

# Theater Management Knowledge Base

Management Tools



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## Governance Self-Evaluation Tool

**v4.25.12**

Using this tool:

1. This tool is intended for use in conjunction with "Mission Driven Governance," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Summer 2009.
2. The tool is designed to reveal an agenda for discussion and possible action. It is NOT a scorecard. A facilitator or governance committee typically would use the tool as preparation for a governance retreat or other substantial discussion.
3. Discussions of sensitive issues typically can be conducted in a reasonable and low-temperature atmosphere when the issues are identified through use of a tool that is systematic and embodies no specific preferred outcome.

4. The tool is organized as a confidential survey in order to elicit candor, and it's essential that recipients are able to trust the confidentiality of their responses. If a paper survey is used a neutral outsider should tabulate the responses, but it's better to use an online survey application that automatically tabulates results and keeps the individual responses private.
5. The survey typically is administered to all who have a say in governance decisions, not limited to members of the board. Executives and other ranking staff members who formulate proposals or make recommendations typically are included.
6. Tabulated results are synthesized into an agenda for discussion primarily by prioritizing the survey items on which the recipients give sharply different answers. (Example: if half of the respondents say there should be a single leader and the other half prefer the dual leader structure, this might be an important thing to discuss.)
7. Agenda items for discussion also may be identified by survey items where recipients are in agreement on an answer that seems "wrong."
8. The highest and best use of this, or any other governance self-evaluation system, is to employ it regularly at intervals of two or three years, looking back on agenda items that were identified for improvement in the previous discussion and identifying agenda items for action in the next period.

The questions in this section are about your organization's importance and the principal issues, if any, that should occupy its attention.

**How old is your organization?**

Less than 10 years old.	
10-25 years old.	
26-50 years old.	
51-75 years old.	
76-100 years old.	
More than 100 years old.	

**In your personal opinion, where does your organization rank in importance among the private non-profit institutions (of all types) in its area?**

top five	
top ten	
top twenty	
lower than the top twenty	

**If you contribute money to your organization, where does it rank in your personal giving?**

top five	
top ten	
top twenty	
lower than the top twenty	
I don't contribute	

<p><b>What are your top three concerns about governance in your organization.</b>  <b>(Please answer in a word or short phrase.)</b></p>	
-	
-	
-	

<p><b>To what extent are you optimistic that your organization will address these concerns effectively?</b></p>	
pessimistic	
optimistic	

**The questions in this section are about how your organization's governance function is organized.**

<p><b>How big is your board of directors?</b></p>	
20 or fewer members	
21-30 members	
31-40 members	
41-50 members	
51-60 members	
more than 60 members	

<b>What is your opinion about the size of the board of directors?</b>	
The board is too large.	
The board is too small.	
The board is about the right size.	
No opinion.	

<b>How often does your organization's board of directors meet?</b>	
Never	
1-2 times a year	
3-4 times a year	
5-6 times a year	
7-10 times a year	
more than 10 times a year	

<b>What is your opinion about the frequency of board meetings?</b>	
The board meets too often.	
The board doesn't meet often enough.	
The frequency of board meetings is about right.	

**In some organizations the board meetings are where the real work gets done. In other organizations the real work gets done in committees and board meetings are used for formal approvals. Where is your organization along that spectrum?**

real work done in committee meetings	
real work done in board meetings	

**Does your organization have a regular process for reviewing the organization's needs in recruiting new board members?**

Yes	
No	
Don't know	

**Please evaluate the composition of your board in these areas:**

	deficient	poor	fair	good	excellent
all relevant backgrounds and viewpoints are represented					
all relevant areas of expertise are covered					
all important buyer/user groups are represented					
a sufficient number of potential future leaders to provide choice					

<b>How long may a board member serve without rotating off (at least temporarily)?</b>	
less than 3 years	
3-4 years	
5-6 years	
7-8 years	
there is a limit, but it's greater than 8 years	
there is no limit	

<b>What is your opinion about the average length of service on the board?</b>	
The average length of service is too short.	
The average length of service is too long.	
The average length of service is about right.	

