
How are we going as a Board?

This questionnaire is designed to create discussion on the issues facing your Board.

Please allocate three points between the two options offered. You can split the points but don't use fractions. For each question your choices are:

A	B
3	0
1	2
2	1
0	3

Please attempt all questions and allocate three points to every question.

You are being asked for your impression about *what most Trustees /Board Members would generally do* in each situation.

You're not being asked what **you would do in each situation**.

Grateful acknowledgement for the use of the format to Bob Dearden when we worked together in the NZ Health Services Management Development Unit.

Owning Policy

Remember to answer questions “what most Trustees/Board members would generally do”

		A	B
1.	At a private meeting with some town leaders there is general criticism of the Board’s performance. Vocal Board members begin to blame each other, the management and the media. The Chair moves from blame and suggests a workable solution.		
	Do you think most members would: a. Support the Chair publicly and privately b. Continue arguing and defending their position		
2.	Dale, a Board member has a special interest in the community, but has been unable to make an impact at Board meetings. There’s a nasty confrontation before the Board meeting and an internal enquiry has been instituted by the Manager. The Chair asks Dale not to raise the issue at the Board Meeting until the internal enquiry is completed and the Manager reports formally to the Board.		
	Do you think most members would: a. raise it b. keep quiet		
3.	The Board has been asked to contribute \$5,000 to a special children’s program for the town. The Board does not have a clear ‘Donations Policy’ and none has been budgeted. One member is strongly advocating making the donation despite the Manager’s and Chair’s recommendation to the contrary.		
	Do you think most members would: a. make a donation /spend the money b. identify the risks and not spend money		

		A	B
4.	The Manager invites Board members to attend a day long strategic planning workshop the day before the regular Board meeting, to set the direction and milestones for the coming year.		
	Do you think most members would: a. attend the strategic planning workshop b. make an excuse not to go		
5.	The Board is considering a difficult and controversial issue which has been the subject of much lobbying within and outside. A Board member, Lee Fry has been part of the lobby group. When the issue is brought to Board Lee does not offer to leave the meeting or abstain from voting. Other members notice what's happened....and identify a conflict of interest.		
	In their place what you think most members would do: a. Do nothing... it's not worth upsetting a colleague on the Board b. Identify the conflict of interest and draw the matter to the Chair's attention and refer to existing 'protocols'		
6.	The management team propose a particularly complicated change in the regulations and procedures. Everyone was asked to read the material before the meeting. The Chair asks for a vote, but you and two other members do not understand the implications.		
	What would most members do: a. vote on limited information b. ask for a postponement or further information to ensure clarity		

		A	B
7.	The Board member representing a ‘particular district’ feels strongly about a proposal on the table which will limit their power on the Board. The proposal means that the good of the organisation will be served, community groups will get a better service overall and representation will be shared and seen to be spread more equitably. It is however very obviously to the disadvantage of the ‘particular district’.		
	What would most members do if they were in this Board members’ situation. a. vote against the proposal because it goes against the ‘particular district’s’ good b. vote for the proposal because it supports the longer term good		
8.	There are several levels of ‘confidentiality’ within the Board procedures. Members are not clear about their boundaries and two of them speak to a potential competitor about the Organisation’s quality initiative plans. The Chair brings the issue to the Board table for discussion and asks that the members be censured.		
	Would most members: a. argue that their colleagues didn’t know any better or leave it to the Chair and CE to sort out or ignore the issue b. support the Chair in enforcing the confidentiality requirements		
9.	Several Board members are lobbying the Manager to change staffing and financial allocation decisions that they are making. The Manager is working within their delegated authority (for staff and finance) and suggests that the Board members confine their advice to policy issues.		
	Most members would: a. complain loudly to the Chair and ask that the manager be reprimanded b. comply with the Board policy on the separation between governance and management		

