

Module 8

Board and Organizational Assessment: Tools for Measuring Development and Self-Improvement



Board Profiling
Committee Profiles
Board Assessment
Board Recruitment
Board Orientation of New Members

What is Your Board Profile?
Who Is Serving On Your Board?
Who Will Serve On Next Year's Board?
**How Do You Locate the Appropriate
Expertise and Resources for Board Service?**

The Importance of the Nonprofit Board Assessment

Board Profiling

Using a worksheet, build the ideal board for your organization.

1. What is the current composition of your board?
2. What characteristics, skills, experience, and background does your board need now?
3. What gaps does your board need to fill in the future?
4. What are the priorities for identifying and recruiting new members?
5. What other attributes or qualities are important for your board members to have?

Recruiting and Retaining a Skilled and Diverse Board

1. Be prepared to devote time, attention, and consistent effort to board recruitment and retention.
2. Be honest in discussing the issues.
3. Build relationships that foster trust and alliances.
4. Look for skills as well as attributes in prospective board members.



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Board Profile - Demographic and Expertise Assessment

This process can be used to quickly describe both your current and your ideal boards.

Characteristics	Current Members	Potential Members
Age		
Over 60		
45-60		
Under 45		
Gender		
Female		
Male		
Diversity		
Regional or Geographical Representation		
Race/Ethnic Background		
Area of Expertise		
Administration/Management		
Public Relations		
Finance		
Fundraising		
Business/Economics		
International Affairs		
Government		
Law		
Other		



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Committee Profile - Assessment Worksheet

Board Committee Member Profile Assessment Discovering Committee Needs for Expertise, Skills, Resources and Diversity		
Committees An inventory of committee members by expertise, skills, resources and diversity	Current Members Number and Expertise	Prospective Members Number and Expertise
Governance or Executive		
Nominating		
Finance		
Program		
Development		
Fundraising		
Investments		
Audit		
Building and Grounds		
Public Relations		
Communications		
Other		



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5. Engage new board members in meaningful activities based on their skills, talents, and interests.
 6. Follow sound development practices to create a positive working climate for all board members.

Guidelines for Recruiting New Board Members

The following guidelines should be modified as necessary to conform to the particular culture and purpose of the organization.

It's very important to keep the perspective that your board deserves highly skilled and involved board members. Do not erode your goals and believe that you are lucky to get anyone at all.

When you set out to recruit new members, the most important consideration is know what kind of skills are currently needed by the board. Consider the nature of issues and goals currently faced by the organization, for example, if you're struggling with finances then seek a member with strong financial skills. It's highly useful to use a Sample Board Recruitment Grid.

How To Find New Board Members?

Start by thinking about the organization's mission and outreach programs. Consider who has an interest in fostering that purpose in the community or service area. Use this information to identify individuals with a vested interest in the success of your programs and start your talent search at that point. They can be a source of invaluable information and a possible candidate for board service themselves. Think about the organization's constituency, clientele, or audiences served by the organization's programs.

Maintain an up-to-date list of potential board candidates including the experience, particular skills and resources they can bring to the organization. The administrator, board chair and the governance committee often maintain an unofficial list. On a more formal level the nominations committee is often charged to update the list and actively recruit individuals to serve as directors or officers (Board Source, 2002).

Use a worksheet to assess the profile of the seated board member's expertise, skill, talent and resource base that contributes to the board and nonprofit organization in a meaningful and constructive way. Create a database of this profile information.

Have the board members engage in a self-assessment during a work session of the board with the profile worksheet. This will give them a clearer perspective of the importance of their own roles and an appreciation of where gaps exist. It is an excellent planning device for maintaining a fresh and diverse board with actively contributing members. Distribute the data to board members for continuous feedback and improvement. A form is included in this module.

The worksheet assessment form can be used to promote an objective and realistic review of board and organizational needs.

Have new members on the board complete the worksheet. Brief discussion with



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other members of the board can speed active engagement with and contribution to the board and organizational activities and programs. The “start-up” phase for new board members can be shortened considerably with this orientation exercise.

The worksheet and assessment process sets the stage for recruiting new board members.

Criteria for Selecting Board Members

Identify what skills would be highly useful to the board, e.g., if new people will be hired, the board may desire people with human resource skills, etc. Maintain an up-to-date assessment of individual board members’ strengths.

Refer to the list of potential candidates to recruit for board membership and ask to meet with them.

Solicit information from potential new members or use references to identify the prospective new member’s level of expertise, skills, and resources that would be useful to the board and organization. Ask for biographical information, reasons why they want to join the organization’s board, what they hope to bring to the board, and what they would like to get from the board membership. Answer any questions they might have or refer them to the appropriate individual with the information.

