

# TRANSCRIPT

## May 4<sup>th</sup> BoardPro webinar (Handling a Crisis While Managing Your Board and Stakeholders)

Hi everybody. Welcome to our Governance Made Easy webinar titled Handling a Crisis While Managing Your Board and Stakeholders. Today we are having a great discussion with a special guest, Raylene Castle, who is the group CEO of Sport New Zealand, and we'll be delving into the crisis management world and look to impart key strategies and tactics to help you when facing crisis challenges in your own organization.

My name's Sean McDonald and I shall be your moderator for the next 45 odd minutes. Firstly, thanks for attending today. We really appreciate the effort you've made to be here for our live event and during our session. If you have any questions for Raelene or our general panel, please use the q and a button at the bottom of your screen and we'll be answering these during our session and try to get through as many of these as we have time for.

And finally, if you stay through to the end, which we hope you do and is customary for our webinars, we have a special treat for you by answering our one minute survey. At the end of the webinar, you'll go into the drawer to win our beautiful gift, tamper worth \$400. Now for those of you who don't know Board Pro, we are a board software provider sometimes called a board portal that serve over 20,000 users around the world.

And we enable organizations to prepare for and run their board meetings more effectively and efficiently with clever software, with less time, and deliver more impact and value for the organization. Now 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, especially those with resource constraints.

Let me introduce our panel for today, then starting with Steven Bowman, who is the managing Director of Conscious Governance. Steve brings a great depth of experience with board review strategic planning. Steve has a wealth of executive and governance experience and has written over 14 books on governance and strategy.

Good afternoon, good morning to you, Steven, and good afternoon. Good morning, and good evening to everyone around the world. Raelene Castle. Our special guest today is the group Chief Executive of Sport New Zealand and High Performance Sport New Zealand. She had joined the organization in December, 2020 after serving seven years working in Australia as Chief executive of the Canterbury Banks, down Bulldogs, the Rugby League club, and then Chief Executive of Rugby Australia.

She was previously to that Chief Executive of Netball New Zealand from 2007 to 2013. Railings held several governance roles in sport. Previously serving as a board director for the A NZ

Championship, netball International Federation of Netball Association and San Rugby, and also the World Cup Council.

Raelene was made a special officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit 2015 for her services to Business and Sport. Welcome to you, Raelene.

Brett Herkt is our glorious CEO of BoardPro. Brett is a serial entrepreneur having built several high growth businesses over the last 20 odd years, and he's built 10 million exit value in an I C T business. Persevered through to a modest exit on his first startup and carried the lessons into Board pro's burgeoning success. Brett brings tenacity, a strategic mindset, strong generalist business skills and an enduring curiosity to the table. Welcome to you, Brett. Greetings to everyone. So let's start this great conversation with Raelene and for that we will hand over to Steven to get us started.

Awesome, thanks very much. So today Raelene is going to share both the insights and some of the really practical things that she both put in place and the things that started to unfold in this amazing case study that she'll be sharing with us today. So Raelene, can you start off just by walking us through, what was this crisis?

Situation that you and your organization, your board, and your stakeholders ended up facing. Can you give us a bit of a walkthrough and a backgrounding on that? Thanks, Stephen. Yeah. I thought a good example which would be known to some of you on this webinar and some not would be the Israel Fillou issue that we had around his social media posting.

For those of you who aren't aware Israel at the time was Rugby Australia's most highly paid and contracted rugby player. He was the most high profile player that we had on our books. And in reality was the mark and profile player that we had in 20 17 , he posted a tweet which was of religious basis that had an offensive undertone to people who, from the L G B T I Q community that they would that gay people would go to hell.

We had a conversation with him. We expressed our concerns about the way he had expressed that tweet through his social media platforms how that it was offensive to a portion of our members and also some of our staff that we had a diversity and inclusion policy had an employment contract.

That diversity and inclusion policy stated that you weren't to use language that would be offensive to members of our staff or our audience. And it was very mature growing up. It was very stressful at the time. There was lots of media going on. But we managed to get there and we sat down and we ended up having a conversation.

And he assured me that he would not do that again. That he was, he wouldn't do it to his whanau, he wouldn't do it to the organization. He wouldn't do his top wallaby teammates. And ultimately he wouldn't do it to me. So about nine months later he repeated the same a similar type tweet with a similar implication that was that gay people would go to hell.

