



Evaluating Your Executive Director's End Results

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Q: What do you want your Executive Director to accomplish this year?

A: One look at the organizational chart and you know: The board is the Executive Director's boss. And as the boss, it is the job of the board to evaluate the performance of the Executive Director.

When we evaluate the performance of the Executive Director, we are really evaluating the performance of the entire organization. Considered through that lens, what will you base your Executive Director's evaluation on? Will you only look to see what the ED did? Or will you look deeper, to see what both the ED and the organization accomplished?

If your organization is going to improve your community's quality of life, your board will want to know the organization is making measurable progress on that, every year. That is a big part of what the board is accountable for monitoring! One easy way to measure that success is to focus your Executive Director's work NOT on what he/she will DO, but on what he/she will ACCOMPLISH, and to then measure and monitor that.

The following steps may help you as you transform from an organization that **does** things, to an organization that **accomplishes** things.

1) Plan Ahead:

During your annual planning session (You do have an annual planning session, don't you?), determine what you want the organization to have accomplished by the end of the following year. Ask yourselves:

- What do you want to be different / better next year than it is this year?
- How do you want your community and your clients to be better off than they are today?

While some of your plans may be about improving your organization, it is far more important that your plans be about improving your community and the lives of those who participate in your programs. How do you want their lives to be better a year from now?

2) Plan Now to Measure Later:

Once you have determined what you want to accomplish and for whom, determine how will you measure to know if that has happened.

- What indicators will you look for?
- If you are successful, how will you know?
- If you are not successful, how will you know?

3) Make Assignments:

Determine which portion of the plan the Executive Director will be responsible for accomplishing. "By next year, we want you to have accomplished X." Be clear in your assignments, so there is no confusion about who has what responsibility.

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4) Provide the Tools:

Make sure the Executive Director has the tools he/she needs to get the job done. You would not set impossible goals and expect them to be met - the same holds true for setting goals without providing the tools and support for meeting those goals. If the only thing standing in the way of your organization accomplishing its goals is a tool (or a system, or a person, or what-have-you), figure out how you can make sure you have that tool. Don't let obstacles become insurmountable - get around those obstacles and accomplish your goals!

5) Set Parameters:

Once you have established expectations for what the ED will accomplish, set expectations for the [values that will guide that work](#).

6) Write the Evaluation Form Now.

While it is fresh in your minds, create a checklist of the items you will be looking to measure when you evaluate your Executive Director. Provide that checklist to your ED, letting him/her know a year ahead of time, "Here is what we expect you to accomplish, and here is what we will be evaluating." This is the most supportive way you can encourage your employee - your ED - to do the best job possible.

There is a mile of difference between "doing" and "accomplishing." By evaluating your Executive Director's performance based NOT on what he/she DID, but on what he/she ACCOMPLISHED, your organization will be taking great strides to creating incredible improvement in your community's quality of life.

And the side benefits? First, your Executive Director will know what is expected. Second, though, your board will not be like the many boards who call our office, a week before their ED's evaluation, asking, "What should we ask in that evaluation?" You will already know what you want to measure, and chances are, you will have been measuring progress along the way.

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