		A	B
10.	Board members are in a local coffee shop and they overhear staff comments about the organisation's management. They go directly to the Chair to complain. The Chair asks that they discuss the issue with management to get the facts.		
	Would most members:		
	a. tell other Board members what they'd heard		
	b. meet with management first to ascertain the facts of the situation		
11.	A Board member, Jac has a personal friendship with a staff member and hears that management are about to restructure his job. The Board member asks other members to put pressure on management to stop the 'restructuring'. A paper for the reorganising of the jobs is being prepared by the manager but not yet tabled for Board member information (as this is a management decision).		
	Would most members in Jac's position.		
	a. tell the Chair they want to discuss the proposal and change it even though it has not been submitted to the Board for consideration		
	b. trust the Manager and Chair to deal with the issue		
12.	A financial scenario is put before the Board. A new member who has no financial background asks for clarification and time to consider the matter fully. They are concerned about their fiduciary responsibilities.		
	Would most members in this situation:		
	a. be too shy/ insecure to request clarification and more time and maybe vote with the majority.		
	b. request more information and clarification about fiduciary responsibility		

		A	B
13.	The Board has never had formal performance assessments of Board members. The Chair suggests that a sub-committee design a way to do this.		
	Would most members: a. disagree with the concept b. agree to investigate it		
14.	The Board says it's committed to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. When the Chair suggests that a paper on specific recommendations for action and implementation be prepared.		
	Would most members: a. disagree with the concept b. agree to investigate it		
15.	A professional group asks for representation on the Board and its committees. This has financial implications and also changes the weighting on the Board.		
	Would most members: a. agree without question b. consider the implications on Board policy		

		A	B
16.	A new Chair, unfamiliar with some of the procedures, fails to call members to account when they move outside their governance role and push ahead with a motion interfering with management operations. The Manager offers advice, but is talked down.		
	Would most members: a. be pleased that the Manager was put in his place b. suggest that the Board refresh itself on correct procedures		
17.	The media are hounding the Board over a controversial issue. The Board has agreed a position that Board members Jackie and Lee do not agree with. Jackie and Lee go to the local paper and give their views. The Manager points out that members have not supported the Board viewpoint.		
	Would most members: a. ignore this breach of conduct b. take serious notice		
18.	There's growing unease amongst some members about the 'rebellious' actions of a colleague (a prior Board member) that is bringing the Board into disrepute. Informal phone calls are held to complain to the Chair about the impact. The Chair is new and refuses to act because he fears a disruption to the collegial climate.		
	Would most members: a. ignore the issue and hope it goes away b. request discussion or move dissent from the chair if he refuse		

		A	B
19.	The Board faces a new economic environment and there are numerous opportunities and avenues it can take. Several Board members (on a sub-committee) recommend a change of direction and move quickly to take advantage of the opportunities. The rest of the Board is 'not sure' and not convinced that the 'future' direction/opportunities would be good for the Board.		
	Would most members: a. actively lobby against the sub committee's recommendation b. take time out to investigate the feasibility (financial and otherwise) of the sub committee's recommendations		
20.	A board member has disagreed with the opinion of the Chair at a previous meeting. At the next meeting the Chair starts verbally attacking this board member and personally abusing them. This type of behaviour is not unusual for this Chair.		
	Would most members: a. get embarrassed and avoid dealing with the conflict in an open meeting b. say 'there's an important issue for us to deal with here' can we break and talk to the Chair off-line		

Score	A	B
Please total your columns A & B. See over for the 'key' to your results.		
Where were the differences? What were the issues - governance, policy, ethics, behaviours, boundaries, conflicts of interest etc?		
If you and the Board are satisfied with the overall position what do you have to do to keep it that way?		
If you feel changes are needed, who has to do what to ensure they happen?		

Owning Policy Score Sheet

Mark the total score for each column (A and B) on the chart. Then read the comment beside each.

If you score	A	B	
between	60	0	A shambles; someone else is running this Board or soon will be!
	50	10	
between	50	10	You must find a better way
	40	20	
between	40	20	Situation tense; difficult to work effectively as a policy making and monitoring body
	30	30	
between	30	30	We get by but would improve by openly addressing issues and group work
	20	40	
between	20	40	Keep it up and reward good work; extract the learning from the difficulties
	10	50	
between	10	50	Incredible! If you were serious in your scoring you should share it with your colleagues for reality testing
	0	60	