*Week of Sept. 3:* What is governance? Why does it matter for you?

The business world can have a lot of jargon. Whether you’re reaching out, putting out a fire, or or striving to meet a core competency, this jargon affects your day-to-day life. And while some of these phrases and terms can just be fluff, it’s important to recognize the difference between vital phrases to your job and what’s just a phrase that gets thrown around too often.

We’re here to tell you about a phrase that you should definitely understand what it means and why you should know it: governance. Most simply, governance means an establishment of policies, and continuous monitoring of their proper implementation, by the members of the governing body of an organization. That’s easy enough to comprehend and break down, but the difficult thing to understand is why it’s important to your business. Oftentimes, people complain about having do something a certain way. They don’t understand the reasoning behind having to do x,y, and z before they can mark a task complete. But the reasoning is usually due to governance. People need to have a way to monitor and ensure that tasks are being done correctly and legally.

Let’s look at it a different way. What happens when you have three different departments working together, each with their own organizational methods and ways to complete tasks. It can be confusing for the people working on that team. However, if you were to employ the governance model, which is mechanism used by the board and management to translate the elements of the governance framework and policies into practices, procedures, and job responsibilities within the corporate governance infrastructure, you’d have a simplified system that incorporates each department’s standard operating procedures.

Take this situation as an example. You’re designing solutions for a complex problem with a team from different departments. Since it’s a complex problem, the odds that you will need to implement several projects at the same time are high. That’s because sustainable solutions are usually addressed by multiple projects, which means there are multiple stakeholders and multiple interests involved. But if you employ the Governance Model concept, you’ll have a group of people that can translate the actions, practices, procedures, etc. that need to occur to reach a solution. will help you to achieve and sustain the solutions’ implementation goals.

For more information about governance and the governance model, visit [embedded-knowledge.com](https://embedded-knowledge.com/).

*Week of Sept. 10th:* 4 Questions to ask when making critical decisions

Work can sometimes feel like one big decision after another. And it can be daunting and stressful. We understand the anxiety that comes with making big decisions. But we also believe there are ways to reduce this stress and pressure. We always like to ask ourselves these questions before making a decision:

• What do I really want?

• What are my hopes for this project?

• What are my goals?

• What do I need see addressed?

You can substitute this project, this company, or other things for me in all these questions. What are this project’s goals? What does the CEO need to see addressed?

Let’s take a look at an example In this situation. Faith is working to pick a location for a new program to launch, and she is working with a group of stakeholders to make this decision. Faith knows that she needs to work with the stakeholders to get to a decision, but she also realizes that sometimes stakeholders have their own agendas.

The most simple question is: Where should we locate this new project? And as one would expect, the first impulse the stakeholders had was to immediately start debating the candidate locations for the fund and why it would benefit their own agenda to have it be in their desired location. However, Faith, an experienced Solution Designer, called out the need for capturing “everyone’s input,” which is technically known as “expectations and concerns,” before doing anything. Faith decided to interview each of her stakeholders, then gathered them in a room to double-check each one’s viewpoints to drive consensus. And instead of posing the question about where to locate, she asked them the four questions above:

• What do I really want?

• What are my hopes for this fund?

• What are my goals?

• What do I need see addressed?

This was a clever approach. It took away the ego and self motivated outlooks of the stakeholders and put the focus back on what’s best for the project. Plus, since everyone was answering the same question, it was easier for Faith to examine and evaluate the answers and concerns of hte stakeholders. Faith took these concerns and created a list that she could then work through to determine if it was a legitimate concern or how she could assuage the stakeholder’s concern. She brought the list to the stakeholders, with her answers, and they worked through it. It created a workshop situation where the whole group could voice their values, specific needs, and aspirations for the project and come to an agreement on where to locate the project.

For more information about making critical decisions, visit [embedded-knowledge.com](https://embedded-knowledge.com/).

*Week of Sept. 17:* How to keep your values and objects at the center of your goal

Life would be a lot easier if it followed a linear path that didn’t throw any surprises your way or had you working on several different things at once. But, unfortunately, life is not like that. It’s more common to find yourself in a situation where you’re working on a multitude of projects and issues at once. You think you’re heading west, when all of a sudden you have to make a sharp turn and then you’re heading south. And that’s true for both your personal and work life. You are involved in a dynamic environment, affected by constant changes that require you to revisit your goals and your options regularly. But how can you be sure that you’re staying focused on your goals? How can you keep your values and objects at the center of your goals? This is where technology and software can be very helpful in making sure everything is being tracked and recorded appropriately without any information getting lost.

When these changes come at you, it’s important to have a process that allows you to be consistent with your approach, even in the most unstable scenarios, to help you to focus on the essential problem you need to address—the one you identified as the root cause of your headaches. It might seem like more work to log these issues into a spreadsheet or track them in your company’s database, but it can save you a headache later on. You’ll be thankful with the time you invested at the onset since it will save you time in the middle of the project. You’ll be able to examine what the main issues are and if they’re occurring in any sort of patterned way. Plus, by reviewing these issues daily or weekly, you’ll be able to ensure that your goals (and the outcome you want to achieve) is still what you’re working toward.

 In addition to technology, we recommend using risk management concepts as an effective way to help you keep consistency throughout the process. Using risk management concepts, you’ll be able to define criteria to prioritize the problems to solve, evaluate solution options, and avoid the trap of ending up in an eternal crisis management— what we call “fire drill” mode. You’ll be keeping the value and objectives of your goals at the center of your decision making to ensure that you obtain the desired outcome. And you won’t be scrambling every day with stopgaps to keep from sinking. You’ll be analyzing and calmly assessing what needs to happen next.

For more information about keeping values and objects at the center of your goals, visit [embedded-knowledge.com](https://embedded-knowledge.com/).

*Week of Sept. 24th:* The importance of data when assessing your solution options

Making a decision can be hard enough, but having to explain your decision-making process can be just as difficult. It’s why we believe in having clear facts and data to substantiate your decision. No one will go along with your solution because of a gut feeling you have. This is the time to bring in real and hard information to support your decision.

 We’ve even found that when we examine our data, it changes our own minds. Often, we’re so set in the right outcome for a problem, but we still go back and check the data and evidence so we can support it. After examining that information, we decide on a different solution! We compile our data by looking at past experiences, researching new tools and trends, and then by creating a list and providing a weighted value to the importance of our potential options.

Let’s say that you’ve already been to your stakeholders and discussed their concerns and wishes on how to move forward. Now you have to decide what is most important in getting to your desired outcome. Is it cost-cutting? Is it the nature of the community your business will be entering? Or perhaps it’s how to keep your stakeholders happy with an unwanted outcome? Decide what is most important and give that the weighted point value of 3, if it’s very important but not critical give it a 2, and so forth. Now you can examine what solutions make the most sense and look at them with a critical and analytical eye.

Combine this data points with your past experience, business trends, and desired end results to visually see what the best solution is. You’ll have more evidence to back up your decision to your managers, shareholders, board of directors, etc., and therefore, you’ll be able to support your reasoning. It’s better to be over prepared with facts, figures, and statistics then to have to convince people based on what’s in your head and feelings.

Data collection and analysis takes time and energy, but it pays off in the long-run when it comes time to explain and defend your decision making.

For more information about using date in your decision making, visit [embedded-knowledge.com](https://embedded-knowledge.com/).

As you may be realizing, Faith came a long way from the initial concerns voiced by her stakeholders, representing both real and potential problems. Anchored on the principles of the decision-mak- ing framework PrOACT, Faith was able to put numbers to subjective concepts and opinions.