



# The Board Assessment

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THE ACCOUNTABLE  
NONPROFIT SERIES

## *The Accountable Nonprofit*

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### THE BOARD ASSESSMENT

#### Two Important Thoughts

- Why did I want to attend this session?
- What has been the culture of accountability as it relates to your board and its performance of governance?

*What would you say is your board's feelings about having their performance assessed and being an accountable body?*

#### What You Received From Us

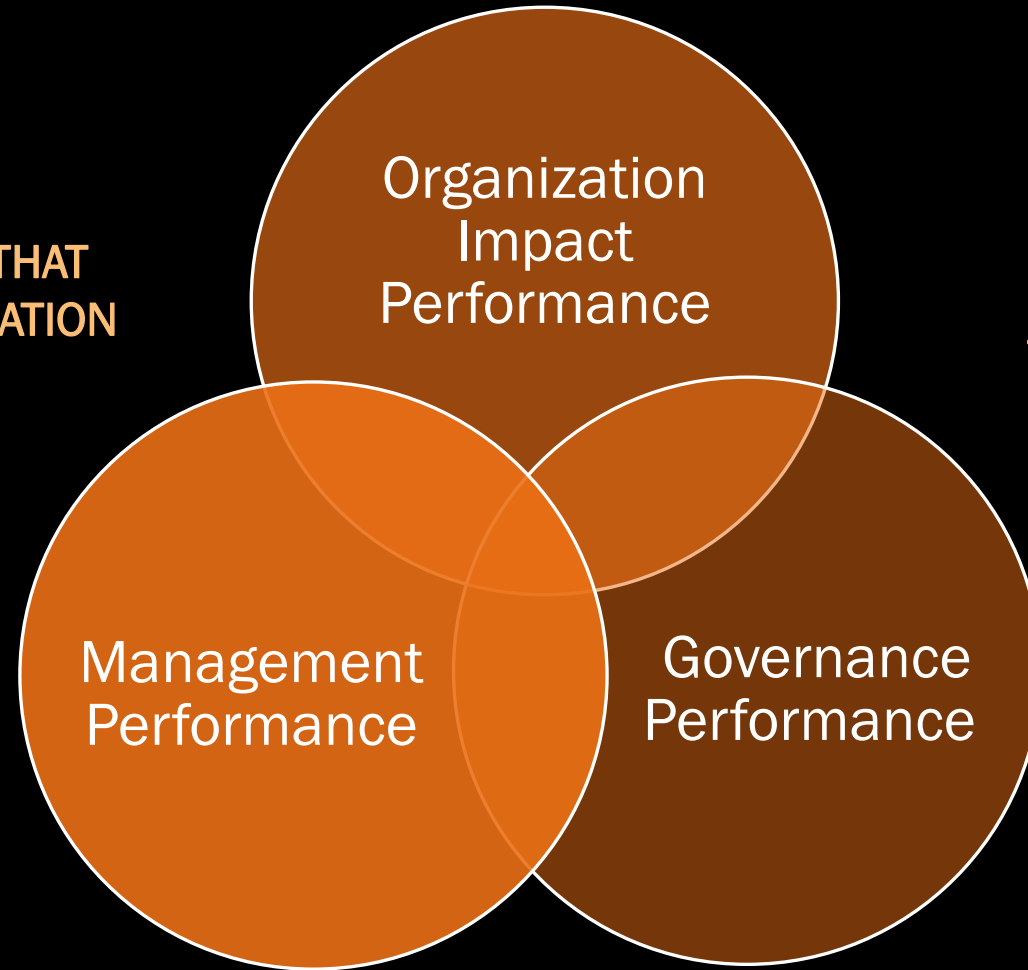
- Participant's Guide
- Board Governance Assessment from Third Sector Company
- Board of Directors Self-Assessment Questionnaire from Stanford
- Board Self-Evaluation Questionnaire from Dalhousie University
- Nonprofit Board Evaluation Form from Twin Cities United Way

# Why “The Accountable Nonprofit?”



How do should we demonstrate that we are a responsible organization?

THERE ARE THREE FORCES THAT  
INFLUENCE MISSION MOBILIZATION  
& MEASURED IMPACT ...



... Each must be monitored in order  
for equitable due diligence to result.

- Taking Responsibility
- Acting Responsibly
- Focusing Responsibility
- Proving Responsibility

# A Culture of Accountability

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Moving a Mission.  
Making an Impact.  
Working Together Well.



*Let's Get Started ...*

# About Board Assessments

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Who is a nonprofit board of directors accountable (responsible) to?

What would you say are the attributes of a board that takes its accountability seriously?

How would your board currently compare with that list?

