

## Bite Size Pieces

Learning Topic – Board Governance – Module Four

### **1. Recommended Pre-Requisite(s)**

Governance BSP Modules one, two and three

### **2. Learning Objectives**

Introduce the Concept of Assessing the Board Performance

This session is intended to help boards better understand why it is important for them to pause and reflect on their performance as a board on an annual basis. It can also be used as a teambuilding and new member orientation tool.

Note – There are actually two modules covering board performance – this one and module number five. You might want to review the next module to see how they fit together!

### **3. Content Covered**

Why Assessing Board Performance is Important  
Completing a Board Performance Checklist  
Your Board's Commitment Moving Forward

Tip – If food is being served, you might consider having the board start the module while eating

### **4. Learning Outline**

Before the session, you may wish to read 'Board Assessment? Why Bother?'

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Begin the session by introducing the concept of assessing board performance and how this is a relatively new phenomenon but one that has incredible power to help boards govern more effectively.

Ask the board for their thoughts on the topic and any examples they have of profit or not-for-profit organizations that had a board performance assessment tool and how it worked. If no one has an example, ask for examples where a board could have benefited from an assessment tool. (5 minutes)

Hand out the 'Board Performance Checklist'. Explain that it was developed specifically for community legal clinics. Ask them to take a few minutes to individually review the topics and instructions on the Checklist. Ask for any comments or questions about the tool. (5 minutes)

Now ask the board members to commit to individually 'score' the board on its performance over the last year. (10 minutes)

Ask those who have completed the Checklist to hand in their completed checklists anonymously. Explain that at your next board meeting you will present the composite result of their ratings and have a further discussion.

Option – You may prefer to tally the scores during a break in the meeting and hand out the composite results before the end of the meeting so members can reflect on it and prepare

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for the next meeting. Alternatively, if time permits, you may wish to carry on with the next BSP at this meeting.

Tip – If you have new board members, ask them to refrain from ‘scoring’ the board and instead ask them to reflect on what they would hope to see in the results.

### **5. Equipment and Materials**

“Board Assessment Why Bother?” By Mel Gill at <http://www.charitychannel.com/publish/templates/?a=9863&z=19>

‘Board Performance Checklist’ (pages 6-10)

Note – The “Board Performance Checklist” is also available on the BSWG website - [www.onboardlegalclinics.org](http://www.onboardlegalclinics.org). Click on “Board Tools” and then “Board Tool Kit”

### **6. Timeframe**

20 minutes

### **7. Facilitator Notes**

Note - Use this section to make your own notes about the session. Be sure to share anything of an evaluation nature when the session is over.

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## **8. Results/Evaluation**

Please make enough copies of the evaluation form (pages 11-12) and have each participant complete and hand it in to you at the end of the session.

Note – Evaluation is an important part of our training success! Please ask all participants to complete an evaluation form.

## **9. Next Steps**

Consider adding another Bite Size Piece module to your next agenda.

Ask for a volunteer to lead the next session.

Encourage all board members to visit [www.onboardlegalclinics.org](http://www.onboardlegalclinics.org) to sign up for automatic updates on board learning and development.

Tip – Why not download the ‘Bite Size Pieces Board Training Grid’ which your board can use to track what training has been covered and who has been a session leader?

Learning Topic – Board Governance – Module Four  
Handout – Board Performance Checklist

Review the performance of your board over the last year. You might find it helpful to think about several situations or crisis that you have faced over the year. Using the scoring key below, rate each statement according to your perception of how well your board is doing. Try to be as spontaneous as possible so that your responses reflect your immediate reactions.

