



BOARD BRIEF: Assessing Your Board

Board Briefs are "at-a-glance" resources that help board volunteers better support their Boys & Girls Club. They are designed to occur as five-minute education opportunities at board meetings.

SUMMARY

Amidst all the task boards must complete, the assessment process is often forgotten, pushed to the side or totally ignored. However, assessment is critical. Many low-performing boards, in fact, can trace their problems back to the root cause of lacking assessment. Evaluation of the full board as well as its individual members is essential for effective leadership to occur.

INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER ASSESSMENTS

Conducting individual member assessments is essential to board success. The process reveals team performance, builds the foundation for individual recognition; identifies development opportunities; and shed lights on members who may need to roll off the board. An annual assessment that is based on specific, board-approved duties should be conducted for each board member.

The Process

The assessment should be reasonable and realistic while also challenging. Duties must be quantitative so progress can be tracked throughout the year. Assessment metrics might include:

- Attend 75% of monthly board meetings.
- Participate on two board committees; attend 75% of committee meetings.
- Personally give to the Boys & Girls Club a minimum of \$ _____.
- Secure at least \$ _____ in donations for the Boys & Girls Club.
- Invite at least two targeted individuals for a tour of a Boys & Girls Club program.

A database of all board members should be used to track assessment results. It should be maintained by the CEO and shared with the board development (or governance) committee. After reviewing the data, the board development committee should schedule a special meeting to make recommendations of action. These actions might include:

1. Individual recognition for outstanding performance
2. Personal visits to low-performing individuals to develop an action plan for improvement
3. Conversations with low-performing individuals to discuss desire to continue serving
4. Recommending nonrenewal for low-performing individual board members

At the next board meeting, the board development committee shares a summary of the overall results of the Annual Assessment. Special recognition is provided to high-achieving board

members. At no time are low-performing individuals singled out in front of their peers or placed in an embarrassing situation...that is handled in private.

THE WHOLE IS THE SUM OF ITS PARTS

A strong and effective board of directors is built upon its individual board member performance. Boards often wish to reflect on how well it collectively meets its responsibilities. This process can be conducted every two or three years to provide insight into the quality of their work and identify ways to strengthen board operations.

The Process

BGCA has a number of simple, free tools to evaluate the whole board, such as the *Board Assessment Survey* and *Criteria for Evaluating a Board of Directors*. They can be accessed online at <http://www.bgca.net/BoardResourceCenter/Downloads.aspx#brief>. The board development committee oversees the following steps:

1. Distributes the selected assessment tool for completion.
2. Compiles and analyzes responses.
3. Discusses results with full board.
4. Develops an action plan for improvement and submits for full board approval.
5. Works with CEO to monitor progress on action plan.