And then we had a moment. So we had that very defining moment where we had to take some very swift and specific action. Because we now didn't have a situation where an employee had made a mistake and we had dealt with that through an employment process. We actually had a very serious breach of his employment contract.

How, at what stage did you view this as a crisis? Or was it something that actually just crept up on you? How, what was your strategy for assessing how severe would this and what was the impact of this? What was going through your mind at that stage? Or you and your board's mind in particular?

Yeah, I think the key parts of it is that the first time he had posted on social media there was significant media interest in commentary. There was feedback from staff and from our wider membership base that this was unacceptable behavior. So the board were fully briefed. We'd been through a process of updating our staff on the steps that we were taking.

We also had a very concerned major sponsor who was Qantas who were obviously as you would be in this situation, concerned about their own brand damage. Potential brand damage. That's one of the challenges in the state code management pieces through this. So we had a lot of things in place because we'd already dealt with it in stage one, so we knew it wasn't a new issue that we were trying to deal with.

But it was, it was hot like the, back page of the paper stuff. So we're talking about media cameras and press conferences and stand up outside Rugby Australia with, 20 live cameras going live to me doing a press conference. By the time we got to the second time it didn't take me very long to work out.

So this was a crisis because my phone was going absolutely mental from either media trying to get hold of me from staff. And so I basically did two things very quickly. The first thing is I spoke to the board and I suggested that our only option was to terminate his contract. And they were, after we had an emergency board meeting, are very supportive of that.

I also spoke to the coach who was at that stage, Michael Checker, and I said to him, this is our position. Are you supportive of that? And he said Absolutely, I'm supportive of the process that you are going through. So that's the first thing, right? When you're dealing with something that's so significant and you know that you have to look forward what you don't want to do is have the problem of being concerned about having to look behind you, knowing that the board aren't a hundred percent committed to the process or the agreement that you've taken.

And that was probably number one. Number two is we having got that agreement. I tried to get hold of him and he disappeared. I couldn't, we couldn't he wouldn't return any phone calls and he wouldn't engage. So for about 45 hour, 48 hours, he was non-contact. So if you can imagine what that's there's media going everywhere, there's all sorts of speculation.

You can see that he's I was pretty sure he was alive cuz I could see that he, his, the two blue ticks on Twitter, on WhatsApp rather as he was being and he was still viewing the Wallabies WhatsApp group notification, so I was pretty sure he was alive. But we actually sent a team to his house, a welfare team to his house to check that he was okay.

Because you can imagine the outcome of the situation was that, if had we not done that or there had, there would be a whole set of other crisis situation that we'd be dealing with. And we set up basically a team of people who were capable of dealing with the, outcomes or next stages in this process, which was mainly led by our legal team.

So our group council and myself were leading this and we did we set up a war room, if you like, which was the process that we started to go through to execute how we were going to be able to go through the next stages of this process. You mentioned before, I think probably one of the key things in this whole conversation, Raelene, was keeping your board informed.

There's one element, the other one is getting the alignment that they agreed with what we're going forward. What did you have to do anything prior to that to get. To the stage where you could actually call an emergency board meeting, and it was a strategic conversation you could have with them about it rather than a, oh my God, what's going on here?

Sort of conversation. What assisted that? The reality of the public nature of this issue is there was no missing it. So it wasn't like something that they were surprised about. It was, they were aware of it. By nature of the engagement and the relationship that I had with the board In my experience, you only call emergency board meetings when you really need them.

So it's the boy that cried wolf scenario is that you wanna make sure that when you say, I need you now and I need you for an hour, please that they are, become available because they know that it's really urgent. You don't wanna be one of those CEOs that's always saying, oh, I've got this and I've got that.

You need to, make sure they understand that. And because of the I suppose the fact we'd already been through a similar issue previously and that, they had been briefed of why, what the support plans we put in place to ensure this didn't happen again. But ultimately we were in the hands of the athlete when he did do it again, they understood the consequences and I could call and get them together quickly.

We have a question from Kathy here, Kathy Cunningham. An obvious question. Where was your comms team in this process? Yeah, so we hadn't we literally hadn't got to that. As in, so literally this has all happened within about four hours. I think it happened about two o'clock by six o'clock I'd already had a board meeting and spoken to the coach, we'd agreed and aligned that we needed to execute.

