

L E A D E R S H I P

402

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

TAKING THE REINS





**Ontario Real Estate
Association**

Promoting Professionalism

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OREA Virtual Session November 15, 2020
Participant Guide

TAKING THE REINS

This interactive course helps new presidents take the reins with success. The first months of a president's term is a critical time to establish themselves in their new role, and this course helps them prepare for the year ahead. Through self-reflection, group discussion, activities, and action planning, new presidents will develop their plan for success.

TOPICS

Strategic Initiatives

- How can you ensure that your board is focusing on strategy?
- What could get in the way of your board's ability to achieve strategic initiatives?

President/Executive Officer Working Relationship

- How can you build a solid working relationship with your EO?
- How effective is your EO performance review process?

Board Effectiveness

- How will your board assess its effectiveness?
- What initiative would you like to work on this year to increase your board's effectiveness?

Board Development

- What do your board members need to learn or learn more about?
- How do you conduct training for new board members and provide ongoing development for existing board members?

Anticipated Challenges

- What challenges do you feel you will face in your term as President?
- What challenges might you use to address those challenges?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Focus the board on strategic initiatives
2. Build a strong working relationship with the EO
3. Use board assessments to increase board effectiveness
4. Plan for board development to ensure skills and knowledge are high
5. Prepare to address anticipated challenges
6. Network with other association leaders throughout their term of office

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

The courses offered by the OREA Centre for Leadership Development are designed to start with the recruiting of qualified and motivated volunteer leaders. The cycle then takes that new leader from their first introduction to organized real estate, through five phases from committee membership at a local association all the way to provincial leadership.

Volunteer Position	Course
Committee Member	On the Path to Volunteering Leadership 100
Committee Chair	Becoming a Leader Leadership 200
Director	Enhancing Leadership Skills Leadership 300
	Member-focused Leadership Leadership 301
	Nimble Decision Making Board Tutorial
President-elect	The Hot Seat Leadership 400
	Laying the Groundwork for Success Leadership 401
President	Taking the Reins Leadership 402

PRESIDENT LEARNING PATH

OCLD has created learning paths for leaders at the highest levels. These learning paths outline the courses we offer volunteer leaders and executive officers to assist them in their leadership development.

The goal at each phase in the learning path is to provide the necessary background, skills and support to help you be as effective as possible in your role.

OCLD continues to improve and enhance its courses and we look forward to providing additional online and onsite support services in the coming years.

OREA Centre for Leadership Development

Helping volunteers become leaders who make a difference

GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES



GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES CHECKLIST

Work with your executive officer and president-elect to discuss how you can implement more of these elements of the Governance Principles Checklist.

STEWARDSHIP	
THE RESPONSIBLE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES TO ENSURE THE ASSOCIATION IS CONTINUOUSLY WORKING TO ACHIEVE ITS PURPOSE	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vision, mission and values statements that articulate the association's purpose are in place
<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision making criteria, that includes reference to achieving the association's purpose, is developed and used for important and planning decisions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Documentation references how key decisions relate to the mission and vision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Committees and task forces are formed based on what is required to achieve the association's strategic goals
<input type="checkbox"/>	All staff and volunteers are oriented to the association's vision, mission and values
<input type="checkbox"/>	The board of directors allocates the resources required to achieve the board's decisions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Financial policies are developed and adhered to in order to ensure that association resources are used wisely for the benefit of members

OVERSIGHT	
A ROBUST PROCESS FOR MONITORING THE ACTIONS & ASSETS OF THE ASSOCIATION	
<input type="checkbox"/>	A monitoring plan is in place and mapped on a calendar to ensure regular and consistent oversight by the board of directors, based on key performance indicators identified in the strategic plan
<input type="checkbox"/>	Defined reports are provided to support oversight by the board, such as: the AE report, reports from committees, and compliance reports from the AE confirming all required regulatory submissions are complete
<input type="checkbox"/>	An AE performance evaluation process is defined in policy and regularly completed
<input type="checkbox"/>	The board of directors' reviews audited financial statements annually and financial statements quarterly to ensure adherence to the budget and financial policies
<input type="checkbox"/>	The board requires an annual review of by-laws and governance policies to ensure consistent adherence, ideally at the same time as the orientation process for new board members

GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES CHECKLIST (CONT'D)**ACCOUNTABILITY****PRESERVING THE TRUST OF THE MEMBERSHIP BY ACCOUNTING FOR ACTIVITIES
ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY AND DISCLOSING THE RESULTS IN A TRANSPARENT
MANNER**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Governance policies are in place and reviewed regularly to ensure their effectiveness, including conflict of interest policies, AE evaluation process, policies on reporting to membership
<input type="checkbox"/>	A meeting evaluation process is in place and completed after each meeting, with improvements made to how meetings are managed as required
<input type="checkbox"/>	A board evaluation process is defined in policy and regularly completed, with changes made as required
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sound financial policies are in place to guide the board of directors and finance/budget committees, and to ensure financial accountability
<input type="checkbox"/>	The board provides members with an annual report outlining progress on strategic goals along with audited financial statements
<input type="checkbox"/>	A membership engagement policy is in place that defines how the board will consult with members to ensure membership input for key strategic decisions by the board

STRATEGIC GOALS**SERVE TO ALIGN ACTION TO PURPOSE: GOALS ARE MONITORED AND PROVIDE
DEMONSTRABLE RESULTS WHICH ARE MEASURED**

<input type="checkbox"/>	A strategic planning workshop or retreat is led by the board every 3-5 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	The strategic plan has clearly defined goals which support the vision and mission
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strategic goals have clearly defined measurable outcomes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Board meeting agendas align to the strategic goals
<input type="checkbox"/>	AE performance objectives and the board evaluation align to the strategic plan
<input type="checkbox"/>	All staff and volunteers are oriented to the association's strategic goals, and understand how their work helps to advance these goals

STRATEGIC GOALS WORKSHEET

THE PRESIDENT'S ROLE

The president's role is to advance the mission, vision, values and strategic goals of the association. These should influence every activity, discussion and assignment. The president will refer to them often, including in messages and on agendas, so that others realize their importance to the organization and to the profession. The president needs to ensure that the board focuses on achieving the mission and strategic goals that lead to the association's vision.

DELIBERATION 1: STRATEGIES FOR ENSURING STRATEGIC FOCUS

What does your board do to ensure that it is focusing on advancing strategic goals vs. drilling down on operations?

BREAKOUT ROOM INSTRUCTIONS

- Discuss:
 - What does your board do to ensure that it is focusing on advancing strategic goals vs. drilling down on operations? (Medium to Large boards), or
 - What does your board do to make sure it is spending sufficient time focusing on strategy? (Smaller boards)
- Be prepared to share your ideas with the larger group. Discuss for 10 minutes

ACTION ITEMS FROM DISCUSSION

PRESIDENT/EXECUTIVE OFFICER RELATIONSHIP WORKSHEET

THE PRESIDENT'S ROLE

The president and the executive officer work in partnership to advance the goals of the association. The president is responsible for ensuring that the position of EO is filled with the right candidate and is ultimately responsible for the EO performance assessment process. The president and EO must pro-actively establish a strong working relationship to the benefit of the organization, the board of directors, staff and members. They must ensure that each understands and fulfils their own responsibilities without overstepping their responsibilities.

DELIBERATION 2: BUILD A STRONG PRESIDENT/EO RELATIONSHIP

What is something you do to build a solid working relationship with your executive officer?

BREAKOUT ROOM INSTRUCTIONS

- Share what you wrote and discuss ideas for how you can build a strong relationship or overcome any challenges
- Discuss for 7 minutes

ACTION ITEMS FROM DISCUSSION

IMPORTANT PRESIDENT/EXECUTIVE OFFICER QUESTIONS

Questions for a dialog between the incoming president and the executive officer.

THE RELATIONSHIP

1. Expectations
 - What can the president anticipate in the way of support from staff?
 - What can staff expect from the president in the spirit of teamwork and accessibility?
2. Barriers
 - Do any limitations, surprises or hidden agendas exist?
 - Is there anything we really need to address to ensure we understand each other?
3. Communications
 - What is the preference for staying in touch; how frequently?
 - Do you want to schedule a consistent call time?
 - Do we need to meet in person; at whose office?
 - How can we ensure meetings are productive for both of us?
 - Can meetings be scheduled in advance to avoid surprise 'drop-ins'?
4. Spokesperson
 - Who will serve as primary spokesperson?
 - Is the president comfortable with knowledge of organizational history, milestones and goals for speaking purposes?
 - How will social media be handled?
5. Calendars
 - Are there some days, weeks or months that should be avoided?
 - What about vacations and holidays of the president and executive officer?
6. Partnering
 - How can we work together to best serve the organization? (one or two ideas each)
7. Recognitions
 - What ideas do you have to recognize volunteer and staff excellence?