Determine a Match Between the Potential Members’ Profile of the Organization’s Mission and Needs

Arrange a meeting with a board representatives, executives and prospective board members.

Present an overview of the organization and provide relevant materials describing the organization’s products or services and a board member application form. The prospective new member should hear about how the organization orients new members. Provide names of several board members whom the prospective new member might contact with any questions.

Identify if there are any potential conflicts of interest with the candidate. Determine if he or she on the board of a competing organization, a vendor of the organization, or other interest that could be misconstrued as unethical. Image and public perception are important.

In some cases a board representative can invite a prospective new member to a board meeting. Notify current board members that a potential new member will be attending. Consider using nametags to help the potential new member become acquainted with board members. Introduce the member right away in the meeting and at the end of the meeting and ask the potential new member if he or she has any questions. Thank the prospect for attending the meeting.



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The Board's Future Profile of Skills, Expertise and Resources

An Assessment Plan to Fill Vacancies on the Board

This matrix helps to identify gaps and desired characteristics on your board at this stage of your nonprofit organization's life. Whether this tool is reviewed by a single individual or by a nominating committee, mark the grid with a check mark for each characteristic that is filled presently by one or more board members. After that, you can more easily identify gaps that need to be filled. Please note that each number represents a seat on the board.

Categories to Consider An inventory of board seats by expertise, skills, experience, resources and diversity	No. of Current Board Members with Trait (check box)				No. of Prospective Members with Trait (check box)			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Organizational Management								
Financial Management								
Organizational Management								
Special program areas (education, health, child care, public policy, etc.)								
Administration								
Business/Corporate								
Finance								
- Accounting								
- Banking and Trusts								
- Investments								
Fundraising (professional and those with leverage in getting funds)								
Government Regulations								
Government Representative								
Law								
Marketing								
Personnel								
Physical Plan (architect, engineer)								



Categories to Consider An inventory of board seats by expertise, skills, experi- ence, resources and diversity	No. of Current Board Members with Trait (check box)				No. of Prospective Members with Trait (check box)			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Strategic and Long Range Planning								
Public Relations								
Representative from Volunteer Base								
Representative of Key Stakeholder Agency								
Rep. of Clients Served by Nonprofit								
Other: _____								
Age: Under 35								
From 35 to 50								
From 51 to 65								
Over 65								
Gender								
Women								
Men								
Race/Ethnic Background: Asian								
African-American								
Hispanic/Latino								
Native American								
Caucasian								



Categories to Consider An inventory of board seats by expertise, skills, experience, resources and diversity	No. of Current Board Members with Trait (check box)				No. of Prospective Members with Trait (check box)			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Other: _____								
Location: City or Inner City								
Suburbs								
State								
Regional								
National								
International								
Financial Position								
Self employed								
Salaried								
Philanthropic Reputation								
Prospective Major Donor								
Length of Past Board Service								
More than ten years								
5-10 years								
2-5 years								
Less than 2 years								
Length of Board Service with Related Boards								
More than 10 years								
5-10 years								
2-5 years								
Less than 2 years								



Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Organization Boards

Legal Responsibilities

- Determine the organization's mission and purpose.
- Maintain accountability and ensure legal and ethical integrity.

Fiduciary Responsibilities

- Practice fiduciary responsibility and manage resources effectively.
- Ensure access to adequate resources.

Policy Formation and Planning

- Ensure effective organizational, policy, and program planning.
- Provide procedures for organization oversight and management.
- Select the administrator (executive director).
- Support the administrator (executive director).
- Recruit and orient new board members

Program and Service Delivery

- Determine, monitor, and strengthen the organization's programs and services.
- Enhance the organization's public standing and public relations.
- Deal effectively with stakeholders and constituents.

Evaluation and Assessment

- Assess and evaluate board performance.
- Assess and evaluate the executive director or administrator's performance. (Board Source, 2002; McNamara, 1999; Ingram, 1999).

Hallmarks of a Responsible and Effective Board

I. Legal Responsibility

- Recognize the board's legal responsibility to the organization and constituents.
- Uphold the public trust.
- Plan, manage and take steps to reduce risk to the organization, its personnel, and its constituents.

II. Fiduciary Responsibility and Financial Management

- Understand the board's fiduciary responsibility.
- Maintain a financially sustainable organization.
- Maintain financial assets in compliance with legal codes.

III. Policy Formation and Planning

- Focus the board's attention on issues that matter most to the organization in the short-term and long-term. Focus time and attention on issues important to stakeholders and constituents. Restructure board work to address policy matters and implementation.



