

5

Strategies to Build

FOCUS

1

“We now accept the fact that learning is a lifelong process of keeping abreast of change. And the most pressing task is to teach people how to learn.”

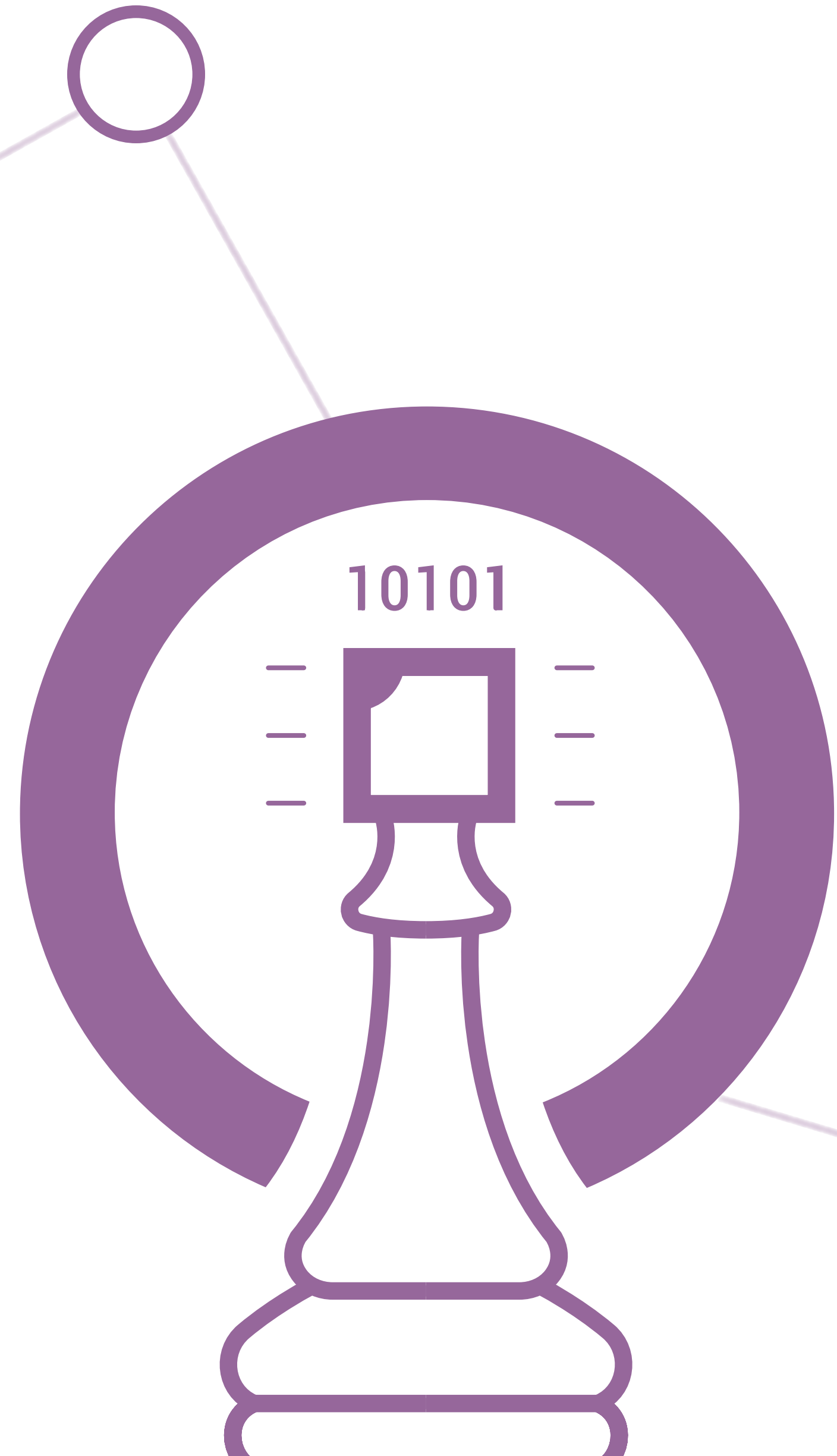
– Peter Drucker

Build a culture of continuous learning.

In today’s fast-changing work environments, we must continually learn new ways to perform our work and do things that have never been tried. Make sure your organizational culture (bottom to top, across all departments) supports lifelong learning with educational opportunities and funding, time for reflection and thought, and rewards for innovation.



2



Invest in modern, connected and people-aligned data strategies.

Data has become the greatest asset an association has at its disposal. In this multi-channel, highly personalized and quickly-becoming -regulated environment, associations need to secure their internal and external data systems to protect privacy AND leverage data for marketing, management and continuous improvement.

Put technologies and policies in place to govern how data is used throughout your association and who has access to what information. Collect data that is actionable and solves business problems based on what the analyzed data shows. Data must be relevant and actionable or it shouldn't be collected. Make sure departments are reporting data that allows for adjustment, enhancement and knowledge sharing.

3

Adapt agile values.

There are some discreet values used in agile software development, agile management and agile marketing that associations can utilize to their advantage when implementing change or new programs:



Visibility

Make projects and goals highly visible using tools like project management platforms or sticky notes on a white board.



Experimentation

Create an environment where team members feel safe to fail and creativity reigns.



Collaboration

The people closest to the work and the audience consuming that work should decide how that work gets done.



Efficiency

Agile teams work hard to do less.

4

Embrace Knowledge-Based Governance (KBG).

