



Evaluating the Executive Director

This material excerpted from CompassPoint's Building Successful Boards seminar.

Because the executive director is so central to the success or failure of an organization, evaluation of the executive director by the board is an important component of the board's oversight and governance responsibilities.

Too often evaluations (and job descriptions) are undertaken only when the board has become unhappy with its chief executive. But an annual evaluation (along with ongoing informal feedback) helps the executive director understand management areas that need improvement, as well as operational areas where the board is insufficiently informed. A written evaluation also serves to document the executive director's accomplishments, as well as unsatisfactory performance. A committee of the board (often the board officers or the governance committee) leads the evaluation process, reports on the evaluation to the entire board, and recommends the director's salary for the next year. This committee should also handle other board actions related to the executive director.

Because the executive director acts both directly and indirectly through others to manage the organization, evaluating the executive director's performance is inevitably linked to evaluating the agency's performance as a whole. As a result, many boards incorporate evaluation of the executive director into the annual review of organizational performance and goal setting for the coming year.

A formal annual assessment provides a straightforward way for board members to provide feedback to the executive director and for the director to be aware of criteria that will be used in this evaluation. The Annual Assessment Questionnaire has two noteworthy shortcomings. First, it is based on the perceptions of board members, who frequently have very limited views of the executive director's performance. Weak executives can hide performance problems from the board much more easily than from staff, clients, or funders. Second, the quantitative nature of the questionnaire tends to attribute the same level of importance to all activities, thereby allowing success with smaller tasks to

compensate for a larger failure. For example, if an executive director performs wonderful program and community work but has incurred a huge deficit, the problem will emerge only as one or two negative “grades” but will not affect the overall score.

Because of these shortcomings, you should use the Annual Assessment not as the evaluation itself, but as the starting point for a discussion on performance measurement. Boards need to discuss their sense of where the director and the agency are succeeding and which areas need more attention.

Regardless of the evaluation process used, remember that executive directors need feedback all year round. Like any employee, executive directors need praise and acknowledgment for work well done, as well as immediate feedback when problems arise. In the best situations, the board president and officers have established good working relationships with the executive director and constant feedback flows in both directions.

Customize the enclosed template to ensure that the ED is being evaluated on the specific requirements and expectations of the organization and not on generic requirements.

SAMPLE Executive Director Annual Performance Evaluation

Today's Date:	Your Role:	Your Name (optional):
	<input type="checkbox"/> Board <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Self (ED)	

Guidelines for completing evaluations:

- Evaluation information will be kept in confidence by the Board. Individuals' feedback will be aggregated and summarized by a Board representative. A summary with themes will be shared the ED and the Board; specific comments will not be attributed to any individual.
- If you do not have sufficient information about the ED's performance over the appraisal period, please mark N/A.
- In reflecting on the ED's performance, consider her/his overall performance rather than isolated incidents. Focus on broad themes and patterns of consistent behavior including her/his strengths, contributions to the organization, and challenges/areas that you would suggest for improvement or development.
- When providing comments, please use specific examples when possible.
- Please prepare to spend about 20 minutes completing this evaluation.

Rating scale:

Gold Star: Performance levels and accomplishments far exceed normal expectations. This category is reserved for performance that stands out and clearly and consistently demonstrates exceptional accomplishments in terms of quality and quantity of work that is easily recognized as truly exceptional by others.

Exemplary: Performance frequently exceeds job requirements. Performance is sustained and uniformly high with thorough and on-time results.

Fully Effective: Performance clearly and fully meets all the requirements of the position in terms of quality and quantity of work. It is described as solid performance. Minor deviations may occur, the overall level of performance meets or slightly exceeds all position requirements.

Development Needed: Performance is less than expected OR this is a new skill that needs to be developed or enhanced.

Significant Concerns: Performance must improve significantly within a reasonable period of time if the individual is to remain in this position.