That ultimately we had a very significant breach of our contract and the likely outcome was termination. I had a war room with legal advice. And comms in place who very quickly were

starting to think about the implications because we had media all over us. The comms team were starting to think about the strategies we would use for engagement.

We were trying to get hold and locate the athlete. And I made personal phone calls to our five. Sponsors to say to them that this was now a situation that we were taking extremely seriously. And it was something that was likely to lead. It was a serious breach of our employment contracts because of the diversity and inclusion clause that we had in those contracts.

And ultimately as an organization we had a responsibility to not only to live up to that contract, but to live up to the values that we stood for, which was an inclu, a sport that was prided itself on inclusion. So we communicated, I communicated directly with our five major sponsors. And then I had other levels of people who were starting to communicate to the other levels of sponsor and partner that we had.

And we started with a comms plan, which was stepping into communicating. I did a face-to-face with our staff and we started to go into the wider rugby network across Australia. So Raylene, did you. That's a lot to have happen in four or five hours. Did you have some protocols that you put in place from the previous incident?

Did you have essentially a crisis management plan if this were to occur again, or was it something that was a bit more generic that was able to assist you because. Yeah, there's a big difference between thinking on your feet and knowing the right things and having thought about what is you're going to do and then just putting the pieces in place so that you can actually generate that.

What did you find really useful to, to help get you over those first 3, 4, 5 hours? I. I think experience goes a really long way. And having been through a number of different situations before, I think that's helpful. Certainly a crisis management plan is helpful, but in my. Experience. It can't be too specific because the nature of a crisis is that you don't know actually what the crisis is.

So the genuine, the general big topics that you would need to be considering and think about whether you had considered are an important checkbox or list if you like to start to, to to check off. But actually having a. A really specific for me, our risk management plan in the type of issue, and I think this is an important point, Steven, is that whilst this was a crisis for rugby Australia because of the media intensity, like we literally had cameras parked outside the front door and stopped.

Staff as they walked into the building to try and get a comment. No one had died, right? So we weren't in a situation where we ran a a mine for example, that exploded and we had 30 miners stuck down the mine shaft, right? So I do think we have to make sure that we are. Talking about crisis and risk management planning in the right context.

And the differentiation between what risk looks like to your business when you are talking about a reputational crisis of behavior versus a reputational crisis of losing, part people dying, I think is a spectrum that we all have to make sure we've got in this context. Could I.

Did I jump in Steve? Just with a of course follow up question for you, Raelene. Most of our customers, users of Board Pro are at organizations sub 5 million in revenue and many of them will never have put together a crisis management plan. Is in your viewers, it worth having a one pager with five headings or something.

What's your take for those smaller organizations? What's the minimum they should have in place, do you think? Yeah, I, I do, I think it's hugely important to think about how you would work through scenarios, even think about one, like whatever your business is and what a, what in your world a crisis would look like.

What would happen. And then if you ran that scenario and you just literally, it's literally a two hour exercise, what would we do with, with. The CEO or the GM and a couple of people and say if this happened, what would we do? And actually think about those five or six key boxes that we'd need to tick, like notifying the board, like your comms plan, like making sure you keep your staff updated, like reaching out to the fa family or whanau.

Of the person that's affected. Making sure that you are thinking about your sponsors or partners or other, business colleagues that, whatever it is that your business is. All of those different elements I think are important. But actually taking a couple of hours to remove yourself from day-to-day and actually thinking about how you'd respond I think it would be really important.

Thank you. Raelene I think that idea of the one pager also one of the things that I've learned, particularly when it comes to a crisis management plan or some sort of process that's useful is that there's no good sitting down and writing at once and hoping it's gonna be okay on the day it actually needs to be tested out.

For example, Raelene, you said you called up your five major sponsors. You must have known what their phone numbers were and that they were actually the right sort of phone numbers and testing that out and making sure that you've got all those things in place. I know certainly that the very first crisis management plan I wrote up with the institute of banking and Finance.

My then chair said to me, how do you know it's going to work? And I said I don't really, he said how would you know it? And I said I probably. Test it out. And he said, why don't you call everyone that's on your list? And a third of the phone numbers were no longer relevant. So Steve, you raised a really interesting point.