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- Ensure that the board has the appropriate information needed to make informed decisions about key issues in a timely manner.
 - Ensure that the board, administrator, and staff work in partnerships and follow principles of effective teamwork. Ensure that board members work together as an effective corporate unit.
 - Has the confidence to take risks or allow risks to be taken by staff.

Identify Board Needs

- Identify skills, knowledge, perspective, connections, etc., needed to implement the strategic plan. What do we have? What is missing? Identify sources of board members with the needed characteristics.

Recruit, retain and renew board members

- Describe why a prospective member is wanted and needed. Describe expectations and responsibilities of board members, and don't minimize requirements. Invite questions and elicit their interest to serve.

Diversify board members

- Establish and use term limits. Do not automatically re-elect board members for an additional term; consider the board's needs and the board member's performance. Explore advisability of having inactive members resign. Develop new leadership.

Cultivate potential board members

- Get prospective board members interested in your organization and keep them informed of your progress. Invite them to events and meetings.

Orient and educate new board members

- Give new board members an orientation to the organization and its programs, history, bylaws, pressing issues, finances, facilities, and organizational chart. Give the new members recent minutes, committee membership lists, a summary of board member responsibilities, and a membership and key staff roster.

Educate the board

- Provide board members with information concerning different program areas outside their own sphere of activity. Promote exploration of issues facing the organization. Do not hide difficulties. Celebrate accomplishments.

Engage all board members

- Discover their interests, talents and availability. Involve them in committees or task forces. Assign them a board "team partner." Solicit feedback. Hold everyone accountable. Express appreciation for work well done. Recognize victories and progress, even small ones. Appreciate individual contributions to the board, the organization, and the community.



IV. Program and Service Delivery

- Ensure that board representation reflects program and service delivery goals.
- View board composition as strategic in order to accomplish the organization's mission.
- Require the engagement of the organization's internal and external constituencies.
- Reflect the needs and interests of stakeholders, constituents and clientele.

V. Evaluation and Assessment

- Use an assessment and evaluation process to learn and improve rather than criticize.
- Ensure that results and outcomes are linked to defined timetables and benchmarks.
- Ensure that job descriptions have been given to each staff and board member.
- Personnel evaluation must be geared to the job description and defined objectives.
- The board must identify clear measures of program outcomes and success.
- Annually evaluate the board and individual board members. Engage the board in assessing its own performance. Identify ways in which to improve. Encourage individual self-assessment (Board Source, 2002; Taylor, Chait, and Holland; Bowen, 1994:20-68; Carver and Carver, 1997:114-124).



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Annual Board Evaluation

Directions: Every board member should complete this form. Take time to consider your responses. A special meeting will be held to discuss results. Check “yes” if the item is true all of the time. Check “some” if the item is at least partially true. Check “no” if the item is never true.

Behavior, Item or Subject to be Evaluated	Yes	Some	No
Policy and Planning:			
Board activities are confined to policy, not management results			
All management activities are delegated to the administrator.			
The board annually reviews by-laws and the policy manual.			
Board activities focus on the mission statement.			
The board has written a long-range plan - updates at least once a year.			
Roles and Responsibilities:			
Each board member has a copy of his or her job description.			
Board members understand their legal responsibilities as trustees.			
Board members have no conflict of interest as part of board service.			
Board member understand their fiduciary responsibilities as trustees.			
Board members participate in fund-raising activities.			
Board members make personal financial or pro bono contributions.			
Board members talks positively about the nonprofit in public.			
The board holds yearly self-evaluations.			
Committees meet only if they have work to do.			
The full board approves the annual evaluation of the administrator.			
Board needs are clearly communicated to the administrator.			
Board members are recruited for their knowledge, skills and influence.			
New board members receive orientation.			
Each board office and committee has a job description.			
Board members receive in-service training at least every six months.			
Board members understand that communication with staff should be channeled through the administrator.			
Meetings:			
Board meetings follow a system of parliamentary procedure.			
Board meetings stick to the agenda and are businesslike.			
Board meetings start on time and end on time.			
Board members arrive on time for meetings.			
Board meeting last two hours or less.			
Board members participate in discussion at board meetings.			



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Self-Appraisal Form Regarding Personal Board Service

Using the following guide, please indicate your appraisal of each item.

