 **“Best Governance Practices” Survey**

Customize this survey for your board!

## Drop these survey questions into the SurveyMonkey software

**(or your preferred survey software).**

[***www.SurveyMonkey.com***](http://www.SurveyMonkey.com/)

## Background

The following “Best Governance Practices” survey questions were developed in 2016 with the help and feedback of over 20 governance consultants, many who served as board coaches in one of the board enrichment programs funded in part by M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust.

John Pearson asked consultants to rank order several laundry lists of “best governance practices.” The responses were summarized by John and provided to Kay Edwards, President & CEO of Outsight Network (www.outsightnetwork.com).

The attached survey was then completed by the CEOs and board members in the 2016 CCCA Thriving Boards Program, an initiative of Christian Camp and Conference Association (*www.CCCA.o*rg), and funded in part by Murdock Trust. For more information, visit: [*www.ccca.org/ccca/Thriving\_Boards.asp*](http://www.ccca.org/ccca/Thriving_Boards.asp) and [*www.BoardLeadership.org.*](http://www.BoardLeadership.org/)

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**Attn: Church Boards**

While the following board self-assessment survey is designed for nonprofit boards, ask a board member or staff member to customize it for the unique needs of your church board.

Customize this survey for your board!

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**Introduction to the BEST GOVERNANCE PRACTICES Survey**

*Cover memo and introduction on first page of survey:*

SURVEY DEADLINE: (date)

## Attn: All Board Members

As part of our board’s annual self-assessment process, we’re asking all board members to complete this important survey. Your survey responses will be anonymous, and your participation is extremely important to the process. We will be using your responses to improve our governance, so thanks for investing your time on this.

Survey results will be shared with the full board at our next meeting.

IMPORTANT! Survey references to “CEO” (chief executive officer) refer, of course, to ,

*the one staff person who reports directly to our board.*

Thank you for your board service as we continue on our journey to become a more healthy and more effective governing board!

Name

Board Chair
Organization

## Introductory Questions

✦1. How many years have you served on the board?

* + Less than 1 year
	+ 1 – 3 years
	+ 4 – 6 years
	+ 7 – 9 years
	+ 10 – 12 years
	+ 13 or more years

✦2. Counting our board, how many other boards (including your local church board) are you currently serving on?

* + 1 board
	+ 2 boards
	+ 3 boards
	+ 4 boards
	+ 5 boards
	+ More than 5 boards

# ✦ **3. Mission, Vision, and Values**

**One of the board’s fundamental responsibilities is to establish the mission, vision, and values of the organization.** The board should review the mission at least every three years. Each member of the board should understand and support the mission, vision, and values.

*For each statement, please indicate how much you agree, on a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 being “Describes Completely” and 1 being, “Does Not Describe At All.”*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Mission, Vision, and Values** | **1****Does Not Describe At All** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7****Describes Completely** |
| Our board members have high passion for our mission, vision, and values. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board ensures that our programs align with our mission, vision and values. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# ✦ **4. Executive Leadership**

One of the most significant decisions a board makes is the selection of a chief executive. An effective board will provide a clear job description that outlines the duties of the chief executive, and will undertake a carefully planned search process to fill the position. The board will support its chief executive by providing him or her with frequent and constructive feedback, and by conducting an annual evaluation to help the chief executive strengthen his or her performance.

*For each statement, please indicate how much you agree, on a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 being “Describes Completely” and 1 being, “Does Not Describe At All.”*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Executive Leadership** | **1****Does Not Describe At All** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7****Describes Completely** |
| Our board agrees that their most important responsibility is having the right CEO in place. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board approves our CEO’s annual measurable goals. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board monitors our CEO’s annual measurable goals at least quarterly. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board conducts an annual performance review of our CEO. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board has a written plan for an emergency CEO transition—and it is reviewed annually. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board ensures that we have an on-going continuous process of succession planning. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board agrees that compensation/benefits for our CEO are at the right level. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# ✦ **5. Governance**

## Effective boards ensure effective governance by putting organizational policy documents in place and periodically reviewing and updating those documents.

