



Webinar Transcript – From Conflict to Innovation

So hi, everybody. Welcome to our Governance Made Easy webinar today, titled from Conflict to Innovation.

Today, we're having a discussion with our special guests, Fiona McKenzie, Stephen Bowman, and Julie Garland McLennan, all the way from Delhi in India.

My name is Sean McDonald, and I shall be your moderator for the next forty odd minutes.

Firstly, thank you for attending today. We always appreciate the effort you make to be here for our live webinar events.

During the session, as usual, if you have any questions for the panel, please use the or try to use the q and a button on your toolbar. Just enables us to keep a track of things, and we'll try and get through as many of those questions as we have time for. And finally, if you stay through till the end, which we hope you will do and as is customary for our webinars, we have a special treat for you. By answering a one minute survey at the end of the webinar, you're going to the draw to win our beautiful gift hamper worth over four hundred dollars.

Last week's winner was Bruce Forsyth from, Industrial Site Services. So congratulations again, Bruce, and thanks for leaving the feedback on our quick survey.

For those who are not too familiar with BoardPro, we are a board software provider sometimes called a board portal that serve or we serve around thirty thousand users across about thirty nine different countries these days.



We enable organizations to prepare for and run their board meetings more efficiently and effectively with less time and deliver more impact and value for the organization.

And as much as we are a board software provider, part of our wider mission is to make the fundamentals of governance free and easy to implement for all organizations, but especially those with resource constraints.

In these free webinars and the many templates, guides, and white papers on the BoardPro resource page are a great tangible example of how we look to achieve our mission for nonprofits and small to medium businesses around the world.

Now the slides from today's webinar, and the recording and also a transcript will be sent to you via email. So just relax and ask as many questions, as you would like. Now I will hand over to our great panel starting with you, Fiona, to introduce yourself.

Thanks, Sean. Good morning, everyone. My name's Fiona McKenzie. I'm dialing in today from Sydney, Australia, from the Gadigal lands of the Eora people, and I wanted to start by acknowledging the traditional owners of these lands and extend that respect to people joining us from Aotearoa and any other First Nations people joining today.

By way of background, I'm a negotiation and conflict specialist. I've got a background in management consulting, but I've spent the last decade or so helping leaders and teams embrace negotiation and conflict skills to get better outcomes.



We are negotiating all of the time. Almost every interaction has some form of negotiation, and I really think that people need to get better at it. It's a fundamental human skill.

And I know it sounds strange, but I actually love conflict. It's hard going through it, and it's really natural to avoid it, but we only make progress when we face it. Good things wait on the other side of conflict.

So the bulk of my work involves teaching negotiation skills to government and industry, coaching leaders through conflict situations. I speak on all of those things, facilitate collaborative agreements with boards and leadership teams.

I'm gonna hand over now to Steven and Julie to introduce themselves.

Hi. I'm Steve Bowman from Conscious Governance, and welcome everyone. I've been working with boards, and I've been on boards, and I've been CEO for the last forty five odd years. And, most of the work we do now is around governance reviews, strategic planning, dealing with conflict resolution from, from boards and directors and individuals.

Really looking forward to this conversation.

And, over to you, Julie.

Hi. I'm Julie Garland McClellan.

Most of you, I hope, will know me as the person who publishes the director's dilemma, which is a free global newsletter for directors



featuring, lots of practical case studies to help you develop your judgment. And I'd say ninety percent, if not ninety five of them, talk about dealing with some form of conflict, whether that's constructive conflict, whether that's just internal tension because we conflict with ourselves, or whether that's conflict between the directors or between an opportunity and your strategy.

So I really I was so excited when Fiona volunteered to present this topic that I volunteered for it even though it's only five AM here. I said, nope.

I'm up for this one. So I'm really looking forward to it, and, I hope everyone else is too.

Thanks, Julie. Fiona, over to you.

Thank you. Excellent. Well, I hope you get to stay awake, Julie. It's great to have you both here.

For this webinar, I'm gonna start in a really odd place.

I'm going to ask you this question. What do a time travel movie about artists, music of the nineteen sixties, and the Sydney Opera House have in common?

