

# 123

## **Step-by-Step Guide** to a Successful Governance Practices Assessment



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## Governance Practices Assessment Overview

**T**rustees are accountable for ensuring that continuous quality improvement processes are in place throughout their organization. An effective board ensures that every hospital department has quality processes, systems and structures in place. But how do trustees ensure their own continuous quality improvement? How do they determine when they are under-performing as a leadership team? How can boards of trustees hold themselves to the same level of accountability for quality improvement to which they hold their hospitals?

### Assessing Governance Performance

Governing performance self-assessment is an important preventive measure boards can take to ensure continual improvement in governing health and wellness. And it's one of the most reliable ways to identify and correct trouble spots before they get out of control.

A board self-assessment is an organized evaluation of board members' satisfaction with all aspects of board performance in fulfilling the board's governance responsibilities. Self-assessments generally use a combination of quantitative and qualitative measurements of board, committee and individual performance.

Successful self-assessments enable boards to identify "leadership gaps," or areas in which the board has the greatest potential for improvement. The board self-assessment process identifies these gaps, and facilitates the development and implementation of initiatives and strategies to improve leadership performance.

Through an effective, well-developed board self-assessment process growth opportunities can be realized, education can be pinpointed to unique governance needs, recruitment of new trustees can be undertaken with increased confidence, and long-range planning can be conducted within a consensus-based framework with everybody on the same page.

### Using the Assessment to Improve Governance Effectiveness

A successful board self-assessment engages the board in a wide-ranging evaluation of its overall leadership performance. At the same time, it provides trustees with an opportunity to rate their personal performance as vital contributing members of the board of trustees. An excellent board self-assessment process will achieve several key outcomes:

- Define the board's most critical governance success factors;
- Secure anonymous, broad-based and insightful trustee input on the critical fundamentals of successful governing leadership;
- Create an opportunity to address major issues and ideas in a non-threatening, collaborative manner;
- Clearly demonstrate where the board is both in and out of alignment on leadership fundamentals and issues;
- Objectively assess the degree of common trustee understanding, expectations and direction for the board;
- Assess the deficiencies that may impact the board's ability to fulfill its fiduciary responsibilities;
- Identify opportunities for meaningful leadership improvement; and
- Help administration better understand and respond to the board's leadership education and development needs.

Many hospital boards conduct a self-assessment prior to their annual retreat, at which they have ample time to discuss the assessment results and explore ways to improve leadership performance.

## Goals of a Governance Practices Assessment

While organizations conduct board governance assessments for a variety of reasons, common goals of a board governance assessment include :

- Set measurable objectives for improving hospital performance;
- Gather information to assess board effectiveness in improving hospital performance;
- Use pre-established, objective process criteria to assess board effectiveness in improving hospital performance;
- Draw conclusions based on findings, and develop and implement improvement in governance activities; and
- Evaluate board performance to support sustained improvement.

## How Often Should the Assessment be Conducted?

Ideally, the board should assess its performance annually. Some boards have the internal resources and knowledge to successfully design and conduct the self-assessment, compile and analyze the results and present the findings in a way that facilitates discussion and governance action planning. Others rely on outside consultants with experience using tested and proven tools, techniques and processes.

## Putting Your Self-Assessment Results to Work

Conducting the board self-assessment is just the first step in improving governance leadership performance. The key to success of the full process is not simply the measurement of trustee viewpoints, but is instead the action that is taken as a result of a careful examination of trustee viewpoints.

The self-assessment results should be a catalyst to engage trustees in a wide-ranging discussion of findings that highlight performance gaps and areas where trustees lack consensus about the board's performance.

A full review of trustees' viewpoints should stimulate the board to discuss their opinions and ideas for improving board success, and result in the development of a governance improvement action plan with clearly defined responsibilities, time frames and projected outcomes (see our "governance gain planner" for more information). Boards should then monitor their progress to ensure that projected outcomes are achieved, and revise the governance improvement action plan when necessary.

Whatever you do well at the board level cascades throughout the organization. Governance assessment, when done right, may have profound implications throughout the organization.

## Governance Assessment Components

**The Basic Board Governance Assessment.** Board governance assessment criteria should be divided into sub-categories, or "leadership dimensions." Before finalizing the criteria to be used, the board should review the assessment to ensure full board understanding of the meaning of the criteria, and ensure the assessment meets the organization's unique governance needs. With that understanding and buy-in a governance assessment can be implemented that may be used year-after-year.

Here are ten leadership dimensions for consideration in measuring governance effectiveness:

- 1) Mission, values and vision;
- 2) Strategic direction;
- 3) Leadership structure and governance processes;
- 4) Quality and patient safety;
- 5) Community relationships;

- 6) Relationship with the CEO;
- 7) Relationship with the medical staff;
- 8) Financial leadership;
- 9) Community health; and
- 10) Organizational ethics.

**The Governance Committee Assessment.** In addition to rating overall board performance, the effectiveness of governance committees should also be evaluated. Typically, committee performance is assessed using the committee charters as a foundation. Committee performance criteria should be based on the duties and responsibilities of each committee, and performance should only be rated by individuals that serve on the committee being evaluated.

