

PERSONALITIES

That Help Build A CULTURE OF INQUIRY

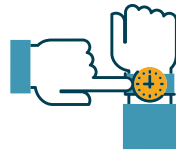
The following composite personality types illuminate ways that individual board members can contribute to a culture of inquiry. Most people have a combination of traits that may emerge according to the situation. But a board that is completely missing any of these traits — or is too heavily weighted with one or two — will have a harder time governing in a culture of inquiry mode.

THE COACH



A cheerleader who celebrates what's working well, motivates the board to do even better, and reminds the group of the common vision, core values, and the interests of the organization.

THE FACILITATOR



Highly attuned to the needs and emotions of others by encouraging full participation, ensuring that different views are heard, and supporting everyone to do their best thinking. Helps keep the board on track in serving the interests of the organization and the board. (Ideally, facilitator traits are present in the board chair, committee chairs, and individuals designated to lead board discussions.)

THE CALLER



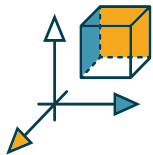
Courageous, sensitive, and skillful in calling individuals on questionable or inappropriate actions or disrespectful behaviors, the board's desired norms of behavior, or the welfare of the organization.

THE OBSERVER



Good at pointing out to the group insights and observations about board dynamics or other issues that illuminate board performance and get disagreements as well as accomplishments out in the open.

THE REFRAMER



Skilled in recasting a complex or divisive issue in a new light, ferreting out and framing the real challenge at hand, and opening up new possibilities to shift attention to fertile new ground for realistic options.

THE ANALYST



Adept at generating conceptual possibilities, sorting through large amounts of information, considering the consequences of proposed actions, and/or analyzing options strategically, objectively, and dispassionately.

THE HEALTHY SKEPTIC



Enjoys questioning the pros and cons, testing new ideas, playing the devil's advocate, and airing "dissensus" for a good argument that will help surface intelligent doubt and illuminate the issues and the stakes.

THE SYNTHESIZER



Quickly distills patterns, core issues, common themes, and long-range perspectives on complex, contentious, or controversial issues that summarize the discussion to help the board advance to the next step and avoid rehashing old ground.

When these qualities are not present in the chair (and when a board agenda item cries out for open discussion and dialogue), consider asking another more skilled board member to facilitate the board discussion. A skilled facilitator can draw out everyone's input in a safe and respectful manner, especially if the chair lacks the group-process skills or objectivity to create this climate. Additionally, one or more board members can volunteer to play any roles that may be missing from your current board composition.