

Checklist for Engaging Your Board

Recruiting and Orientation Process

- Does the board have a recruiting process that provides a strong pipeline of mission-driven, diverse board prospects that can support the strategic priorities?
- Has the board developed a profile of the ideal board member? Is it based upon fulfilling the strategic plan?
- Are board members regularly asked to identify prospects for the board and its committees?
- Are there many ways for a prospective board member to become involved with the organization before joining?
- Are there clearly articulated expectations for board members? Are they asked to commit to them annually?
- Are new board members assigned a board mentor/buddy?
- Is there a process to orient and actively engage new board members within their first 90 days?
- Do board members understand what the organization does and its impact?

Leadership

- Does the Board Chair partner with the CEO to pursue the organization's strategic priorities? Do they set a positive tone for the board?
- Are board members identified and groomed for leadership roles?
- Are board members among the largest and most consistent donors of the organization?
- Is the board willing and able to frame the key issues and decisions that need to be made around challenges and opportunities?
- Does the board act as ambassadors for the organization among partners and the community?
- Is there a culture of philanthropy throughout the board? Do they understand they are a critical factor in any successful fundraising campaign?
- Does the board have a succession planning process that provides a smooth transition for new board leaders?

Meetings

- Is the board using committees and task forces effectively to execute the strategic plan?
- Are meeting agendas designed to focus on the organization's strategic priorities and board engagement?
- Are meeting agendas and materials distributed well in advance of meetings?
- Are board and committee meetings scheduled for the full year and correspond with the timing of key milestones or decisions?
- Is there a willingness to constructively debate important issues among the board?
- Is the board willing to challenge the senior staff leadership on their plans and recommendations? Will they ask tough questions?
- Are many board members asked to contribute and lead some portion of board and committee meetings?
- Are board members actively engaged and contributing their expertise and knowledge at meetings or other board activities?
- Is their ongoing board training and education on organizational and governance issues?
- Is their time for team building and connecting personally?

Accountability

- Does the board assess its own performance regularly and have clear accountability measures that are self-enforced?
- Are board members recognized individually and at meetings for their work and impact?
- Do board members provide access to their network of relationships to further the mission?
- Has 100% of the board made a cash donation?
- Is the board large enough to fulfill its roles and responsibilities for oversight? Is it small enough for each board member to understand their role and feel engaged?
- Is there a process to reengage or roll off underperforming or difficult board members from the board?

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