**The Personal Leadership Performance Assessment.** A critical piece of a quality governance assessment process is the individual performance assessment. Trustees may have one view of the overall board's performance, and have an entirely different view of their own individual governing performance. An introspective personal look at individual leadership enables trustees to focus on the essentials of good leadership and their personal impressions of their individual performance.

Trustees should rate themselves in two areas: 1) governing attributes, or the factors that define their performance in fulfilling their governance duties; and 2) personal attributes, the factors that describe their personal strengths and abilities to be effective trustees.

**The Peer Assessment.** A more comprehensive way to measure individual governing performance is through a "peer-to-peer assessment." This process enables trustees to constructively evaluate their both their own performance and the performance of each of their board colleagues, using a short and concise list of leadership criteria. In addition, each trustee should answer one simple question after rating each individual board member: "What suggestions do you have for ways this trustee colleague may improve his or her governing performance?"

Peer assessments often include the same questions as the personal performance assessment, rating trustees in two areas: governing attributes and personal attributes.

The peer feedback allows boards to focus on the critical individual skills and assets required for effective trusteeship. Confidentiality of individual trustee responses is critical. If a peer assessment is undertaken the ratings of individual trustees should be compiled in a confidential report and be reviewed in a private meeting with the board chair.

## Action Agenda: Five Steps to Governance Practices Assessment Success

In order to receive maximum benefit from a governance practices assessment, the following steps should be taken to ensure success:

- Define your board's performance criteria by identifying the areas to be measured, ensuring appropriateness to your leadership needs;
- Measure board performance by determining a uniform measurement method, such as the Level 1– Level 5 rating scale recommended in these materials;
- Report findings and potential improvement areas resulting from thought-provoking ratings and comments about important issues and priorities facing your board;
- Develop a governing performance improvement plan; and
- Continually assess and improve governing leadership effectiveness.

### After the Assessment: Developing a Performance Improvement Action Plan

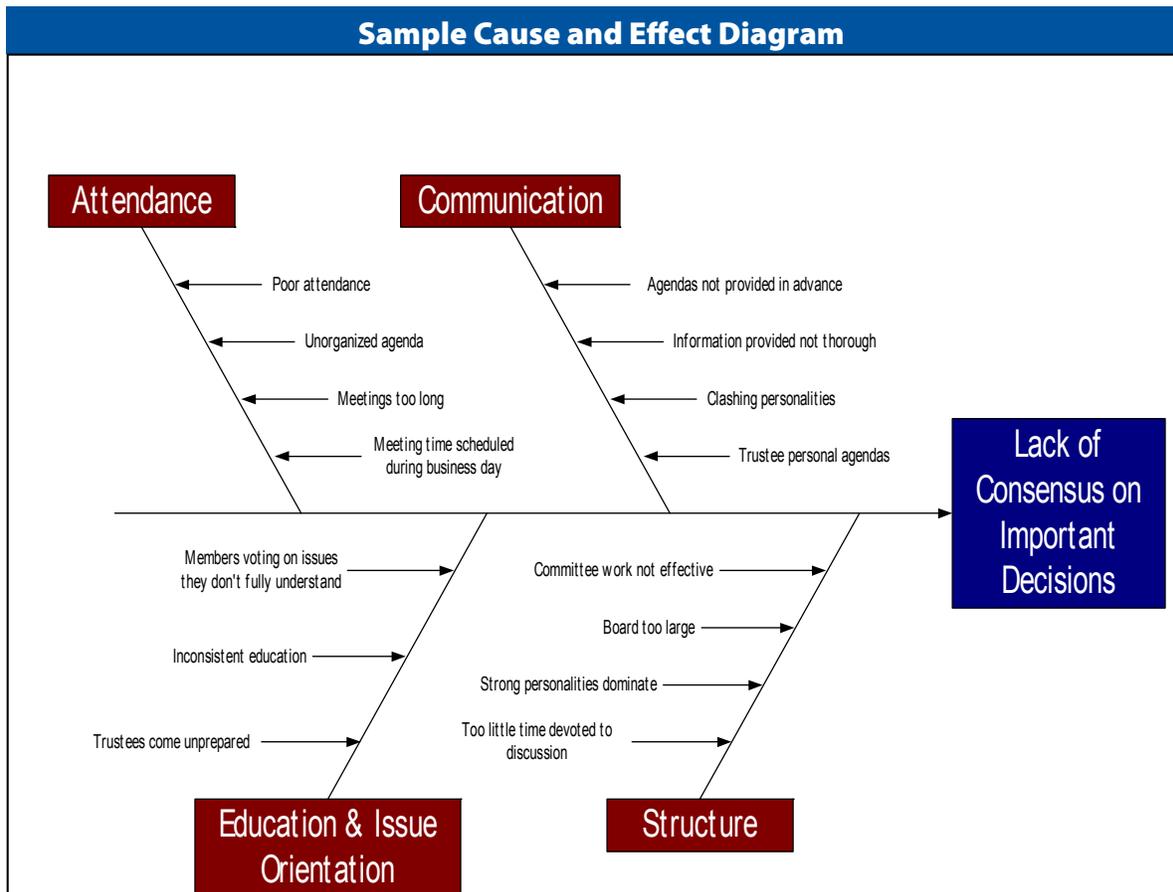
Once the assessment has been completed and the data and qualitative input have been analyzed, the board should identify the lower-performing areas and the areas that lack consensus, and develop ideas for specific actions to improve leadership under-performance. In order to address specific performance problems, the board must first identify the causes of the under-performance, and then develop a measurable, accountable action plan to ensure board performance improvement. Following implementation of the action plan, boards should regularly reassess their performance to ensure progress is being made.