IMPORTANT PRESIDENT/EXECUTIVE OFFICER QUESTIONS (CONT'D)

OUR ORGANIZATION

8. Committees

- Who appoints committee chairs, vice chairs; and charges them with work?
- Are committees expected to keep minutes?
- Will there be committee liaisons from the board and staff?

9. Performance

- How will the performance review of the executive officer be conducted?
- Will the president conduct a review of the board's performance?

10. Leadership Development

- What type of orientation or board retreat is planned?
- How will you focus on future leader identification and development?
- What leadership development is planned for this year?

11. Strategic Plan

- Will the strategic plan be the primary guide for board, staff and committees?
- When does the plan need to be updated?

12. Agendas and Meetings

- How involved is the president in setting meeting agendas?
- Are there special expectations or needs regarding meeting sites and set-up?

13. Travel

- What expectations are there for travel?
- What is already scheduled?
- How are reservations handled?
- What about travel preferences?

14. Finances and Budgeting

- Are budget line items understood, as well as the organization's financial policies?
- What process will be used to draft the next budget, and when will it start?
- Is the president reimbursed for expenses?
- What are the expense policies regarding travel, conferences, etc.?
- Is the audit process understood?

PRESIDENT/EXECUTIVE OFFICER TASK LIST

Instructions: This section should be filled out by the board President and the EO at the same time. The purpose of this section is to determine the division of duties between the elected leadership and association staff. Place an "X" in the appropriate space or spaces that indicate where the primary responsibility for each item exists.	EO Only	Other Association Staff	Elected Leadership Only	Joint Staff & Leadership	Vendor	N/A
OREA/CREA						
1. Participates in association/regional meetings						
2. Provides input to Area Directors relative to positions on provincial/national association issues						
3. Participates in recommending members for position on provincial/national association committee appointments						
4. Serves on provincial association committees						
5. Serves on national association committees						
6. Attends all/some national association meetings						
Communication						
1. Directs media calls and questions to elected association leadership						
2. Responds directly to media inquiries						
3. Writes/edits press releases						
4. Arranges press conferences						
5. Has editorial and content authority over association publications						
6. Writes articles for association publications						
Community Involvement						
1. Is specifically in charge of the degree of involvement and participation in community activities and civic organizations as an association representative. (i.e. Chamber of Commerce)						
2. Serves on local government and civic advisory bodies						
Membership Education						
1. Solicits/reviews information about prospective education courses and educational speakers for presentation to members						
2. Reviews and discusses such information with the association's education committee						
3. Organizes and schedules continuing education courses and exam processing						
4. Supervises other staff specialists who perform any or all of the above duties (questions 1-3)						

PRESIDENT/EXECUTIVE OFFICER TASK LIST

	EO Only	Other Association Staff	Elected Leadership Only	Joint Staff & Leadership	Vendor	N/A
Financial Management						
1. Independently develops annual budget						
2. Develops annual budget, accompanied by substantial assistance and direction of leadership						
3. Develops annual budget using computer programs						
4. Performs all bookkeeping and accounting duties						
5. Performs most bookkeeping and accounting duties						
6. Supervises staff bookkeeper or outside accountant						
7. Produces monthly financial statement						
8. Reviews monthly financial statement produced by bookkeeper and/or accountant						
9. Analyzes monthly financial statement and provides narrative report summarizing financial performance and explaining reasons for deviations from budget						
10. Supervises association savings accounts and investments						
11. Develops and implements investment strategies						
12. Conducts/implements financial management in accordance with long-range planning guidelines						
13. Supervises other staff specialists in the performance of any or all of the other activities						
Government and Political Affairs						
1. Conducts research for and writes testimony given by association leadership at public hearings conducted by elected officials and government agencies						
2. Delivers testimony at public hearings on behalf of the association						
3. Researches and writes association position statements and policies related to government issues						
4. Composes correspondence to elected officials on various issues for association leadership signature						
5. Deals directly with elected officials, regulatory personnel and government agencies on behalf of the association						
6. Attends and participates in provincial and national PAC meetings						
7. Supervises other staff specialists in the performance of any or all of the above activities (questions 1-7)						

