

IN- BOARD LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME, FOUNTAINBLEAU

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The corporate governance crisis at the start of this third Millennium and the financial crisis only a few years later, have cast doubts on the way boards of directors of companies and other organisations function. Lawyers, (financial) economists, organisational consultants, accountants and other experts have developed relatively narrow perspectives of boards and their roles. These perspectives are unable to explain board performance in reality and the factors that determine it. A comprehensive and integrated approach of boards is required to truly understand what drives board performance. We have developed an integrated approach to understand board performance, dealing with key factors that determine it: the board as a Group and its dynamics – the contribution of the individual Persons that make up the board and – the requirements and core elements of the governance System (core rules, codes, incentives), together *Board GPS*.

We will start our session on the first day with exploring elements of the **System**, in particular the various contexts in which boards operate and the *roles* that board members play. The discussion on roles is connected to the Group dimension and board dynamics, through the way that people experience the reality of the boardroom, of being-in-the-board. Much of this experience is sub-conscious, but nonetheless it informs board members on how to understand the board, its challenges and the various roles to be played and how to act in that board reality.

This will lead us to explore the **Group dimension**, the dynamics in the board. A core element of these board dynamics are the series of cognitive traps and biases that are easily activated in any team and group context. We will then explore the *constellation dynamics* in which a board operates: the socio-dynamic field of interactions between executives, non-executives, internal and external stakeholders, media, regulators. Developing board effectiveness requires to develop the capacity to observe, understand and shift patterns of interaction in the constellation.

Key conceptual tools to do this will be introduced, among which *fault-lines*, *primary task*, *social defenses* and *rackets*. We will introduce *four core conditions of effective boards*: creating reflective space, establishing trust, (social) humility and the courage to speak the truth. This concludes the first day of the programme.

The second day of the programme is focused on the **Personal dimension**. The overall purpose of the leadership development coaching session is to give you some dedicated time to think about your leadership needs and personal development, related to your (potential) role as a non-executive member of a board. An extensive group coaching session will provide an opportunity for self-reflection and a deeper understanding of your feedback with the benefit of different perspectives through additional input from the group. At the end of the session, you will be asked to draft your personal action agenda with a view to your effectiveness.

The last day of the programme is focused on the more difficult task of how to really change some of your ways of doing things to be more effective as a leader and as a non-executive member of a board. In this session we will work through a specific process that will help you to finetune your action plan and to also begin to get some insight into the factors that might be “below the surface” that are likely to compete with your good intentions in terms of implementing that plan. We use the final hour of the programme to integrate the core elements of the programme, in which participants can discuss their new insights, implications they see for themselves in their board roles, what practices they wish to develop etc.

Erik van de Loo, September 2022