### Conducting a Root-Cause Analysis

In some cases, boards may want to take a deep and detailed look at the causes and effects of board under-performance in certain areas. A cause and effect diagram can help the board team better understand the factors related to improving board performance in targeted areas.

Creating a cause and effect diagram is a good approach to take. A committee of trustees may identify a few major factors shaping performance in the problem area. A board committee, or the entire board team, may then brainstorm the barriers impeding high performance in each of the areas.

The “Cause and Effect” diagram below demonstrates potential causes leading to the inability of a board to build the consensus necessary to ensure effective leadership.



## Building a Governance Practices Assessment Action Plan

Once problem performance areas and their potential root causes have been identified, the board should develop a robust action plan for improving governing performance.

Below are some examples of possible corrective action for a board that needs improvement in the area of *“ensuring an appropriate board structure, and effective processes for building optimum hospital service and value.”*

### 1. Governance Education Initiatives

- Provide trustees with the background information and intelligence resources required for active participation in board dialogue
- Conduct a regular community health care environmental assessment; ensure trustee understanding of the changes taking place in the health care environment, and their implications on the hospital, its physicians, and local health care consumers
- Develop an education plan that ensures trustees understanding of the issues essential to effective governance; conduct education and orientation at every board meeting, and annually at the board retreat

### 2. Board Structure Initiatives

- Examine board composition, and match present skills against current and emerging trends, challenges and issues; ensure that skills are/will be in place to successfully deal with the future
- Clearly define board, medical staff leadership and management strategic planning roles and responsibilities
- Involve physicians in meaningful ways as key participants in governance decision making, including trusteeship, committee appointments, strategic task force involvement, etc.
- Develop a process for governance “renewal” to ensure that committees, policies, procedures and overall board structure and functions create a high-performance organization

### 3. Governance Efficiency Initiatives

- Ensure that trustees receive agenda at least one week in advance of board, committee and task force meetings; provide background materials (articles, white papers, talking points, etc.) that ensure trustee understanding of critical governance-related issues
- Examine the governance committee structure to ensure responsiveness to evolving challenges and opportunities. Consider establishing “strategic issue teams” to replace some traditional standing committees
- Evaluate the quality and quantity of information used by the board to make policy and strategic decisions; ensure that information is relevant, timely, understandable and actionable, and that it facilitates high-quality board decision making
- Examine the content of board meetings to ensure that the most significant and meaningful issues are being effectively addressed, that trustee time is respected and used efficiently, and that trustee involvement and participation are enhanced
- Examine the prior six board agendas; assess the ratio of time spent discussing issues and opportunities vs. time spent on approval of minutes, committee reports, and other more procedural issues; make discussion of strategic issues the centerpiece of every board meeting

### 4. Legal and Quality Initiatives

- Create a formal compliance plan, and regularly review adherence to the plan and the timely organizational responsiveness to issues of compliance
- Ensure that the hospital has a fully-functioning quality improvement process that continuously defines, measures and improves quality at all levels, including clinical, service and organizational development
- Ensure that the board has approved quality indicators that are reported to the board regularly

# Using The Governance Practices Assessment Toolkit

**T**he Governance Practices Assessment Toolkit includes resources to implement a highly-accountable board governance assessment. It includes tools for creating the assessment questionnaire, correspondence to be used in implementation of the assessment, information and resources for compilation of the results, ideas and samples of ways to analyze and present assessment findings, and tools for building “governance gain.”

Organizations may utilize the toolkit in two ways: 1) Conduct the entire governance assessment process independently, following this instruction guide and utilizing the documents included on the toolkit; or 2) Utilize this instruction guide to understand the process and determine the steps you prefer to complete internally, and those steps you may prefer to engage an outside consulting company to assist you with.

Regardless of which approach is best for your organization, the content included on the toolkit can play a critical role in ensuring your success. Each of the documents included on the toolkit are numbered to guide you through the order in which the documents may be used. The toolkit includes all documents necessary to complete a thorough, “best practices” board governance assessment.