PRESIDENT/EXECUTIVE OFFICER TASK LIST

	EO Only	Other Association Staff	Elected Leadership Only	Joint Staff & Leadership	Vendor	N/A
Arbitration/Ethics						
1. Processes complaints and applications for arbitration and ethics hearings						
2. Helps select hearing panel members						
3. Schedules hearings						
4. Provides technical support to arbitration and ethics committees						
5. Interfaces with complaints and respondents						
6. Assists ethics committee in complaint investigations						
7. Writes hearing decision letters as directed by ethics committee						
8. Keeps updated on new provincial and national association developments in the areas of arbitration and ethics						
9. Interacts directly with provincial and national association legal counsel and staff on questions related to the Code of Ethics, Standards of Business Practice, ethics and arbitration procedures						
10. Supervises staff specialists or department heads who execute some or all of the above duties (questions 1-9)						
Interaction with Outside Organizations & Suppliers						
1. Is authorized to interact/consult with association legal counsel independently without seeking prior permission of association leadership						
2. Interacts/consults with provincial association services and policy departments						
3. Interacts with supervisory personnel of suppliers for MLS®						
4. Works with outside accountant/auditors						
5. Hires/executes contracts with association office maintenance firms (janitorial, landscaping)						
6. Interacts directly with suppliers and consultants who provide other association services [computer equipment, air-conditioning/heating]						
7. Supervises other staff specialists and/or department heads who execute any or all of the above duties [questions 1-6]						

PRESIDENT/EXECUTIVE OFFICER TASK LIST

	EO Only	Other Association Staff	Elected Leadership Only	Joint Staff & Leadership	Vendor	N/A
Membership						
1. Takes part in [speaks at] all new member orientation sessions						
2. Helps plan and design format of new member orientation program						
3. Visits member offices to give presentations on association membership benefits and activities [or trains staff members to do the same]						
4. Performs basic function of processing membership applications						
5. Maintains membership files						
6. Supervises staff department head, who performs any or all of the above duties						
7. Supervises operation of association store and stationery departments						
8. Is responsible for entire store/stationery operation [i.e. ordering supplier contracts, inventory and so on]						
9. Interacts directly with membership departments of provincial/national association						
10. Readily accessible to general membership on a daily basis						
Multiple Listing Service®						
1. Performs all basic input, book preparation, hot sheet production, etc.						
2. Performs all functions related to supplier relations, including book orders, delivery coordination, invoicing						
3. Handles all aspects of terminal/computer leasing						
4. Enforces MLS® Rules and Regulations						
5. Ensures that MLS® Rules and Regulations conform to national association policy						
6. Develops and supervises implementation of MLS® administrative office procedures and policies						
7. Conducts training sessions for members on how to correctly use the various MLS® services						
8. Supervises MLS® department staff or MLS® department head						
9. Coordinates reciprocal MLS® activities with other local boards/associations						

HOW TO FOSTER AN EFFECTIVE PRESIDENT/EO RELATIONSHIP¹

A Real Estate Board/Association's success depends largely on how well the President and the Executive Officer work together. The duties required of each - to render quick decisions, to interpret and enforce policies, and to serve as their association's public voice - demand a unified effort.

In developing a good President-EO relationship, the most important step is communication. If the president and EO are unable to relate their opinion and plans for the future to each other, even the best plan will be fettered.

JOB FUNCTION EXERCISE

A job function exercise is a simple yet rewarding activity. A good place to start is for the incoming President and EO to review together the following: the EO's job description; the President's job description; by-laws and other documents that define the President's and EO's duties; a listing of association programs; ongoing projects and problems; and, the association's long-range plan.

There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Answers may even change annually with each president's style, goals and abilities. The important thing is for the President and the EO to reach an agreement - encouraging a level of consistency in the relationship.

The answer in a job functions exercise will also vary by board size. In small boards, it is likely that most of the responsibilities and functions will fall on the shoulders of its elected leadership, since the EO may be the only staff, chiefly an office administrator. In large boards, more responsibilities for publications, government relations, and media representation will be delegated to the EO and his/her staff.

The reason behind President/EO conflicts often boils down to inconsistent communication. The EO, attempting to be efficient and execute what he or she sees as the association's goal and priorities, will sometimes forge ahead on a project without routing it through the appropriate committees, much less discussing it with the president. Likewise, an eager president might have a wonderful new idea and begin to implement it without checking with the EO to see how the project fits into the program of work and the budget.

