



## HOW TO CREATE OPERATING PRINCIPLES FOR BOARDS AND LEADERSHIP TEAMS

There are many definitions of what operating principles are, but at the core, operating principles are essentially the way that organizations put their values into practice and get things done. Operating principles serve as guides, helping you make sound decisions, build trust, and hold each other accountable for your daily actions. In short, they are your ground rules in your work together. Here is The Strategy Group's guide to get you started on developing your own operating principles for your board or leadership team.

Step 1 – Individually identify three-four principles that will help your board or leadership team in its growth and development. Step 2 – Collectively select five-six core operating principles for your board or leadership team to adopt and live by. Here are some examples to get you started. Be creative and add your own!

1. We owe it to one another to communicate to each other first – good news and bad.
2. Bad news isn't like wine. We share information right away.
3. We focus on big issues rather than on small issues.
4. We hold regular meetings, even if it's just to share information.
5. We make clear the decision-making roles of the group and individuals.
6. We ask challenging questions because we need to understand each other's priorities and portray each other in the best possible light.
7. If we don't agree, that's okay. Disagreements can be healthy. However, once a decision is made, it's up to all of us to support it.
8. Board members support board decisions and actions
9. Decisions are made by majority rule
10. If you're not sure, ask.
11. Disagree without being disagreeable
12. Silence is agreement.
13. We don't assume that something is meant in a negative way – we check our assumptions.
14. If there are issues between us, we go to each other first.
15. Don't make assumptions/assume positive intent.
16. Be tough on issues, not on people.
17. Integrity cannot be compromised.
18. Information must provide the basis for decisions.

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21. Be tough on issues, not on people.
22. Integrity cannot be compromised.
23. Information must provide the basis for decisions.
24. We honor each other's requests to keep something confidential.
25. If you have a better idea or see something that's not working, say so!
26. We are prepared, on time, and ready to contribute
27. Err on the side of generosity and reciprocity.
28. Embrace, adapt to, and drive change.
29. If it's high impact for the organization, it's high priority for you.
30. Measure what matters.
31. Context matters—say why, not just what.
32. Listen with an open mind and be open to new ideas
33. Everyone participates, no one dominates
34. Share your experience (not others)
35. Allow the future to emerge.

### Contact Us!

We'd love to hear from you and know how we can be of assistance.



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