## The “Full Board Governance Assessment” Includes:

1. **A Governance Practices Assessment Organizer** for organizations to use to develop an advanced and highly-customized board governance assessment. The organizer enables organizations to select from a broad range of criteria and determine those that best fit the organization’s unique assessment needs.
2. **A Governance Practices Assessment Survey Questionnaire Format** for organizations that choose to implement a basic board governance assessment using standard questions. Created in Microsoft Word®, organizations may quickly and easily customize the assessment tool, print it, and distribute it to board members. The template includes a recommended rating scale and criteria for board members to rate in ten areas of board performance. Organizations may also use the criteria identified in the organizer and input the criteria into an online survey tool of their choice.
3. **Sample Correspondence**, including templates for an email or letter to accompany the board governance assessment; a first reminder notification about the upcoming governance assessment deadline; a second reminder notification about the upcoming assessment deadline; and a sample press release to communicate the purpose and completion of the assessment to employees, the community and key stakeholders.
4. **Sample of a Completed Microsoft PowerPoint® Governance Assessment Report**, including introductory information, an overview, and sample results from a section of a board governance assessment. This sample report helps organizations to visualize how to develop a PowerPoint® report, and provides a format for organizations to use.
5. **A Sample of a Completed Written Governance Assessment Report**, including an overview of the process and results from a section of a sample board governance assessment report. This report helps organizations to visualize how to develop a written report, and provides a format for organizations to use.
6. **A Sample of a Completed Open-Ended Comments Summary Report**, showing what a complete analysis of open-ended comments looks like, with sample key themes and verbatim survey responses that support each key theme.

## The “Governance Committees Assessment” Includes:

1. A **Governance Committee Assessment Organizer** for organizations to use to develop advanced and highly-customized committee assessments. The organizer enables organizations to select from a broad range of criteria and determine those that best fit the organization’s unique governance committee assessment needs. The questions selected from the governance committee assessment organizer will supplement the questions in your full board governance assessment.
2. **Sample Correspondence**, including templates for developing a letter to accompany the committee assessment; a first reminder notification about the upcoming assessment deadline; and a second reminder notification about the upcoming assessment deadline.
3. A **Sample Committee Assessment Survey Questionnaire Format**, which may be modified to reflect the committee criteria selected using the governance committee assessment organizer. Organizations may also use the criteria identified in the committee organizer and input the criteria into an online survey tool of their choice.

## The “Peer Assessment” Includes:

1. The **Peer Leadership Assessment Format** is for organizations that choose to implement a peer-to-peer assessment in addition to their full board governance assessment. It may be easily customized using the Microsoft Word® template provided. The peer assessment enables a thorough evaluation of each individual trustee’s performance and development of individualized personal governance improvement action plans. The peer assessment supplements the board governance assessment for governing boards prepared for a more in-depth analysis of their performance.
2. A **Format for Compiling Peer Assessment Results**, a simple, easy-to-use format to display peer assessment results for each individual trustee.
3. **Sample Correspondence**, including templates for developing a letter to accompany the peer assessment; a first reminder notification about the upcoming peer assessment deadline; and a second reminder notification about the upcoming peer assessment deadline.

## The “Planning for Governance Gain” Materials Include:

1. A **Governance Gain Planner Instruction Guide**, which includes detailed instructions for using the Governance Gain Planner, such as prioritizing governance gain initiatives and sorting those initiatives in a variety of ways.
2. A **Governance Gain Microsoft Excel® Spreadsheet** to use to itemize ideas for governance improvement, prioritize the initiatives and assign times frames and roles and responsibilities. Governance improvement initiatives are automatically color-coded based upon their priority, and may be sorted or organized by a variety of factors (such as priority, time frame, or responsibility).
3. **101 Governance Best Practices**, a list of 101 specific ideas for ways to improve governing performance. These best practices may be used as a guide for the development of action initiatives to improve board performance, which may be included in the “Governance Gain” spreadsheet.

## Step-by-Step Guide: Conducting the Full Board Assessment

The following steps offer a general guideline for conducting a full board governance assessment using this *Governance Practices Assessment Toolkit*.

### **Step 1: Determine a Governance Assessment Administrator**

Determine who will be primarily responsible for administering the survey. The individual appointed for this position (either someone such as an administrative assistant or an outside party) will be responsible for setting up an online survey, or receiving the assessments and entering data. He/she must be highly organized, accessible, and have an eye for detail. In addition, this person must be trusted to respect the anonymity guarantee.

### **Step 2: Determine the Board Governance Assessment Your Organization Will Conduct**

Determine whether your organization will use the basic board governance assessment already provided (*Document 2 of the Full Board Governance Assessment*), or develop a customized assessment using the Governance Practices Assessment Organizer (*Document 1 of the Full Board Governance Assessment*).

The basic board governance assessment may be implemented with minimal change, and includes recommended criteria based on the most commonly selected criteria by other hospitals and health systems conducting board governance assessments. The basic board governance assessment document may also be easily modified to add or remove criteria.

