Step 5: Write your governance purpose statement

Now let's put all this together!

Looking at your achievements, values, contributions and goals, write a 50-100-word governance purpose statement. It might take a few goes – a bit of crossing out and rewriting.

If you need it, here's an example:

'Building on my achievements in the bringing of people and ideas together in the environmental and human rights sector, and my values of equity and inclusion, my contribution to the boardroom will be in an organisation that has a long-term vision that makes me feel hopeful and where I can contribute my strategic thinking.'

PURPOSE STATEMENT

Let's pause to reflect...

What does your governance purpose statement tell you about the type of board you'd like to join?

THE TYPE OF BOARD I'D LIKE TO JOIN



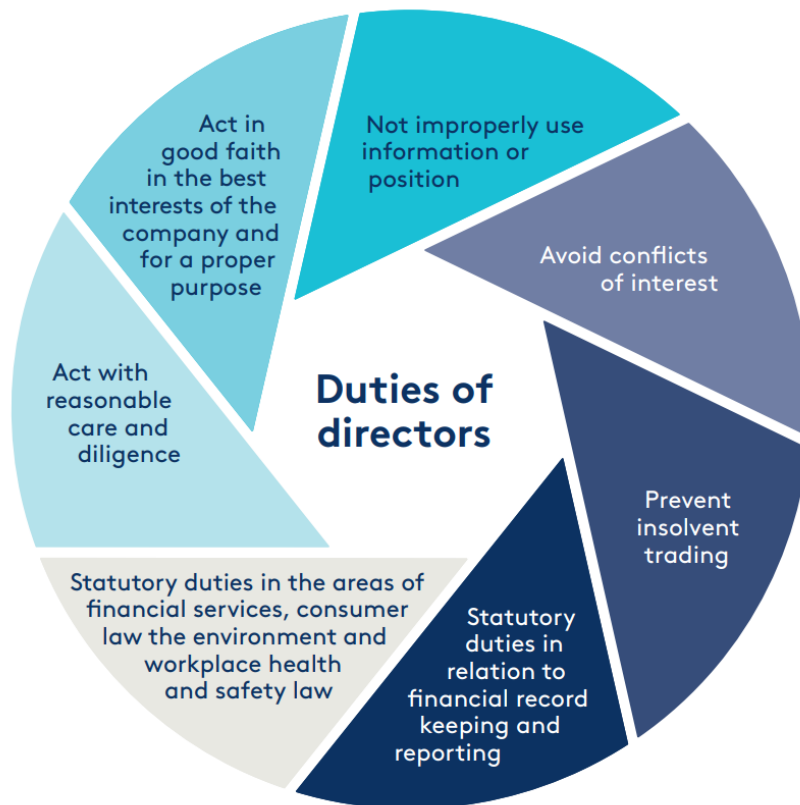
Module 3: Commitment

General duties of directors

Handout (link): The AICD's *general duties of directors* factsheet outlines the 'core legal duties that apply to directors under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) (Corporations Act) and common law':

'The relationship between a director and a company is fiduciary in nature, meaning that a director undertakes to act in the interests of the company and not in his or her own interests.'

The overriding duty of a fiduciary is the obligation of undivided loyalty. This obliges the director to act honestly, in good faith and to the best of his or her ability in the company's interests. A director must not allow conflicting interests or personal advantages to override the company's interests.'



What each of these duties requires

Looking at these general duties of directors, expand on what each duty requires, as well as any consequences if breached.

Answers will be discussed as a group.

DUTY	REQUIREMENTS
Act in good faith in the best interests of the company and for a proper purpose	
Not improperly use information or position	
Avoid conflicts of interest	
Prevent insolvent trading	
Statutory duties in relation to financial record keeping and reporting	
Statutory duties in the areas of financial services, consumer law the environment and workplace health and safety law	
Act with reasonable care and diligence	





The roles and behaviours required of directors

Handout (link): First published in Company Director Magazine in 2009, Thoughtpost Governance’s updated *4-in-1 Directorship Model* identifies four broad functions of directorship:

- **Performing:** board performance through role clarity and board composition, culture and processes
- **Decision-making:** direction setting for delegations, strategy, risk appetite and framework, culture, CEO, stakeholder engagement and major decisions
- **Advising:** assist management with knowledge, experience, networks and mentoring
- **Monitoring:** overseeing performance, capacity, compliance and accountability

Considering these four functions of directorship, look at what roles and behaviours are required of directors. Answers will then be discussed as a group.