While job descriptions and leadership development programs can help EO's and President's form a strong working bond, these are not enough. The President and EO must be in constant contact and always review proposals with each other before going any further. Make sure you keep the EO informed and encourage him or her to openly communicate with you. "No surprises" makes for a happy and rewarding relationship.

¹ Printed with permission from Bob Harris, CAE. www.nonprofitcenter.com

EXECUTIVE OFFICER PERFORMANCE REVIEW WORKSHEET

THE PRESIDENT'S ROLE

The board president is ultimately responsible for assessing the EO's performance, and most often selects a subgroup of the board to assess performance. The president will ensure the integrity and confidentiality of the process and lead the conversation about findings and improvements. It is most effective if the EO's performance assessment is linked to the association's strategic goals, ensuring that the EO focuses on working with the board and staff to achieve those goals.

DELIBERATION

What improvements could be made to your current EO performance review process? (refer to course prework)

IDEAS TO CONSIDER FOR MY ASSOCIATION

RESOURCES FOR EO PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

NH CENTRE FOR NONPROFITS

Leadership Performance Evaluation for Nonprofit CEO

www.cpacanada.ca/en/business-and-accounting-resources/strategy-risk-and-governance/not-for-profit-governance

CHARITY VILLAGE

Assessing the Executive Director's Performance, Jack Shand

https://charityvillage.com/cms/content/topic/assessing_the_executive_directors_performance#.XZuxs0ZKi72

FIRST NONPROFIT FOUNDATION

Evaluating the Executive Director: Your Role as a Board Member

http://www.firstnonprofit.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Evaluating-the-Executive-Director_Your-Role-as-a-Board-Member.pdf

BOARD DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET

PRESIDENT'S ROLE

The president is in an excellent position to identify areas in which the board would benefit from education and development. Board development activities that can both educate and enliven board meetings include special events such as retreats, workshops, or sessions within board meetings devoted to exploring single topics in depth or learning from experts. A president can also encourage board members to attend workshops and conferences on governance-related matters hosted by other organizations. An increasing number of associations are establishing board development committees to coordinate the orientation and continuing education of board members.

DELIBERATION

What does your board need to learn or learn more about this year?

IDEAS TO CONSIDER FOR MY ASSOCIATION



BOARD PERFORMANCE – ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

THE PRESIDENT’S ROLE

The president is responsible for ensuring that the board as a whole and individual directors fulfil their duties in the most effective manner. Board assessment enables the board to hold itself, its members, and its processes accountable. It identifies gaps between current performance and expected performance, and charts a course of improvement, refinement, and further progress. The president oversees board assessment and ensures that it is an ongoing catalyst for improvement.

DELIBERATION

How will our board assess our effectiveness?

What tools will we use? Can we glean any ideas from the sample and resources provided?

What can I do as President to get the ball rolling?

RESOURCES FOR CONDUCTING BOARD ASSESSMENTS

CPA CANADA

20 Questions Directors of Not-For-Profit Organizations Should Ask About Board Recruitment, Development and Assessment

www.cpacanada.ca/en/business-and-accounting-resources/strategy-risk-and-governance/not-for-profit-governance

IMAGINE CANADA

Building Your Board: Recruitment, Evaluation, Succession Planning, Board Orientation

<http://sectorsource.ca/managing-organization/board-governance/building-your-board>

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

Board Self-Evaluation Questionnaire and User Guide

<https://mla.mb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Board-Self-Evaluation-Questionnaire-Dalhousie-University-College-of-Continuing-Education.doc>

BOARD PERFORMANCE – IMPROVEMENT WORKSHEET

THE PRESIDENT'S ROLE

A board president is responsible for ensuring that the board is performing well and achieving the desired results. This is part of the board's fiduciary duty to act in the best interest of others. The president will partner with the board members and the EO to solicit, identify and implement initiatives that will improve the performance of the board and its members. It is important for the board to set specific goals for performance and measure the success of new initiatives.