Well, let's work through that. So first with the movie, there's a really fantastic Woody Allen movie called Midnight in Paris. It stars Owen Wilson. He of the squashed nose, And he's a young writer on holidays in Paris.

Every night at midnight, he travels back in time to the golden age of the 1920s, where he meets famous artists and painters and



musicians, including a few feuding characters. Firstly, he meets Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso.

They are very different artists, but they met regularly in real life and the movie to argue passionately about their art, and their exchanges fueled some of their greatest works. They kept trying to push each other to better things.

Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald also featured in the film, and they too argued about different writing skills and pushed each other to improve.

The second part of my old question is the music of the 1960s.

So the Beatles and the Beach Boys had a really healthy rivalry and they pushed each other to new heights. The back and forth with competing albums like Pet Sounds and Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Heart Club Band shaped the evolution of modern music and album production. Then on to the third part of my question, the Sydney Opera House.

Danish architect, Johan Utzon's design was groundbreaking but really controversial. And during construction, there were cost overruns, technical challenges, and there were even questions about whether those iconic shells could be built. But all this tension led to lots of advancement in construction, including notably some of the earliest use of, computer modeling for the geometric shapes.

So what do a time travel movie music of the nineteen sixties and the Sydney Opera House have in common? Well, they all show that conflict can generate great innovation.

And the same is possible in the boardroom too. Directors disagree about things, and that's not a problem. In my view, it would be more of a problem if they didn't disagree about things. We do want leaders who are willing to embrace conflict and to step into the challenge. We don't want leaders who are complacent or who hide their views or pretend there's harmony when there's underlying tension.

So I'm gonna present a model today.

Sean, if you can take us to the next slide.

This is a model from this book, which I've had for decades. I think that should come into view there.

It's called Facilitator's Guide to participatory decision making by Sam Kaner or Connor. I don't know.

I really love it. I'm really my work is quite influenced by this book. And, in effect, my company logo is a diamond because of this model. So let's take a quick look at it.

If you think about the way that decisions are made, if there's a clear pathway and there's no controversy, groups will often canvas a few familiar opinions and then, close the conversation down and reach a decision. So that's the dark blue part of that model.

But, unfortunately, the same approach is often used for complex decisions, and it shouldn't be. People work hard to reach a quick decision because they're trying to avoid conflict.



So it's a it's I understand the temptation, but it doesn't do the organization, that it doesn't it's not it's not beneficial for organizations and decision making.

And so that's when divergent thinking is needed. That's that that lighter blue section there where you're opening up the diversity of the ideas, and you wanna be considering new perspectives, controversial opinions, maybe some half baked ideas. They often, the very intriguing ones.

Once there's been enough divergence, that's when you would use convergent thinking. So you've opened it all out and then you close it down. That's the green bit to consolidate the best ideas into a final decision. Sounds easy.

Right? Well, the model's helpful, but it simplifies things too much. So if we take a look at this next slide, you can see I've included in the middle there a groan zone. And, yes, it's as bad as it sounds.

So, good decisions actually can get really messy, and people get stuck on their own views and they stop listening to each other and they push for closure, and they try to go back to that little dark blue diamond at the start with the quick decisions.

Sometimes they pull their heads in and they don't want to continue to engage in the conflict and they don't share their real opinions. And the key actually is to persevere with that groan zone, the orange section.

According to Kana, confusion and frustration is natural if we're doing this properly. So I'm just gonna repeat that again. That's really important.



Confusion and frustration is natural if we're doing this properly.

Struggling to understand new and unusual ideas is hard. It doesn't happen in a smooth line. It's not comfortable. We don't get through the groan zone without discomfort, and it's really tempting to turn back.

But once you work through that, and the thinking starts to converge, the and the decisions in sight, it gets easier and the innovation appears and it's worth it. And in my opinion, as always, good things wait on the other side of the conflict or the groan zone.

Sean, if you could go to the next slide.

I've just given you a bit more detail here and you'll be able to look at that more closely in the pack.

But essentially, the divergent phase is about gathering diverse perspectives, understanding the situation, searching for alternatives, raising difficult issues.