<b>Other than an executive committee, how many standing committees does your board have?</b>	
no standing committees	
4 or fewer standing committees	
5-7 standing committees	
8-10 standing committees	
more than 10 standing committees	

<b>Other than an executive committee, which of the following board committees does your organization have?</b>	
Collections/Acquisitions	
Development/Annual Fundraising	
Development/Major Gifts	
Education	
Finance (Budget/Operations)	
Finance (Investment)	
Governance (separate from Nominating)	
Landscaping	
Marketing	
Nominating	
Planning	
Plant & Equipment	
Programming	
Other, please specify below:	
-	
-	

-



Other than an executive committee, which of your board committees is considered most important by members of the board?	
Collections/Acquisitions	
Development/Annual Fundraising	
Development/Major Gifts	
Education	
Finance (Budget/Operations)	
Finance (Investment)	
Governance (separate from Nominating)	
Landscaping	
Marketing	
Nominating	
Planning	
Plant & Equipment	
Programming	
Other, please specify	

<b>Other than an executive committee, which of your board committees is considered most important by the staff?</b>	
Collections/Acquisitions	
Development/Annual Fundraising	
Development/Major Gifts	
Education	
Finance (Budget/Operations)	
Finance (Investment)	
Governance (separate from Nominating)	
Landscaping	
Marketing	
Nominating	
Planning	
Plant & Equipment	
Programming	
Other, please specify	

<b>What is your opinion about the frequency of turnover in the position of board chair?</b>	
the board chair serves indefinitely, and that's the right approach for our organization	
the board chair serves indefinitely, but it would be better if we had regular turnover	
we have planned turnover at regular intervals, but it would be better if the board chair could serve indefinitely	
we have planned turnover at regular intervals, and that's the right approach for our organization	

<b>Does your organization have a written succession plan for Board leadership?</b>	
Yes	
No	
Don't know	

<b>Does your organization have a written succession plan for executive leadership?</b>	
Yes	
No	
Don't know	

<b>Does your organization have a regular systematic process for evaluating the executive(s) performance?</b>	
Yes	
No	
Don't know	

<b>Does your organization's board have a regular systematic process for evaluating the organization's governance performance?</b>	
Yes	
No	
Don't know	

<b>How many top executives are there in your organization?</b>	
One executive answers to the board, and that's as it should be.	
One executive answers to the board, but it would be better if there were dual leaders.	
Two executives answer to the board, and that's as it should be.	
Two executives answer to the board, but it would be better if there was a single leader.	

<b>Is any executive in your organization a voting member of the board? Should he/she be?</b>	
Yes, the executive is a voting member, and yes, I think that's appropriate.	
No, the executive is not a voting member, but yes, I think he/she should be.	
Yes, the executive is a voting member, but no, I don't think that's appropriate.	
No, the executive is not a voting member, and no, I don't think he/she should be.	

Please grade your organization's performance in these areas of leadership succession and development:					
	don't know	poor	fair	good	excellent
succession planning for board leadership					
a regular businesslike process for winnowing out board members who are unproductive or a bad fit					
regular opportunities for education of board members					
regular performance reviews for the board					
the opportunity for all board members to give input into the selection/hiring of the executive(s)					
regular performance reviews for professional leaders					
the opportunity for all board members to give input to performance reviews for the executive(s)					
regular opportunities for professional development for the executive(s)					

The questions in this section are about the relationship between the board of directors and the executive(s) in your organization.

Please give up to five words that best characterize the relationship between the executive(s) and the board of directors in your organization.

-
-
-
-
-

In some organizations the executive(s) is/are regarded by the board as their leader. In other organizations the executive(s) is/are expected to implement board decisions. Where is your organization along this spectrum?

executive(s) as implementer(s)	
	
executive(s) as leader(s)	

The questions in this section are about your organization's overall direction, including its mission and strategy.

How often do you refer to your organization's written mission statement (to refresh your memory, use it to help make a decision, bring it up in conversation, or think about its meaning)?

daily	
weekly	
monthly	
annually	
almost never	

Does your organization have a written mission statement?

Yes	
No	

If you have a written mission statement, does it describe your organization's purpose (the impact it wants to have in the world)?

Yes	
No	

<b>If you have a written mission statement, does it describe your organization's core values (the principles it will not compromise)?</b>	
Yes	
No	

<b>What are your organization's core values?</b>
-
-
-
-
-

<b>If you have a written mission statement, does it set a big over-arching goal?</b>	
Yes	
No	

<b>If your organization has set a big over-arching goal, how much of a stretch will it be to accomplish it (on a spectrum between "it's a sure thing" to "it may be beyond reach")?</b>	
sure thing	
↑	
↓	
may be beyond reach	



<b>In your opinion, what proportion of your organization's board members are aware of its purpose and core values?</b>	
0%	
25%	
50%	
75%	
100%	

<b>Can you recall an instance or instances in which your organization endured criticism, lost support, or passed up a substantial opportunity in order to adhere to the purpose and core values?</b>	
Yes	
No	
-If yes, please describe briefly:	

