

Appendix – Answers to Exercises

The correct answer is highlighted in **bold** and a with a . Often, multiple responses are listed with discussions as to a better answer.

» Module 1 - Your Commitment to the Board

Carlos' question:

Why is it so important for me to be clear about my personal goals and motivations for getting involved?

- (A) So that you can target your contributions to maximize benefit for the organization.
- (B) To ensure that you take on assignments that you will find most rewarding.
- (C) To ensure that your objectives are compatible with the organization's needs and goals.
- (D) **All of the above.**

(A) Yes, if Carlos knows what his incentives are, he can consciously contribute to the board in ways that have the most impact for the agency. Review (B) and (C), though ... these are also benefits of having clear motivations and goals. Have another look at What Motivates You? and Are You Compatible?

(B) You're right, if Carlos can identify and express his objectives and motivations, he'll be more likely to find roles on the board that are fulfilling, and may stay with the board longer and make a significant contribution. But think about (A) and (C) ... these are also good reasons for him to examine his motives for getting involved on the board. What is motivating you? , What can you offer? and Are you compatible? provide more information.

(C) True, Carlos needs to be sure that what he wants to achieve and what he has to offer match what the organization's objectives are and what the organization requires from him. Otherwise, he may find himself frustrated, unfulfilled or even in conflict. Take another look at (A) and (B), though ... these are also part of the rationale for knowing your goals and motivations. Consider reviewing What is motivating you? and What can you offer?

(D) **Congratulations, you have convinced Carlos to take a closer look at what is motivating him and what his goals are before he makes a commitment to the board.**

Debra's question:

What do you think has led me to feel so disillusioned with my board involvement?

- (A) You seem clear about what you want to get out of your board involvement. The organization isn't making the best use of your talents, though, because you haven't identified and communicated the assets that you are willing to offer the board and the opportunities you are seeking from your involvement.
- (B) Your goals related to your board involvement are completely unrealistic.
- (C) Maybe your goals and assets are not compatible with the board's goals and needs.
- (D) **Both A and C above.**

(A) Yes, Debra needs to talk to the board about what she has to contribute and what she hopes to gain. However, it's also possible that she and this board are not a good fit. Think about the incompatibility problem in (C) as another reason for her disillusionment. Review Are You Compatible? for further details.

(B) No, Debra's goals are not necessarily unrealistic ... but until she lets the organization know her goals and what she wants to contribute, she may never receive assignments that help her to achieve her goals. Consider (A) and (C) as likely reasons for her disillusionment. What Motivates You?, What Can You Offer? and Are You Compatible? provide more information.

(C) You're right, it's possible that what Debra wants to contribute and to gain do not fit with what the board needs from her. Perhaps this board just won't fulfill her objectives, but she'll never know that for certain unless she communicates with the board about her assets and her goals ... reconsider a) as another reason for her disillusionment. Re-examine What Motivates You? and What Can You Offer? for more information.

(D) Debra is grateful for your insight. She plans to take your advice and talk to the board President about her assets and goals and their compatibility with the organization's needs and objectives.

» Module 2 -The Board's Context

Do You Know the Sector?

Test your knowledge by circling "True" or "False" for each of the following statements:

(A) Corporations are the largest funder of the Canadian charitable sector.	True	False <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(B) There are nearly 80,000 registered charities in Canada.	True <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	False
(C) Universities and hospitals are part of the Canadian charitable sector, even though they are primarily funded by government.	True <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	False
(D) Churches are not considered to be members of the charitable sector in Canada.	True	False <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(E) Approximately 33% of Canadians volunteer in the charitable sector.	True <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	False

Tax Status Test

Which of the following may not considered to be a charitable purpose under Canada's tax laws?

- (A) The relief of poverty (C) The advancement of equality
 (B) The advancement of education (D) The advancement of religion

The main difference between registered charities and non-profit organizations in Canada is:

- (A) Registered charities have more money than non-profit organizations. (C) Non-profit organizations can be audited, but registered charities cannot.
 (B) Registered charities are profit-generating organizations and non-profit organizations are not. (D) Non-profit organizations are not authorized to issue charitable receipts that the donor can claim as tax credits or deductions, but registered charities are authorized to do so.

In Canada, which of the following is responsible for determining and monitoring charitable status?