A more comprehensive set of criteria for use in a customized board governance assessment is available in the *Governance Practices Assessment Organizer (Document 1 of the Full Board Governance Assessment)*. The *Organizer* includes many more criteria than any one organization would use in its board governance assessment. It helps your organization to select the criteria that are most relevant to your board. Once the criteria are selected, the survey administrator will be responsible for entering the selected criteria into a survey format. This can be done using any online survey tool, or by modifying the Microsoft Word® document template (*Document 2 of the Full Board Governance Assessment, entitled "Governance Practices Assessment Survey Questionnaire Format.doc"*)

### **Step 3: Determine if Your Organization Will Conduct a Peer Assessment**

Determine whether your organization will conduct a peer assessment in addition to the full board governance assessment. If this is your board's first assessment, you may consider utilizing only the full board governance assessment in the first year, and add the peer assessment in subsequent years. *This part of the step-by-step guide focuses on the basic board self assessment. For a detailed guide to conducting the peer assessment, see "Value-Added Assessment Options," page 15.*

### **Step 4: Determine if Your Organization Will Conduct an Advanced Governance Committee Assessment**

Determine whether your organization will conduct an advanced governance committee assessment in addition to the full board governance assessment. Conducting an advanced governance committee assessment will provide insight into the current performance of each committee, and determine potential areas improvement. *This part of the step-by-step guide focuses on the basic board self assessment. For a detailed guide to conducting the peer assessment, see "Value-Added Assessment Options," page 15.*

### **Step 5: Determine the Timeline and Methodology for Submitting Responses**

Determine the appropriate amount of time you will allow for board members to complete the assessment. Once the time frame is established, determine the most appropriate method for responses to be submitted, in a manner that ensures board member anonymity. Many organizations prefer to use an online survey and enter the assessment criteria selected from the *Governance Assessment Organizer*. For organizations that implement the survey using a written format, we recommend two methods for trustees to submit their assessment: 1) mail the completed assessment to the survey administrator in a stamped and self-addressed envelope; or 2) deliver the assessment directly to the survey administrator in the same envelope.

### **Step 6: Inform and Discuss the Governance Assessment Process With the Board**

The board governance assessment should be discussed at a board meeting prior to implementation to ensure trustee understanding of the criteria, and board-wide commitment to completing the assessment and supporting next steps to address assessment results with “governance gain” actions. Board members should be prepared to respond to the self-assessment survey when they receive it.

### **Step 7: Prepare the Board Governance Assessment**

If you plan to conduct the survey online, once the criteria to be used has been determined, enter the criteria into an online survey tool of your choice (such as Survey Monkey, Survey Planet, Zoho Survey, Kwik Survey, etc.).

If you plan to conduct the survey on paper, open *Document 2 of the Full Board Governance Assessment* titled “*Governance Practices Assessment Survey Questionnaire Format.doc*.” Replace the information in [brackets] on the first page with your organization-specific information, such as the hospital name and contact information. Modify the text in the document header to reflect your hospital’s name, and the year the assessment is being conducted. Once all the [bracket] text is replaced, save the document to your computer and print a copy of the survey for each board member.

*If your organization has elected to create a customized board governance assessment using the Governance Practices Assessment Organizer, follow the description above, but also change the criteria in the survey to match the criteria selected in the Governance Assessment Organizer.*

Next, open the sample correspondence document titled “*Sample Email and Letter Correspondence with Trustees.doc*” (*Document 3*). Replace the text in [brackets] with your organization’s specific information, save the document to your computer, and email or print a copy of the letter for each board member. Include a link to the survey in the email, or attach a copy of the letter to the front of each printed survey.

### **Step 8: Distribute the Board Governance Assessment**

The assessment may be distributed either by email, mail, or at a board meeting. *If you elect to have trustees submit the assessment via mail, you should provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope to each trustee along with the cover letter and assessment.*

### **Step 9: Prepare and Send the First Survey Reminder**

As the survey deadline approaches, if you have not received a response from every trustee, distribute the first survey reminder. Use the reminder copy from “*Sample Email and Letter Correspondence with Trustees.doc*” (*Document 3*) as a starting point, replacing the text in [brackets] with your organization-specific information.

Distribute the notification via email by placing the text of the text in the body of the message, not as an attachment. *The first reminder should be sent approximately five days prior to the assessment due date to ensure appropriate time for trustees to respond.*

### **Step 10: Prepare and Send the Final Survey Reminder**

If you have not received responses from all trustees by the day prior to the survey deadline, distribute the final survey reminder. Use the reminder copy from "*Sample Email and Letter Correspondence with Trustees.doc*" (Document 3) as a starting point, replacing the text in [brackets] with your organization-specific information. Distribute the final reminder via email by placing the text of the text in the body of the message, not as an attachment. *You may want to supplement the final reminder with a personal call from the CEO or board chair to encourage responses. If necessary, extend the survey deadline to ensure the greatest response rate.*

### **Step 11: Analyze the Assessment Responses**

Once all the assessments have been received, the survey administer should download the data or enter the results into a spreadsheet and compile the results into a document that can be used for meaningful analysis.

After the rating responses have been compiled and graphs have been created, the open-ended comments must be organized in a meaningful manner. The Full Board Governance Assessment document titled "*Sample of Completed Open-Ended Comments Summary Report.doc*" provides an example of how to organize the open-ended comments. To do this:

- Create subheadings for each open-ended question asked in the assessment
- Copy and paste each of the open-ended comments that trustees write under the appropriate section in the document.
- Review the comments pasted into the document, and determine the key themes that emerge from the comments. For example, if several trustees indicated that they think the mission and vision statements should be more prominent at board meetings when making decisions, create a key theme titled "*Increase Prominence of Mission and Vision at Board Meetings,*" and copy the bullet points supporting this theme under the title.
- Organize the open-ended comments under each section in as many key theme areas as possible. If there are several comments that do not appear to fit into a theme, create a new theme called "*Other*" and copy those comments underneath the "*Other*" category.