We've just been through in a sports sector like New Zealand has, the flooding that happened in the cyclone and in Hawkes Bay, for example, sport Hawkes Bay had a crisis management plan. And ultimately it didn't work because there was no cell coverage and no internet coverage. So it

was as useless as the paper as it was written on in reality from a business continuity and risk management point of view.

There is some, for all of the best will in the world of having the best planning, the, my advice would be, . To stay as calm as you possibly can to make sure that you've got all the information that you need to make the right decisions. So don't start dropping into solution mode now until you actually are sure that you spend enough time as disciplined and as hard as that is to make sure that you stay here first so that you've got accurate information in front of you.

Before you start giving directions as to what needs to happen next the worst thing anyone needs is a leader running around with a chicken with their head cut off as much as your tummy might be tuning and you'll be anxious because, this is adrenaline. When the adrenaline starts going the clear direction that you give will be absolutely vital to making sure this is managed as effectively as possible.

Can we pin you down Raelene but so this situation, which must have been stressful though it wasn't life giving. Talk us through. How long did you take? Did you take half an hour some time to, to get yourself straight? Put your phone away? Yeah. We I got the two or three key people I knew I needed in the room.

And we started making sure that we had the accurate information. What was the tweet? What did it actually say? Who, who would've read it? You know what the actual implications were tried to get hold of the athlete to have the conversation. Those key things I had the legal starting to think about legal implications had comms starting to think about.

So making sure that we were up here first. And then with that specific information that there was no accident or it wasn't someone who was masquerading as him with a fake Twitter profile and, all of those types of things. That actually then I, the first thing, of course was to ring the board chair and say, this is what I'm thinking.

And then, we went through it was literally, I think it was two o'clock till, probably eight or nine o'clock at night, first day. But it was about making sure that we had those key people and that we were getting the key decisions made so that we could move on to the next element we need consider.

There's some great questions coming through Raelene. There's one from Adrian questions which and she said, could you just give your take on the role of the board chair, the role of the CEO, the role of the board themselves? What was going through your mind and how did that all work from your perspective?

Yeah, I think it depends is the answer. We had, I had a very strong and robust and mature relationship with my chairman. He was not a chair that ever sought the headlines that was not where, there is some chairs dare I suggest that might see this as a moment to make themselves cover themselves in glory and step into the.

Into that situation. Equally there might be ones that go running for the hills because they dunno what to do and how to help you. I was fortunate to have a chair who had run NAB Bank with, 30,000 employees. So he knew what crisis looked like. He was. On my shoulder the absolutely whole time he said to me I will step in beside you and stand with you whenever you need me to including in, in press conferences and the like, if that's what you need.

But we did have a very serious discussion as a female leader who's dealing with a crisis. The moment that you have a male chair stepping behind you is the supposition that actually you can't cope with us. So you actually need your chair with you. Now was reputational implications, the right considerations in that moment for the organization?

I don't know. We decided that we would wait for escalation to have him, if that was required. Ultimately I ended up doing most of the fronting myself, but his job, which we agreed, was to manage the board and make sure that the board stayed united on the course of action that we'd agreed on.

John, did you wanna cover any of the other questions? Yeah, there's there, there's a number. We'll try and get through as many of these as we have time for, but there's one from Georgia Henry. How did the board deal with the impact of the crisis on those within the organization and the long-term impact?

On the culture of the organization. Yeah, Sean. And I think that's a really great question because actually the reason that we had to make the very difficult decision was exactly for cultural reasons and cultural and safety reasons. As a CEO, I've got a responsibility to provide a safe workplace.

And if I've got staff who don't feel safe coming into that environment because. They feel threatened or bullied or uncomfortable then that's why you have a diversity and inclusion policy. And that's why you actually need, we needed to stand up. So for all of, on the one hand I've said many times.

This is a very complex public situation with back page of the paper stories with the prime minister of the time getting asked about it because he was deeply religious, man. This was not a decision or a A conversation about was religion, right or wrong? Was an athlete's right to speak publicly, right or wrong?

That actually wasn't, this was about, it was a very simple case of an employment contract that had been breached and my responsibility to provide a safe working environment that lived up to its values. And so had we not taken the very difficult decision, which ultimately ended up in an out of court settlement we couldn't be seriously standing up and saying that we were an organization that was.



Peer to protect and look after its staff. That was very much the driver of the ultimate decision that we that we unfortunately had to make. Cool. So we've covered so far, the un the unveiling of the crisis that had occurred. Your crisis management team that you pulled together. Then how you prioritize your communication with your board and your key stakeholders.

