# Navigating a drift in strategic vision

## Vision drift

The purpose of your organisation is often expressed in very few words and will rarely change.

However, your strategic vision, which might be expressed in a three-year, five-year, 10-year or even longer-term plan, affects the way your organisation achieves its purpose in a constantly shifting environment.

Sometimes, an organisation can drift away from the strategic vision by accident, or start to move in a different direction in line with the skills and leadership of some on the board or staff, without adequate consultation with the board.

There comes a time for many board members when they start to feel they do not agree with where the organisation is heading, either on purpose or by accident.

The following factors can lead an organisation to drift or change its strategic vision:

* a sudden and significant change in the environment (e.g. a new competitor, a sudden financial change or a pandemic)
* a gradual change in the environment
* a gradual change in the composition of the board (different skills, work background, age, attitude, personality, priorities, attributes, etc)
* a gradual change in the make up of paid staff or volunteers
* funding opportunities change
* unintended consequences of prior decisions.

## Considerations

Whatever the cause of discomfort with where the organization strategically aims to go, it is important to consider the following questions. Share your worries with the board directly or through the chair or executive, after reflecting on how best to navigate what could be a difficult conversation.

* Does the board believe in the current purpose of the organisation?
* Does the strategy in its current form best achieve that purpose?
* Has the strategy crept away from the purpose of the organisation or is it still fit for purpose?
* Is the organisation’s decision-making in line with its strategic objectives?
* Do you have the right board members around the table to achieve that strategy, or is a board recruitment process something that would help? E.g. if you aim to be edgy and fresh, do you have people with that attitude at the board table?
* What are the possible trade-offs or conflicting aims in the strategic vision? E.g. are you wanting to be both small *and* financially sustainable? Are you wanting to take risks in order to grow *and* to stick to a sensible budget?
* How does each member of the board prefer to navigate these conflicts? Is there consensus regarding which are the priorities or is this a source of tension?