### **Step 12: Create a PowerPoint® or Written Report Based on the Assessment Results**

Create a PowerPoint® or a written report that will be used to present the assessment results to the board. The report format may vary based upon your preferences, but should include a stacked bar graph of the criteria in each section, in order from highest to lowest rated, and the key themes determined from trustees' open-ended responses. Document 4 of the Full Board Governance Assessment, "*Sample of Completed PowerPoint Governance Assessment Report.ppt*" provides a sample of a completed PowerPoint® report. Document 5, "*Sample of Completed Written Governance Assessment Report.pdf*" provides a sample of a completed written report.

If you create a written report, you may also want to include the key themes and supporting bullet points from the open-ended comments in an appendix to the report. This can be as simple as copying your completed key themes document at the end of your completed written report.

If you create a PowerPoint® report, you may want to print your completed summary of key themes and provide it as a handout for trustees to review as a supplement to the presentation. Providing this information to the trustees helps assure them that the key themes developed are an accurate representation of the assessment results.

### **Step 13: Present Assessment Findings to the Board for Full Discussion**

After the results from the assessment are compiled, the findings should be presented to the full board at a workshop or special meeting with ample time to discuss the results, strategic implications and next steps. The ideal meeting or workshop would include the following components:

- A presentation of the key themes and findings from the assessment;
- Discussion of the board's reaction to the assessment results; and
- Determination of next steps, such as deeper analysis of the lowest scores, or, if the lowest rated areas are clear, development of specific initiatives and action items the board may implement to improve its governing performance.

## **Step-by-Step Guide: Planning for Governance Gain After the Assessment**

### **Step 1: Conduct a Post Governance Assessment Analysis**

Once the governance assessment findings have been tabulated and shared with the board, the board should hold a retreat or workshop, or assign special time at a board meeting to discuss the results. The findings should be a catalyst to engage trustees in a wide-ranging discussion of findings that highlight performance gaps and areas where trustees lack consensus about the board's performance.

### **Step 2: Determine Governance Improvement Ideas**

The lower rated areas on the assessment and the areas of concern and ideas that emerge from the full board discussion should lead to specific ideas for governance improvement. For potential ideas and solutions to improve governance practices refer to Document 3 of "Planning for Governance Gain" entitled "[\*101 Governance Best Practices.pdf\*](#)".

### **Step 3: Develop a Governance Gain Planner**

Rank the priority of the governance improvement ideas you develop using a combination of board discussion and the *101 Governance Best Practices* document, and establish a methodology for improvement. Refer to Document 1 of "Planning for Governance Gain" entitled "[\*Governance Gain Planner Instruction Guide.pdf\*](#)" for detailed information on how to develop your Governance Gain Planner, then input and rate the priority of your ideas using Document 2 of "Planning for Governance Gain" , "[\*Governance Gain Planner.xls\*](#)".

## **Step 4: Distribute Internal Communication About Completion of the Assessment**

Open the "Sample Correspondence" folder in the "Full Board Governance Assessment" folder and select Document 5 entitled "Internal Communication - After Board Governance Assessment.doc." Replace the text in [brackets] with your organization's specific information, and save the document on your computer. The internal release is designed to inform staff members and the medical staff about the board governance assessment process and use in building governance performance and accountability. This document is a guide, and should be customized to meet your unique needs.

You may print copies of the internal release and post the memorandum in centrally located and easily accessible staff areas. You may also consider emailing the document to hospital employees and members of the medical staff, post the release on your internal Intranet website (if applicable), and/or distribute the release at employee meetings.

## **Step 5: Distribute Internal Communication and Issue a Press Release About the Governance Assessment**

Using the "Sample Press Release.doc" from the "Full Board Governance Assessment" (Document 7), prepare internal correspondence to employees, followed by an external release for the local media. The document is a guide, and should be customized to meet your needs, including replacing the text in [brackets] with your organization's specific information.

To ensure strong communication with employees and volunteers, internal communication should be distributed through multiple channels, including printing copies of the internal release, posting the memorandum in centrally located and easily accessible staff areas, emailing the document to hospital employees and members of the medical staff, and posting the release on your internal Intranet website, and/or distributing the release at employee meetings.

After the internal release has been posted and distributed, develop an external press release. The external press release is used to inform the community about the board governance assessment process, and include quotes and talking points that will build community awareness, trust and confidence. You may also want to post the press release on your website and distribute it to local leaders.

## Value-Added Assessment Options

### Step-by-Step Guide to Conducting a Peer Assessment

The peer assessment may be conducted simultaneously with the full board governance assessment, or conducted at another time. While the board governance assessment provides information about the *board's* performance, the peer assessment provides comprehensive peer feedback about each *individual trustee's* performance.

The results of the peer assessment must be treated carefully. Confidentiality must be ensured throughout the process, from collecting responses to compiling and reporting the results. The final product is an individual report for each trustee that depicts demonstrating how he/she rated personal performance in each of the criteria areas, compared side-by-side with their colleagues' combined ratings in the same areas.