The focus of the groan zone is building shared knowledge. That's where you're really listening to each other, forcing people to be quiet and to listen properly.

It's all about strengthening relationships and creating the shared content.

That's an important step. So you've taken all the views into account before you start converging. And that convergent phase is about



finding inclusive decisions, exploring principles, reframing problems, building on good ideas.

And you can see at the bottom the types of phases that you might go through at the bottom, and they sort of go from, you know, everyone's at the one point exploring and then converging again.

So we've kind of covered some of the theory of that, and I wanted to check-in with the panel. Do you have experiences of boards doing this either poorly, where they're avoiding conflict and shutting the conversation down too quickly, or perhaps experience where they've done it really well and they've stayed in that groan zone and worked hard to integrate everyone's opinions. I'd love to hear your experiences.

Julie.

Yeah. I've got, I love that groan zone.

I always talk about friction and traction Because if you've got no friction, you've got no traction. You might as well be running on ice. But if you've got too much friction, you're not going anywhere. It's holding you back. And the groan zone is probably like the last kilometer of a marathon.

Well, that just shows where my head goes when I get up this time of morning. But I have a great example, in fact, from a board that I'm currently on where we have two very excellent engineers who are both experts in the topic of the board.

And they come at things from different perspectives. They've got very different characters. And when they disagree, one of them will



explain something and, because some of the directors are not engineers.

And then most of the time we just nod and move on. But sometimes one of them will explain something and the other one will say, well, you could look at it like that. But out comes this different equally correct way of looking at what we're doing. And then they generally lock horns and engage in a bit of a discussion about why it should be this and not that.

And and the rest of the board actually learns. So even if we do wind up simply selecting one or the other, The whole board is able to build that shared knowledge of what this decision is all about.

And therefore, we make the decision with greater confidence, and with more understanding of some of the potential downsides.

So we know we've made a better decision.

And for me personally, I sometimes come out of board meetings feeling like I've just had a class in PhD engineering, which is brilliant because they pay me.

So how good is that? But, yeah, I think that whole when it's done well, that conflict between different perspectives and different ideas can really give you a really good foundation.

It's like crushing rock to make a good base for your concrete. How's that?

We we had a perfect example of this yesterday in a in a board meeting that I was, involved in.

And then actually a strategy meeting, more so than a board meeting, where they automatically wanted to try and solve the problem. And it was an intractable problem at this stage of we're part of the federated organization, and the federation's not working it well. What do we do as a state based organization?

Yeah. Should we slash and burn or should we try and fix it? Because fixing doesn't actually and so it could have got really ugly. But what what they chose to do was to actually exactly in that in that, blue area, the gather diverse perspectives and start to do some research. And what they actually did, which I thought was brilliant, is they came up with seven possible ways forward.

Now they're moving into the groan zone. But they couldn't have got into the groan zone unless they'd actually done some divergent thinking and looking at what are these options that we've got. And simple little things like going out and talking to other organizations that have been through this and learning what they learned from it rather than hit yeah. Let let's pick the thing the one thing that we all agree on right now. And they're talking about the whole future of the organization.

So I think, actually, this this model, is is is brilliant because let's get together what the options are. Let's figure out what they're doing, but let's not try and solve it yet. Now let's then explore, unpack, build the shared knowledge as you said. And now from that will then come the here's the choice that we're going to make going forward. And I find too often that that that boards in particular are after the one answer that will solve everything without actually having to look to see what the options are. Fiona?



I think that's, that's really well said, both of you. I think, actually in Connor's book, he depicts that opening up of the divergent ideas where there's a whole bunch of little circles and each one is like a new idea and they start wandering off until they're contained and you go through the groan zone and bring it back through. And I think forcing, a leadership team or a board to explore all of the options, as you've both explained, and actually push harder to make sure you've canvassed all of the options, not just the convenient ones or the the regular ones before you start shutting it down is a really important part of this.

I'm gonna work through a case study shortly which demonstrates some of that too where where, it's really easy to to make a quick decision, stay in that dark blue section instead of kind of push through the hard stuff, and you can end up with, really surprising innovation on the other side.

We might go to the next slide, Sean. Thank you.

So if you leave here today with only one message, it's this. When conflict and disagreement arise at your board meeting, stay in that grind zone as long as you need to before you start converging on a decision.

If you don't make it to the grind zone or you get there too early, you're missing out on perspectives that could actually be really innovative for your organization, things that you didn't know could even exist.

And so, that really is the main takeaway today, but let's have a look at some examples.



In my experience, disagreements in boards often fall into one of four buckets.

The direction of the organization, so clashes either the long term vision.

The second one, their budget priorities disagreeing about funding allocations. That's a fairly universal issue. Growth versus stability, that old chestnut, that perennial trade off between risks the risks of growth and the risks of stability.

And finally, people things. There's, you know, talent development, recruitment, succession plans. These things are a real hotbed of disagreement, especially CEO appointments, and I I imagine, there's a few there's a few stories on the panel about that.

I wanted to work through, an example from my work of this, an organization that I helped to move from conflict to innovation, using that diamond process from the Carna model. So I've changed a few details just to to keep it, confidential. But this case is about a not for profit education group, and they provide educational resources to remote and rural schools.

And some years ago, the leadership team, and the board faced what I would now call, like, a crisis of mission.

They couldn't decide if they should keep their focus just on remote education or whether they should expand their services to schools in capital and larger region areas. There's, obviously, there's educational inequality in cities as much as remote areas, but it was a really big move that they were considering away from the organization's mission.



Some board members argued that expanding into urban schools would help the organization reach a bigger audience, that it might generate extra income.

It would increase visibility, maybe get additional donors.

On the other side of the argument, several directors felt strongly that shifting the focus to the urban schools would dilute the original mission of serving rural and remote Australia.

So over a few months, the debate became really polarized, really difficult conflict, really hardened positions.

And those that wanted to stay with the rural and remote work felt that expanding into the urban areas was actually a betrayal of the organization's roots, and the other faction thought that the first group was really shortsighted.

So it was quite a protracted conflict.

And really at the heart of it, was that disagreement about the direction of the organization.

And that's about when I got involved, and we started that process of moving from conflict to innovation.

We spent a lot of time letting everyone share their five year vision for the organization.

As everyone got a chance to describe their hopes and aspirations without interruption, all of the stakeholders got to see and



understand the multiple perspectives. And this process revealed, actually, that, everybody remained committed to serving the regional and remote communities, even those who supported the urban expansion.

And it became clear that those supporting the urban work simply saw it as a way to generate extra income and attention. And so just having that understanding in the group was really helpful. And by staying in the grown zone, we were slowly able to highlight the common ground, and, there was quite a shift in the attitudes of the group that didn't wanna look at the urban work. As we went into the convergent phase, we worked through the groan zone and started to settle on a way forward, and the board agreed to pilot a small hybrid model that involved maintaining the primary focus on the, rural and remote work, but targeting some disadvantaged schools here in Sydney where I am. And any funds generated from that work went back to the rural and remote work.

So they started to test that and see where it went. The outcome, this is where it's really exciting. So through all of that conflict, the outcome was really exciting and innovative, and there were some fantastic outcomes. So a steering group was tasked with overseeing the urban pilot and making sure that that revenue flowed back to the rural and remote work. The urban project drew much more attention and increased funding. And the really this is the really good bit, the really innovative bit.

Some really new approaches were trialed, and the urban and remote schools actually started developing, like, inter school communities using, technologies. There were even some cultural exchanges, some in real life, some just, like, a weekly, they would work together on video. So, it was there were some actually really



groundbreaking outcomes from that from that from that project and, so much conflict at the start, so polarized.

And with careful facilitation, we ended up, actually with some really exciting outcomes for urban disadvantaged schools and rural and remote schools.

So that's a long kind of a long, talk through, but you can see how with that model, it was tempting to make that little first diamond, a quick decision of, yes or no, you know, urban yes or no. And by working through the divergent views and the groan zone and then focusing in on that pilot, which has now been rolled out more broadly, was, actually really great things came out of that that we couldn't have foreseen any of that.

