

BUILDING A VIBRANT BOARD

When I spend time with a board, it's pretty easy to quickly identify whether that board has a culture of vibrancy or not.

When there is a vibrant board, when their mindset has a nature of vibrancy, there is a great deal of thoughtful and well-placed conversation at the table.

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On a vibrant board, there is a variety of experience and a variety of opinions. There is laughter and humor, and there is flexibility and adaptability.

On a vibrant board, while they can vehemently disagree on particular items, there's a level of cohesion that holds them together, so they're able to provide one voice and one direction to the CEO and the management team.

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Don't confuse vibrancy and change-oriented and think that they can be used synonymously. While boards can employ them together, they are not the same thing.

When an organization is in a maintenance mode, the board vibrancy can deteriorate. This is because the board can start to feel like, "Oh, another good set of results; some more good returns. The CEO's been in place three years now. Things are good." And they can start to miss some of the signals that might be happening externally. So while the vibrancy and the change can be there at the same time, sometimes the vibrancy is at greater risk when there hasn't been any change for a period of time.

Lastly, a vibrant board is committed to board education. They don't believe that they know all the answers. One example I've seen was when

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the directors of a large bank, which is a very large institution and a Fortune 100 company, periodically brought in millennials to meet with the board and to give the board, many of whom were homogenous in their demographics, an understanding of technology, or potential disruptions that they might not have thought about otherwise.