

Unit 2

Effective Boards





Effective Boards

An effective, well informed and well trained Board of Directors is essential to the success and operation of your Provincial Sport Organization. Board members have accepted the responsibility of governing, managing and developing a PSO and this requires commitment, skill and considerable time. The following tips and information should further support your board in its operations and effectiveness.

Standards of performance for board members

As a Director, you have been elected by your members to carry out duties in an ethical and professional manner. Meeting appropriate performance standards make it possible to do the work of the board in an efficient and effective way.

Performance standards of board members include:

- Being loyal to the PSO and its membership
- Avoiding conflict of interest
- Not exercising individual authority over staff or members
- Being prepared for and actively participating in meetings
- Fostering positive working relationship between volunteers and staff
- Maintaining confidentiality of board business
- Speaking positively of the PSO to the public

Source: Resource Centre of Voluntary Organizations – Articles Online

Conflict often occurs when people are passionate about an issue. Dealing with conflict is critical in allowing the board to conduct their business effectively and efficiently.

See Tool #2 for tips on how to deal with conflict.

2.1

Board/Board Member Evaluation

A thorough annual evaluation of the board, its committees and individual board members is an effective way to identify concerns and problems pertaining to governance and board member satisfaction. An effective evaluation will lead to concrete plans to address the concerns outlined in the evaluations that lead to improvement in board performance.

Board member self-evaluations should be used to provide feedback to the President. This feedback will be a great resource to make your board operate in a more efficient and pleasant manner.

A sample effectiveness checklist and self-evaluation form are available as Tool 3 & 4.

FAQ: Why should boards engage in self-assessments?

A board self-assessment allows board members an opportunity to:

- Reflect upon their individual and collective responsibilities.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the board, your meetings and committees.
- Collect different opinions and views of the board and organization.
- Increase the level of board cohesion.
- Clarify and define board expectations.
- Look internally and evaluate the board and the organization.
- Identify concerns and weak areas.
- Use the results to make positive changes for the future.

2.2



How to Deal with Conflict

Tool # 2

When Conflict Arises

One way to get to the core of conflict is to approach it from a “how do we make peace?” approach instead of “who is to blame?” perspective. This technique proposes four simple steps to resolving conflict in a meeting situation:

1. Observe what is happening in the given situation. Listen to the messages coming from both sides. What might they be feeling? What might they need or want? Read between the lines if necessary and prompt them to uncover their feelings and their needs.
2. Identify what each party is feeling. We often talk more about what we “think” is going on than actually expressing what is going on for us. Urge people to talk about the facts and their feelings.
3. Identify what each party needs. When we clearly express what we actually need in a given situation, we show respect for ourselves. And by “owning” our truth in this way, we show respect for the other person as well.
4. Have each side make requests for desired outcomes. Once each side understands what the other feels and needs, we have a chance to use our energies to create win-win solutions.
5. Implement the solution. Once all parties have agreed upon a potential solution, make it happen!

Source: Involving Volunteers Effectively, Fact Sheets. Produced by the Ontario Volunteer Centre Network and Volunteer Canada.

2.3

Sample Board Member Self-Evaluation

Tool #3

Your Name: _____

1. How do you rate your involvement as a board member in the following areas?

(Check the responses that apply below)

V Very good **S** Satisfactory **N** Needs work

	V	S	N
Attendance at board meetings			
Committee participation			
Time commitment			
Input into decision making			
Fundraising			
Community outreach/education			
Educating self on purpose, needs of organization			
Keeping current on issues affecting organizations			
Other(s):			

2. What factors contributed to your performance (either positively or negatively) in the areas above?

3. Here's what I would need from the organization to maintain/increase my level of board commitment:

4. What do you like best about serving on the board?

5. What do you like least about serving on the board?

6. Do you have any other comments or suggestions that will help the board increase its effectiveness?

Source: Building an Effective Board of Directors

2.4

A Good Board Practice Checklist

Tool #4

2.5

1. The board of directors meets at a regular time and date?

yes **no**

2. The board operates according to the constitution or by-laws under which the organization is incorporated?

yes **no**

3. All board members have a copy of the by-laws or constitution under which the organization is incorporated?

yes **no**

4. The board or its executive committee normally plan the board meeting agenda?

yes **no**

5. We normally make it through the board meeting agenda in the allotted time?

yes **no**

6. Minutes, committee and staff reports are distributed to directors at least a few days in advance of board meetings?

yes **no**

7. There is a written job description or statement of responsibilities for members of the board?

yes **no**

8. The board has approved policies outlining its expectations in the following areas:

(i) Financial management practices

yes no

(ii) Personnel management practices

yes no

(iii) Conflict of interest

yes no

(iv) Funding practices

yes no

(v) Quality of services to users, clients, consumers or the public

yes no

(vi) Safety of staff, volunteers, and clients

yes no

9. There is a policy manual containing all existing organizational policies

yes no

10. The board receives regular financial reports and monitors the performance of the organization in relation to its budget?

yes no

2.6

Source: 2003 Non-Profit Sector Leadership Program, Dalhousie University