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APPENDIX 25

SAMPLE BOARD EFFECTIVENESS QUESTIONNAIRES

Sample 1 Open-Ended Questionnaire

[Please provide your written comments on the issues listed below.] or [Please review the questions listed below and prepare your comments in advance of your scheduled interview with _____].

Your answers and comments will be kept confidential. They will be used to help the board assess its own effectiveness and to address concerns that directors may have about how we function as a board and an organization.

Please be as specific as possible in your assessment.

Board Composition and Knowledge

1. The skills/background/experience/diversity and number of directors

2. a) The board's understanding of [the organization's] mission, management/positioning of the organization, the organization's competitive environment, and long-range needs;

b) Your own personal understanding of these items

3. The board's knowledge of the [organization's] constituency and financial support base

Board Meetings

4. The number, location, and length of board meetings

5. The subjects covered at meetings

6. The time spent on particular subjects

7. The opportunity for discussion at board meetings

8. The directors' ability to suggest agenda items

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9. The amount and quality of presentations and education on [the organization's mission or area of focus] at the board meetings

Information Flow

10. The quality, quantity, and method of delivery of information provided to directors:

- a) in connection with board meetings,
- b) unrelated to board meetings

Board Relationship to Management/Staff

11. Management's willingness to respond to director questions, requests for information, special reports, receptiveness to board suggestions, etc.

12. Director access to management; relationship with management and staff; and opportunity for input and feedback with management

Board Participation

13. Director participation

- a) at board meetings,
- b) at committee meetings,
- c) outside of regular meetings (e.g., events related to the organization)

14. Deployment of the board in the community, with donors, constituents, and unrelated groups for advocacy, etc.

15. Opportunities for informal "get togethers" with other board members (e.g., dinners following board meetings, lunches, etc.)

16. Overall cohesiveness of the board (participation of the full board vs. individual director efforts)

Board Committees

17. Committee structure, mandate, and numbers of committees

18. Committee appointments

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19. Committee agendas, information, and materials

General Questions on Board Effectiveness

20. Are there any factors that currently impede board/committee effectiveness?

21. Are there factors that currently enhance board/committee effectiveness?

22. How does the effectiveness of [this organization's] board compare to that of other boards on which you serve?

Questions About Your Service on the Board

23. How effectively is [this organization] using your talents?

24. What attracted you to board service at [this organization] in the first place and what keeps you interested as a director?

Strategic Issues and Goals for This Organization

25. What are the major strategic issues facing [this organization] over the next three years, in your opinion?

26. What goals would you like to see [this organization] accomplish in the next

a) year

b) three years?

What Else?

26. Are there any other issues you wish to raise or comment on?

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APPENDIX 25 (CONT'D)

Sample 2

Effectiveness Questionnaire for Telephone Interview

Please review the listed items and prepare your responses in advance of your telephone interview with [_____] on [_____]

1. What do you like most about being on the XYZ. board?
2. What do you like least about being on the XYZ. board?
3. Are we using your talents the way we should? If not, please give us suggestions.
4. Please give us your views on the overall effectiveness of the XYZ board with respect to the following matters, suggesting any improvements you feel would be appropriate.

Board Meetings:

Time, place, length, etc.

Substance/topics covered

Opportunity for discussion/meaningful input

Opportunity to learn about XYZ (or some important aspect of mission)

Sufficiency and usefulness of materials

Value in attending

Committee Meetings:

Time, place, length, etc.

Substance/topics covered

Opportunity for discussion/meaningful input

Opportunity to learn about XYZ (or some important aspect of mission)

Sufficiency and usefulness of materials

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Value in attending

Leadership provided to the organization by:

Chair of the Board

Officers/Committee Chairs

Managing Executive/CEO

_____ (Other senior management leader)

5. What do you think are the one or two most important strategic issues facing XYZ over the next several years? [OR: On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being most important and 5 being least important, please rank the strategic importance of the issues listed below:]

Here are some possibilities for you to consider in preparing your answer to this question.

Raising a meaningful endowment

Maintaining a balanced (deficit-free) operating budget

Increasing excellence in _____

Evolving the mission or type of work done by XYZ

Increasing contributed income

Increasing earned income

Managing expenses and finding ways to structurally reduce expense

Creating a long-term financial plan that eliminates the current “structural deficit”

Developing a successful _____ program

Obtaining a more permanent facility

Improving financial reporting and discipline

Developing management and board leadership succession programs

Improving the relationship of management to the board

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Improving communications with the board

Improving communications with or outreach to the community or other major stakeholders

Maintaining good board governance/effectiveness

Board leadership development

Increasing the size and stature of the board

Improving the board's understanding of _____

Achieving better understanding of changing nature of environment in which XYZ operates and impact on strategy and mission