

What it is

A self-assessment of a Board of Directors' performance

What it can do

This tool can assist you to:

- Help educate board members about their appropriate roles and responsibilities.
- Identify areas of strength in the functioning of the board.
- Identify areas for improvement in the board's functioning.
- Initiate conversations to improve board performance.

How it works

The digital version of this PDF form can be filled out using Adobe Reader. It can be downloaded at: <http://www.stproject.org/resources/tools-for-transformation/>

Individuals rate their responses to each statement in the assessment that follows using a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing STRONGLY DISAGREE and 7 representing STRONGLY AGREE.

- The tool is most powerful when all members of the board fill it out, so that there is a shared picture of its strengths and needs for improvement.
- It is usually best to have data collected confidentially, either by creating an on-line survey or using printed assessments that individual members can fill out anonymously.
- Sharing the results of this survey with a board always generates considerable conversation and a desire to improve. Adequate time must be given to debrief and discuss possible next action steps.
- While certain board roles, such as fiduciary responsibility, are always an absolute requirement in evaluating boards, keep in mind that the relative importance of various board roles may vary depending on the needs of the organization. For example, in early stages of an organization's life where the focus is on building capacity, the board may tend to focus more on supporting the CEO in planning and creating effective and sustainable structures and systems. In later phases of consolidation, the board may focus more on oversight, direction-setting, and assessment of organizational impact.

To what extent do you feel these statements are true about the board of your organization? Rate your response to each statement in this assessment using a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing STRONGLY DISAGREE and 7 representing STRONGLY AGREE. Please leave blank any questions that you feel unable to answer.

Board Responsibilities

- 1. The board takes responsibility for ensuring that the organization’s vision, mission and values are clear.**

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

- 2. Board members share a common understanding of the mission and 5-10 year vision of the organization.**

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

- 3. The mission and vision are used regularly as frameworks for board discussions of strategy and policy.**

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

- 4. There is a clear process for the board’s involvement in strategic planning.**

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

- 5. Board members have a clear understanding of the organization’s principal programs.**

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

- 6. The board approves the yearly budget after careful consideration of the organization’s yearly plan.**

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

- 7. The board has an effective procedure for routinely and effectively monitoring and evaluating the organization’s performance in achieving its goals.**

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

8. The board does an effective job of managing the performance of the ED/president with formal evaluations held at least annually that include a 360° assessment.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

9. The board exercises its fiduciary responsibility to ensure that the organization has sufficient financial resources to operate and thrive.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

10. The board regularly monitors financial statements and has an effective process for raising and resolving variances and other concerns.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

11. The board ensures timely independent financial audits that insure full legal and regulatory compliance and contractual obligations.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

12. The board takes its role of risk management seriously and reviews, at least annually, potential sources of risk and mitigation plans.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

13. The board ensures that necessary organizational policies are in place, up to date, and in effect.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

Board-Staff Relations

1. The board and our ED/president have a positive and effective working relationship.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

2. The respective decision-making powers of board and staff are clear and honored in practice.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

3. Board members understand and respect appropriate organizational boundaries in the ways they interact (and don't interact) with staff.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

4. Board members are positive and responsive to requests from the staff.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

5. Staff willingly provide board members with the information they need to be effective.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

6. What could be done to help improve the working partnership between board and staff?

Board Working Process

1. The board chair has the skills, energy and time to provide effective leadership to the board.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

2. Executive committee (if it exists) has a clear role and effectively supports the board chair and ED/president in guiding the organization.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

3. Any other committees have clear mandates and function effectively.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

4. Individual board members are clear on their roles and responsibilities.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

5. Board meetings are highly productive.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

6. Board members say what they really feel and think in board meetings.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

7. The board makes good and timely decisions.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

8. Board members deal effectively with disagreement and conflict within the board.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

9. The board is willing to step up to the plate in confronting organizational challenges.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

10. The skills and expertise of board members are put to good use.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

11. Board members receive the information they need to be effective contributors.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

12. Board meetings are well prepared, well organized and facilitated to be efficient and productive.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

13. Board meetings are energizing, positive experiences that board members look forward to.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

14. The board regularly evaluates its performance and looks at how to improve its functioning.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

15. The frequency of board meetings is sufficient to do its job well.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

16. What specific suggestions do you have to help improve the board's functioning?

Board Membership and Expectations

- 1. There is a formal and effective process for recruiting, orienting and training new board members.**

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

- 2. The overall composition of the board contains the various skills and experience needed to fulfill well its roles and responsibilities.**

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

- 3. The overall composition of the board reflects the diversity appropriate to the organization's mission, values, need for diverse input, and gaining the trust of the communities it serves.**

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

- 4. Term limits effectively balance needs for new members/skills, retention of valuable directors, and exiting of directors who are no longer engaged or effective.**

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

- 5. All board members actively participate in the financial support of the organization through their own giving or help with raising money.**

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

- 6. Board members actively help provide access, influence and/or enhancement of reputation to support organizational objectives.**

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

- 7. Individual board members commit the time and resources to get the job done.**

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

8. The board monitors the engagement of individual directors and does not tolerate those who are non-participating or whose behavior detracts from board functioning.

STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 STRONGLY AGREE

9. What positive suggestions do you have regarding board composition and behavior of individual members?

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

1. What is the greatest strength of this board in the way it contributes to the organization?

2. Out of everything in this survey, what are the two greatest needs for improvement?

3. What advice would you like to give the board chair?

4. Any other feedback you wish to give?