**Small Group Discussion #1**

*What We Know*

# About Board Assessments

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A strong, vibrant board of directors is a clear indicator of a healthy organization. Yet even the best organizations need a periodic check-up to ensure that they cannot just survive but will really thrive in today's environment. To check your board's vital signs, or to put in place practices and strategies for a healthy and energized board, the best place to start is with a board self-assessment.

**The Maine Association of Nonprofits**

## THE BOARD ASSESSMENT

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### The Reality of Governance Today

Sources:  
BoardSource  
CompassPoint  
Concord Leadership  
Alliance for Nonprofit  
Management

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51% of boards self-evaluate

67% consult their completed strategic plan

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75% of boards provide an orientation to the job

74% focus on operations versus strategy/policy

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17% have a succession plan

62% of executives have confidence in their boards

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10% report the board as being “diverse”

73% of boards view exec as “strategic partner”

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32% of boards use a dashboard

29% are prepared for the board meeting



# Why a Board Assessment

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“Start with the Why”

An Adaptation on Simon Sinek

- Assures an annual check-up that the basics of governance are in place
- Creates a basis for fact-based conversation and objective decision-making about board priorities, processes and composition
- Provides a means for all voices to speak about the board’s culture and the board experience
- Allows an opportunity for board members to evaluate both their own performance as well as that of the whole board
- Forms a board development agenda
- Informs the executive review



### The Reason:

To evolve your Board to its full potential as diverse community of people coming together to accomplish something extraordinary for the community.

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# THE BOARD ASSESSMENT

# The Board Lifecycles

## THE ORGANIZING/FOUNDING BOARD

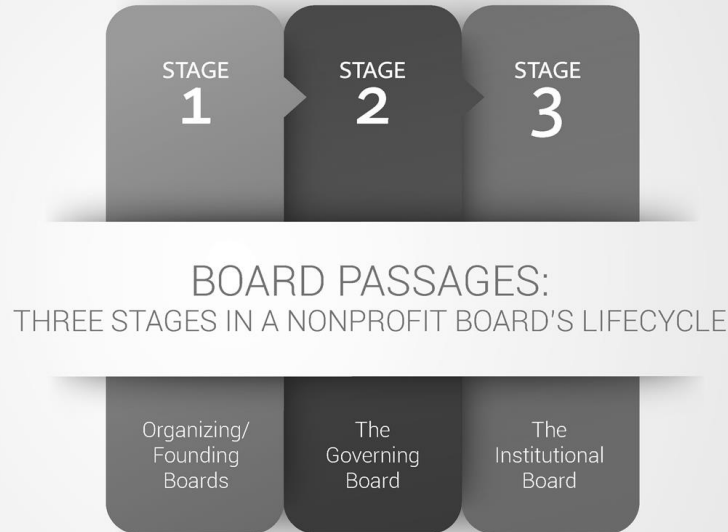
*Small, Operational, Task-Focused, Sense of Owners*

## GOVERNING BOARD

*Growing and Diversifying, Staff and Board Dynamic, Responsibility-Focused, Committee Development*

## INSTITUTIONAL BOARD

*Large, Resource and Finance Focused, Visibility Critical, Oversight-Focused*



**Boards are not — and should not — be static.** To be effective, they must change and evolve as their organizations change and grow. Many years ago, Karl Mathiasen III wrote a paper for BoardSource in which he identified three different and quite distinct types of nonprofit boards that develop as their organizations grow and change. While recognizing that various permutations of the three exist, that the board maturing process is not inevitable — organizations may develop differently or boards may stop at one stage or another — and that each board is unique, he noticed that these three very broad types of boards appear and reappear on a regular basis in the nonprofit world.

What follows are brief descriptions of the three nonprofit board types identified by Mathiasen. We present them as food for thought only — not as necessarily best board practice. Do you agree with them? Do they stand the test of time? Do some or all of the characteristics of each hold true in your experience or have other types and characteristics surfaced? Do you recognize your own board in any of them?

# The Board Assessment

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## Pathways to Exploration

### WE SUGGEST SIX POSSIBLE APPROACHES

- Talking about it
- Focusing on the duties of the board
- Looking at the results of the work of the board
- Targeting individual performance
- Looking at the board's culture
- A hybrid

Ways to gauge the experiences of community leaders in their governance responsibilities to advance a community cause.