Organizational boards need to govern more and manage less. This means two things:

Staff leaders need to guide these principles and help boards become and stay strategic.

Boards need to adjust their behavior and thinking for optimum success.

KBG involves adopting a knowledge-based approach to decision making, using discussion before voting, embracing principles of critical thinking on governance, and committing to a process of thinking and planning strategically based on what is known. The results confirm the approach works: a nimbler, more proactive organization makes better data-based decisions with their customers wants, needs and pain points top of mind.

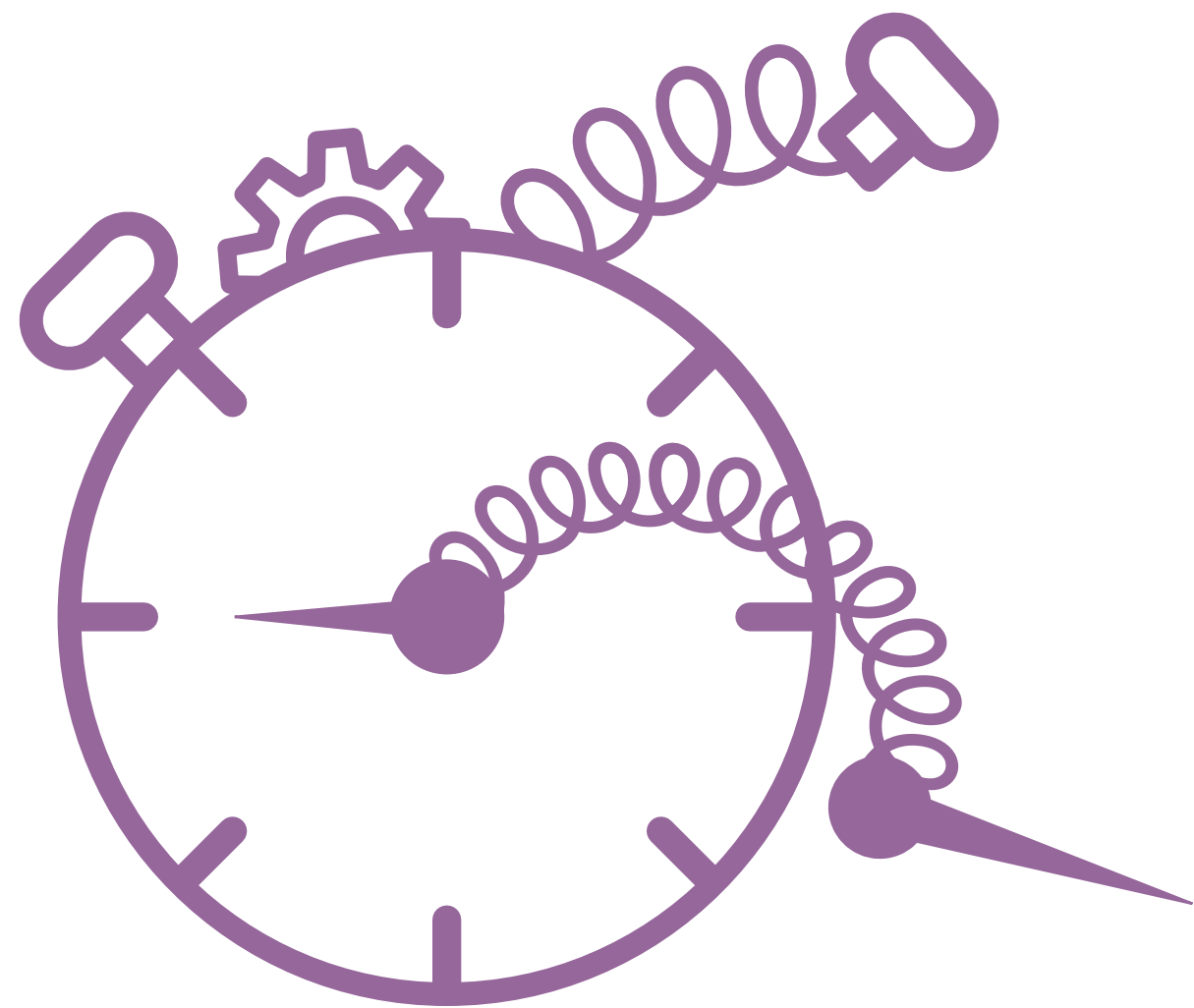
Good leaders and boards make conscious decisions about what will be accomplished and how they will lead. Leadership must be willing to change governance process; changing processes changes behavior and changing behavior changes culture.

Culture is the key. An enjoyable and trustworthy culture increases likelihood of getting things done. It increases the desire to meet new challenges and opportunities for both staff and volunteer leadership.

5

Destroy disruptive time wasters.

We live in a world of constant connection and technology. When we talk about focus, we understand it is difficult to attend to the right things when we are simultaneously and relentlessly interrupted by email, phone calls, meetings, employees, bosses, family, friends, and news. We need to be disciplined to navigate through that “noise” to accomplish our work successfully.



Stop multitasking.

*Prioritize your tasks: hone in on a tasks **urgency** and **importance**. Manage time to focus on the **important** and **not urgent** tasks for mid- and long-term success. Or use **the rocks, pebbles and sand philosophy**.*

Create the right environment: Minimize or turn off the noise with headphones and stream focus-designed music. Completely unplug for short time periods.

Take breaks to recharge; stay fueled.