Section 1: Organizational Expectations

Organizational Standards	Definition	Rating and Comments Choose N/A if you do not have enough information to provide input
Relationship Management	Ability to represent organizational values within every relationship at work and to cultivate and maintain positive relationships with individuals, staff, clients, funders, and other partner organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold Star • Exemplary • Fully Effective • Development Needed • Significant Concerns • N/A Comment:
Collaboration	Works effectively with staff, volunteers and community partners, ensuring the employment of an inclusive, team approach whenever possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold Star • Exemplary • Fully Effective • Development Needed • Significant Concerns • N/A Comment:
Priority Setting	Ability to manage and prioritize multiple, sometimes competing, tasks and deadlines to ensure that both values are being upheld and goals are being accomplished.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold Star • Exemplary • Fully Effective • Development Needed • Significant Concerns • N/A Comment:
Problem-Solving	Ability to accurately and effectively assess problems and identify and implement solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold Star • Exemplary • Fully Effective • Development Needed • Significant Concerns • N/A Comment:
Compassion	Demonstrates genuine cares for staff and clients of the agency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold Star • Exemplary • Fully Effective • Development Needed • Significant Concerns • N/A Comment:
Communication	Demonstrates professional, clear and compassionate communication with staff, clients and community partners of the agency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold Star • Exemplary • Fully Effective • Development Needed • Significant Concerns

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A <p>Comment:</p>
Commitment	Demonstrates commitment and dedication to the work we do, the clients we serve and the agency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold Star • Exemplary • Fully Effective • Development Needed • Significant Concerns • N/A <p>Comment:</p>
Leadership	Creating a climate of trust and mutual respect; supports shared leadership principles and distribution of decision-making, increasing the potential for employees to be productive and to feel welcome, valued, and motivated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold Star • Exemplary • Fully Effective • Development Needed • Significant Concerns • N/A <p>Comment:</p>
Performance Management	Managing employee performance in alignment with the mission and goals of the agency and consistent with policies and procedures adopted by the Board of Directors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold Star • Exemplary • Fully Effective • Development Needed • Significant Concerns • N/A <p>Comment:</p>
Project Management	Ability to develop, implement, coordinate and evaluate projects under their scope of duties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold Star • Exemplary • Fully Effective • Development Needed • Significant Concerns • N/A <p>Comment:</p>
Delegation	Effective delegation to ensure supervisory level staff are able to meet the expectations and requirements of their job and to ensure all staff are able to develop new job skills and competencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold Star • Exemplary • Fully Effective • Development Needed • Significant Concerns • N/A <p>Comment:</p>
Conflict resolution	Understand that conflict is a normal part of all organizations and that it can be an opportunity to seek clarity, understand divergent viewpoints and engage others in important organizational issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold Star • Exemplary • Fully Effective • Development Needed • Significant Concerns • N/A <p>Comment:</p>

Building External Relationships	Cultivate relationships with external stakeholders in a positive and productive manner. Stakeholders include donors, area delegates and politicians, community service partners, funders, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold Star • Exemplary • Fully Effective • Development Needed • Significant Concerns • N/A <p>Comment:</p>
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Values	Definition
Confidentiality and Safety	It is vital that confidentiality and personal safety be respected at all times. We, therefore, honor the privacy of clients, staff and volunteers. We claim an atmosphere of emotional, verbal, and physical non-violence in our workplace and in our programs.
Equality and Respect	All individuals have inherent worth and are, therefore, valued equally, regardless of gender identity, ethnicity, class, age, country of origin, political affiliation, sexual orientation, religion or ability. It is essential to honor our differences, as well as our similarities. Respect is reflected in the way we treat our clients, ourselves, and members of the community. We value the ideas, beliefs, opinions and decisions of others, whether or not we agree with them.
Empowerment	We believe empowerment begins with recognizing and knowing that individually and collectively clients, staff and volunteers have the strength to make necessary change and to accomplish our goals.
Personal and Professional Responsibility	We hold ourselves and others accountable for decisions and behaviors within both the agency and the community. We recognize that we make decisions that affect others and ourselves and do so with as much information as possible. Our commitment to cooperation and open communication is demonstrated in the way we approach our work.
Social Change Through Education and Advocacy	We envision a society of nonviolence in which every individual is valued and we advocate for positive changes in the societal systems that may lead to oppression. Our work will not be done until every person in our community is treated equally, until each individual is respected, and the dignity of every person is recognized. To this end, we will educate ourselves and our community to reject violence and oppression in our own lives and in the lives of the people around us.
Sustaining Ourselves and Our Community	We believe that individual wellness is essential to the health and success of our organizational mission. It is our goal to cultivate an environment that supports wellness in mind, body and spirit for ourselves, our clients and our communities. We do this by creating space and skills for self-care investing in our communities and supporting environmental sustainability.
Overall comments about the ED's demonstration of values:	