1=Never a Problem 2=Seldom a Problem 3=A Growing Problem 4=A Definite Problem

Behavior or Perception to Be Evaluated

1 2 3 4

- Do I fulfill the legal responsibilities of board service? _____
- Do I fulfill the fiduciary responsibilities of board service? _____
- Do I fulfill the policy and planning responsibilities of board service? _____
- Do I fulfill the program & mission-related responsibilities of board service? _____
- Do I fulfill the evaluation responsibilities of board service? _____
- Am I able to attend regularly scheduled meetings? _____
- Do I arrive on time for meetings? _____
- Is my schedule flexible enough to attend emergency sessions? _____
- Does my career conflict with my position on the board? _____
- Am I able to discuss controversial topics effectively? _____
- Do I review support materials prior to all meetings? _____
- Am I tense and hostile during candid exchanges of opinion? _____
- Do I work easily with other board members and our administrator? _____
- Am I able to keep an open mind on issues? _____
- Do I confine my discussion to agenda items only? _____
- Do I make at least one positive contribution to each board meeting? _____
- Do I have a high level of commitment and interest in our organization? _____

Comments:

(Struck, 1994 in Di Lima and Johns, 1996:7:15)



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A Rating Scale for Boards

Board Characteristic	How the Board Rates				
	1=Excellent 2=Good 3=Average 4=Fair 5=Poor				
	Rating Scale: 1 2 3 4 5				
1. The board is made up of effective individuals who can supplement one another's talents.					
2. The board represents the interests that should be consulted in formulating policy.					
3. The board is large enough to carry all necessary responsibilities, but small enough to act as a deliberative group.					
4. The basic structural pattern (board, board officials, committees, executive, and staff) is clear.					
5. An effective working relationship exists between the board and the executive and staff.					
6. The members of the board understand the mission of the organization and how the organization achieves the mission.					
7. The board has a feeling of social ease and rapport.					
8. Each board member is interested and engaged in the work of the organization.					
9. The board formulates specific goals to guide its work.					
10. Decisions on policy are made only after full consideration by all parties concerned with decision.					
11. The board maintains effective community relationships.					
12. The board has a sense of progress and accomplishment.					



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Assessment of the Nonprofit Board

Assessment of the Board	SD	D	U	A	SA
1. Members of the board work to ensure the mission is carried out.					
2. Every member of the board is concerned with maintaining fiduciary responsibility.					
3. Members of the board do whatever they can to contribute to the organization's bottom line.					
4. Without exception, each member of the board is careful to maintain confidentiality of board matters.					
5. Every member of the board is sensitive to possible conflicts of interest.					
6. Members of the board try to maintain appropriate lines of communication with the organizations support staff.					
7. Members of the board recognize the need for separate roles and the need to maintain separate roles with appropriate responsibilities.					
8. Members of the board trust and respect one another.					
9. Each member of the board is committed to enhancing the public image of this organization.					
10. Every member of the board is continually on the look-out for individuals who can be recruited to serve as future board members.					



Self Assessment of Board Fulfillment of Basic Responsibilities

All nonprofit boards have specific responsibilities. Rate the level of success in terms of how well the board performed in these five major responsibility areas. Place a number in each space next to the item.

1=unsatisfactory 2=poor 3=average, acceptable 4= very satisfactory 5=excellent

Legal Responsibilities

- _____ Determine the organization's mission and purpose.
- _____ Maintain accountability and ensure legal and ethical integrity.

Fiduciary Responsibilities

- _____ Practice fiduciary responsibility and manage resources effectively.
- _____ Ensure access to adequate resources.

Policy Formation and Planning

- _____ Ensure effective organizational, policy, and program planning.
- _____ Provide procedures for organization oversight and management.
- _____ Select the administrator (executive director).
- _____ Support the administrator (executive director).
- _____ Recruit and orient new board members

Program and Service Delivery

- _____ Determine, monitor, and strengthen the organization's programs and services.
- _____ Enhance the organization's public standing and public relations.
- _____ Deal effectively with stakeholders and constituents.

Evaluation and Assessment

- _____ Assess and evaluate board performance.
- _____ Assess and evaluate the executive director or administrator's performance.

Comments: Provide additional evaluation comments, suggestions, concerns or issues to be addressed.

Do not sign this form. Turn this form in to the administrator or board chair in the envelope provided for your convenience.



Self Assessment for NonProfit Boards

All nonprofit boards have specific responsibilities. Rate the level of success in terms of how well the board performed in these five major responsibility areas. Place a number in each space next to the item.

1=unsatisfactory 2=poor 3=average, acceptable 4= very satisfactory 5=excellent

- _____ 1. Determine the organization's mission and purpose
- _____ 2. Select and support the executive, and review his or her performance
- _____ 3. Approve and monitor the organization's programs and services
- _____ 4. Raise money
- _____ 5. Ensure effective fiscal management
- _____ 6. Engage in strategic planning
- _____ 7. Carefully select and orient new board members
- _____ 8. Understand relationship between board and staff
- _____ 9. Enhance the organization's public image
- _____ 10. Organize itself so that the board operates efficiently
- _____ 11. Ensure sound risk management policies
- _____ 12. Maintain relationships with affiliated organizations or members
- _____ 13. Understand the relationship between board and service volunteers
- _____ 14. General assessment: planning-issues, board organization and performance
- _____ 15. Individual board member self-evaluation (Board Source, 2002)

Comments:



Orientation of New Members on Nonprofit Boards

Using an Important Resource Quickly and Efficiently

Engaging New Board Members

Involve new members in board committees and board tasks

Seek feedback and opinions from new members

Encourage all members to ask questions

Hold every member accountable/expect participation and follow-through

Express appreciation for work well done

A Sample of Board Development Activities

A board self-assessment process that enables the board to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of its own performance and establishes common ground.

A periodic review of the mission statement to promote mutual understanding on the board and effective communication.

Special board training workshops on topics such as fund-raising, planning, and finances. Ensure access to information to all board members.

A well-planned discussion on a facet of the board's work, such as the committee structure, the content and conduct of board meetings, or how to increase board diversity.

Presentations by outside consultants or staff experts on trends in the organization's mission area.

A well-planned and carefully scheduled board orientation and retreats.

Special governance workshops offered by local and national management assistance providers.



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Board Member Orientation Guide for New Board Members

Orientation of: _____

(Board Member)

Date Orientation Began: _____

(Write date completed in space below)

Describe the Organization To the New Board Member: _____

1. Whom We Serve
2. What We Do
3. Other:

Explain and Discuss with the Board Member: _____

1. Meeting Attendance for Board and Committees
2. Committee Assignment or Selection

Tour of Offices, Facilities and Programs: _____

1. Board Room and Administrative Offices
2. Other Facilities
3. Program Sites

Deliver Important Information to New Board Member: _____

1. Letter of Welcome from the Administrator
2. Mission Statement
3. By-Laws
4. Board Manual
5. Annual Report and Auditor's Report for Past 3 Years
6. Current Budget and Other Financial Reports
7. List of Board Officers with Addresses, Contact Points
8. List of Committee Memberships Including Chairs
9. Calendar of Meetings for the Year
10. Special Events and Other

Introduce the New Board Member To: _____

1. Chair of the Board
2. Chair of the Assigned Committee
3. Other Board Members
4. Staff
5. Key Officials Linked to the Organization (optional)
6. Others:

(Gillis, 1995 in Di Lima and Johns, 1996: 7:6)



Board Orientation for New Members: All About the Organization

Information	Issues	Presentation Options
Program	How to give new board members a feel for the work of the organization - what it does, whom it serves, what difference it makes; to get them emotionally and intellectually connected and motivated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Tour of facilities ◆ Observation of/participation in program activities ◆ Presentation by client/member/ program participants ◆ Video, slides, film, verbal, written materials
Finances	How to help new board members become informed about where money comes from, how it is spent, and the state of the organization's financial health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Presentation by ED, CFO, or treasurer ◆ Background materials (latest audit, budget, latest financial info.) graphically presented, if possible
History	How to help new members get sufficient knowledge about the past that the present makes sense. Also, to help them begin to see their own participation as part of the organization's ongoing history	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Stories told by "old timers" ◆ Pictures, written materials
Strategic Direction	How to provide a framework for new members to participate effectively and to be clear about the mission, vision, and organizational values and to be aware of the goals that inform organizational actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Presentation/discussion led by the executive and/or the board chair person ◆ Copy of the strategic plan (or other documents, especially the mission statement, if no such plan is available)
Organizational Structure	How to help new board members understand who does what and what the lines of accountability are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Copy of the bylaws, IRS ◆ Determination Letter ◆ Organizational chart ◆ Introduction to key staff members



Board Orientation for New Members: All About the Board

Information	Issues	Presentation Options
Board Roles and Responsibilities	How to assure that new members understand the responsibilities of the board, their own responsibilities as board members, and that they are informed about how the board operates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Presentation/discussion - preferably with the whole board involved ◆ Written materials
Board Member Responsibilities	How to assure that new board members understand their own responsibilities as board members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Presentation/discussion ◆ Signed agreement listing board member responsibilities, including reference to avoidance of conflict of interest and commitment to ethical operations
Board Operations	How to help new board members understand how the board operates so that they may participate effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Board manual ◆ Board mentors ◆ Committee lists, with committee charges and member lists ◆ Meeting schedule
Board Members	How to facilitate new board member integration with the other members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ List of board members ◆ Board member biographical info ◆ Time set aside for social interaction



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