



## Board Assessment

A high-functioning Board is critical for an organization to be successful in today's world, but the performance of far too many boards falls below what would be considered highly effective. Consider the general characteristics that describe many boards:

- Directors come from outside the organization and often the industry
- Directors have little or no experience working together as a team.
- Directors lack the technical skills to make judgments on many matters because they come from outside the industry
- Directors bring a diverse background and experience, and often have conflicting opinions (which is a good thing!)
- Directors bring varying levels of commitment and have different expectations of what is required of peers on the board
- Boards lack a process for dealing with divergent views and conflict in general

Given these circumstances, it is not uncommon for boards to become dysfunctional. This can occur when a board breaks down into separate factions due to conflicting opinions, or when a board becomes too compliant and unanimously agrees with executive management and one another.

For most organizations, the fiduciary responsibility of a board is to, at the very least, provide a performance review for the CEO or Executive Director, and to provide the overall strategic mission and vision for the organization. Many boards fail in delivering on these two most basic responsibilities.

What is lacking in most boards is a process for self-evaluation and correction so that directors can hold one another accountable and set realistic expectation for performance. The RealTime Performance Board Assessment is a tool that provides boards with a snapshot of how the board as a team is performing, and how each individual director is contributing to the board's success.

The RealTime Performance Board Assessment is a 360-evaluation, where every board member has the opportunity to provide feedback to every other board member. It also allows the executive director or CEO to provide feedback to every board member. In this way, directors get a complete view of each board member's perspective of their performance. At the same time, it measures the overall perspective on how well the board is functioning, as graded by the board members themselves.

Conducting an annual RealTime Performance Board Assessment helps boards hold themselves accountable for results while improving communication, collaboration and decision making.

### RealTime Performance Board Assessment Items

The following is a sample of items included in the assessment:

1. **Honest:** shares the whole story when communicating, strives to keep things accurate (doesn't share just their side of an issue)?
2. **Prepared:** comes to meetings thoroughly prepared, reads the packet, knows the issues, ready to discuss and decide?
3. **Direct:** goes face to face with other board members if they have a concern or an issue; doesn't gossip to others or set up rumors?
4. **Listens:** actively seeks to hear out what others say, and is amenable to being influenced by them?
5. **Informed:** knows the business, helps find ways to generate profits and maintain budgets?
6. **Legal Knowledge:** thoroughly understands the legal and fiduciary obligations of a board member under the corporate laws of the State of Washington (i.e. a board member must advocate for the good of the enterprise over self interest)?
7. **Legal Consistency:** behaves consistent with the legal and fiduciary obligations as a board member (i.e. advocates for the good of the enterprise over self interest)?
8. **Trustworthy:** what this person says is predictable, you can have confidence they mean what they say, will come through with what they say?
9. **Conflict Manager:** surface conflict, helps find meaningful compromises and win / win solutions to get issues resolved; does not let conflicts simmer?
10. **Communicates:** succinctly gets ideas across during meetings in a mature adult manner, effectively uses I messages?
11. **Self-Manages:** avoids over stating opinions, or using questions or accusations to get an emotional reaction from others?
12. **Decisions Maker:** will express opinions, but once the decision is made will actively support the board's decisions outside the group?
13. **Creative:** thinks creatively and in new ways about how to address board challenges and opportunities?
14. **Confidentiality:** keeps off the record any information that might reflect unfavorably on any board member or on the board as whole?
15. **Role Clarity:** understands their role as a board member, to deliberate toward decisions, to hire and evaluate the CEO, guide the business, validate management's thinking (not to supervise the CEO)?
16. **Professional Distance:** is not too close to management and also not too far removed, keeps a respectable professional distance?

## RealTime Performance Board Assessment

17. Listens: tracks conversations well, listens for emotion and intention and does not over read or inappropriately ignore what others say?
18. Collaborative: yields to the leadership during the meetings, acts cooperatively in doing their share of the work.
19. Feedback: willingly seeks out and accepts and benefits from performance feedback.
20. Spokesperson: accurately and constructively represents the board with NDA and WFF constituents, producers, customers, legal and regulatory bodies?
21. Between Meetings: is a helpful factor when communicating with others between formal meetings, doesn't over use or misuse written, email or phone communications?
22. Management Interaction: helps create stable and effective relationships with CEO and senior management?
23. Balanced: sees both the big picture as well as the day to day implications of board actions?
24. Constructive Feedback: offers helpful, constructive and balanced feedback for the CEO / management, channeling comments through the board chair as appropriate?
25. Accountability: willingly responsive to feedback and helpful suggestions for improvement as a board member without the need for negative sanctions or disciplinary action.
26. Cross Cultural: works well with differing styles and individual differences.
27. Courage: has the courage of convictions, will speak out on issues even if it might be risky and or uncomfortable?
28. Professional Development: attends conferences, reads journals, stays current on the issues and concerns facing the board?
29. Leadership Supportive: gets behind the leadership of the board, helps achieve the board's as well as company's goals and plans.
30. Processes: follows meeting protocol, signals the chair to talk, complies with groundrules, stays on the topics, asks good questions?
31. Appreciative: expresses appreciation and thankfulness when things go well, compliments others, is positive and helpful?

### RealTime Performance Board Assessment Process

- Directors complete a self-assessment and an assessment of each board member
- Data is collected and reports are run
- Each Director received an Individual Feedback Report
- The Board receives an Overall Board Report
- A RealTime Performance facilitator meets with the board to deliver the feedback
- Directors summarize their feedback to one another and create an individual action plan for improvement
- The board creates a Board Action Plan for Improvement that includes specific tasks and goals it will hold itself accountable for achieving

### Pricing

- **\$250 per Board Member**
- **1-day Facilitation: \$3,500 + TE**

### RealTime Performance

RealTime Performance is a leadership and organization development consulting firm. Sean Murray, the CEO and Founder, has over fifteen years experience delivering leadership and business acumen training to companies such as Johnson & Johnson, FedEx, Nordstrom, AutoNation, Microsoft, PepsiCo and Apple. Sean has an MBA from the University of Oregon and Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics.

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