Section 2: Executive Director Position Expectations

Position Competencies	Position Profile	Rating and Comments Choose N/A if you do not have enough information to provide input
Overall Oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Directly supervises all Program Directors and Administrative Director ○ Ensures overall compliance with program goals and objectives ○ Provides guidance on personnel matters to Program Directors ○ Work with Administrative Director to ensure overall compliance with agency policies, funding guidelines, accounting policies and procedures, etc. ○ Serve as final signing authority for funders, contracts, MOU's involving the exchange of funds or resources, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gold Star ● Exemplary ● Fully Effective ● Development Needed ● Significant Concerns ● N/A <p>Comment:</p>
Overall Budgeting – Development and Oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create overall agency budget in collaboration with Program Directors and Administrative Director; make modifications as necessary ○ Training and mentoring of managers to take responsibility of budget development and oversight ○ Provide oversight for monthly review of financials and changes to allocation spreadsheets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gold Star ● Exemplary ● Fully Effective ● Development Needed ● Significant Concerns ● N/A <p>Comment:</p>
Fund Development (oversight of development team, including Board, Program Directors, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In coordination with Program Directors, search for, analyze, develop, write and submit grants on behalf of all programs ○ Mentor/train agency staff to write/manage ongoing grants and re-applications ○ Support and guide all fundraising efforts across the agency. ED will work closely with individual programs and board of directors to provide support and guidance as appropriate, however, will not coordinate the fundraising efforts for individual programs, only for the agency as a whole ○ Develop corporate and foundation donors for programs and for agency as a whole where appropriate ○ Develop and implement agency-wide strategies for fundraising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gold Star ● Exemplary ● Fully Effective ● Development Needed ● Significant Concerns ● N/A <p>Comment:</p>

Board of Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work with Board President to set agendas, schedule meetings, and coordinate information to be shared with the board ○ Prepare and assemble all reports and materials for Board ○ Serve on all board committees, as appropriate ○ Work with the board regarding personnel issues, policy issues and planning issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gold Star ● Exemplary ● Fully Effective ● Development Needed ● Significant Concerns ● N/A <p>Comment:</p>
External Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work closely with Program Directors to ensure positive and collaborative relationships with essential community partners ○ Attend community meetings are requested by Program Directors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gold Star ● Exemplary ● Fully Effective ● Development Needed ● Significant Concerns ● N/A <p>Comment:</p>
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assists Program Directors in creating evaluation plans to measure program outcomes. ○ Monitors evaluation strategies and outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gold Star ● Exemplary ● Fully Effective ● Development Needed ● Significant Concerns ● N/A <p>Comment:</p>
Sustainability Impact/ Financial Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that there are viable strategies in place to achieve desired mission impact. ○ Ensure that the organization generates sufficient resources to fund current work and invest in the organization's future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gold Star ● Exemplary ● Fully Effective ● Development Needed ● Significant Concerns ● N/A <p>Comment:</p>
Comments on Overall Demonstration of Position Competencies:		

Section 3: Additional Comments

Major Accomplishments and Contributions:
Briefly identify 3-4 of the ED's major achievements during the appraisal period. Consider the actions s/he took to contribute to the organization's overall effectiveness, success, and/or reputation and visibility.
Other comments about ED's performance not captured above: