



The Board Assessment: What We Know

A strong, vibrant board of directors is a clear indicator of a healthy organization. Yet even the best organizations need a periodic check-up to ensure that they cannot just survive but will really thrive in today's environment. To check your board's vital signs, or to put in place practices and strategies for a healthy and energized board, the best place to start is with a board self-assessment.

The Maine Association of Nonprofits

- 51% of boards self-evaluate
- 67% consult their completed strategic plan
- 75% of boards provide an orientation to the job
- 74% focus on operations versus strategy/policy
- 17% have a succession plan
- 62% of executives have confidence in their boards
- 10% report the board as being “diverse”
- 73% of boards view exec as “strategic partner”
- 32% of boards use a dashboard
- 29% are prepared for the board meeting

Sources:

BoardSource – Leading with Intent Study
CompassPoint – Daring to Lead Study
Concord Leadership – Nonprofit Leadership Study
Alliance for Nonprofit Management – Board Governance Study

How does your organization “stack up” against the current landscape?

Why do most nonprofit organizations consider conducting an annual board assessment an important element of their “culture of accountability?”

- Assures an annual check-up that the basics of governance are in place
- Creates a basis for fact-based conversation and objective decision-making about board priorities, processes, and composition
- Provides a means for all voices to speak about the board’s culture and the board experience
- Allows an opportunity for board members to evaluate both their own performance as well as that of the whole board
- Forms a board development agenda
- Informs the executive review

Are there any additional benefits that could arise from an annual board assessment in your organization?

Why would your organization not want to conduct an annual board assessment?



THE REASON:

To evolve your Board to its full potential as diverse community people coming together to accomplish something extraordinary for the community.

A Board Assessment is a Board’s visible commitment to assuring a “All Hands In” culture exists in the boardroom when it comes to governing the cause.



Board Governance Assessment

Based on *Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards* by BoardSource and Enhanced by Third Sector Company

Assessing Governance in Your Organization

For each of the basic governance (board of directors) responsibilities listed below, rate your levels of satisfaction in the board's performance. Circle the appropriate number and add a comment in the space provided.

"4" represents effective

"2" represents somewhat ineffective

"3" represents somewhat effective

"1" represents ineffective

"N/R" represent no response

WE KNOW WHY WE ARE HERE

How effective is our board at ...

- ✓ Viewing the organization as a community-based cause driven by a set of **stated human values or corporate convictions** that explains why the organization exists and what it stands for as an organization that engages and benefits citizens.

<i>Effective</i>	<i>Ineffective</i>	
4 3	2 1	N/R

COMMENTS: _____

WE ARE GOVERNING A MISSION-DRIVEN COMMUNITY CAUSE

How effective is our board at ...

- ✓ Reviewing the **mission statement** at least every two years and effectively monitoring that the board is governing as a "mission-driven" body in its decision-making.

4	3	2	1	N/R
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- ✓ Assuring all board members are familiar with the current **mission statement and can effectively communicate the mission statement to others easily.**

4	3	2	1	N/R
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- ✓ Assuring our **mission statement** is appropriate for evolving with the community it serves over the next five years.

4	3	2	1	N/R
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COMMENTS: _____

PERFORMING THE JOBS OF GOVERNANCE

How effective is our board at ...

- ✓ **Supporting the Chief Executive**, including providing an annual performance review based on mutually-agreed measurements and leadership goals, on-going monitoring, and clear delineations of management and governance roles and expectations.

Effective *Ineffective*
4 3 2 1 N/R

COMMENTS: _____

- ✓ **Acting as advocates who “Stand Up For The Mission” on behalf of the people and values of the organization in visible and public ways;** delivering key messages about how the organization mobilizes efforts to enhance community life and issues a call to action for community support and engagement.

4 3 2 1 N/R

COMMENTS: _____

- ✓ **Reviewing and approving essential organizational policies on an annual basis** that assures the organization is a safe, legal, practical and logical work environment with clear protocols for Program, Finance, Personnel, Management, Resource Development, Technology and Succession.

4 3 2 1 N/R

COMMENTS: _____

- ✓ **Assuring adequate organizational planning** is taking place for the long-term and short-term viability of the organization, including strategic planning and annual operations planning.

4 3 2 1 N/R

COMMENTS: _____

- ✓ **Participating in developing community resources** by approving an annual plan for raising charitable resources, participating in giving to the organization as an example to others and personally inviting others to support the work of the organization.

4 3 2 1 N/R

COMMENTS: _____

- ✓ **Monitoring key indicators of organizational success** using a dashboard approach tracking the key outcomes and measurements of the organization’s activities.

4 3 2 1 N/R

COMMENTS: _____

How effective is our board at ...

- ✓ **Providing adequate financial oversight** making sure that the assets of the organizations are protected and there has been adequate due diligence in helping to guarantee a resilient organization to the community.

Effective *Ineffective*
4 3 2 1 N/R

COMMENTS:

- ✓ **Continuously developing the board and board members to their full potential** through an annual board development plan that includes board education programs and briefings, recruitment guidelines, an orientation, priorities for board recruitment, and a separate governance committee.

4 3 2 1 N/R

COMMENTS:

WE HOLD OURSELVES ACCOUNTABLE

How effective is our board at ...

- ✓ **Approving and monitoring a set of board performance standards** identifying the expectations of the board and board members in operating and strategic plans.

4 3 2 1 N/R

- ✓ **Assessing board performance on an annual basis** carrying out governance responsibilities and assigned duties.

4 3 2 1 N/R

COMMENTS:

WE KNOW WHY WE ARE HERE

How effective is our board at ...

- ✓ **Holding itself to standards of advancing diversity, inclusion, equity and access** against well-defined and generally circulated definitions, expectations and strategies.

4 3 2 1 N/R

COMMENTS:

BOARD DEVELOPMENT PLANNING GRID

Critical Area of Governance for Board Development Identify two assessment areas that you feel should pursue a higher score during the next year.	Recommended Strategy Identify two action steps for each critical area, once further refined and implemented, could raise the assessment score.	Strategic Leadership Strategy Based on your current board configuration, where does the responsibility for these actions steps lie? And, what is your role in the process?
<p><u>Critical Area #1</u></p> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Action Step #1</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Action Step #2</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Board Responsibility</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>My Responsibility</u></p>
<p><u>Critical Area #2</u></p> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Action Step #1</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Action Step #2</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Board Responsibility</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>My Responsibility</u></p>

TAKE HEART and REMEMBER:
Your board will always be a “Work in Progress.”
Always seek to evolve it and it will make progress.