- (A) The Provincial Governments (C) Industry Canada
 (B) Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (D) The Better Business Bureau

In general, what percentage of its receipted gifts must a registered charity disburse for the operation of its charitable programs?

- (A) 20% (C) 75%
 (B) 50% (D) 80 %

How long after their fiscal year ends must registered charities and non-profits submit information returns to Canada Customs and Revenue Agency?

- (A) Four months (C) Nine months
 (B) Six months (D) One year

Spot the Style of Governance

Check your understanding of the differences in board governance models by identifying whether a policy board or a working / administrative board is in action in each of the following situations:	Policy Board	Working Board
(A) Staff identify a need for a conflict of interest policy. The Executive Director drafts a policy for the board's consideration and approval.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
(B) The process for screening direct service volunteers involves having a staff member interview the volunteer and present a report to a casework committee. The casework committee makes recommendations to the board regarding the volunteer's acceptance or non-acceptance into the program.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(C) A summer picnic is held for the users of the organization's services. Each board member has had a task to complete in the planning and execution of the event.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(D) The organization needs to hire an additional caseworker. After ensuring the salaries and benefits budget can accommodate the new position, the Executive Director initiates a hiring process without first seeking approval from the board.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
(E) The finance committee develops the organization's annual budget for the board's approval. The board approves the budget and empowers the Executive Director to make financial decisions as she sees fit, so long as she remains within the budget and provides monthly financial statements to the board, and complies with other financial policies.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Carlos' question:

Based on the agency's goals, what do you think are the five charitable sector trends that are impacting the organization most? (Please select **only five)**

- | | |
|--|---|
| (A) Government cut backs | (I) Professionalization of fundraising |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (B) Increased demand for services | (J) Professionalization of other voluntary sector functions |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (C) Greater attention to issues relating to an increasingly diverse population | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (K) Intensified competition for volunteers |
| (D) Funders and donors are expecting results for their investments. Charitable organizations' programs must now produce outcome-based evaluations. | (L) Board leadership vacuum |
| (E) Increased competition for the charitable dollar | (M) More rigorous volunteer screening standards |
| (F) "Donor fatigue" | (N) Greater accountability demands |
| (G) Greater sophistication and involvement of donors | (O) Increased need for transparency |
| (H) Stricter ethical standards in fundraising | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (P) Organizational change and restructuring |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (Q) Partnerships, collaborations and mergers |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (R) Increased need for risk management |
| | (S) Technological advances |

Debra's questions:

To be sure I'm not mistaken, please tell me which of the following best describes the central role of the board:

- (A) **To govern the organization by setting major policies, planning and ensuring that the necessary structures and processes are in place to achieve the goals it has set.**
- (B) To carry out all day-to-day business of the organization.
- (C) To approve all decisions and recommendations of the Executive Director.
- (D) All of the above.

(A) **You have an accurate understanding of the fundamental role of the board. Debra thanks you for confirming her perception of the board's role.**

(B) While some boards, particularly "working boards", may be involved in daily operations, the fundamental role of all styles of boards is most accurately described in (A). Have another look at Role of the Board and Governance Models for further clarification.

(C) The Executive Director is a key leadership position, and the board will certainly vest some authority in that position. However, the board's role does not involve simply "rubber stamping" all the Executive Director's decisions. The board must act as a leader in planning, policy-setting, oversight and directing the organization, as described in (A). Role of the Board provides further details.

(D) Only "working boards" are involved in daily operations. The board's role is not one of "rubber stamping", but one of leading and overseeing. Thus, (A) defines the fundamental role of a board most accurately. Review Role of the Board and Governance Models for more information.

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Here some features that might be necessary for the board to fulfill its role. Circle those that you think are typically part of the individual board member's role and responsibilities. Review The Role of a Board Member in case you are unsure.

(A) Demonstrating ethical behavior	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No
(B) Directing front-line staff in performing their duties	Yes	No
(C) Making substantial monetary donations to the organization	Yes	No
(D) Auditing the organization's books	Yes	No
(E) Ensuring the organization and its board have the necessary structures and processes in place to effectively manage day-to-day operations	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No
(F) Reviewing board correspondence in advance of meetings	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No
(G) Reviewing the personnel files of all staff	Yes	No
(H) Showing an eager, constructive, encouraging attitude	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No
(I) Requesting a report on the status of the organization's compliance with such legal requirements as payment of federal payroll taxes and submission of Canada Customs and Revenue Agency information returns.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No
(J) Participating in the activities and events of the board and the organization	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No

Thanks for clarifying that for me. I guess I am right ... my board and some of its members are not fulfilling their roles. What do you think could help to solve this problem?

