



October 2024

ClubED

Bite-Sized Learning

CEI Monthly Newsletter



Club Education Institute

Welcome to the October edition of our Bite-Sized Learning newsletter.

This month, we address the recurring issue of directors getting operational. Understanding the difference between governance and operations is crucial for the success of the club. Directors should regularly assess their involvement to ensure they are focused on governance and not stepping into operational responsibilities. This month we review the situation through this case study.

Is This Director Getting Operational?

John is a board director of a sports club.

Responding to the club's needs, he has increasingly been involved in operational issues like attending staff meetings, approving vendor contracts and event planning. Realising he's spending more time on day-to-day management than strategy, he begins questioning whether he's crossing into operational territory rather than focusing on governance.

Self-Assessment: Is John Too Operational?

To determine whether John is becoming too involved in operations, he can evaluate his role against key guidelines and use a checklist to assess whether he is overstepping his governance duties.

The most effective boards are those that blend oversight with active involvement in setting strategy and advising the CEO.

Michael Useem PhD
Wharton Executive Team

- **Am I involved in routine decisions, such as approving purchases or staffing?**
If yes, this is operational. Such tasks should be handled by management.
- **Am I regularly attending staff or operational meetings?**
If yes, this indicates he's slipping into operational territory, as these meetings should not require his presence unless they relate to governance.
- **Do I supervise or give instructions directly to staff members?**
If yes, this is a management responsibility. John's role is to oversee the general manager, not manage staff.
- **Am I focusing on solving short-term problems rather than discussing long-term strategy and policy?**

If yes, this is a red flag. Directors need to maintain a long-term, strategic perspective.

- **Do I spend more time reacting to issues rather than reviewing the club's performance and strategic direction?**

If yes, John should shift his focus back to higher-level governance.

- **Am I micromanaging everyday club procedures?**

If yes, he is crossing into operations. Governance is about setting policies and overseeing their execution, not controlling how they are carried out.

Recommendations for John

1 Refocus on Strategy

John should prioritise strategic discussions, ensuring the club's long-term goals are being met. His role is to secure the club's sustainability and success, not to solve immediate operational issues.

2 Step Back from Operations

John should delegate operational tasks to the management team and trust them to handle day-to-day responsibilities. His involvement in staff meetings and operational decisions is outside his governance role.

3 Create Clear Boundaries

John should work with the board to clearly define the roles of directors versus management, ensuring that directors focus on governance while the staff manage operations.

4 Evaluate the Management Team

If John feels the need to intervene frequently, this may signal underperformance by the management team. Instead of stepping in, John should hold management accountable for results.

Conclusion

By following these guidelines and using the checklist, John can better understand whether he is becoming too operational in his director role. Staying focused on governance will enable him to contribute more effectively to the club's success, ensuring that he provides strategic direction while leaving day-to-day management to the operations team.

Are you and your board clear on director duties? Complete a self-paced [online refresher](#).



Upcoming Management Director Training

Newcastle & Hunter Valley Region
19 & 20 November
9am-3pm
Club Lemon Tree

Virtual Trainer Facilitated
4 & 5 December
9am-12pm

Register via the member portal or contact ClubASSIST on 1300 730 001.

Continuous Professional Development Courses for Directors (self-paced, online)

- **Anti-discrimination & bullying prevention**
- **Board Director Induction**
 - Dealing with difficult board members
 - Ethics in the workplace
 - Governance refresher
 - Sex-based harassment for boards & leaders
 - Whistleblower legislation for club directors & executives
- **Work health safety**
- **Director duties**

CEI membership entitles you to a discount of over 50 per cent on these online courses.

[Find Out More](#)