



Practical Board Self-Assessment

Agenda

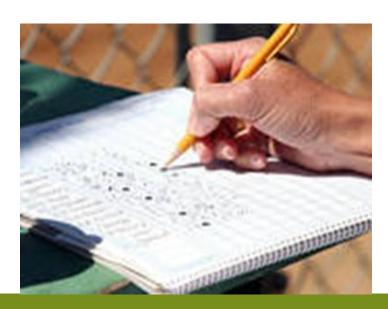
- What
- ☐ Why
- When
- ☐ How

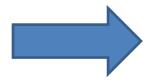


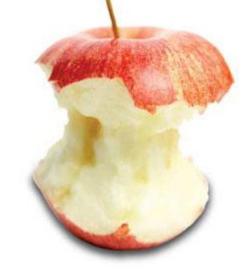
What is Board Self-Assessment?

Objective survey of board members' knowledge, experience and perspective

Compiles results and reports findings to board for discussion and reflection







What is Board Self-Assessment?

- Efficient structure to identify and prioritize hot topics
- Increases engagement of board members/ generations
- Helps in planning for future
- Models best-practice behavior



Outcomes: What You Can Expect



- > Practical, useful results
 - Identify strengths and areas for improvement
 - Prioritizes results
- Sets up the board for productive conversations
 - Leads to greater effectiveness

Outcomes: What NOT to Expect

- Doesn't replace good conversations
- 2. Doesn't replace legal advice
- Isn't an assessment of grants, grantees or impact*
- 4. Doesn't compare foundation to peers*



Reveal···



- ✓ Strengths of board and foundation
- ✓ Range of perspectives, concerns, values
- ✓ Difficult or unspoken issues in an objective, safe manner
- ✓ Gaps in knowledge or understanding
- ✓ Hopes, dreams, and vision

Create an Experience...



- ✓ Positive and collegial
- ✓ Integrates voices equally

In Order to...

✓ Clarify **focus**: mission, vision, values, priorities, goals, objectives



- ✓ Articulate **roles**, responsibilities, expectations and levels of engagement
- ✓ Fine-tune governance and management
- ✓ Become more efficient in **operations** (time and resources)
- ✓ Improve communication and therefore relationships
- ✓ Gain a fresh perspective on how we evaluate our work

When the Goal is Thoughtful Conversations...

- Regular check-up
 - All is well (confirm or improve)
 - Transition coming up (succession, scaling up)
 - Minor questions
- > Extra visit
 - Specific question would like to resolve
 - General sense of a problem
- Emergency room
 - Complex dynamics or barriers making resolution difficult (+ bring in outside help!)

Examples:

- Around strategic planning process or developing focus
- Around bringing in new board members, e.g., next gen
- > As kick off to a retreat
- CEO is settling in
- "It's just time."

Tips for Board Buy-In

- Work with an ally who will introduce topic to the board
- ➤ Have one-on-one **conversations** with individuals who are reluctant: listen well
- > Read and share ASF's primer with the board
- Share stories of others' experiences
- Discuss motivations, expectations, and goals with full board
- > Talk to ASF staff about your situation

The Nitty-Gritty of "How"



	1	2	3	4	5	Average	Range	# Comments
1	2	2		1	1	2.5	4	3
2	2	2	2			2.0	2	1
3	3	3				1.5	1	2
4	2	2	2			2.0	2	1
	5	1		10		1.2	1	1
	3	1	2			1.8	2	
	2	4				1.7	1	2
	2	3	1			1.8	3	1
	1	5				1.8	1	1
0	2	4		- 1		1.7	1	2
1								
1	2	4				1.7	1	
2	2	3				1.3	1	2
3	1	3	1	1		2.3	3	2
4	1	3	2			2.2	2	3
5	4	2				1.3	1	1
6	4		2	2		2.2	2	

<u>past;</u> however, the board would likely benefit from taking the time to ensure that these issues are fully worked through and resolved.

- The board sets direction for the foundation.
 - "We have a good strategic framework, but not universal agreement on proactive versus responsive grantmaking and more visible disagreement on direct service versus thought leadership/policy advancing role of our philanthropy."
 - "In the past this has been done by a smaller subset of the board, I think that more recently it has changed."
- All board members fulfill their responsibilities.
 - "At times some board members have allowed personal relationships influence their decisions on board matters."
- Our board members are able to invest sufficient time to accomplish their responsibilities.
 - "The board members put in a significant amount of time, particularly in this past two years when we have had some difficult issues to address."
 - o "All very committed and responsible."

In particular, the board may wish to re-consider its committee structures.

- The board makes effective use of committees to fulfill its responsibilities and get work done.
 - o "Almost too many committees for our relatively small Board, but all seem



Example: ASF's Survey

I. Effective Foundation Boards A. Roles and Responsibilities Definitely N/A 1 Every board member and officer has a written job description. 2 Board members and officers are clear about their roles 3 5 and the functions of the position they hold. 3 Each board member has copies of all of the following: 5 the articles of incorporation and bylaws (or the trust document); past meeting minutes; and board policies. 4 Our board is familiar with board policies and with the 5 bylaws or trust document. 5 New board members and officers receive an orientation to their position soon after they are elected. 3 4 The board has access to competent legal advice when it has questions. 7 The board sets direction for the foundation. 3 5 8 All board members fulfill their responsibilities. 5

Example: ASF's Report

- 1. Context
- 2. Strengths
- Opportunities for Improvement/Topics for Discussion (prioritize)
- 4. Next Steps

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Choose Wisely...



NATIONAL CENTER

FAMILY PHILANTHROPY





THE CENTER FOR EFFECTIVE PHILANTHROPY



Project Streamline



...consulting firms ...independent consultants... DIY ...

Consider...Scope & Process

- Focus or culture of assessment
- Online v. on paper
- Staff support
- Timing: when can you do it; how long does it take
- Is data aggregated or case-by-case?
- What kind of reports are provided?
- What does it cost?

Consider...What to Assess

- Governance; board; legal & tax; financial management
- Grantmaking process/impact
- Topics specific to foundation type (family, corporate, independent, community/public, staffed or unstaffed)
- Board meeting assessment
- Individual board member self-assessment
- Grantee & applicant perception
- Compensation
- CEO or staff evaluation
- Strategy landscape tool
- Foundation strategy, communications, accountability



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