Individual trustees must not know how any other individual trustees rated their performance. The results are prepared in summary form.

When conducting a peer assessment in conjunction with a board governance assessment, we recommend the following four-step process:

#### **Step 1: Prepare the Peer Assessment**

If you plan to conduct the peer assessment online, enter the criteria into an online survey tool of your choice (such as Survey Monkey, Survey Planet, Zoho Survey, Kwik Survey, etc.). Follow the instructions below to create a separate page/section of the survey for each individual trustee.

If you plan to conduct the peer assessment on paper, open Document 1 of the "Peer Assessment" titled "*Peer Leadership Assessment Format.doc*." Replace the text in [brackets] on the first page with your organization's specific information, such as hospital name and contact information. Also replace [hospital name] in the header, and ensure the header displays the appropriate year.

The subsequent pages following the instruction page will be customized to include the name of each individual trustee. For example, at the top of page two replace the prompt "Type Trustee Name Here" with the name of a trustee (i.e. "John Smith"). When "John Smith" completes the survey, he will check the box on this first page indicating that he is rating himself. All other trustees will rate John Smith's performance in the leadership criteria areas, and rate their own performance on the page with their name at the top (*See Peer Assessment Figure 1*).

Continue with the same process throughout the document. The document has placeholders for fifteen trustees. *If your organization has fewer than fifteen trustees, simply delete the additional pages; if you have more than fifteen trustees, simply copy and paste the last page several times and type the appropriate name under "Trustee Name."*

#### **Step 2: Distribute the Peer Assessment**

Email the link to the online survey to all trustees, or print one copy of the entire peer assessment for each trustee, and distribute the assessments to all trustees, either via email, mail or at a board meeting. Use the sample correspondence included with the "Peer Assessment" materials for sample email and letter copy when distributing the peer assessment.

*Important: Should you choose, the peer assessment may replace "Section 4: Personal Performance Assessment" in the basic board governance assessment. When developing the assessment survey online or printing the basic board governance assessment, do not include Section 4 (the last two pages of the assessment) if you conduct your peer assessment concurrent with the full board assessment.*

**Step 3: Analyze the Peer Assessment Responses**

After all assessments have been received, the governance assessment administrator should download the survey data or manually enter the results into a spreadsheet for analysis. Once the results have been tabulated, open Document 2 of the Peer Assessment titled "Format for Compiling Peer Assessment Results.doc." This document format may be used to develop a separate report for each individual trustee.

Create a separate document for each trustee, and modify each document to reflect your hospital's name as well as each individual trustee's name and the date the peer assessment was conducted. The report contains three sections:

**Peer Assessment Figure 1**

Replace the prompts in the [brackets] with your organization's specific information. On each page following the first page, type the name of a trustee in the specified location.

[Hospital Name]

**Board of Trustees**  
**[Year] Peer Leadership Assessment**

This peer leadership assessment evaluates the performance of each of your trustees. The assessment asks you to rate the governing attributes and personal attributes of each trustee. Identical questions are asked of each trustee, please check the box that best describes your own personal performance.

Upon completion of the assessment, please return the assessment to the address on the back of this envelope by [Time].

Each trustee's peer assessment will be placed in a separate envelope side-by-side with the other trustees' assessments. The reports will be presented to the Board of Trustees.

If you have any questions about the assessment, please contact [Name] at [Telephone Number].

*Please complete this section*

Your responses to this peer assessment will be reported in aggregate.

**Trustee Name:** [Type trustee name here]

I am this trustee. This is my personal self-assessment.

**Rating Key:**  
 Level 5: I strongly agree with this statement. Performance in this area is outstanding.  
 Level 4: I generally agree with this statement. Performance in this area is good.  
 Level 3: I somewhat agree with this statement. Performance in this area is inconsistent and fair/good.  
 Level 2: I somewhat disagree with this statement. Performance in this area is inconsistent.  
 Level 1: I disagree with this statement. Performance in this area is poor.  
 NS: Not Sure. I don't have enough information to make a valid judgment.

Governing Attributes	Level 5	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1	NS
Comes to meetings prepared to engage in meaningful discussion and thoughtful decision-making	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Builds good working relationships with other trustee colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Has an effective working relationship with the CEO	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Understands the key issues and challenges facing the hospital	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Demonstrates a high level of commitment to and interest in the hospital	<input type="checkbox"/>					

**Personal Attributes**

Personal Attributes	Level 5	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1	NS
Keeps an open mind on controversial issues	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Meets time commitments	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Thinks quickly and assimilates ideas well	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Asks for and listens to others' ideas and input	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Maintains confidentiality when required	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Continually seeks to improve leadership performance	<input type="checkbox"/>					

What suggestions do you have for ways this trustee colleague can improve his or her governing performance?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Type the first trustee's name here**

**Type the second trustee's name here**

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1) governing attribute ratings; 2) personal attribute ratings; and 3) colleagues' specific suggestions for ways each trustee may improve his/her governing performance.