FUNCTION	ROLES	BEHAVIOURS
Performing		
Decision making		
Advising		
Monitoring		





Due diligence

It's important that you do your due diligence before you join a board.

PROMPT:

YOUR ANSWER

What questions you would ask?

Where can you find information about the organisation?

Let's pause to reflect...

What stood out for you in this module?

WHAT I LEARNT ABOUT GENERAL DUTIES OF DIRECTORS



Module 4: Diversity, equity and inclusion

Diverse, equitable and inclusive boards are now known to be stronger (yet sometimes, harder!).

In this session we'll explore diversity, equity and inclusion. In doing so, you'll be reflecting on your own identity. Please feel free to share as much or as little about yourself as you wish.

Handout (link): The AICD's *Which Two Heads are Better than One?* book says:

'Generating diversity of thinking requires more diligence than simply assembling a disparate group of people, encouraging random brainstorming and crossing one's fingers.'

In small groups of 2-4, look at what you have in common and what is unique to you. Answers will then be discussed as a group.

PROMPT:

YOUR ANSWER

What are three things that each member of your group has in common?

What is one thing that is unique to you (e.g. unique to you as an individual, not unique to your group as a whole)?





Inherent vs acquired diversity

- **Inherent diversity** = characteristics you've inherited (i.e. race, ethnicity, birthplace, age)
- **Acquired diversity** = characteristics you've acquired through experiences (i.e. education, places you've lived, socioeconomic status)

Handout (link): [Better Decisions Through Diversity](#) (Kellogg School of Management)

Handout (link): The [How Diversity Can Drive Innovation](#) article (Harvard Business Review) about a research study that provided 'compelling evidence that diversity unlocks innovation and drives market growth' says:

'Inherent diversity, however, is only half of the equation. Leaders also need acquired diversity to establish a culture in which all employees feel free to contribute ideas.'

YOUR DIVERSITY: INHERENT	YOUR DIVERSITY: ACQUIRED

Advantages and disadvantages of diversity

A number of studies have shown that diversity can enhance decision-making. Yet it can also make it more challenging.

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES





The benefits of constructive tension

Think about a time when you were involved in a group with people who were different to you – and thought different to you – and you needed to make a difficult decision together.

PROMPT:

YOUR ANSWER

What happened?

How was it managed?

How can you learn from it?





Let's consider constructive tension in the boardroom

Constructive tension is a positive attribute of a diverse board.

What does this reflection – and your wider experience – tell you about personal differences and difficult conversations in the boardroom?

PROMPT:

YOUR ANSWER

What can boards do to encourage diversity, equity and inclusion in the boardroom?

What can board chairs do to encourage diversity, equity and inclusion in the boardroom?





Let's pause to reflect...

What stood out for you in this module?

WHAT I LEARNT ABOUT DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

A large, empty rectangular area with a light gray background, intended for the user to write their reflections on diversity, equity, and inclusion.



Module 5: Pitch

A powerful, succinct pitch for why **YOU** will be a fabulous director will give you the extra confidence boost when you apply for the board role and land the interview.

Use a 'governance lens' as much as possible in your responses.

PROMPT

YOUR ANSWER

I'm a...

And my strengths are ____, ____ and ____.

My current (or most recent role) is...

Some of my achievements include...

My background is...

I'm also...

I'm looking forward to using my skills of ____, ____ and ____ to make a contribution to ____.





Refine your pitch

Now, let's **put it all together!** Then, practice makes perfect...

This won't be the last time you refine your pitch. You might refine your pitch every time you apply for a board role.

Homework 1: Refine your pitch

Homework 2: Call me and practice your pitch (leave a message if I don't answer)

PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

A large, empty rectangular box with a light gray background, intended for the user to write their refined pitch.

Module 6: Board resumé

Handout (link): Take on Board podcast [episode 6 – developing a governance CV](#)

You'll need to use a board resumé – not your executive resumé – to apply for a board role.

