

Summary of Eight Factors in Board Effectiveness

Basic Factors in Board Effectiveness

- **Determine Mission and Purpose**
 - **Select/Support/Evaluate the CEO**
 - **Articulate Roles and Responsibilities**
 - **Plan Strategically/Allocate Resources**
 - **Monitor and Evaluate/Accountability**
 - **Maintain Legal and Ethical Integrity**
 - **Public Standing and Credibility**
 - **Recruit Aggressively/Assess Performance**
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Board Effectiveness

Effective boards demonstrate particular characteristics.

They know their **mission** and purpose. Successful boards connect with the community agenda for improving the quality of life of residents. They act in ways that demonstrate that they are in the “business” of community development, not simply providing library or information services.

In this framework, effective boards **plan** strategically and go after the necessary resources to realize their plans. Planning for the future is a focus of Board work, not simply hearing reports of what happened last month.

Effective boards select their **director** with care. They understand what they need to achieve, what competencies and personal qualities will be necessary to achieve their goals, possible barriers to success and how they will support their chief executive officer. The Board’s strategic plan forms the annual approved work plan for the director. Evaluation of performance is done regularly in a fair, objective and transparent manner as a means of feedback and professional growth.

Roles and relationships are clear. The Board knows its role (the what) and the director knows his or her role (the how) and how to negotiate the middle ground. The chair works effectively with the mayor, individual trustees work effectively with members of council, the director works effectively with the municipal manager. Roles with community leaders and business leaders are articulated.

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The Board determines “the what” through strategic planning and direction-setting exercises and **monitors and evaluates** carefully. The Board is accountable not only for smooth operations and fiscal responsibility but overall impact by leveraging library resources for community development. The concern is less with numbers than outcomes, less on books circulated than development of literacy.

The Board maintains its **legal and ethical integrity** by knowing the legislative framework for its actions, acting on the principles for financial integrity and espousing a code of ethics and conduct.

The Board is committed to its own **high public standing** by raising the profile of the Chair, highlighting biographical statements and photographs for trustees on the Web site, and providing business cards for trustee use. Liaison activities with community agencies and branches are valued. Identification and recruitment of new trustees is undertaken in a planned and deliberate manner to develop a board representative of the demographic (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, location) and required expertise (e.g., education, financial, legal, marketing, technological) essential to success.

The Board **assesses its own performance** on a regular basis, discusses results and commits to its own growth as a force for community development.

At a minimum, there are three core Board functions:

1. set strategic directions;
2. hire/evaluate the CEO to implement #1; and
3. ensure monitoring and auditing of implementation and outcomes (the what, not the how)

In other words, start with the end in mind and plan to succeed in moving the organization forward.

Stated somewhat differently, the Institute on Governance suggests these characteristics of effective boards:

- Vision: planning the future (you have a bold vision for the Library’s contribution to community development)
- Destination: having clear goals and a road map (the Board has the goals and objectives to realized the vision)
- Resources: acquiring the necessary resources (and working with the director to allocate those resources to achieve the stated goals)
- Monitoring: assessing progress and impact of services and programs (not simply numbers but also the outcome or impact on community development)
- Accountability: auditing; determining efficiency; reporting to stakeholders.

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