Fiona, have you have you found, that actually explaining those three elements to a group before they get stuck into it, before they before they start to fall apart. Does actually understanding what the process or the road map is like for the decision making, does that help? Or is it just something you have to naturally work your way through maybe with a facilitator or or, you know, wait until things explode and then try and bring it back online again? What have you found?

Oh, that's a great question. I mean, I sometimes get bought in once things are in a grind zone and people wanna turn back to the little quick decision.

But I think if people understand that the discomfort of the groan zone is part of the process, it's easier to stay in that because it's uncomfortable.



You've got disagreement. You've got people not listening properly, and it needs really strong facilitation.

But knowing that it's normal and natural to go through that before you start going through it is helpful.

So I do I do use this model. I show this model, when I'm working with teams and boards because it makes sense of what's happening, and people can point to where they are on the map almost.

But it's it's fairly innate part of my work anyway. Like, as a negotiator, you're always looking to expand the options that gives you power in a negotiation, the more options that you have.

And then you close down on the one that's best for the parties.

Yeah.

No. We've got a good question from Marco.

She asked, could you say more about, one, which types of conflict are actually productive versus which ones are pointless?

And two, how you make sure you properly recognize and distinguish between them.

I actually did a board pro webinar on on this.

I think it was on difficult conversations, and we talked about the different types.

Yeah.



So some conflicts are just task conflicts. We disagree about an allocation. Some are more values based, and they're a bit harder.

And so, in a board situation, I think so with the the the, servicing the disadvantaged schools, the conflict there was actually about their their mission and the fundamental sort of reason that organization existed.

And so that's why it was such a protracted, contracted sort of conflict.

I mean, I do genuinely believe that good things lie on the other side of conflict, and no conflict is too big. But some get some are toxic and have gone have gone too far, and they're irretrievable.

I'm not sure if that answered the question. There was a second part, Sean. What was the second part?

How do you recognize which one's which? Yeah.

It was great. Yeah.

One of my tips later in the presentation actually is to get outside help. And I think people can get better at dealing with conflict, identifying when it's coming, staying aware of body language or whatever it might be.

But sometimes outside help is invaluable. If you've got an independent person who is able to read the room, make sure that, that, you know, holding space for everybody to express opinions, that that's that's an invaluable help.

Another great question that's come in, like this one. How do you navigate a pattern of confirmation bias amongst the board?

To give you context, I'm a female on a on a board of five males and would like to learn how I can positively influence my fellow members to lean into engaging a different perspective.

Who wants to tackle that one?

Julie?

Oh, I've I've been in that situation a few times.

And there are some different perspectives that take so long to become part of the fabric of the board that it feels for a long time as if this is just a waste of time. This is just a vexatious, ongoing, nitpicking, annoying complaint.

But I'd say two things. One, and I struggle with this, is ask questions. Don't make declarative statements. I love to make declarative statements, but the sky is blue. No. It's not. It's transparent and it's black outside at the moment.

But I'll make a statement inviting somebody to come back to me with a counter statement, and other people react quite badly to that because that's just Julie being bombastic.

But when you ask somebody, why do you think that? They sometimes hear, what were you smoking when you thought that?



So you have to be careful. I think that, Simon Sinek actually causes quite a bit of conflict without intending to because being asked why can be irritating.

But I like to do what Steven just did and modeled beautifully, which is ask a question, but don't ask a question that challenges. Ask a question that starts with how or how might or when could, because those are what I call crack questions.

They they split the issue open, but they're still actually closed questions because they assume you you will at some point.

So, I love to see people doing that. And the other thing is to, be very careful that you constantly go back to the duty of the board to serve the best long term interests of the organization because that is why you're raising this different context.

And I always say if you can't influence the board and if they can't influence you, it's not working. You're better off going somewhere else where you've got a more constructive relationship.

So have a long hard think. And if you are being vexatious, stop it.

But if you're genuinely raising it, try raising it in a different way. And just be aware that when you're asking people, particularly a bunch of blokes, to change the way they think, it's it's a long time for them to come around to that this is different and valuable, because they they start from a position of this is different and therefore alien and therefore threatening.

That would be my two pence worth.

I'll take a slightly different tack on this one.

There there are two things involved in this. It's a fantastic question because confirmation bias is pervasive in many instances. And one of my favorite phrases is, if two of us agree on something, then one of us is not useful.