Trying to get in contact with the person involved having your comms team involved in it. And we'd spent a little bit of time talking about your leadership technique, which I think can be summarized as take a deep breath. And just work your way through it. But also be aware of what the actual underlying issue is there.

What would you say was the most significant challenge that you faced in all of this? What was the one where we, where it almost went. Oh and how did you get over that? How did you overcome that? Oh, there's enormously, there's a lot of things. I think one of the things that was particularly challenging in all of this is there was a, there was a media narrative happening, which was the female CEO versus the Games top player and was religion versus the gay community and was freedom of speech.

And I said there was a whole lot of over. riding issues that were being debated publicly in the, through the news media and quite frankly, all over the world. And it was to try and park that. Cause actually that wasn't what this was about. That, that was a case study for a university degree.

At a later time, this was actually as I just explained, a, . A complex issue that actually had simple roads right in front of us. And we ultimately had to go through on those on those simple execute the values of the organization. Whilst all that was going on, there was also a major organization to run as well.

How did you make sure that. Whilst you were dealing with that, that the, that things kept on the day-to-day business kept on as well too and it didn't didn't overly impact on our ability to actually do what we needed to do. What were your thoughts on that? Yeah, and I think, fortunate because of the size of Rugby Australia we did have a team who were capable of continuing to run the business in the way that they could and focus on the things that they need to focus on.

The important thing was to make sure that they were updated on what was happening and that they had a good safe Reply to people who were going to ask them about what was happening because no matter where they went or what function or organization they turned up to people were curious about what was happening and what was going to happen.

So making sure they felt safe and being able to answer those questions was really important. And also that the staff really felt that we were stepping up and supporting them, but ultimately that's the reality. We all had jobs to do and we had to keep doing it. And whilst there was some very short-term, maybe 48, 72 hours, once we got through the initial phase and we had a plan it

was a small part of what we did every day because we had to get back to business while we dealt with the actual issue that you know, which ultimately ends up as a court case.

Steven, we have some great questions here. I think what we'll do is we'll lead them till the end. Do you agree? So that we have time. I think so, because then we can just cover this process off that Raelene has. So aeroditley been discussing with us, right? What kept you awake at night, Raelene?

What if you look at, in hindsight, is there anything that anything that you might have done differently? Is there and hindsight is always interesting that to some extent useless. What. What kept you awakened? What is it that now that you've learned from that, that you could pass on to everyone who will face a crisis at some stage in their career?

So a couple of things specifically to this situation is that when you are particularly dealing with a crisis that has a lot of media commentary is have an independent public relations advisor who will work directly to you. Okay, great. So it needs to be somebody who is outside of the organization that's not caught up in the noise and the turmoil.

And the washing machine that you're in that's actually sitting objectively from a distance and can give you some very specific advice on what you need to do in the steps that you need to do around public relations. How did you find them Raelene I already had that. I had a, I had somebody who was able to provide that to me.

And I knew that I had that person and I only ever used that person for that particular role. So I didn't, get them involved in day-to-day stuff. And they knew that if I rang them it was because we were dealing with something specific. That's quite high trust model cause they will ask you to do some things that you might not feel comfortable with.

But they are. Neutral and they'll be able to assess the situation and what the next steps might you, might need to do. It might well upset your own staff that are in the public relations space. And whilst you've talked about it in a previously about this as a model that you are gonna follow that can be slightly difficult.

But I deeply recommend to a CEO or a senior leader that they have that advice. And the second thing I think specifically to this is that for all of your wonderful diversity and inclusion policies that you will have in your in your constitution, in your charters actually the reality of trying to put inclusion and diversity in one policy is incredibly challenging.

And the modern day. Freedom of speech, voice, our desire to be inclusive with huge amounts of diversity. But to provide a safe space where everyone can express their views clearly is not something that's straightforward. In all of this, what insights did you get about risk management generally, because, a crisis tends to keep you pretty focused on, on actually what's happening.

But what are some of the bigger lessons that you've learned or the bigger aha moments you've learned that you could actually then share with us about how that's impacted on, risk management and moving it to the next level throughout the organization? Yeah, I think it's probably what I said earlier is that, you have to make sure you're separating what is risk management versus crisis management.

