

Good Governance Checklist – Board Self-Evaluation



This checklist may be used alone or as part of a board self-evaluation. The results should be summarized and returned to the board for discussion about areas of strength *and* areas for future improvement. Use the following numbers to respond to each question:

5 = Strongly Agree; **4** = Agree; **3** = Neither Agree nor Disagree; **2** = Disagree; **1** = Strongly Disagree.

	I am clear on the role of the board <i>and</i> the role of the Executive Director and how the two interact.
	The board initiates and participates in strategic planning for the organization.
	Board meetings are well managed and make good use of our time.
	Our committee structure is functional and supports the work of the board.
	We have a positive working relationship, based in trust and open communication with the executive director.
	I have the information needed to make good decisions during board and committee meetings.
	I am always clear about the decisions we have made during meetings.
	I understand the liabilities of the board.
	I know how to reduce the risk of liability.
	I understand the finances of the organization, including budgets, financial statements and funding.
	I understand our framework and governance policies (bylaws, vision, mission, board duties, etc.).
	The board has a written process for evaluating the performance of the executive director.
	The board uses this process annually or as required.
	I understand the board's conflict of interest policy.
	Board members generally get along. Disagreements do not become arguments.
	The board is active in public relations and raising awareness about the organization in the community.
	When I was first elected to the board, I received a comprehensive orientation to my role and to the organization's programs and policies.
	The board initiates and participates in ongoing board development at least once a year.
	The board takes responsibility for ensuring the long-term financial health of the organization through planning, fundraising and/or entrepreneurial ventures.
	The board has a succession plan or process to ensure its own continuity.
	The board evaluates its own performance at least annually.

Common Meeting Problems And How to Solve Them

Problem:	Strategies & Options:
1. People are late.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Start all meetings on time. ◆ Put important issues first on the agenda (minor and housekeeping items go later). ◆ Plan a “visiting” time for 15 to 30 minutes (with refreshments and snacks) before the actual start time. ◆ Address chronic lateness directly, but privately, as a “performance issue”.
2. Side conversations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Ask a question directly of one of the participants. ◆ Stop speaking and create silence so participants realize they are the only ones speaking. ◆ Address the issue privately and directly with “repeat offenders”. ◆ Ask the group to develop a list of “meeting protocols” for the group. ◆ Ensure the role of chairperson of the meetings is rotated.
3. Key people are absent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ If the agenda requires key people, talk to them directly and reinforce the importance of attending. ◆ Match people’s time schedule with agenda item placement. ◆ Go “pick them up” before the meeting. ◆ Address the issue privately and directly with the person. ◆ Make the decision without them; inform them and confirm their agreement.
4. People add points that are off topic or add new agenda items.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Create a “parking lot” on a piece of flip chart paper. ◆ Acknowledge the point and redirect the discussion. ◆ Suggest how the item can/will be discussed later or at future meetings.
5. People become emotional.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Acknowledge the emotion. ◆ Identify if there is underlying (often unstated) conflict. ◆ Ensure meeting leaders have conflict resolution training. ◆ Ask, “What is the _____ about?” ◆ Identify or ask about the “real problem” (emotions are usually flags for real issues). ◆ Do not smooth over, or push real issues underground. ◆ Schedule a separate meeting to deal with the issue. ◆ Follow up with participant(s) after the meeting.
6. People are distracted by other tasks, leave the meeting to answer phones, pagers, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Keep meetings short. ◆ Make good use of group time. ◆ Make important decisions at the beginning. ◆ Set protocols for the types of interruptions allowed and how they will be managed.

◆ Address issues privately and directly with “repeat offenders”.