DELIBERATION 3: INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE BOARD PERFORMANCE

BREAKOUT ROOM INSTRUCTIONS

- Share ideas on ways a board can ensure high performance in the area you have been assigned
- Talk about what you do at your association and any challenges you are having
- You will be asked to share your ideas so make notes on the table below

IDEAS TO CONSIDER FOR MY ASSOCIATION

1. Understanding what members need/want	
2. Using board committees and task forces effectively	

3. Getting the right people at the table (board succession)	
4. Ensuring effective director conduct and professionalism	
5. Generating high director engagement	
6.	
7.	

PRESIDENT'S CHECK IN

As a leader, you need to be thinking ahead. Meet regularly with your EO and President-elect to discuss how your board is performing, identify improvements and prepare for important decisions.

		In good shape	Monitor	Address now	Action Items
HOW ARE WE DOING?					
1.	Our board is working well as a team				
2.	We have a board work plan and monitor it regularly				
3.	Meeting agendas keep us focused on the strategic and important work of the board				
4.	Directors stay at a strategic level – not involved in making or implementing operational decisions				
5.	All directors comply with board policies, including code of conduct policies				
6.	Conflict of interest issues are addressed sensitively and resolved constructively				
7.	Board evaluation is conducted on a regular basis				
8.	Members are kept informed on board decisions				
9.	The board is accountable to and transparent with its key stakeholders				
10.	Our board anticipates issues and emerging trends as we implement and plan				
11.	We regularly identify and implement ways for the board to become more efficient and effective				

ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES WORKSHEET

DELIBERATION 4: SHARING CHALLENGES

BREAKOUT ROOM INSTRUCTIONS

- Discuss the challenge you identified, looking for common themes and possible strategies
- Be prepared to share some of your top take-aways with the total group
- Use the Get Help button if you have an immediate question
- Take 20 minutes to discuss challenges and strategies

STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER FOR MY ASSOCIATION

ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES (CONT'D)

APPENDIX

- Governance Principles
- Board Assessment Sample:
 - Board Self-Evaluation Questionnaire, Dalhousie University: A Tool for Improving the Governance Practices of Non-Profit Organizations

GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

Stewardship is the responsible planning and management of resources to ensure the association is continuously working to achieve its purpose

- Ensure that actions taken by the association advance the association's mission or purpose
 - Avoid mission creep that distracts the board and dilutes resources
- Act on behalf of members who have entrusted the association to your care
- Set strategic direction and goals and use them to guide all board decisions
- Make decisions:
 - Strategic decisions that move the organization forward for the benefit of members
 - Fiduciary decisions that ensure the trust of members is retained

Accountability is the obligation to account for activities, accept responsibility for them and to disclose the results in a transparent manner

- Account for activities, accept responsibility for them and disclose the results in a transparent manner
- Communicate with members on the decisions made by the board and the reasons for making them
- Hold each other accountable for good governance
- Fulfil your fiduciary duties

Oversight means the association has in place a robust process for monitoring its actions

- Put in place a robust process for monitoring the association's actions
- Monitor strategic plan progress, compliance, EO performance and be prepared to make changes
- Ensure compliance with by-laws, policies, regulations, reporting requirements
- Work at a strategic level (nose in – fingers out)

Strategic Goals are the goals set out in your strategic plan, defining your long-term objectives for the association

- Conduct strategic planning meetings every 3 – 5 years
- Ensure your plan includes clearly defined goals with measurable outcomes
- Communicate the plan with members and stakeholders
- Align board meeting agendas and EO performance goals to the strategic goals to ensure constant focus