Cause I actually think they're two really different things. And you have to, in your business context, make sure that you can separate those two things. I think being very comfortable with the fact that you won't keep a hundred percent of the people happy a hundred percent of the time that is not the reality of the world that you live in when you have a crisis in front of you.

Ultimately you have to work to make sure you are shoring up the board. The staff in front of you the wider stakeholder, group sponsors, whatever it is, but actually trying to keep the wider public or in the situation was just not reality. And all the media for that wouldn't have mattered what I'd done there was people that had different views on the situation. So actually being comfortable, recognizing that you can't keep everyone happy is something that you've just got to get used to. Now for people who have listened through and semi-live some of this experience about a crisis being prepared for a future crisis, you've already given some wonderful hints in there.

If you had to pick two things that would really help people be prepared, even though they don't know what the crisis is, which I love your definition of a crisis. It's not what you expect it to be. But what would be the two or three key things that really that you, when you look back in hindsight, were the things that actually enabled you to deal with this in a way that was both respectful but also very strategic?

It is those The one I would and I would give is that you do need that independent advice public relations advice. It might also be, depending on what the issue is, it might be legal advice that needs to be independent so that it's not, if you work with a lawyer and you've got a long-term relationship, you might actually need independent specific advice in the area that you are dealing with making sure that you've really got those trusted people around you. I think that's the first thing. Secondly is you do have to take time to look after yourself and whatever that means to you. For some people it's exercise. For some people, it's a debrief with your partner.

For some people, it's a walk around the block. For some people it might be a glass of wine, maybe one, not more than that, I. Speak to when I suggest when you're dealing with a big crisis, but you actually do have to recognize cause there's no point you falling over, right? Because you work 20 hours and you haven't had enough sleep and you haven't.

But actually I'm making sure you give yourself that space. And however it is that you're dealing with at whatever level is that they've got your back. So whatever angle we are coming at this from, you can't be fighting on all sides. If it's your board, if it's your CEO, if it's your owner, if it's your, whatever it is that you are dealing with, is you have to make sure they're squared away

and that they are comfortable and agree with the actions that you have recommended and that you've got agreement to those. Because you just can't fight the issue on both sides.

You've got to be able to focus forward only. Awesome. Sean, I think this is a good stage now to go to some of the questions that we've got in there because people have really given us some thought. Do you wanna kick off with those? Yeah, there's some great questions. Here's one from Sally Ann Blanchard.

With this crisis, did you have, did you consider the impact of your decisions for future scenario building? There, there is. I, we did Certainly around it's hard. I could give you a bunch of very specific things that we did in relation to engagements for social media use for our players and education around what good look like and the understanding of what the contract that they were signing around diversity and inclusion so they understood.

So there was some very. Specific things that we did off the back of this situation to try and stop or risk mitigate happening again in the future. We had some bridges to repair because the Israel's teammates who were deeply religious and many of them Polynesian, felt we're questioning whether or not this was a race.

Decision. And where the some of the Australian boys who were much more pragmatic about putting the wallabies at the front of this conversation did not see, did not have the same tug and pull, if you like. That cultural repair that we had to do inside the environment was very challenging.

Those are all learnings that can be extrapolated out into other situations. But I do think back to the comment of Brett earlier is actually having a risk. Management plan that you can work to. And actually even just when you do get a quiet moment sitting down and actually thinking about how did you execute it?

What did you do? Would you do anything differently? And, do you have the documentation to back that up? I think is a really good learning outta something like this. Thank you. One here from Rich Easton. Beyond the Crisis, how did you support the business getting refocused and moved forward?

Yeah. I think that's where you, leadership's really important. You have to be seen to continue to go about the job and the way that, people expect you to go about it in a way. Making sure that you are communicating clearly with them. And also that's the moment where your teammates need to step up.

That's where you've got a COO or a chief commercial officer or a Yeah, high performance director. They, that's where they really have to lean in as well and make sure that they're supporting you to do the things that they can cover on the day-to-day delivery and decision making of things that you would usually be in.

But ultimately you are distracted or focused for a period of time over here. Giving clear direction of your expectations from them and how you need them to help you. No point being a martyr in these situations where you think you're gonna be a superman or superwoman and manage it all yourself actually make sure you are really delegating and setting clear expectations to everyone else around the day-to-day stuff is also important.