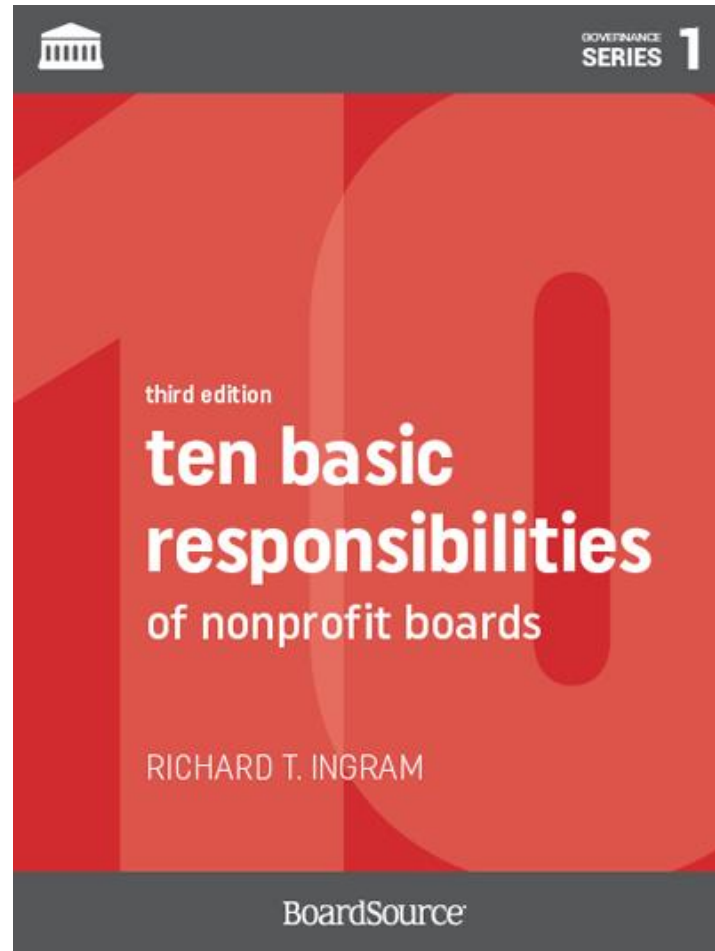
# A Board Assessment Conversation



**APPROACH #1:**  
**Have a Focused Discussion**

- What's working well?
- What isn't working as well?
- What stands in the way of this being a great board?
- What could we do right now to make this a better board?

# The Responsibilities of Governance



## APPROACH #2

### The Job of the Board According to BoardSource

- Mission
- Advocacy
- Planning
- CEO Selection and Support
- Program Monitoring
- Adequate Resourcing
- Financial Oversight & Asset Protection
- Competent Board
- Legal and Ethical Integrity
- Public Standing

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## Board Governance Assessment

Based on *Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards* by BoardSource  
and Enhanced by Third Sector Company

### Approach #3: MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

- Evolving with the community
- Engaging the community
- Advocating in the community
- Creating impact
- Cultivating the next generation
- Mobilizing an effective structure of paid and unpaid people working together well



# **Individual Board Member Performance**

**A Self-Assessment for Completion by Each Board Member**

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- ✓ **ENTHUSIASM FOR MISSION**
- ✓ **UNDERSTANDING OF ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**
- ✓ **MISSION ADVANCEMENT THROUGH GIVING, VOLUNTEERING**
- ✓ **ATTENDANCE**
- ✓ **OBJECTIVITY**
- ✓ **AVOID CONFLICT OF INTEREST**
- ✓ **PREPARATION**
- ✓ **ABILITY TO “TELL THE STORY”**
- ✓ **RECRUITING PEOPLE**
- ✓ **UNDERSTAND BOARD & STAFF DIFFERENT ROLES**



## **The Board Experience**

**A Self-Assessment for Completion by Each Board Member**

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**Stanford**  
Law School

- ✓ **Structure**
- ✓ **Information**
- ✓ **Dynamics**
- ✓ **Open-Ended**

**Board of Directors  
Self-Assessment Questionnaire**



# Board Self-Evaluation Questionnaire

A Tool for Improving the Governance Practices  
of Non-Profit Organizations

## MEASURING PERFORMANCE

- How Well the Board has done its Job
- How Well the Board has Conducted Itself
- The Relationship with the Executive Director
- The Board Member's Self-Evaluation
- The Performance of the Board Chair





### The Result:

Respect the feedback as input  
for creating a “board  
development plan” overseen by  
members of the board.

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# THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE



Presents

# BOARDS IN GEAR

# Exploring the Why, What, Who, and How of Nonprofit Boards.



**WE MAKE SURE NONPROFITS HAVE WHAT THEY NEED TO SUCCEED.**



Office of the Secretary of State

Kim Wyman

*Now What ...*

# About Board Assessments

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What kind of assessment would make sense  
for your board right now?

- Talking about it
- Focusing on the duties of the board
- Looking at the results of the work of the board
- Targeting individual performance
- Looking at the board's culture
- A hybrid

**Small Group Discussion #2**

# The Board Assessment

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Applying Learning.  
Taking Action.  
Realizing Results.

- ACTION #1: Answer the questions contained in the participant guide.
- ACTION #2: Begin with a SWOT-based conversation.
- ACTION #3: Explore or further evolve a governance committee.
- ACTION #4: Commit to an annual board development strategy based assessment findings.