- (A) Develop processes whereby the performance of the board and its individual members are evaluated.
- (B) Conduct board development sessions in which the role, responsibilities and expectations of the board and its individual members are clearly identified.
- (C) Develop a board mentoring program, whereby experienced, "high performance" members offer support and encouragement to new or struggling members.
- (D) Ensure that the roles and responsibilities are written into the board members' job descriptions.
- (E) Develop a thorough board member recruitment process that screens out candidates who do not demonstrate the qualities you require for an effective board.
- (F) Have the appropriate person(s) speak directly with those board members who are not fulfilling their role and responsibilities. Discuss ways in which they can be supported to either produce better results or to leave the board.
- (G) All of the above.

(A) Yes, accountability agreements or board evaluations can help the board to ensure its roles and responsibilities are fulfilled. But consider the all the other options as well ... they could also help get the board on track.

(B) Good idea, especially if attendance is mandatory. All the other ideas offered here would also help to reinforce the importance of acting on the information presented in the board development workshops.

(C) Yes, taking advantage of the power of relationship and connection is one way to increase performance. However, the other ideas here also merit your consideration as ways to help the board effectively perform its role.

(D) This is an excellent idea, assuming that board members read and execute their job descriptions. Think about the other suggestions as ways that will also help the board and its members to effectively carry out their roles.

(E) Good advice. But because no screening process is entirely foolproof, you should review the other suggestions for additional ways to improve the board's performance of its role.

(F) Yes, the direct approach is often the best way to deal with those who are not living up to their responsibilities. But consider some of the other options as ways to prevent the problem from occurring again in the future.

(G) You are a brilliant, creative problem-solver! Debra looks forward to acting on your advice.

» Module 3 - Board Accountabilities

Transparency Test

It is your non-profit board's responsibility to ensure that the organization conducts itself in a transparent manner. Check your understanding of non-profit transparency by circling yes or no to indicate whether or not the following situations demonstrate transparency.

	Yes, this demonstrates transparency	No, this does not demonstrate transparency
(A) Your organization posts its annual report on its website.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No
(B) Your board minutes are made available to board members only.	Yes	No
(C) Your board makes details of client and personnel files available to donors and other concerned parties upon request.	Yes	No
(D) Your board regularly surveys service users and volunteers on their ideas and satisfaction with the organization's programs and services.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No
(E) Your organization regularly sends out newsletters and program updates to funders, donors and organizations it partners with.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No
(F) Your board's emergency response policy states that comments will be not made to the media about the emergency situation.	Yes	No

(A) Yes, having a website can be an excellent communication tool. Posting your annual report on it enhances your financial transparency.

(B) No. While some board discussions are confidential and should be treated as such, making board minutes available to staff and other interested parties can present an opportunity for trust building and open exchange of information among your stakeholders.

(C) No, this would constitute a breach of confidentiality. Transparency entails *appropriate* disclosures of information.)

(D) Yes, seeking feedback from your program participants and the public is an important part of your board's responsibility for transparency.

(E) Yes, reaching out to interested parties with relevant communications contributes to your organization's transparency.

(F) No, a "no comment" policy contributes to public mistrust. In the event of an emergency, it is important for your organization to respond to requests for a statement, even if it is to say that details are not yet known, but will be forthcoming. It is important for your organization to have a consistent spokesperson and a consistent message that respects confidential information.

Structural Snags

Your board meetings often go on for hours discussing the details of fundraising campaigns, small purchases outside of the budget, public relations events, and other seemingly trivial matters, while some of the bigger picture issues go unresolved. Which structure has a snag?

- (A) Committee structures
(B) Bylaws
(C) Code of conduct policies

(A) You're right. It seems that a lot of the detail work that should be done by committees is being done by the board. Perhaps the committee structures need further development, including clarifying the committee's roles and job descriptions.

(B) No. While the bylaws outline how the board and organization structure their internal affairs, they do not typically address what issues should be discussed at board meetings. Consider how a well developed committee structure (A) could solve this problem.

