The Founding Board		The Governing/Managing Board		The Governing/Fund Raising Board	
The Board is the o	rganization	Assumption of responsil longevity of the organiza		Focus on fund raisir prestigious board m expectations of staf	
consensus leaders power to staff, oft	leadership, reluctance to release cause			levels of boardsmanship or an "out" group, heavy ertise of staff	
Informal, consensus decision-making; sometimes "rubber stamping"		Formalized decision-making process, increased reliance on staff recommendationsDecision making delegated to executive committee, formal often "rubber stamping"		e, formalized process,	
Strong mission focus, little distinction between policy and administration.		Focus on policy, planning, and oversight responsibilities; focus on building management systems and structures; micro-management often a problem; beginning to embrace fundraising responsibilities		Pre- and Post operations focus (planning and evaluation); strong commitment to fundraising	
Small group, few committees		Committees more important, more delegation of work to committees, add board members		Add more board members, executive committee often functions as governance board	
Passion for mission		Passion for mission decreases with focus on building internal capacity		Passion high (especially among leading fund raisers)	
Composed of individuals with close ties to the mission of the organization		Recruit board members who are specialists in management, computers, finance, etc.		Recruit board members of high visibility and with "money" connections, members gain certain amount of prestige by sitting on this board	
	Transition:		Transition:		
	Due to growth and crisis		 Due to growth or crisis 		

•	Due to growth and crisis	•	Due to growth or crisis
•	Tension between board and staff	•	Need for change mutually
•	New board members (new ideas)		recognized
•	Painful	•	Less traumatic

Life Stages of Non Profit Boards

Stage	Early	Middle	Mature	
Focus	Organizing Board	Governing Board	Institutional Board	
Characteristic	 Small Involved in everything Homogeneous Informal Committed 	 Board accepts responsibilities Board is enlarged & diversified Committee structure allows some tasks to be delegated Staff gain new responsibilities & decision making power 	 Focus on recruiting a large board that has the capacity to give or have access to funders and donors, and influential people. Serving on the Board is considered prestigious Board oversight responsibilities delegated to committees Planning and budgeting is done by staff and approved by the Board 	
Transitions	 Shift to more business like operation Board/Staff must redefine roles Open up to new people Development of systems Clearer job descriptions 	 Established organization becomes increasingly "professionalized" Fundraising function of Board increasingly important 	 Ability to delegate governance of the institution to an executive or management committee Becomes an institutional fundraising board 	
Challenges	 Find it difficult to hire or trust first staff members and share power Some founding members will choose to leave 	 Frustration with change occurring slowly The Board is often the slowest to change and operate on a new dynamic, due to its operation being focused on last 	 Initially the straggle between being independent and interdependent may get in the way until both board and staff learn to adjust to their new roles 	

Source: Board Passages: Three Key Stages in a Nonprofit Board's Life Cycle, National Center for Nonprofit Boards