This module will help you start your board resumé, although you'll likely need to finish and refine it in your own time. It will take a few re-drafts to get right. I re-draft mine often.



HELGA SVENDSEN

(FAICD, BA, LLB)
GOVERNANCE • PEOPLE AND CULTURE •
STRATEGY AND PLANNING • STAKEHOLDER
ENGAGEMENT

DIRECTORSHIPS

Victorian Asbestos Eradication Agency
(2022 to present)

- Board member and Chair

Workplace Injury Commission
(2019 to present)

- Board member
- Member of People, Culture and Engagement committee and former member of Risk and Finance committee

Royal Women's Hospital
(2015 to 2023)

- Board member
- Member of various committees including Chair of Primary Care and Population Health Advisory Committee and member of People, Culture and Engagement Committee, Finance, Investment and IT Committee, Audit & Risk Committee

Centre for Sustainability Leadership
(2016 to 2019)

- Co-chair and non-executive director
- Member, Finance Committee and Governance Committee

Social Housing Victoria
(2013 to 2016)

- Non-executive director and Vice President

YWCA Victoria
(2009 to 2015)

- Non-executive director and Vice President
- Chair, Membership & Advocacy Committee (2010 to 2013) and New Business Working Group (2014 to 2015)
- Member, various committees including Asset Management Working Group and Investment Committee

Community Services and Health Industry Training Advisory Board

- Non-executive director (1994 to 1996)
- Member, Executive Committee (1995 to 1996)

COMMITTEES

Boards Ministerial Advisory Committee (Vic Dept of Health)
(2023 to present)

Basketball Australia
(2021 to present)

- Nominations Committee

Greenpeace Australia Pacific
(2015 to present)

- Member, General Assembly
- Member, Nominations Committee (2018 to present)

CONTACT

0418 536 447
helga@helgasvendsen.com.au
www.helgasvendsen.com.au

PERSONAL PROFILE

I am a connector: Ideas to strategy to plan to action. I am passionate about engagement, empowerment and wise decision-making.

PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

- Oxfam Trailwalker
- The Murray River Marathon
- Kokoda Track

QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

Bachelor of Laws, Bachelor of Arts
Monash University

Barrister and solicitor
Supreme Court of Victoria

Company Directors Course (FAICD)
Institute of Company Directors

Williamson Community Leadership Program
Leadership Victoria

Adaptive Leadership Intensive
Social Leadership Australia

Board Leadership Program
Leadership Victoria

MEMBERSHIPS
(not exhaustive)

- Australian Institute of Company Directors (FAICD)
- Victorian and Australian Facilitators Network
- International Coach Federation (Professional Certified Coach)
- International Association of Public Participation
- Women on Boards

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Speaker | Facilitator | Mentor | Advisor | Coach
www.helgasvendsen.com.au | 2013 to present

- Building on my extensive leadership roles in government, not-for-profit and membership organisations, I am known as a dynamic facilitator, a supportive and challenging coach and an engaging speaker.
- Host of the Take on Board podcast, which has over 200 episodes and nearing 100,000 listens, as well as an engaged community of women and gender diverse people in governance.
- Founder of the Take on Board: KickStarter and Take on Board: Accelerator programs to support women into and in non-executive director roles.
- Speciality areas: governance, strategy and planning, stakeholder engagement, leadership, people and culture, human resources and risk management.

PREVIOUS PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Chief Executive Officer - Hotham Mission Asylum Seeker Project
- Facilitator - Sustainability Victoria
- Assistant Secretary - Australian Services Union, Victorian Private Sector Branch
- Solicitor - Patrick Robinson & Co; Simon Parsons & Co

VOLUNTEER AND PRO BONO WORK

- Mentor for YWCA Asista program
- Workshop presenter for Ignite Leadership Program and Board Development Program (Leadership Victoria).
- Mentor to various Leadership Victoria program participants including African Community Leadership Program.
- Strategic planning and other strategic and/or governance advice to not-for-profit groups.

REFEREES

Available on request.

Before we start...

You will have a range of experience that has made you who you are today – remember that only some of it will be relevant to a board.