Scoring Key

- 1 = needs significant improvement
- 2 = could benefit from development
- 3 = effective
- 4 = highly effective

**Core Competencies**

Stewardship

Strategic planning process in place

1            2            3            4

Appropriate systems to manage risk in operation

1            2            3            4

Effective financial systems and reporting are in place

1            2            3            4

In compliance with laws and regulations

1            2            3            4

Accountability

Always acts in good faith and in the best interests of the organization

1            2            3            4

Potential conflicts of interest avoided or declared

1            2            3            4

Learning Topic – Board Governance – Module Four  
Handout – Board Performance Checklist

Roles and responsibilities of the board are clearly defined

1            2            3            4

High ethical standards

1            2            3            4

Board Success

Positive governance model in place

1            2            3            4

High level of commitment to the organization

1            2            3            4

Members attend meetings regularly

1            2            3            4

Members serve a useful purpose and are evaluated

1            2            3            4

Holds regular board meetings

1            2            3            4

Communication

Logical, clear conclusions

1            2            3            4

Communicates in a straightforward manner

1            2            3            4

Confidential information held in trust

1            2            3            4

**Elective/Tailored Competencies**

(Adapted from BOARDrx ‘Keys to Individual Board Member Effectiveness’ 2004)

Adaptability

Is flexible

1            2            3            4

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Handout – Board Performance Checklist

Reacts constructively to setbacks

1            2            3            4

Views obstacles as opportunities for creative change

1            2            3            4

Competence

Fundamentals of roles clear

1            2            3            4

Makes wise use of clinic's resources

1            2            3            4

Recognizes and acts appropriately on priorities

1            2            3            4

Personal Development

Helps one another learn from mistakes

1            2            3            4

Encourages constructive criticism

1            2            3            4

Looks for ways to help members improve

1            2            3            4

Teamwork

Conflicts resolved fairly

1            2            3            4

Consensus considered key

1            2            3            4

Capable people on the team

1            2            3            4

Fundraising

Fundraising strategy is aligned to the strategic plan

1            2            3            4

Participates in fundraising initiatives

1            2            3            4

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Handout – Board Performance Checklist

Evaluated fundraising initiatives

1            2            3            4

Trend Analysis

Assesses impact of environment influences

1            2            3            4

Identifies opportunities for the clinic

1            2            3            4

Evaluates fundraising initiatives

1            2            3            4

Creativity

Approaches situations with imagination and originality

1            2            3            4

Inspires innovation in organization

1            2            3            4

Encourages brainstorming and other creative exercises

1            2            3            4

Leadership Potential

Develops a vision for the organization

1            2            3            4

Garners co-operation from others to fulfill vision

1            2            3            4

Supports change where indicated

1            2            3            4

Is recognized as a leader in the community

1            2            3            4

Energizes people to overcome obstacles and resource limitations

1            2            3            4

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Media Relations

Current matters affecting the organization

1            2            3            4

Communicates clearly and simply with members of the media

1            2            3            4

Consults with other key players before issuing any statements

1            2            3            4

Board Development

Board profile addresses the challenges facing the organization

1            2            3            4

Candidates have the skills, qualities and knowledge to fit the profile

1            2            3            4

Reflects the diversity of the community

1            2            3            4

Evaluates the board's effectiveness throughout the year

1            2            3            4

## Bite Size Pieces

### Evaluation

Name of Clinic:

Module Name: Board Performance

Date:

Module Number: Four

#### About this Module

(To be completed by all participants and the session leader)

This material contributed to a better understanding of the topic

Disagree          Neutral          Agree          Strongly Agree

The Content was relevant

Disagree          Neutral          Agree          Strongly Agree

The content was organized and easy to follow

Disagree          Neutral          Agree          Strongly Agree

The time spent on this module was worth it

Disagree          Neutral          Agree          Strongly Agree

For an introductory session, the level of the content material was:

Too Advanced          Just Right          Too Basic

This module could be improved by:

## Bite Size Pieces

### Evaluation

#### About Bite Size Pieces Training

(To be completed by all participants and the session leader)

This is an easy and cost-effective way to learn

Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

I like making learning a board agenda topic

Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

Everyone on the board should take a turn at leading a session

Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

#### About the Bite Size Pieces Facilitation

(To be completed by the session leader)

I found the facilitation notes and material easy to follow

Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

I enjoyed my role as session leader

Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

**Session Leader.** Please provide a copy of this evaluation form to each participant and ask that it be completed and returned to you at the end of the session.

Tabulate all results on a separate sheet and fax to the BSWG at: 1-866-674-6714. You can also send an email of the results to: [contact@onboardlegalclinics.org](mailto:contact@onboardlegalclinics.org)