And so one of the things is is, to actually put in place things that will challenge any perceived or unperceived confirmation bias that's there. And there's two things that immediately come to mind. One of them is, Julie touched upon which is the use of questions. Now the purpose of a a question is never to seek an answer.

The purpose of a question should always be to seek to unlock wisdom, both of the person asking that question and those receiving it. So a really good question actually gets us to challenge preconceived biases or notions, and letting other people actually unlock that wisdom that they have which might be tied up in all sorts of biases they might have. So one of my most favorite questions I'll give you a couple that just are incredibly powerful and so simple. The first one is, what question do you ask when you don't know what question to ask?

And the power behind that is you ask a question about the question.

So if you perceive that there might be something going on or you can see there might be some bias going on, then ask a question about the question which is what question should we be asking here that might actually allow us to see any unanswered biases that we might have. And just leave that as a question. Don't use it as a weapon. So, if if things are getting a bit confusing and we're going around in circles, then you ask a question about the question. What question



should we be asking here to give us some clarity about where to next? And then shut up.

The thing behind questions is they should always invite people to go up to the next level, whatever that is, and help them unlock their own wisdom.

And the power of question, I think, is really misunderstood because most people think a question seeks an answer and it really shouldn't. So that's the first thing I'd say. The second thing is sometimes it can be very useful to have people take on roles.

So you might actually, say to a director, in this conversation that's coming up, can you take on the role of a couple of our key stakeholders, please? Just put yourself in their shoes and ask the sorts of things that they're likely to ask. Maybe ask the questions you think they might like to ask. Or can you put, can you put yourself in the the space of someone who is gonna fight this to the very end and take that role on?

And this becomes really quite interesting because, always in boards, often you'll find someone who is the the negative Neli, the person who always come up with ideas. You don't give them that role. They've got it anyway. Alright?

But you give someone else that role. And what it does tends to do is to unlock some of the biases and gets us to start looking at different areas we wouldn't have otherwise looked at. So first one is understand the role of questions is on is to unlock wisdom, not to prove points. And the second thing is to maybe allocate some roles to people, to look at from different stakeholder viewpoints.

End of soapbox. Back to you, Fiona.

No. No. That's great.

Questions are a superpower.

I tell people that all the time in relation to a negotiation. If you're stuck, if your emotions are a bit out of control, whatever it might be, ask a question and, the the gold waits for you there and gives you a chance to regroup as well. I will just, in response to that question, talk very briefly about, research in the area of women in male dominated industries.

And there is quite a well documented backlash against women, so we are subject to the stereotypes. Sean, maybe this is, a topic for a webinar next year, women leaders in in male dominated environments.

And what I teach is the art of courteous defiance, which is essentially, that I think women need to be relentlessly pleasant while also being firm in what they're asking for. Because if you are too bombastic, that that can backfire. It's quite well documented just because of the stereotypes that, you know, that I think they're starting to dissipate, but it's it takes a long time.

So, yes, courteous defiance, relentlessly pleasant while being firm would be a suggestion. And that's that's some of the ways that I work when I'm coaching, female leaders.

One of my favorite phrases also, Fiona, is respectful dissension. Yeah. They've got to work together, though.



Yeah. Yeah. That's right. You don't want one without the other. Exactly right. It's, and it is that that's not just for for women.

That's for everybody. But, I think there's a there's a particular, backlash that women can face, when they're being assertive.

So Couple of other questions.

Is when you're being respectfully defiant, when you say to somebody with respect, you're not actually being respectful.

You're telling them that your opinion's better than theirs.

So, again, that question is a superpower.

How would we protect against the allegation? And then you say what it was you were going to say and get them arguing your point. It's, and it's not always a male female thing.

Sometimes it's the engineer in the room full of accountants and economists.