Tips:

- Draw on your purpose statement and the work we did with your pitch
- Keep to **two pages** – three if you have to
- You may think 'I have nothing', together I'm sure we'll find things that are relevant!



Challenge, action, result

Source: The 'what does a CAR have to do with your resumé' article by Laura Smith-Proulx in Career Rocketeer (no longer available) said:

'The most powerful, attention-getting resumé tell entire stories, helping employers understand how you'll be the best candidate to tackle their business problems.

'To create a resumé that truly represents the full spectrum of what you offer, consider taking a look at the results of your work using the C-A-R (Challenge-Action-Result) method.'

The C-A-R method consists of these steps:

- First, describe the situation you faced at work (Challenge)
- Then what you did when faced with it (Action)
- Last but not least, the outcome (Result) that you achieved is the critical part

The article had this example of how to use the C-A-R strategy:

- **Original sentence:** Grew revenue 21% in 3 different markets.
- **C-A-R modified sentence:** Grew revenue 21%, adding \$1.7 million in three markets by training new sales representatives in benefit selling techniques.

Show how and why you've been effective in a past role:

CHALLENGE	ACTION	RESULT



Build up your board resumé

PROMPT:

YOUR ANSWER

Purpose

Governance experience

Professional experience

Qualifications and training

Memberships

Interests and achievements

Volunteering

Referees (by request)





Presentation matters

There are thousands of free board resumé templates out there.

INSERT NAME

INSERT NAME
Insert address details
(m) insert contact number Email: insert email address

[Your resume should be 2 - 3 pages maximum. Be succinct and focus on what demonstrates your suitability as a director.]

Profile summary
[A 3 to 4 sentence 'elevator pitch' outlining your career experience, skills and attributes and how you would add value to a board.]

Non-executive board and governance positions¹

Company name	Start date /finish date
Position	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the organisation in terms of size, nature and the services / products it offers. • Describe your key contributions 	
Company name	Start date /finish date
Position	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the organisation in terms of size, nature and the services / products it offers. • Describe your key contributions 	
Company name	Start date /finish date
Position	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the organisation in terms of size, nature and the services / products it offers. • Describe your key contributions 	
Company name	Start date /finish date
Position	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the organisation in terms of size, nature and the services / products it offers. • Describe your key contributions 	

Key skills sets and attributes
[List in bullet points your key skills and attributes developed through your career and board experience as they relate to boards/the role of a director.]

Career summary²

Your role, company name	Start date /finish date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the organisation in terms of size, nature and the services / products it offers. • Describe your key responsibilities • Describe your key achievements 	
Your role, company name	Start date /finish date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the organisation in terms of size, nature and the services / products it offers. • Describe your key responsibilities • Describe your key achievements 	
Your role, company name	Start date /finish date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the organisation in terms of size, nature and the services / products it offers. • Describe your key responsibilities • Describe your key achievements 	

¹ List in reverse chronological order board / governance roles that you have held. If you have held many such roles consider summarising smaller / less significant roles into a single item.
² List in reverse chronological order your executive career roles over the last 15 years.

Page 1
Page 2

Handout (link): The Muse's [185 powerful verbs that will make your resumé awesome](#) article says:

'Most resume bullet points start with the same tired old words hiring managers have read over and over (think: tasked with, responsible for, experience in) to the point where they've lost a lot of their meaning.'

So, choose your words carefully. Draft and redraft. Think C-A-R. Tell your story.

Draft your two-page board resumé

Homework: Use all this to draft your two-page board resumé. Don't forget to draw on your purpose statement and pitch.





Module 7: Where to look

Board roles won't all be advertised in the one place. You'll need to fish around.

Handout (link): Take on Board blog [*Where to start the search for board roles*](#)

Handout (link): Ideas to Action blog [*My personal guide to LinkedIn etiquette*](#)

WHERE WOULD YOU LOOK FOR A BOARD ROLE?

A large, empty rectangular area with a light grey gradient background, intended for taking notes or drawing.



What boards are looking for

Handout (printout): A list of available board roles

PROMPT:

YOUR ANSWER

What do you notice about the range of organisations?

What skills are listed?

Do you notice anything else?