*For each statement, please indicate how much you agree, on a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 being “Describes Completely” and 1 being, “Does Not Describe At All.”*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Governance** | **1****Does Not Describe At All** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7****Describes Completely** |
| Our board member roles and responsibilities are in writing. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board members understand their roles and responsibilities. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board members are knowledgeable about the numerous governance models, including the “policy governance” model. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board agrees that our current governance model is appropriate for us. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board has a dynamic written document (such as a “Board Policies Manual”) to ensure that both long-standing and the latest board policies are easily accessible by the board, CEO, and senior team. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board meetings are well- planned, well-led, and achieve our desired results. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our committee meetings are well- planned, well-led, and achieve our desired results. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# ✦ **6. Board Member Recruitment and Engagement**

**An effective board needs a plan to identify and recruit qualified people to serve on the board.** It is the responsibility of the board to effectively orient new members to their responsibilities and to the activities of the organization.

*For each statement, please indicate how much you agree, on a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 being “Describes Completely” and 1 being, “Does Not Describe At All.”*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Board Member Recruitment and Engagement** | **1****Does Not Describe At All** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7****Describes Completely** |
| Our board (not our CEO) owns the responsibility to recruit and build a competent board. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board has a formal orientation process for new board members. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board members understand the unique “roles/hats” that board members wear (in and out of board meetings), such as the Governance Hat, the Volunteer Hat, and the (Event) Participant Hat—and there is agreement on the protocol for each unique role. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board members sign an annual “re-commitment/reminder” document such as a “Board Member Annual Affirmation Statement.” |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board has written policies addressing charitable giving expectations for board members. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board’s self-evaluation process improves the functioning and output of the board. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board has policies in place— and the spiritual integrity required—to ask an under- performing board member to resign. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board is prepared to do its job well when a crisis erupts. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# ✦ **7. Board Member Character and Relationships**

**Board members must act with integrity and be exemplary role models of the organization’s values and character, carrying out their duties in a Christ-like manner.** An effective board will display healthy relationships with each other, and between the board and staff.

*For each statement, please indicate how much you agree, on a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 being “Describes Completely” and 1 being, “Does Not Describe At All.”*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Board Member Character and Relationships** | **1****Does Not Describe At All** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7****Describes Completely** |
| Our board members conduct our work and relationships with Christ- centered character. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board practices spiritual discernment in our decision- making. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board ensures that there is a healthy and effective relationship between our board chair and our CEO. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board members annually read and sign our “conflicts of interest” policy that addresses legal and ethical integrity. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board “speaks with one voice, or not at all.” |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# ✦ **8. Strategic Planning and Strategy**

**The board is responsible for establishing the organization’s direction and goals.** The board engages in a formal strategic planning process, and monitors changes in the environment that may present new challenges or opportunities that call for new direction.

*For each statement, please indicate how much you agree, on a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 being “Describes Completely” and 1 being, “Does Not Describe At All.”*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Strategic Planning and Strategy** | **1****Does Not Describe At All** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7****Describes Completely** |
| Our board ensures that there is an effective and on-going planning process in place. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board “owns” the organization’s strategy to achieve our mission. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board regularly addresses the risks that could send our ministry over the cliff. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board reviews program reports that address measurements and ministry outcomes. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# ✦ **9. Sustainability, Financial and Fiduciary Oversight**

**The board is responsible for stewarding the organization’s resources and assets.** This includes ensuring that income is managed wisely, financial guidelines are established and adhered to, and the organization is properly reporting sources and uses of funds. It also includes making sure the organization is complying with local, state, and federal requirements.

*For each statement, please indicate how much you agree, on a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 being “Describes Completely” and 1 being, “Does Not Describe At All.”*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sustainability, Financial and Fiduciary Oversight** | **1****Does Not Describe At All** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7****Describes Completely** |
| Our board ensures that there are adequate financial resources to achieve the mission. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board is competent in protecting organizational assets and providing proper financial oversight to ensure our sustainability. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board monitors the organization’s compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations that govern our operations. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Our board has the information, including financial information, it needs to govern well. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# ✦**10. Tools and Templates: Board Best Practices**

##  PART 1:  The Board’s Role with the CEO

**So they don’t have to “re-invent the wheel,” many boards look for tools and templates that other nonprofit boards have found helpful—and then each board customizes the templates to their unique situation.** (One size doesn’t fit all.)