Sometimes it's the sole lawyer in the room who loves words and isn't that fussed about numbers. So it those sudden divisions and there's a lovely question from an autonomous an anonymous attendee or an autonomous anonymous attendee, about the suitable time in the debate for leadership. And chairs are absolutely essential if you haven't got outside help with your discussion, and you don't always have outside help sitting there in the boardroom with you, the chair has to make a leadership call in when do I sit back and watch this discussion happening and get through the groans, and when do I decide we've got to, move on here? And, you



know, sometimes just taking it off the table for this meeting and saying, look. We're obviously not gonna resolve it today. Let's schedule a good half hour to talk about this next time.

Is it's progress of a sort.

I reckon we could talk about this for hours, but we've got five minutes left, and Sean's given us the the hint by changing the slide. So I'm just gonna finish off on this.

Tips for innovation. The first one, don't underestimate the power of the groan zone.

So groupthink is a temptation for everyone. It's where, we reach safe, uninspired decisions because we're afraid of the conflict. The groan zone is an antidote to groupthink, so I moved through that. If you think about the case study that I worked through, if if we made a quick decision or played it safe, all of that innovation wouldn't have been unlocked.

The second tip there, don't stop at the bottom of the flip chart paper. I sort of mean that literally and figuratively. If you ever work with a facilitator that stops at the bottom of the butcher's paper or flip chart paper, they haven't worked the room hard enough. If you put a fresh piece of paper up, people continue to generate ideas, and sometimes they're the best ones because people are trying to find a new perspective that they hadn't found in the initial burst of activity.

And so we can use that same idea figuratively as well. So don't move on from a topic too soon. Keep pushing people to express every thought and view to articulate the creative solutions.



The hopes boards to create a safe environment for disagreement. So there there's a real skill in encouraging open dialogue and managing the dialogue, and good chairs will do this, And many good chairs still have a lot to learn about doing this. And, board members and leadership team members need to feel safe to challenge ideas without the fear of attack.

Focus on the problem, not the person. If I was a a football or rugby player, I might say play the ball, not the man. So a safe environment means that people need to be separated from the problem.

Conflicts should center on ideas, not personalities, and we need to maintain respect and objectivity.

And finally, get outside help. So that's actually come up a bit today, and I've already spoken about it. But I would hope that today we've given you some tips and ideas and that kind of model to think about that. But if your board or leadership team is still having conflict and not making it either to the groan zone or through it, get outside help because it really can make a difference.

I think just in addition to that, Fiona, the getting help also means, yeah, all of your chairs of board committees and the board itself should do some formal training on chairing, because that that gives them insights into something that they weren't born knowing. So it might just help. And just because someone's got a lot of experience as a chair doesn't mean they're a good chair. It just means that they've done a lot of strange things for a long time. So seek that assistance as well.

Yeah. Totally agree.



The other thing I would like to add to build on to that is you don't have to seek help for the whole board. If you're struggling to be able to move the board, maybe just get help with you on how are you influencing, what influencing strategies are you using, and come to the board with some better techniques next time.

Just sitting down and talking things through for an hour with somebody who's a skilled mediator or somebody who's a more experienced director, can be really interesting. I have people that I pay when I'm really stuck, and I go and I spend an hour with them and just get some tips on how do I move this forwards because my instinctive way to do it isn't working in this situation, maybe you've got a better one.

My QR code for my web my newsletter was just up on the screen. If you're interested in that, I worked really hard to keep it to a two minute read, and now I'm just writing about negotiation and conflict. And, the LinkedIn addresses for all three of us are there on that screen.

Sean.

Thanks, Fiona.

We are almost at the end of our calendar year for our governance made easy webinars. We have two great webinars to finish off with, December, identifying and managing conflict of interest. That's with Julie Gallen McClellan.

And the purpose and function of advisory boards, which will be a really interesting, webinar with, Craig Richardson.



So you will receive an email from me later on this afternoon, which will include a link to the webinar recording, obviously, that's hosted on our website.

You'll also get the presentation slides and the transcript.

So as you leave the webinar, don't forget to complete our one minute survey. Go into the drawers to win our hamper worth, over four hundred dollars, and we'll announce the winner or I'll announce the winner later on this afternoon.

So thank you everybody for your attendance today. I hope you enjoyed the session with Fiona, Julie, and Steven. Thanks, guys, for your contribution today. Really appreciate it. Look forward to seeing you all at our next webinar. Everybody, have a great day.