Pick a board

You'll be doing a practice board interview in module 8. To prep for the interview, either:

- **Choose a real board role:** You don't have to actually apply for the board role you pick, although it's a good idea to pick one you would be interested in.
- **Invent a board role:** Just remember to develop a position description so your interviewer knows the organisation and the skills sought.

Some things to think about when assessing which board roles to apply for:

- The board, role, term, remuneration, etc
- Are the values and skills aligned?
- Who is already on the board?
- Any contacts in the organisation or on the board?
- What are the next steps to apply?

Homework: Find a board position description and get your board resumé ready for module 8.

Module 8: Interview

In this session you'll be doing a practice interview.

In groups of three, you'll each get the opportunity to be the:

- Interviewee
- Interviewer
- Observer

The rules:

- 20-minute rounds (15-minute interviews + 5-minute debrief)
- **Each interviewee must provide:** position description and their board resumé
- Observer to give the 5-minute and 2-minute wind-up signal

Don't skip the debrief!

The roster

Round 1

INTERVIEWEE	INTERVIEWER	OBSERVER

Round 2

INTERVIEWEE	INTERVIEWER	OBSERVER

Round 3

INTERVIEWEE	INTERVIEWER	OBSERVER

Before the rounds

Interviewees

By 5pm on __ / __ / ____ you must have 'applied' for the role.

To apply, you need to send to your interviewer the position description for the role you are applying for, your board resume and your cover letter if you choose to do one. Don't forget to cc to the observer and me. All your KickStarter cohort's email addresses are in the introductory booklet.

Late applications will not be accepted. It is not fair on your interviewer.

There's a vast amount of information available that can help you prepare for an interview. Try these:

Handout (link): Take on Board podcast: [*Episode 16 – prepping for a board interview*](#)

Handout (link): Get on Board Australia: [*How to prepare for a board interview*](#)

Handout (link): Board Direction: [*How to reply to board interview questions*](#)

Handout (link): Get on a Board Australia: [*Questions to ask at a board interview*](#)

Interviewers

Your role is to read the provided position description and ask questions. You don't need to research or know anything about the organisation.

Asking questions:

- **Choose 3-4 questions for the interview.** Yes, there's a long list below to choose from, but do not be tempted to ask more than 3-4 as the interview will go over the allocated 15 minutes.
- **Please include 'tell us a bit about yourself' as your opening question** and at least one or two 'behavioural' questions (e.g. 'can you tell us about a time when you [insert skill required in the PD]?')
- **Leave time for 'do you have any questions for us?'** You obviously won't be able to answer those questions, however you want to hear them.



Potential interviewer questions

Introduction:

- Can you tell us a bit about yourself?
- Why does this particular board role appeal to you?

Governance style:

- How hands on do you think a non-executive director should be?
- In your view, what is the leadership role of a non-executive director?
- What do you think are the important soft skills of a non-executive director?
- What role does diversity play in a strong board?

Skills and expertise:

- What is your experience in this field of business?
- Can you tell us about a time when you... (insert one of the key selection criteria)* (Note: ask this question at least two or three times for different skills required.)

Our organisation:

- What do you perceive are our current strategic considerations?
- What do you expect will be the challenges facing our sector in the next 10-15 years?
- Where do you think your strengths and weaknesses fit in with the current board?
- What are your thoughts about our current budget and financial statements?
- How does the current term of the position fit in with your other responsibilities?
- Have you had to deal with any legal issues in past positions that would benefit our board?
- Have you considered which of our committees are a fit for you?
- How do you think the board's expectations match with your expectations for yourself?

Connections and networking:

- How might your personal or professional connections be a useful resource to our organisation?
- Can you tell us about a time when you have drawn on your personal or professional connections?

Passion and commitment:

- What makes our organisation's mission powerful for you?
- What interests you most about our organisation?
- Do you have personal aspirations about serving on our board?
- What does success look like to you?
- What motivates you?
- How do you see yourself fitting in socially with other board members?

Do you have any questions for us?

During the rounds

Observers

As an observer, your role is crucial in helping the others understand what they did/said, and how they might improve their interviews as a result of the practice interview. These guidelines will help you understand the role of the observer and how to give constructive feedback at the end of the interview.