Below is a list of frequently used tools and templates that embody one or more of the most common board best practices.

*Check YES or NO if your board is currently using the following tools and/or templates (or a variation of the template).*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Tools and Templates: Board Best Practices** | **Yes** | **No** | **Not Sure** | **N/A** |
| **CEO’s “5/15” Monthly Board Report**. A standardized monthly report from the CEO, updating the board with agreed-upon topics and metrics—and takes just 5 minutes to read and normally just 15 minutes for the CEO to write. |  |  |  |  |
| **CEO’s Annual S.M.A.R.T. Goals.** A board-approved list of 3 to 5 annual goals for the CEO that meet the “S.M.A.R.T.” test: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-related. |  |  |  |  |
| **CEO’s Monthly Dashboard Report on CEO’s Annual****S.M.A.R.T. Goals.** A one-page dashboard reporting the year-to-date progress on the CEO’s 3 to 5 annual “S.M.A.R.T.” goals (often color-coded in green, yellow and red). |  |  |  |  |
| **CEO’s Position Description.** The document that describes the roles and responsibilities of the CEO. |  |  |  |  |
| **Board’s Annual Evaluation of the CEO.** The agreed- upon process and written (or online) survey instrument completed by all board members for the board’s annual assessment of the CEO. |  |  |  |  |

# ✦**10. Tools and Templates: Board Best Practices**

##  PART 2:  The Board’s Governance Role

**So they don’t have to “re-invent the wheel,” many boards look for tools and templates that other nonprofit boards have found helpful—and then each board customizes the templates to their unique situation.** (One size doesn’t fit all.)

Below is a list of frequently used tools and templates that embody one or more of the most common board best practices.

*Check YES or NO if your board is currently using the following tools and/or templates (or a variation of the template).*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Tools and Templates: Board Best Practices** | **Yes** | **No** | **Not Sure** | **N/A** |
| **Board Policies Manual.** A 15- to 20-page document that gathers all board policies into one document; and revised occasionally—based on the ever-changing environment (financial, leadership, strategy, etc.). |  |  |  |  |
| **Prime Responsibility Chart.** A one-page document clarifying roles between the board, committees, board chair, board treasurer, CEO, CFO, etc. |  |  |  |  |
| **Board Meeting Agenda & Recommendations Template.** A board-approved template for each board meeting’s agenda, recommendations, reports, minutes, etc.—and mailed or emailed to board members at least X days prior to every board meeting (per policy). |  |  |  |  |
| **Board Position Description & Board Member Annual Affirmation Statement.** A board-approved document that includes the board member position description, signed annually by every board member. |  |  |  |  |
| **Board Chair Position Description.** The written position description for the board chair that details roles and responsibilities, plus protocol for enriching the important relationship between the board chair and the CEO. |  |  |  |  |
| **Board Nominee Orientation Resource.** The annually- updated resource that the Nominating Committee uses to inspire and inform both board prospects and board nominees. |  |  |  |  |
| **Board’s Annual Self- Assessment Survey.** The written (or online) annual survey completed by every board member, assessing his or her own performance on the board, and the performance of the full board. |  |  |  |  |
| **The Board’s 3 Powerful S’s: Strengths, Spiritual Gifts and Social Styles (and/or Other Assessments).** The assess­ments that many boards use to help members better understand themselves, each other, and their CEOs. |  |  |  |  |

*Check YES or NO if your board is currently using the following tools and/or templates (or a variation of the template).*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Tools and Templates: Board Best Practices** | **Yes** | **No** | **Not Sure** | **N/A** |
| **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** A monthly or quarterly report that identifies agreed-upon metrics or measurements, outcomes, and impact for programs, products, and services. |  |  |  |  |
| **Dashboard Reports.** The monthly or quarterly dashboard reports that help “nonprofit leaders focus their attention on what matters most in their organizations, and in doing so, gain greater insight and ascribe greater meaning to other available data.”15 |  |  |  |  |



**Attn: Church Boards**

While this board self-assessment survey is designed for nonprofit boards, ask a board member or staff member to customize it for the unique needs of your church board.