<b>To what extent does the mission statement motivate you in your work on your organization's behalf?</b>	
The mission statement is inspirational.	
I agree with the mission statement, but it doesn't really describe the ways in which my organization is important to me.	
My motivation comes from something other than the organization's mission	

<b>Does your organization have a written strategy statement?</b>	
Yes	
No	
Don't know	

<b>If you have a written strategy statement, does it specify your organization's competitive advantage?</b>	
Yes	
No	
Don't know	

<b>What is your organization's competitive advantage? (A single phrase or sentence should suffice.)</b>

<b>If you have a written strategy statement, does it specify your organization's scope in terms of geography, segment, and vertical integration?</b>	
Yes	
No	
Don't know	

<b>To what extent does your organization evaluate the fit of a gift/grant, program, project, or other opportunity with its strategy before deciding to proceed?</b>	
Always	
Usually	
Sometimes	
Rarely	
Never	

<b>In your opinion, is your organization driven primarily by strategy or by opportunity?</b>	
Highly strategic	
Somewhat strategic	
Equally strategic and opportunistic	
Somewhat opportunistic	
Highly opportunistic	

<b>Generally there are two choices of direction when an organization reaches a strategic "fork in the road." Which of these views of your organization's situation is the correct one to guide its next phase of development?</b>	
We are not at a fork in the road. We should maintain the present direction, raising more money to support it if we need to.	
We should broaden our activities to appeal to a broader range of buyers and users, even if it means a somewhat less focused and specific public identity.	
We should focus more selectively on the activities that best represent our public identity, even if it means that the organization will get somewhat smaller.	

The questions in this section are about how your organization makes important decisions.

Please rank the following in order of their influence over important decisions. (Click the button in column 1 under the most influential person or group, the button in column 2 for the next most influential person or group, and so forth until you've clicked a button in all eight columns.)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
full board								
executive committee								
relevant board committee								
board chair								
president								
senior staff other than the president								
major donors								
non-official faction of the board								

In what ways, if any, should the distribution of influence over important decisions change?

<b>What is your opinion about the composition of the board with respect to the range of the members' perspectives?</b>	
The composition of the board is too homogeneous; other useful perspectives are missing.	
The range of board members' perspectives is about right.	
The composition of the board is too heterogeneous; too many perspectives slow us down.	

<b>In your opinion, what proportion of your organization's board members agree with the organization's purpose?</b>	
0%	
25%	
50%	
75%	
100%	

<b>In your opinion, what proportion of your organization's board members share its core values?</b>	
0%	
25%	
50%	
75%	
100%	

Please rate the atmosphere for your work on behalf of your organization in the following areas:					
	deficient	poor	fair	good	excellent
confidential matters remain confidential					
disagreements stay inside the room					
information is shared with all who need it					
our decision making processes are transparent					
decision makers do what's best for the organization, putting their other interests aside					
we deal with problems in a timely way, rather than letting them fester					
policies and procedures are well understood					
communication is clear and timely					
expectations of me are clear					
I am encouraged to take initiative					
I am able to get things done without a lot of red tape					

What are the greatest sources of personal satisfaction you get from working on behalf of your organization?
-
-
-
-

-

<b>Are there any aspects of working on behalf of your organization that you find dissatisfying or annoying?</b>	
-	
-	
-	
-	

The questions in this section are about the information that is available to your organization's decision makers.

<b>Board members and executives review a formal analysis of your organization's competitive environment:</b>	
More often than annually	
Annually	
Less often than annually	
Rarely	
Never	

<b>The area of most serious concern in your organization's competitive environment is:</b>	
too few buyers and users to support our field	
the buyers and users don't have enough time and money to support our field	
too much time and money is diverted away from our field by other kinds of activity (substitutes)	
too much similarity (insufficient differentiation) among organizations in our field	
too many new organizations entering our field	
too few suppliers	
don't know	

<b>Please rate the extent to which your organization's important decisions are based on:</b>					
	deficient	poor	fair	good	excellent
the collective knowledge of all board members and executives					
systematically collected data about the impact of your programs					
timely and informative operational and financial reports					
thorough knowledge of the values and characteristics of your organization's field					
thorough knowledge of the economic and legal conditions in your organization's field					



The questions in this section are about the effectiveness of top-level implementation in your organization.

Please rate your organization's performance in the following areas:					
	deficient	poor	fair	good	excellent
quality of programs					
number/extent of programs					
anticipating and planning for change					
managing change productively					
board giving					
board fundraising from others					
managing resources efficiently					
making the best use of assets					
communicating important decisions about organizational direction to internal and external stakeholders					
communicating about programs with audiences and public					
communicating about our impact with donors and the public					
managing its relationships with alliance partners					
crisis response					