(C) Sorry, a code of conduct policy usually provides clarity around the organization's expectations regarding a board members obligations and ethics. Think about (A) instead ... a well developed committee structure could help to solve this problem.

Your board is having trouble recruiting a new Treasurer. The Executive Director's wife is a skilled accountant who knows the organization well and has demonstrated commitment by volunteering for fundraising events in the past. A suggestion is made that she be nominated to the board and take on the Treasurer's position. Which structure might be snagged?

- (A) Board officers structure
(B) Board governance structure
 (C) Conflict of interest policies

(A) No. While the structure of the board's executive officers may be related to the board's difficulty in recruiting a Treasurer (perhaps the position has too many responsibilities, for instance), this is not the main concern in this situation. Think about (C) and the high potential for lack of objectivity and a conflict of interest to occur here. Clear conflict of interest policies would definitely be needed to avoid problems.

(B) No. Regardless of what model of board governance is utilized, this circumstance presents a large potential for conflict of interest and a lack of objective oversight. Consider (C) as a structure that could help bring control and objectivity to this situation.

(C) Good answer. The Executive Director's wife might make a great Treasurer. But as a board member, she (together with the rest of the board) will be responsible for overseeing his work. She will also be responsible for financial oversight, including staff compensation. The potential for a conflict of interest is great, and strict policies

would be required to bring adequate controls and objective oversight to this situation.

Your Executive Director is burning out. In her recent evaluation, she has told the board that the weight of the day-to-day management of the organization is more than one person can handle. Meanwhile, a seasoned staff member is looking for new challenges but is feeling there is no room for advancement and learning in the organization. Which structure is snagged?







- (A) Staff structure
- (B) Job descriptions
- (C) Program structure

(A) You're right. It seems that a shift in the staff structure to allow for delegation of some of the management responsibilities might be in order in this situation.

(B) You're partly right. Although a change to their job descriptions may help to address the staff members' concerns, it would be the board's responsibility to get to the heart of the matter by making an overall shift in the staff structure (a.) to allow for a different alignment of management responsibilities.

(C) While the program structure may be related to the veteran staff member's lack of challenge, it is not the main structural issue here. Think about a. and how a change to the staff structure might allow for the Executive Director to shift some of her managerial responsibilities to the seasoned staff member, thereby meeting the needs of both people.

Crush Conflict of Interest

CONFLICT?	CRUSH IT !	WIN-WIN!
(A) A board member votes to renew the organization's office lease in a building that he owns.		
(B) The part-time Executive Director takes on a paid personal contract to develop a fundraising program for a similar organization that competes with your organization for funds in the same community.		
(C) The vice president's wife has bid on a contract to evaluate the organization's programs. The board awards her the contract after the vice president discloses his financial interest to the board and abstains from voting on the contract award.		
(D) A board member who is also a service user is placed at the top of the waiting list for services, ahead of others who applied for the services earlier than the board member.		
(E) The board president accepts a \$500 cheque made out in his name, in recognition of a conference presentation he delivered on behalf of the organization.		
(F) The organization purchases a computer system from a board member's business after receiving three less competitive quotes.		

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(G) The Executive Director is given an honorarium for assisting another organization to develop its personnel policies, using her organization's policies as a model. She discloses the honorarium to the board and makes a donation to the organization in the same amount as the gift.



(H) A board member serves on another board in the community, and is approaching the same donors for contributions on behalf of both organizations.



Scavenger Hunt

(A) Who establishes the accounting principles and standards upon which charity's annual financial reports should be based?

Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants

(B) Can a charity sell its donor list? (Yes or No)

No

(C) The charity's board should be informed of the number, type and disposition of complaints received from donors about issues that are addressed in the Ethical Fundraising & Financial Accountability Code at least how often?

Yearly

(D) Are donors entitled to receive the organization's most recent annual report, financial statements and names of the board members upon request? (Yes or No)

Yes

(E) Are gifts of services and volunteer time eligible for charitable receipts? (Yes or No)

No

(F) Your organization decides that it will not issue charitable receipts for donations less than \$15.00. Is it breaking the Ethical Fundraising & Financial Accountability Code? (Yes or No)

No

(G) For what value should a charitable receipt be issued in the case of a non-monetary gift or "gift-in-kind"?