The Governing Attributes and Personal Attributes tables include two columns for each criterion: 1) the trustee's self-rating (the rating they give themselves); and 2) the collective rating of all of the trustee's colleagues. The collective rating is the mean score of all the ratings the trustees provided for each criterion, excluding the self-rating the trustee being rated gave him or herself (See *Peer Assessment Figure 2*).

### Step 4: Review the Results of the Peer Assessments with Individual Trustees

Schedule a time for each trustee to meet with the board chair to review the results of his/her peer assessment. Print a copy of each individual trustee's report for the board chair to share with the trustee. The review should be confidential, and used to explore ideas for ways each trustee can use his/her colleagues' input to improve personal leadership performance and governance success.

**Peer Assessment Figure 2**

[Hospital Name]

## Board of Trustees [Year] Peer Leadership Assessment Report

[Trustee Name]  
[Date]

**Rating Key**

**Level 5:** I *strongly agree* with this statement. Performance in this area is **outstanding**.  
**Level 4:** I *generally agree* with this statement. Performance in this area is **good**.  
**Level 3:** I *somewhat agree* with this statement. Performance in this area is **inconsistent but fairly good**.  
**Level 2:** I *somewhat disagree* with this statement. Performance in this area is **inconsistent**.  
**Level 1:** I *disagree* with this statement. Performance in this area is **poor**.  
**N/S:** Not Sure. I don't have enough information to make a valid judgment.

Governing Attributes	Your Self-Rating	Your Colleagues' Rating
Comes to meetings prepared to engage in meaningful discussion and thoughtful decision-making	4	4.1
Builds good working relationships with other trustee colleagues	5	4.5
Has an effective working relationship with the CEO	3	2.8
Understands the key issues and challenges facing the hospital	4	3.9
Demonstrates a high level of commitment to and interest in the hospital	3	4.2

**Personal Attributes**

Keeps an open mind on controversial issues
Meets time commitments
Thinks quickly and assimilates ideas well
Asks for and listens to others' ideas and input
Maintains confidentiality when required
Continually seeks to improve leadership performance

[Hospital Name]  
Board of Trustees [Year] Peer Leadership Assessment Report

**Your Colleagues' Suggestions for Ways You May Improve Your Governing Performance**

- Paste open-ended comments provided about this trustee here
- Paste open-ended comments provided about this trustee here
- Paste open-ended comments provided about this trustee here
- Paste open-ended comments provided about this trustee here
- Paste open-ended comments provided about this trustee here
- Paste open-ended comments provided about this trustee here

Type the trustee's name and the date here

Type the trustee's self-rating here

Type the mean score of all the other trustees' ratings of this trustee here

Include trustees' comments about this specific trustee here

## Step-by-Step Guide to Conducting a Governance Committee Assessment

The governance committee assessment may be conducted simultaneously with the full board governance assessment, or conducted at a separate time. While the board governance assessment provides information about the *board's* performance, the governance committee assessment provides comprehensive feedback about each *individual committee's* performance. Unlike the brief committee evaluation included in the full board governance assessment, each committee assessment is intended to be completed only by the individuals that serve on the committee being evaluated.

### **Step 1: Determine the Committees to be Evaluated, and The Criteria for Each**

Open Document 1 of the "Governance Committees Assessment" folder titled "*Governance Committee Assessment Organizer.pdf*". This document will assist you in determining the committees you would like to evaluate, and the criteria you may use. Print the document, and determine the criteria to include in the assessment by checking the boxes next to the criteria for each committee. Space is also provided for adding additional criteria. In addition, you may use last the page of the document to list other board committees and the criteria you would like to use to evaluate those committees.

### **Step 2: Prepare the Governance Committee Assessment**

If you plan to conduct the committee assessment online, enter the criteria into an online survey tool of your choice (such as Survey Monkey, Survey Planet, Zoho Survey, Kwik Survey, etc.).

If you plan to conduct the peer assessment on paper, open the "*Sample Committee Questionnaire Format.doc*" and modify the document for each of the committees that will be evaluated. Copy and paste the sample questionnaire format to create a separate document for each committee to be assessed, or simply copy and paste the tables and headings within the sample document and create one long committee survey.

***If all of the committee questions are distributed to the full board, ensure that board members know to only complete the questions for committees that they serve on. The others should be left blank.***

### **Step 3: Distribute the Governance Committee Assessment**

Email the link to the online survey to all trustees, or print a copy of each governance committee assessment for each committee member. Most organizations chose to distribute all of the committee assessments at one time to the full board, and request that each board member only complete assessments for the committees on which they serve.

***Important: The committee assessments do not replace Section 2: Committee Evaluation of the full board governance assessment. Section 2 of the full board governance assessment is completed by all trustees. The committee assessments are only completed by individuals that serve on the committee being evaluated.***

## **Step 4: Analyze Committee Responses**

After all assessments have been received, the governance assessment administrator should download the survey results or manually enter the results into a spreadsheet for analysis. The results may be summarized in a written or PowerPoint® format similar to the full board governance assessment report.

## **Step 5: Review of Results with Individual Committees**

The chair of each committee should review the assessment results at a committee meeting following the assessment. The committees should then develop action plans to address areas for potential governance improvement determined as a result of the assessment.