Board Self-Evaluation Questionnaire

A Tool for Improving the Governance Practices
of Non-Profit Organizations

❖ User Guidelines ❖

Dalhousie University College of Continuing Education
© 2013 – Version III



Board Self-Evaluation Questionnaire

Guidelines on How Best to Use This Tool

- This tool is designed to be used as an annual board evaluation. It seeks to help a board answer the question: what are we as a board now doing well and what can be do better?
- The tool is designed for organizations large enough to employ staff, those with someone in an executive director or CEO role. The concept though, and many of the questions too, may also be of value to all volunteer organizations.
- Section D on the **Performance of Individual Directors** provides an opportunity for board members to personally reflect on their own performance. This portion of the questionnaire, once completed, should be retained by each board member, although board members may feel comfortable sharing their overall rating for this section at the bottom of the page or what one of the criteria identified they most want to improve upon
- Section E, seeks to provide **Feedback to the Chair of the Board**. This page, once completed may be separated from the others, collected, and then passed to the chair. This section is optional; the chair may wish to conduct a separate process for soliciting advice and feedback at another time.
- The rating scale at the bottom of each page (“My Overall Rating”) asks that board members add up the total of the numbers circled on the page. This number is intended as a rough interpretation of the results of each section. The range of numbers will change with the number of questions asked and answered in the section.
- **We would encourage boards to use this as a source of ideas to inform the development of their own board self-evaluation tool.** Your board can complete this assessment as an “experiment” and then develop a customized version based this experience.
- Remember that this tool is best used to stimulate reflection and discussion; it is not a scientific survey instrument that has been tested on a large number of boards and for which there are average results.
- Boards might well consider bringing in an **independent person** (a management student perhaps) to conduct the evaluation and compile, summarize and report on the results. This will insure that individual responses are kept confidential and may result in more honest answers. If you choose to do this then completed copies of Section D could be passed on for that person to compile.

Board Self-Evaluation Questionnaire User Guidelines

- Ask that board members complete the questionnaire at home before bringing it to a meeting. The space for a board member's name on the front cover is meant for distributing the questionnaire rather than for collecting it and compiling the results. Directors may want to hand back only Sections A, B, C and E.
- Consider evaluating other things such as the effectiveness of committees or board "follow-through". Avoid questions that compare individual board member performance; keep the focus on the whole board.
- If your board relies on an **Executive Committee** which meets between full board meetings, a separate section might be needed to assess its relationship to the board (to be answered by everyone), its relationship to the Executive Director and the conduct of Executive Committee meetings. Questions for such a section could be drawn from the other sections.
- Section C on the **Board's Relationship with the Executive Director** is not intended as an evaluation of the Executive Director but rather an evaluation of the quality of the board's relationship with the Executive Director as judged both by the board and by the Executive Director. The items evaluated here should focus on matters that the board can change about its performance.
- Version III gives a bit more attention than previous versions (see Sections A and B) to the board's awareness of, and interaction with external stakeholders. A stakeholder analysis exercise is one boards should undertake on a regular basis. There are lots of tools online to help design one.
- Board evaluation can be done at any time of the year and should be put on the board's annual agenda. It may be best not to schedule it at the same time of the year that the board is conducting an evaluation of the Executive Director or preparing for the AGM.

There are many board self-assessment or evaluation tools available online, some less detailed than this one, which organizations may prefer. These guidelines are for Version III of this questionnaire. Versions I and II have been tested by several organizations and suggestions for improvements from this exercise have been incorporated here. The changes are few. If you are adapting this for your own use we would appreciate crediting us as a resource. We would also welcome receiving your feedback and/or a copy of your own version. Send comments to grant.macdonald@dal.ca



Board Self-Evaluation Questionnaire

A Tool for Improving the Governance Practices
of Non-Profit Organizations

Name _____ For period from _____ to _____
(optional)

Dalhousie University College of Continuing Education
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Board Self-Evaluation Questionnaire

Questions should be answered by all board members. When completed individually the results of Sections A, B and C should be compiled, shared and discussed by the whole board to determine an average group answer to each question and an overall section rating. Section D should be answered by board members alone but not shared with the group. Sections A, B and C should also be completed by the **Executive Director or CEO**. This questionnaire also includes Section E, which provides feedback to the Chair of the Board.

Circle the response that **best** reflects your opinion. The rating scale for each statement is: Strongly Disagree (1); Disagree (2); Maybe or Not Sure (3); Agree (4); Strongly Agree (5).

A. How Well Has the Board Done Its Job?

1. Our organization operates with a strategic plan or a set of measurable goals and priorities.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The board's regular meeting agenda items reflects our strategic plan or priorities.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The board has created or reviewed, in this period, some key governance job descriptions (e.g. board chair, directors and committees	1	2	3	4	5
4. The board gives direction to staff on how to achieve the goals by setting, referring to, or revising policies.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The board has identified and reviewed the organization's relationship with each of its key stakeholders	1	2	3	4	5
6. The board has ensured that the organization's accomplishments and challenges have been communicated to key stakeholders .	1	2	3	4	5
7. The board has ensured that stakeholders have received reports on how our organization has used its financial and human resources.	1	2	3	4	5

My overall rating (add together the total of the numbers circled):

Excellent (30-24) Satisfactory (23-19) Poor (18- 6)

Board Self-Evaluation Questionnaire

B. How Well Has the Board Conducted Itself?

Circle the response that **best** reflects your opinion. The rating scale for each statement is: Strongly Disagree (1); Disagree (2); Maybe or Not Sure (3); Agree (4); Strongly Agree (5).

