

Board Annual Work Plan

One of the first requirements for a board to be effective and successful is to know what its work is for the coming year.

A key tenet of effective governance is that the role and work of the board is different from that of staff. The board's roles and functions demand that the energy, effort and time of the board be directed to addressing its own work and not the work of staff.

The vision and strategic plan should clearly spell out what the organization will seek to accomplish over the next 3-5 years, but it generally does not indicate what the board needs to work on and wants to achieve.

For the board to figure this out it needs to spend some time at the start of the new board year in identifying and prioritizing its must do's, outcomes/goals, activities, events and its monitoring program for the year.

The material on the following pages is a guide for developing the board's annual work plan and calendar. When this is done the board will know what its work is for the coming year, as well as know what it has to do at its board meetings.

Annual Board Goals/Outcomes and Annual Calendar

1. The first step in developing the board’s annual work-plan is to identify and list the tasks, activities and events that must be performed or accomplished during the term of this board. The list might include such things as the following:

- Strategic Planning session
- Nomination’s for next years board
- Monitoring of organizational performance regarding achievement of outcomes and compliance with policies
- The Annual General Meeting
- Approve annual budget
- Financial Audit
- Policy Development/review
- Selection of delegates to attend national conference
- Chief Executive Performance and compensation review
- Bylaw review

Your List:

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2. The second task in developing the board’s annual work-plan is to identify the issues/concerns/problems that the board needs to or would like to address or resolve during its current term of office. The types of issues I am referring to are not operational ones (these belong to the Chief Executive), but big picture issues that will have significant effect on the organization, its work, what it is trying to achieve, and/or those it serves. Neither the board nor the Chief Executive will know all of the issues that will present themselves during the year, but they can be included in the plan as they arise.

The way to proceed with this is to have the board create a list (using the brainstorming technique) of **issues/concerns/problems** that they currently know about or think are important and must be addressed by the board (i.e. government regulations that will have a negative impact on funding, high staff turnover, competition from private sector agencies,). The list is not to contain things that the staff should or will be addressing. This is simply a list of things that the board must deal with. The list should be recorded on flip chart paper.

List the Issues/Concerns/Problems identified by your board:

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3. Generating Board Goals for the Coming Year

The idea here is to generate some board goals for the coming year. Remember, these are goals for the board to accomplish, not for the staff.

Board goals might be things like: development of a comprehensive recruitment, selection and orientation process for new directors; a training session for all directors in decision-making. In this step, it is important to generate as many goals as the group is interested in creating. Do not start discussing, agreeing or disagreeing on the goals at this time. Just generate the list. For this step, it is important to focus only on the (goals) results or outcomes not the methods, programs, strategies or tactics that you will use to achieve them.

List of Draft Goals

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Once the list has been developed and discussed the board needs to select and prioritize those that it will tackle in the coming year.

Putting it all together

After completing all steps, the board can combine the lists. This list will be its work for the year. At this point it may be necessary to prioritize the list to ensure that the most urgent or necessary tasks are addressed before less urgent ones. With this list in hand, the board must now decide by which meeting or timeline each project, goal or task, monitoring and activity should be completed, reported on, or given time on the regular board meeting agendas. With this information in hand, the board can now create a calendar for the coming year that shows what is to be accomplished and by what date; what will be monitored and when; what will be addressed at the various board meetings; and, the dates of various events in which the board is involved.

This is also the time to identify who will be responsible for each item on the board's annual work plan.

This now becomes the annual work plan for the board for the coming year.

SAMPLE OF A BOARD’S ANNUAL WORK PLAN CALENDAR: A THREE-MONTH VIEW

| January | February | March |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New board member orientation (Gov. Committee) • Strategic planning session (all day) • Review financial statements • Create board’s annual work plan (Chair) • Decision on complaints policy (Policy Comm. Presents) • Issue discussion: position on the provincial govt’s new policy on funding for our organization (Chief Exec leads) • Review of board policies: on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Financial management b) Employee relations c) Member relations • Board training on decision-making • Evaluate meeting performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review strategic plan strategies • Review staff’s strategic plan annual goals for the year • Monitor financial statements • Monitor policies on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Compensation & benefits b) Harassment • Discuss task force report on transportation issue • Discuss and decide on new membership structure • Final review & discussion of budget for current fiscal year • Evaluate meeting performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor financial statement • Approve budget for new fiscal year • Discuss the concept of partnerships with other tourism organizations • Discuss and approve policy resolution for AGM • Monitor achievement of strategic plan goals # 1, 3 & 5 • Strike Executive Director Performance Assessment Task Group • Evaluate meeting performance |

Note: where I have identified in (brackets) an individual or committee, that individual or group is responsible for leading the discussion or presenting a report at that meeting.