Great. One question here from Nicole Turner. How often did you keep the chair and board of informed of your Let me just go back to what I'm trying to read this. How often did the, did you keep the chair and board informed of each process? It's from Nicole. Yeah. In the early, early stages.

Twice a day. So it would be first thing in the morning and last thing at night. Sometimes it was a quick call. Sometimes it was just an updated email. So that we could it seems weird now, right? But it wasn't even necessarily a teams like face-to-face call like this, because, that's what we're also used to after Covid, but it was literally a conference call where everyone would dial in and we'd update them or it would just be a written update.

That was probably the first week once we actually got through that. Then it goes back to maybe every two days and then weekly and then ultimately a board meeting. Ultimately it can go as long as you need it to. I think as long as the board are comfortable that you've got it under control, ultimately they need to go back to governing and you need to get on with leading the organization.

Did the did the media scrutiny drive the priorities of your crisis management plan or change the way you needed to implement the plan? I can proudly say no they didn't because that is something that's very easy to do, is to lead and start making decisions because what's written on the back page of the paper, either about your organization or about yourself.

And you have to be enormously disciplined not to do that. We had a plan we were following our legal advice around a breach of our employment contract and the breach of the values of the organization. And we felt that we needed to strongly stand up for that. Outside of that, the rest of it I don't wanna say there's noise because that sounds disrespectful.

You needed to understand where and how you were starting to inform that noise so that you were giving it enough information to try and make the conversation more accurate as opposed to, Speculation. Who did you sit down and do a one-on-one interview with? Who did you ring and have it off the record?

When I say off the record, not in a bad way, but give some background information and context too so that you could start to help shape the narrative. But it certainly didn't waiver or change the base decision making that the board and leadership had to make. Excellent. So let me go back to our questions here.

We have one from Nigel Scott. I think we've answered this one actually. But Nigel asks, you still have a business to run and this was a major distraction. So how did you deal with the day-to-day matters of the organization? Yeah, I think, as I said, it's make sure you're giving the staff that are responsible for that clear direction.

Make sure they're looked after too, cuz they're going into environments which will be challenging for them, that they've got the information that they need but actually really clearly empowering them to do the things they need to do. Awesome. One last question I think we have time for Vasantha.

Did you have any key stakeholders, members of the board who disagreed with your decision to terminate the contract? And if so, how did you manage it? I can genuinely hand on heart say in this situation, we didn't. I can imagine if that was the case and they hadn't supported the positional recommendation of management that would've been enormously difficult and would've delayed the sequencing of the things that we needed to happen a lot and could have been very difficult. We didn't. But that is normal. It's very normal to have a situation dealing with a board where you don't have everyone aligned. But that's ultimately the role of the chair. It's the role of the chair to actually work through that and make sure that he's given or she's given the opportunity for the voice.

And often people might not disagree, but they do want a chance to put their alternative view forward. Or ex or, slightly cuz it might, their view might slightly alter the emphasis in certain areas. And I think that's an important part of the process. Cool. Excellent. So if I can just summarize here, Sean we've all read about crisis management plans.

We've all know that it's a good idea. We've had the absolute pleasure of Listening to Raelene living it and what this actually looks like and the insights that she's had in terms of your crisis management teams and prioritizing communication with stakeholders and how the board works. These are all absolutely priceless.

But also in there the insights of, looking after yourself as well. So Raelene, I think this has been probably one of the best conversations I've ever had the pleasure of having. So thank you so much for sharing both. The insights and the bruises and everything else that went through with this.

Over to you, Sean. Thanks, Steven and thanks again, Raylene. Just draw your attention to the webinars we have coming up. One of, one particular on May 11th, which I think you'll get enormous amount of value from. And that is the role of AI and governance with Steve Norry. And we have other webinars on our website on demand, which you can just scroll through.

Just go to [boardpro.com](http://boardpro.com) and our resource center webinars, and you'll find all those there. Now, just as you leave the webinar, don't forget to complete our one minute survey and go into the draw for our hamper. We'll announce the winner shortly after the webinar. Thanks again

everybody for your attendance, and I hope you enjoyed the session with Raelene Steven and Brett today.

Thanks again, Raelene. Really appreciate it. We look forward to seeing you all at our next webinar on May 11th, the role of AI in the boardroom session, as I said, which is led by Steve Nouri Richard McLean and Stephen Bowman. Thanks again everybody and have a great day.