Capture what you observe – the exact words used or the behaviour observed.

Here are some examples of constructive observations:

Excellent introduction in response to ‘tell us a bit about yourself’ – clear, confident and outlined strengths well. Linked your pitch to the organisation.

During the interview, you looked down at notes too much – not enough eye contact. Looked at the other person’s tie when asking questions.

Used the challenge/action/result framework well when answering questions, although perhaps a little more ‘results’ would be useful.

Asked great questions at the end – I particularly liked when you asked about <topic>.

The feedback process

1. Ask the interviewee:

- How do you think it went?
- What went well?
- What might you do differently next time?

2. Ask the Interviewer:

- What did the interviewee do well?
- What could have been improved?
- Did the interviewee answer all your questions? Did they answer them well?

3. Give your view as the observer with positive feedback first:

- The things that went well
- The things that could have gone better
- Summarise your feedback – be as specific as possible in your suggestions



The debrief

PROMPT

YOUR ANSWER

As the interviewee, what stood out for you?

As the interviewer, what stood out for you?

As an observer, what stood out for you?



Module 9: Eyes wide open

Before we look at what it means to go into a first board role with your 'eyes wide open', let's pause to reflect on and review all the modules we've covered in the program so far.

Program review

By now you've picked the module you'd like to briefly summarise for us all. We'll end the program review with a Q&A session.

MODULE	NOTES
Module 1: Skills	
Module 2: Alignment	
Module 3: Commitment	
Module 4: Diversity, equity, inclusion	
Module 5: Pitch	
Module 6: Board resume	
Module 7: Where to look	
Module 8: Interview	



Going into your first board role with your eyes wide open

Handout (book): By now you would have received your copy of *Eyes Wide Open: A First-Timer's Guide to the Real World of Boards and Company Directorship* by Robyn Weatherley:

'Eyes Wide Open is an enduring and insightful guide for all new and aspiring directors, regardless of whether the appointment is with a not-for-profit, an equal representation board, government enterprise, family-run business, tech start-up, or an ASX-listed company.'

This book will help guide you as you step into your first board role.

QUESTIONS + NOTES



Your next steps...

Before we wrap up, write down what your next steps will be.

Pick five goals. Five is achievable. It could be to reach out to a board for a coffee or even to apply for a board role.

We'll revisit these goals in the two follow-up progress sessions.

GOAL	WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE
Goal 1:	
Goal 2:	
Goal 3:	
Goal 4:	
Goal 5:	



Module 10: Progress sessions

The check-ins! Let's celebrate the wins and workshop the challenges.

GOAL	PROGRESS SESSION 1	PROGRESS SESSION 2
Goal 1:		
Goal 2:		
Goal 3:		
Goal 4:		
Goal 5:		

Handouts

Module 1: Skills

Great Boards journal: [*Distinguishing Governance from Management*](#)

The [Canadian Angel Investment Foundation](#) skills chart

The AICD: [*Board Recruitment*](#)

VIA Signature Strengths Questionnaire

Module 3: Commitment

The AICD: [*general duties of directors*](#)

Thoughtpost Governance: [*4-in-1 Directorship Model*](#)

Module 4: Diversity, equity, inclusion

The AICD: [*Which Two Heads are Better than One?*](#)

Kellogg School of Management: [*Better Decisions Through Diversity*](#)

Harvard Business Review: [*How Diversity Can Drive Innovation*](#)

Module 6: Board resumé

Take on Board podcast: [*Episode 6 – developing a governance CV*](#)

The Muse: [*185 powerful verbs that will make your resumé awesome*](#)

Module 7: Where to look

Take on Board blog: [*Where to start the search for board roles*](#)

Ideas to Action blog: [*My personal guide to LinkedIn etiquette*](#)

Module 8: Interview

Take on Board podcast: [*Episode 16 – prepping for a board interview*](#)

Get on Board Australia's [*How to prepare for a board interview*](#)

Board Direction: [*How to reply to board interview questions*](#)

Get on a Board Australia: [*Questions to ask at a board interview*](#)

Module 9: Eyes wide open

[*Eyes Wide Open: A First-Timer's Guide to the Real World of Boards and Company Directorship*](#)

