

# Effective Boards and Teams: Teamwork, process and decision-making

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# Introduction and Overview

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- ❶ Special challenges for startup groups
- ❶ Understanding typical group development cycles
- ❶ Roles and Relationships matter
- ❶ Meeting processes matter
- ❶ Addressing common startup questions

# What's special about startup groups?

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- ❶ Building relationships while also taking on an enormous project
- ❶ Learning “on the job”!
- ❶ Individual roles may shift tremendously as the project develops – organizer, entrepreneur, board member, and more




# What's not so special about startup groups?

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- ❑ All groups must work out processes and structures.
- ❑ All groups that want to make decisions together have particular challenges.

# Group Development Stages

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-  Forming
-  Storming
-  Norming
-  Performing
-  Transforming

# Forming

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## What's happening here?

- The group is coming together, but hasn't yet begun tackling their real work.

## Some practical tips

- Do a check-in each meeting: How are you?
- Make time at each meeting for some “get to know you” conversation.
- Make basic agreements about how you will work together – sooner rather than later.

# Storming

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## What's happening here?

- Uncovering some basic disagreements about the group's goals and means.
- Polarization, challenging others' points of view.

## Some practical tips

- Use a skilled facilitator.
- Build a set of agreements on *common* values and goals, while still appreciating divergent ideas.

# Norming

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## What's happening here?

- Stepping back and regrouping.
- Building group norms that allow “performing.”

## Some practical tips

- Write down your agreements.
- Regularly evaluate yourselves: Are we doing what we said we would do?



# Performing

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## What's happening here?

- Getting our project moving!
- Others who see us as effective leaders join us.

## Some practical tips

- Celebrate achievements.
- Pay attention to shifting roles as the project develops.






# Transforming

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- ❏ What's happening here?
  - New people join the group.
  - The Steering Committee becomes the Board.
  - The Board hires a manager.
- ❏ Some practical tips
  - Acknowledge the changes.
  - Celebrate the progress.
  - Review and revise your working agreements as necessary.

# Roles

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-  Founder
-  Entrepreneur
-  Governor (“Director”)
-  Member
-  Customer (woo hoo!)

# As the project develops...

- ❏ The founder(s) may feel that their personal initial vision has been lost.
  - Can we keep a founder connected? How? Why would it matter? Is it worth the cost?
- ❏ We may need an entrepreneur (or many) to take initiative.
  - But entrepreneurs often work better solo!
- ❏ Eventually someone must maintain and build on what exists.
  - Founders and entrepreneurs may not have the patience for this ongoing work.
  - Where will the willing directors come from?
- ❏ Can founders, entrepreneurs, early directors (steering committee members) transition into their roles as co-op members and customers?

# Watch out for conflicts of interest

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## Like what?

- A developer who owns “the perfect location”
- A farmer who is looking for a market for his/her product
- A steering committee member who wants to be GM
- What other examples have you experienced?

## Conflicts don't preclude involvement.

- Make sure project leaders declare real and potential conflicts of interest.
- Take appropriate precautions to ensure proper controls on decision-making processes (i.e., recusal).
- Write down your agreements about how to deal with conflict of interest.

# Process vs. Product

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- ❶ A constant tension within all decision-making groups.
- ❶ Check in regularly: ask yourselves if you are giving enough attention to both aspects.

# Product means...

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- ❏ Your goal, what you are trying to accomplish.
- ❏ Make an agreement about your goal. Write it down!
- ❏ The goal will probably change as your project develops. Revisit your agreement periodically to ensure it still reflects the will of the group.

# Process means...

- ❶ How you go about reaching your goal.
- ❷ Make agreements about how you will work together. Write them down!
- ❸ Primary process agreements:
  - How meetings will work? Who sets the agenda and chairs the meeting?
  - How will we make decisions?
- ❹ Your processes may need to become more sophisticated as your project develops. Review your agreements periodically to ensure they still serve you well.
  - See the “Creating Alignment” webinar materials



# Meetings – Can't live with them, can't live without them!

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- ☞ Meetings should be purposeful, not painful.
  - You have a lot of control over meeting quality.
- ☞ Agenda
- ☞ Facilitation
- ☞ Decision-making rule

# Agendas

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- ❏ Focused agendas help the group.
  - Structure can nudge a group through the forming and storming stages.
  - Agreeing to the structure is part of norming.
  - See sample agenda format in the [CBLD Library](#)
- ❏ Each agenda item should have a clear purpose.
- ❏ Agendas should indicate the time allocated to each item.
- ❏ By agreeing to the agenda at the beginning of a meeting, the group makes a plan that then guides the work of the meeting.

# Facilitation

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- ❏ Effective meetings need skilled facilitation.
  - Meetings are not just long conversations! We've got work to do!
  - The facilitator's job is to help the group get its agreed-upon work done.
  - Who in your group has or can learn facilitation skills?
- ❏ Generally the chair is responsible for setting the agenda and facilitating.
  - But the facilitator could be someone else.

# Making decisions

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- ❏ How will you know when you've made a decision?
  - Agree on your "rule" in advance.
  - Do we require a majority? Unanimity? Something else?
    - Decisions come in sizes – not all decisions need the same rule.
- ❏ What process do you use to get to your decision?
  - Parliamentary procedure (Robert's Rules, etc)
  - Consensus
    - Remember that consensus is a process, not a decision-making rule.
- ❏ You've got to decide how to decide!
  - Write down these decisions as part of your working agreements.

# Meetings change as your project develops

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## Meetings during “forming”

- You may need more time to talk about issues, to process feelings, to work through divergent values and visions.
- But don't let yourselves wallow in inaction. Getting things done energizes the group.

## Meetings during “performing”

- More about getting down to business.
- But don't ignore feelings and divergent opinions. The best decisions are built from “many pieces of the truth.”

# YIKES!

## Examples of “scary” questions

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- ❏ Why are we even making a co-op?
- ❏ Should we have a buying club or a storefront?
- ❏ Do we really need to raise a million dollars from our members?
- ❏ Do we really need to hire that professional?

# Ahhh! We can handle it!

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- ❏ Don't be afraid of scary questions!
- ❏ Have clear working agreements about your decision making process.
- ❏ Return to your foundational documents – vision statement, bylaws, etc.
- ❏ Value each person's "piece of the truth."
- ❏ Using your process, decide what to do.
- ❏ Evaluate your decisions regularly.

# Questions?

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- ❏ What specific piece of today's presentation would you like to hear more about?
- ❏ What specific issue at your own start-up would you like to ask about?



# For more information...

Related files are available in the CBLD Library, <http://cdsconsulting.coop/cblibrary>

- 📎 CBLD Policy Template for Startups
- 📎 Agenda Template
- 📎 “Building a Positive Board Performance Culture” Field Guide. Part 1 and 2
- 📎 Webinars for Start-Up Food Co-ops

Related articles are available in Cooperative Grocer, <http://www.cooperativegrocer.coop/>

- 📎 Healy, Michael. “Democracy in Cooperatives.” Cooperative Grocer, May-June, 2005.
- 📎 Healy, Michael. “A Recipe for Good Board Meetings.” Cooperative Grocer, Jan-Feb, 2010

Other resources

- 📎 Kaner, Sam et al. Facilitator’s Guide to Participatory Decision-Making, second edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007.
- 📎 Tuckman, Bruce. “Developmental Sequence in Small Groups.” *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol 63, 1965.

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# Thank You!