

Aligned Influence and Policy Governance Compared and Contrasted

Aligned InfluenceSM

*By, Kenneth Schuetz
Founder, Aligned Influence, LLC*

The board of a local non-profit has been maturing the way they operate for almost 10 years. They implemented Carver's Policy Governance model and have been very successful over all. However, they feel like they have plateaued and find themselves questioning what to do next. They know that they are doing a great job of defining the "Ends" for the organization and limiting the "Means" of their staff as they endeavor to accomplish those outcomes, but they feel that they are becoming disconnected from the "heart" of the organization. In fact, the chairperson of the board finds it more and more difficult to keep some team members from meddling in the operational aspects of the organization so they can feel more connected to the mission of the organization.

The answer to their dilemma is maintaining discipline of their roles. The Aligned Influence model is a valuable tool to that guides this process by giving them an appropriate next step in their development as a board and as an organization.

The Aligned Influence model allows them to maintain all of the discipline that the Policy Governance model taught and allows them to expand their role into a more active, but still appropriate, participative role of supporting the accomplishment of the organization's work.

Relationship Between Models

Policy Governance focuses on the board's role. Aligned Influence expands that focus to the entire eco-system of influence that exists in every organization. That eco-system includes the board, the executive director and other key leaders in the organization.

Policy Governance uses the framework of "Ends" and "Means" to describe the work of the board; structuring

the role of the board by defining the ends and limiting the means, and staying out of all other aspects of organizational leadership

The Aligned Influence model defines the role of both the board and the executive as they "influence" the organization, and stresses that the key to organizational success is "aligning" those influences appropriately. The Aligned Influence model defines the role of the board as directing, protecting and enabling the work of the organization, and the work of the executive director as leading, managing and accomplishing the work of the organization. More about each of these roles is discussed in an article called Roles of Board and Staff at <http://www.alignedinfluence.com/RolesOfBoardAndStaff.php>.

Benefits of Aligned Influence

The Aligned Influence model provides a mechanism for organizational development; not just board development. The model allows for engagement with both the chairperson of the board and the board of directors, but also the executive director and their entire staff. All benefit from understanding their role in the organization and how it is aligned with the role of others.

The Aligned Influence model allows the board to engage more in the work of the organization in an appropriate way. The board still remains disciplined by staying out of the executive director's role of accomplishing the work of organization, but now assumes the defined role of enabling the work of the organization. They enable the work of the organization through advocacy, resource development and role discipline. Advocacy is using all of their professional, personal and civic relationships to communicate the challenges and opportunities of the organization. They extend those advocacy relationships into resource development relationships by looking for alignment between the challenges and opportunities of the organization, and the talents and resources of those with whom they are advocating. Finally, the board enables the organization by being disciplined to their directing, protecting and enabling roles; understanding that when they begin to drift into the executive director's lead, manage and

accomplish roles that they can actually disable the organization.

The Aligned Influence model provides visibility for the executive and staff into the board’s role and visa-versa. The visibility actually leads to a better understanding of each other’s roles, which improves the ability to comply with and be successful in their own roles.

The Aligned Influence model provides clarity about everyone’s role in areas that in the past may have been in question regarding whose role it actually was. In areas like planning, budgeting and development, boards and executives now understand that they are both participating, rather than competing for control of it. In budgeting, boards define what is to be accomplished and create boundaries that keep budgets and the budgeting process on track, while executives create budgets that support their programmatic efforts to accomplish that work and comply with those boundaries. Budgeting is not the responsibility of only the board or only the executive; their roles are aligned in the process.

The Aligned Influence model surfaces and acknowledges potential competition for power in the organization. It addresses the potential by clearly defining roles for both the board and the executive director, and aligning those roles so competition is avoided.

Finally, the Aligned Influence model provides a structure for professional development for the board, the executive director and other leaders in the organization. Board members can develop their ability to direct, protect and enable, while executive directors can develop their ability to lead, manage and accomplish. Every board member and executive

director is “wired” to be better at one of their roles than the others. Development includes exploring their own skill set, but also working in concert with others in the organization to ensure the team's success.

Relationship Between Policies

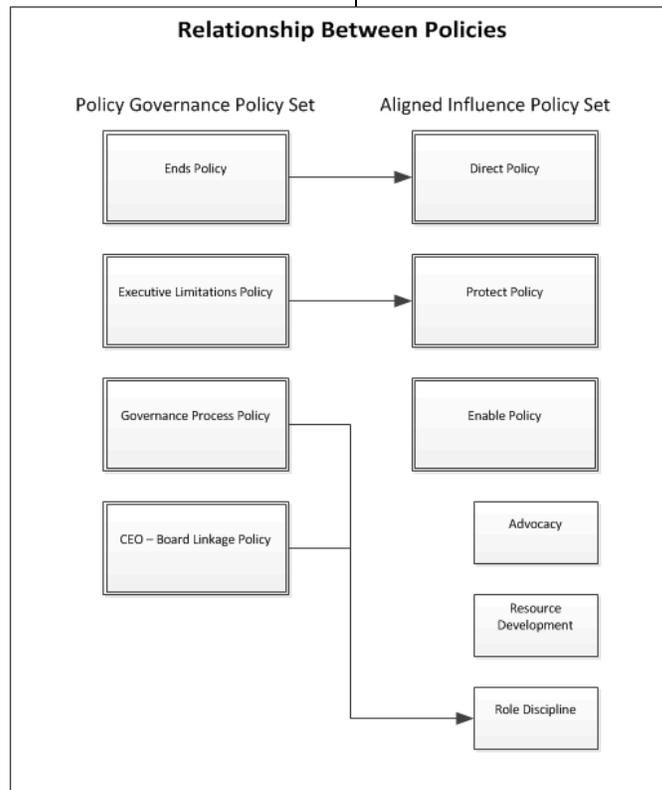
The Aligned Influence model was developed as a next step for boards that have fully exercised the Policy Governance Model and still found themselves not to be where they thought they ought to be. Boards that have spent time developing strong Policy Governance structures will find that their investment was not wasted. In fact, the Aligned Influence model will allow them to retain much of their structure just as it is written today.

The Aligned Influence Direction policy will translate almost directly from their Policy Governance Ends policy, and the Aligned Influence Protection Policy will translate almost directly from their Policy Governance Executive Limitations policy. In both cases, the Aligned

Influence model will prompt the board to reevaluate the currency and the completeness of both.

The last two Policy Governance policies will be Governance Process and CEO-Board Linkage. The essence of these two policies will not be lost, but will be integrated into the role discipline portion of the Enable policy. However, they will be translated as concepts, in contrast with the almost direct translation of the Ends and Executive Limitations policies. The Aligned Influence Enable policy will balance these concepts as one-third of the board’s enabling role;

emphasizing advocacy and assistance in resource development as the other two-thirds of the board’s enabling role.



The professionals at Aligned Influence LLC are ready to assist your organization in its next step toward the excellence that you desire. Whether you have years invested in a Policy Governance model or are just beginning your journey to organizational excellence from the top, we are ready to assist you. If you would like to discuss our services further, please visit us at www.alignedinfluence.com or contact us at 303-257-1794.