Fair market value

(H) Must donors' requests for anonymity and confidentiality be respected? (Yes or No)

Yes

(I) Is it ethical to pay fundraisers commissions? (Yes or No)

No

(J) What percentage of receipted donations must charities generally spend on charitable activities?

80%

Human Resources Challenge

Challenge your awareness of your board's human resource accountabilities by circling whether the following statements are true or false.		
(A) Because volunteers are not paid employees, the board does not need to set policies regarding the management of volunteers.	True	False <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(B) Charities are exempt from employment standards legislation.	True	False <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(C) As the legal employer of all personnel, the board is accountable for the organization's working conditions.	True <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	False
(D) If the performance of the Executive Director (or senior staff) is inadequate, it is the board's responsibility to discipline and, if necessary, fire this person.	True <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	False
(E) Because board members are volunteers, they do not require job descriptions or annual evaluations.	True	False <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Plan for the Prospects

It is one month before the end of your board's fiscal year. The annual general meeting will be held shortly after year-end, and a new board is to be elected then. Four of your board's ten members have completed their terms and are resigning from the board. No one has taken on the task of recruiting new members to the board yet. Who should have this responsibility?

- (A) The Executive Director
 - (B) A nominating committee
 - (C) The past president
- (A) No, the board is responsible for planning for its succession and recruiting new members. In fact, many sources recommend that succession planning and board recruitment should happen independent of management. If you review Succession and Diversity, you will see that a nominating committee (B) or board development committee should take on this task.
- (B) Good answer. An independent nominating committee or board development committee should be planning and recruiting for succession on a year round basis.
- (C) No. While the past president may choose or be assigned a role in succession planning, it is the responsibility of a nominating or board development committee. Have a look at Succession and Diversity to see why (B) is the correct answer.

Your community has a large population of a particular ethnic group but your organization has no board members and relatively few volunteers and clients from this ethnic community. Yet, needs assessments have indicated that many people from this ethnic group would like to participate in your organization's programs. What could your board do to begin to address this diversity dilemma?

(A) Do an organizational assessment to determine what barriers in your organization may be preventing people of this ethnic group from participating in its services.

(B) Recruit board and committee members from this ethnic community to offer their skills and cultural perspective to your leadership group.

(C) Conduct focus groups, informal meetings, surveys, town hall meetings, or other feedback opportunities with members of this ethnic community to get input as to how your organization may be able to involve them more effectively. Then act on that feedback.

(D) Ask the one service delivery volunteer you have who possesses this ethnic background to sit on the board.

(A) This is a positive step towards identifying accessibility barriers and finding solutions to those issues. However, your organization may also become more open and welcoming to this community if it also tried (B) and (C) as potential solutions to its diversity dilemma. Consider reviewing Succession and Diversity for additional ideas.

(B) It will be important to involve members of this ethnic community in decision-making roles in the organization. But your board could also take other steps to reach out to this ethnic group. Consider (A) and (C) as other potential solutions, and have a look at Succession and Diversity for additional ideas.

(C) This could be an effective solution. But (A) and (B) above could also help to address this diversity dilemma. Look at Succession and Diversity for more suggestions.

(D) No, while this person may be a good board member, he or she should not be recruited solely on the basis of ethnic background. Avoid tokenism by basing recruitment not only on ethnic background, but also on other skills and qualities your board requires. Have a look at (A), (B) and (C), as well as Succession and Diversity for solutions to this dilemma.

Your board president's term is coming to a close, and the nominating committee is struggling to find a suitable candidate for board president. Whose name should the nominating committee put forward to assume the president's position on next year's board?

(A) Whoever is available or willing to take on the duties.

(B) Whoever is the current vice president.

(C) Whoever has the skills, experience, leadership ability and other qualities required to guide the organization to achieve its goals.

(A) This is the unfortunate reality in many non-profit organizations. The board should always strive to assign responsibilities based on who the best person is to do the job rather than who has the time or willingness to do it. The nominating committee should assess who has the qualities to do the job well. c) is a better solution.

(B) It is often tradition for the vice president to assume the president's role upon the completion of the president's term. However, the board should be most concerned with

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nominating someone to the role of president (or vice president for that matter) who demonstrates the qualities needed to lead the organization towards achieving its mission. This may or may not be the vice president. c) is the best option.

(C) Yes, the board should be continuously recruiting for and developing the leadership qualities it will need in a president, and it should strive to assign to the position the person who can do the job best.

