

BOARD DASHBOARD

Track Your Board's Performance

According to BoardSource's little black book, *The Source*, exceptional nonprofit boards embrace the qualities of a continuous learning organization by evaluating their own performance and assessing the value they add to the organization. While formal performance assessments are extremely important and should be undertaken every two to three years, your board should consider using a dashboard to track and monitor its performance on a more regular basis, using the information to improve meetings, committees, and address individual member performance.

Before you can create a dashboard, your board must define significant measures of success for itself. Some of the measures presented here in the sample dashboard, such as expectations about meeting attendance and individual financial contributions, may be codified in actual governance policies. Others, concerning committee activities, meeting evaluations, and agreed-upon board actions, are just good practice. The sample dashboard uses a variety of visual styles to denote performance status, several of which incorporate red, yellow, and green signal lights to signify if, where, and how critically improvement is needed.

What do you learn when reviewing the ACME board of directors' dashboard? What questions does it raise about the board's size, the frequency and effectiveness of its meetings, its need for all current committees, and the engagement of its members? Is the board doing what it said it would do? Is the percentage of board members making a contribution sufficient? All of this information can be kept updated in an Excel® spreadsheet by the board's chief governance officer with the help of staff and reported by a member of the governance committee.

Having worked with thousands of board members, I can tell you that although many are aware of the policies that spell out the expectations of their board service, very few know how their board is performing against these expectations. They need a dashboard!

Sources:

[*"The Dashboard Dilemma" by Philip Dunn. Trustee, October 2009.*](#)

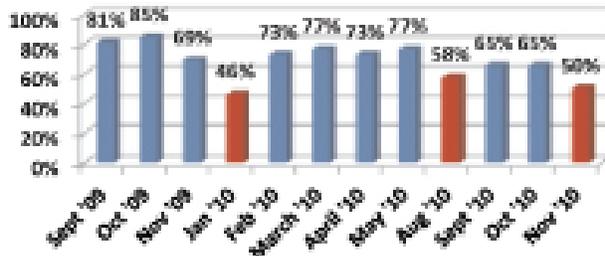
[*The Nonprofit Dashboard: Using Metrics to Drive Mission Success by Lawrence M. Butler. BoardSource, 2012.*](#)

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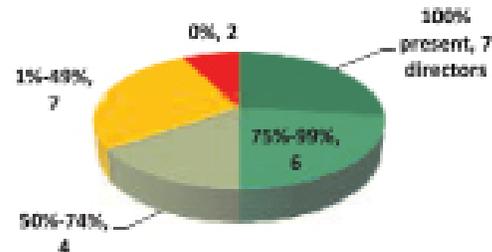
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ACME Nonprofit for Everything Good Board of Directors Dashboard as of January 2011

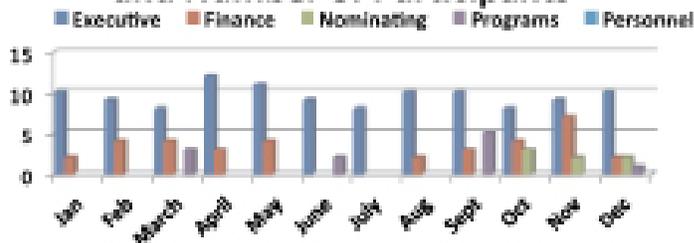
Board Meeting Attendance (26 members; 9 meetings per year)



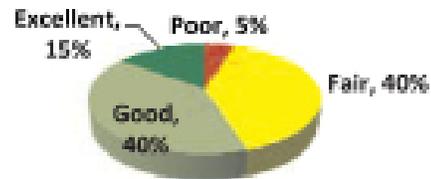
Individual Member Attendance



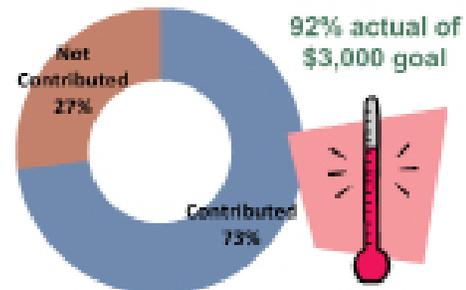
Committee Meetings and Number of Participants



Overall Rating of Last Board Meeting



Director Contributions



Priority	Organization Goal/Objective	Status
A	ACME is growing its programs and services.	
5	Innovate new and improved activities.	
2	Recruit/retain necessary volunteers.	
1	Reach an increasing number of participants.	
9	Maintain funding commensurate with service delivery.	
10	Validate workplan initiatives against expected results.	
B	ACME's policy voice is sought out and influential on "Everything Good"	
3	Be the primary source for data, policy examples, and best practices information.	
8	Educate key decisionmakers.	
C	ACME is the premier network/partner for like-minded organizations.	
4	Engage state/local groups as active participants in forums.	
6	Develop "inter/intra-state" solutions/standards.	
7	Share best practices among groups.	

Other Board Actions:

- 100% completed the annual COI disclosure
- 49% sent advocacy letters in 2010
- 35% attended most recent community information event
- 15% made thank-you calls to sponsors
- 3 board positions open
- Carry-over project from '09 & '10 – CEO succession plan

\$Finance Tweet: Income -17% (contributions & investments), but expenses cut (2 staff positions) for slight year-end surplus & stabilize "6-month" net assets\$