1. As board members we are aware of what is expected of us.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The agenda of board meetings are well planned so that we are able to get through all necessary board business.	1	2	3	4	5
3. It seems like most board members come to meetings prepared.	1	2	3	4	5
4. We receive written reports to the board in advance of our meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
5. All board members participate in important board discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
6. We do a good job encouraging and dealing with different points of view.	1	2	3	4	5
7. We all support the decisions we make.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The board assesses its composition and strengths in advance of recruiting new board members.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The board assumes much of the responsibility for director recruitment and orientation.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Board members have some interaction with external stakeholders at board meetings (e.g. as guests) or between meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Our board meetings are always interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Our board meetings are frequently fun.	1	2	3	4	5
13.					

My overall rating (add together the total of the numbers circled):

Excellent (60-50) Satisfactory (49-35) Poor (34-12)

Board Self-Evaluation Questionnaire

C. Board's Relationship with Executive Director

Circle the response that **best** reflects your opinion. The rating scale for each statement is: Strongly Disagree (1); Disagree (2); Maybe or Not Sure (3); Agree (4); Strongly Agree (5).

1. There is a clear understanding on most matters where the board's role ends and the executive director's begins.	1	2	3	4	5
2. There is good two-way communication between the board and the executive director.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The board trusts the judgment of the executive director.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The board provides direction to the executive director by setting and reviewing policies.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The board has discussed and communicated the kinds of information and level of detail it requires from the executive director.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The board has developed formal criteria and a process for evaluating the executive director.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The board, or a committee of the board, has formally evaluated the executive director within the past 12 months.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The board evaluates the executive director primarily on the accomplishment of the organization's strategic goals and priorities and adherence to policy.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The board provides feedback and shows its appreciation to the executive director on a regular basis.	1	2	3	4	5
10. The board ensures that the Executive Director is able to take advantage of professional development opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	1	2	3	4	5

My overall rating (add together the total of the numbers circled):

Excellent (40+) Satisfactory (39-28) Poor (27-11)

Board Self-Evaluation Questionnaire

D. My Performance as an Individual Board Member (Not to be shared)

Circle the response that **best** reflects your opinion. The rating scale for each statement is: Strongly Disagree (1); Disagree (2); Maybe or Not Sure (3); Agree (4); Strongly Agree (5).

1. I am aware of what is expected of me as a board member.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I have a good record of meeting attendance.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I read the minutes, reports and other materials in advance of our board meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am familiar with what is in the organization's by-laws and governing policies.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I frequently encourage other board members to express their opinions at board meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am encouraged by other board members to express my opinions at board meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I am a good listener at board meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I follow through on things I have said I would do.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I maintain the confidentiality of all board decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
10. When I have a different opinion than the majority, I raise it.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I support board decisions once they are made even if I do not agree with them.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I promote the work of our organization in the community whenever I had a chance to do so.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I stay informed about issues relevant to our mission and bring information to the attention of the board.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	1	2	3	4	5

My overall rating (add together the total of the numbers circled):

Excellent (40+) Satisfactory (39-28) Poor (27-11)

Board Self-Evaluation Questionnaire

E. Feedback to the Chair of the Board (Optional)

Circle the response that **best** reflects your opinion. The rating scale for each statement is: Strongly Disagree (1); Disagree (2); Maybe or Not Sure (3); Agree (4); Strongly Agree (5).

1. The chair is well prepared for board meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The chair helps the board stick to the agenda.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The chair tries hard to ensure that every board member has an opportunity to be heard.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The chair is skilled at managing different points of view.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The chair has demonstrated versatility in facilitating board discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The chair knows how to be direct with an individual board member when their behaviour needs to change.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The chair helps the board work well together.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The chair demonstrates good listening skills.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The board supports the chair.	1	2	3	4	5
10. The chair is effective in delegating responsibility amongst board members.	1	2	3	4	5
11. The chair ensures the board is aware of his/her organizational activities outside of our board meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	1	2	3	4	5

My overall rating (add together the total of the numbers circled):

Excellent (40+) Satisfactory (39-28) Poor (27-11)