Carlos' question:

Can you help me clarify which of the following elements are NOT among the most important elements for the board to consider in developing its strategic plan? (Hint: there are three.)

- (A) Funders' priorities
- (B) The resources needed to carry out potential strategies
- (C) The history of the organization
- (D) The organization's strengths and weaknesses
- (E) A variety of methods for addressing internal and external factors that affect the organization
- (F) Threats and opportunities in the environment
- (G) Operational details for carrying out potential strategies
- (H) The organization's mission
- (I) The priorities of the organization

Debra's questions:

Recently, a member of the public requested that we send her all the board's detailed financial statements for the last year. The Executive Director consulted the board with this request. Although our organization is in good financial shape, and we produce regular, accurate financial statements, we decided not to act on this request. Did we fail to fulfill one of our accountabilities?

- (A) Yes, mission and planning
- (B) Yes, transparency
- (C) Yes, structures
- (D) Yes, board's understanding of its role and avoiding conflict of interest
- (E) Yes, fiscal responsibility
- (F) Yes, human resources
- (G) Yes, assessment and control systems
- (H) Yes, succession and diversity planning
- (I) No, you did not fail in your accountabilities

My board is a working board, but we have delegated the responsibility of program delivery and volunteer management to our Executive Director and two counselors. The board continues to insist on being informed of the details of every volunteer mentor application. In which area of accountability does the review of volunteer applications fit, considering our management structure?

- (A) Mission and planning
- (B) Transparency
- (C) Structures
- (D) Board's understanding of its role and avoiding conflict of interest
- (E) Fiscal responsibility
- (F) Human resources
- (G) Assessment and control systems
- (H) Succession and diversity planning
- (I) This is not a board accountability

Once a year the board has a retreat, when we get together to talk about the issues that are likely to be on the agenda for the next year. We delegate some tasks to the committees, but none of this is ever written into a formal strategy. Is creating a written plan one of the board's accountabilities?

- (A) Yes, mission and planning
- (B) Yes, transparency
- (C) Yes, structures
- (D) Yes, board's understanding of its role and avoiding conflict of interest
- (E) Yes, fiscal responsibility
- (F) Yes, human resources
- (G) Yes, assessment and control systems
- (H) Yes, succession and diversity planning
- (I) No, this is not a board accountability

My board has an insurance policy that covers the organization's property, but we do not currently carry liability insurance to protect the organization, and its directors and officers in the event of abuse, because it is just so expensive. Are we disregarding one of our accountabilities?

- (A) Yes, mission and planning
- (B) Yes, transparency
- (C) Yes, structures
- (D) Yes, board's understanding of its role and avoiding conflict of interest
- (E) Yes, fiscal responsibility
- (F) Yes, human resources
- (G) Yes, assessment and control systems
- (H) Yes, succession and diversity planning
- (I) No, this is not a board accountability

In talking to the Executive Director about creating board member evaluations the other day, she mentioned to me that she has never received a performance evaluation since starting her job four years ago. Is the board neglecting one of its accountabilities?

- (A) Yes, mission and planning
- (B) Yes, transparency
- (C) Yes, structures
- (D) Yes, board's understanding of its role and avoiding conflict of interest
- (E) Yes, fiscal responsibility
- (F) Yes, human resources
- (G) Yes, assessment and control systems
- (H) Yes, succession and diversity planning
- (I) No, this is not part of a board accountability

» **Module 4 - Board Processes**

Cure the Meeting Malady

MALADY		CURE	
4	You feel like your time is being wasted because there is not much important work on the agenda, and no decisions to be made.	1	Ask the meeting chair to hold discussion to topic, and to provide feedback to the offender after the meeting.
8	Your meetings are frustrating and are not producing positive results, but no one seems willing to say anything about it.	2	Ask the chair to distribute and follow an agenda, with timelines assigned to each agenda item.
2	Board meetings go on endlessly, with discussion wandering back and forth among topics.	3	Plan some time before or after the meeting for mingling and getting to know one another.
5	Repetitive discussion goes on at length, with no decisions being made.	4	Suggest meeting less often, or canceling meetings when there is no business to be done.
7	The same people always seem to do all the talking.	5	Propose a motion or resolution, and request that the chair call for a vote or an indication of whether consensus exists.
10	Board members provide lengthy verbal updates of all the activities and issues in their areas of responsibility, causing meetings to drag on.	6	Distribute meeting minutes, documenting who is to do what, by when, and to produce what results, as soon as possible after the meeting.
9	Board members' comments seem to indicate that they have not read the background reports in advance of the meetings.	7	Directly ask the quieter members to share their views and ideas.
1	You have one fellow board member who is constantly speaking at length about irrelevant matters.	8	Suggest that participants provide feedback through meeting evaluation questionnaires.
6	Board members are not following through on the actions delegated to them at the last meeting because they have forgotten or were unclear what was expected of them.	9	Ensure that an interesting, succinct and relevant package of board materials is distributed at least one week in advance of the meeting.
3	Board members are using the meeting time to talk about themselves and to socialize instead of getting down to business.	10	Encourage board members to distribute written reports in advance of meetings, and to report only when updates are necessary or decisions on their issues are needed.

Carlos' question

Circle true or false to give Carlos the correct answer.		
(A) All board members should have job descriptions.	True <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	False
(B) As a board member, I am expected to sit on every committee.	True	False <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(C) According to common parliamentary procedures, the President must propose a motion.	True	False <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(D) My organization's bylaws should explain how I would be elected to the board and how long my term would be.	True <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	False
(E) Committees make the final decision on issues they have researched and debated.	True	False <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(F) It is the Executive Director's role to set the board meeting agenda.	True	False <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Debra's questions

My board is supposed to be a working board, but it's failing to look after some of it's own basic operations, like minute taking and financial record keeping. Our executive includes a president, vice president and secretary-treasurer, and even they aren't taking leadership on these things.

- (A) Amend your bylaws to create more executive positions, and write those operational duties into their job descriptions.
- (B) Have the Executive Director take responsibility for fulfilling these procedures of the board.
- (C) Hire additional staff to take on these duties.

- (A) Yes, this sounds like a good solution to fit with your model of board governance and the size of your organization.
- (B) This may not be the best option, because you said earlier that your Executive Director is already overworked. For a working board, (A) is likely a better solution.
- (C) This option is likely not suitable for a small organization with a working board. If are committed to your model of board governance, and if you have a limited budget, (A) is the best solution.

Our committees aren't working well. Virtually all board members sit on all committees. As a result, most board members are tired of meetings, they're feeling burned out, and they don't attend many of the committee meetings.

- (A) Recruit people to your committees who are not currently sitting on the board.
- (B) Examine your committee structure to see if all the committees are really required.
- (C) Suggest a limit to the number of committees each board member sits on.
- (D) All of the above

- (A) This is one way to address the issue, but will likely offer only a partial solution: implementing (B) and (C) as well would create a greater chance of success.
- (B) This is one way to address the issue, but will likely offer only a partial solution: implementing (A) and (C) as well would create a greater chance of success.
- (C) This is one way to address the issue, but will likely offer only a partial solution: implementing (A) and (B) as well would create a greater chance of success.

(D) Yes, if you implemented all these solutions, you would likely eliminate burnout, increase meeting attendance, revitalize the committees, and get better results from your committees.

My board often has polarized views on issues. There are a number of board members who tend to have pretty traditional ideas, there are several others whose perspectives are more liberal, and there are a few fence-sitters. We have been using a pure consensus model for our decision making process. Sometimes our meetings go on endlessly because it's difficult to find a solution everyone agrees to.

(A) Table those items that you can't agree on to the next meeting, when everyone has had a chance to reconsider.

(B) Recruit board members whose views are more consistent among each other.

(C) After allowing everyone to feel heard and respected, use a "majority rules" or other decision-making process that does not require consensus.

(D) Send issues you can't decide on back to committee for further study.

(A) If there is new information for the board to consider, this solution may work, but otherwise it is likely a stalling or avoidance strategy. (C) will likely yield better decisions.

(B) No, a diversity of perspectives is vital to good decision-making. (C) could help you to solve your impasse among the polarized perspectives.

(C) Yes, sometimes a board needs to consider changing its decision-making process in order to avoid becoming immobilized in indecision. Consensus works best in those situations where board members generally agree on the organization's values, goals, and ways of working together.

(D) If the board is missing important information on which to base its decision, this is an appropriate solution. Otherwise, it's called stalling or avoidance. Consider (C) as a more suitable plan.