



Board appraisal

Prepared by
Right Lane Consulting



Introduction

This board appraisal survey can be used to understand board members' and senior managers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the board. This survey covers board organisation and meetings, board committees, board/management relations, planning and strategy, accountability and governance, board leadership and competencies, and evaluating and reporting.

You are welcome to use the survey without cost provided you contact us by email requesting permission at marc@rightlane.com.au. If you provide us with your data, we will also provide you with a two-page interpretation of results without charge if you allow us to use your de-identified results in our board appraisal survey database.

How to use this survey

Complete	Board members complete this survey either a paper version (attached) or on an electronic survey/data capture program such as Survey Monkey.
Compile and analyse	The survey data should be consolidated and analyses conducted to identify key issues and challenges with respect to board functioning.
Discuss	Discuss the results with directors individually and/or the board as a whole. An independent consultant may be used to facilitate a discussion with the board about the results (mostly with the whole board but possibly also with the chair out of the room for some of the discussion).
Repeat	How often should this survey be conducted? There is no right or wrong answer, but it should be more than once as a longitudinal perspective can be very helpful. Some boards complete the full process every two years and a 'cut down' version every other year.

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Board organisation and meetings

	Strongly Disagree (4)	Disagree (3)	Agree (2)	Strongly Agree (1)
1.1 Our board charter clearly outlines the key functions and responsibilities expected from our board.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.2 Board activities and key decisions are driven by an established annual agenda that is linked closely to the roles and responsibilities of the board as defined in the charter.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.3 Board meetings start and finish on time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.4 Sufficient time is devoted to addressing important issues for the organisation's future.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.5 Board meetings are the right length.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.6 Board meetings are sufficiently outcome oriented.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.7 Materials used in board meetings are generally:				
a. relevant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. appropriate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. timely.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.8 Proposals put to the board include recommendations from the CEO/author that facilitate decision-making.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.9 Board meetings provide sufficient opportunity for a healthy level of discussion regarding concerns and challenges.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.10 Board members exercise the right amount of respect in constructively challenging views and opinions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.11 There is opportunity for the board to meet without management present.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.12 Management's involvement in board meetings is balanced and does not inhibit objective discussion and challenge.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.13 The minutes of the board meetings clearly and accurately record the proceedings and action items agreed upon during board meetings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.14 With respect to the questions you have just answered, what are the key strengths of the board? What are the areas for improvement?				

Board structure and committees

	Strongly Disagree (4)	Disagree (3)	Agree (2)	Strongly Agree (1)
2.1 Our board has the right structure, including committees, to support:				
a. the monitoring of performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. implementation of strategy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. compliance with policies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. accountability.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.2 The delegations to the committees are:				
a. appropriate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. well understood by members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. clearly articulated in the committee's charter.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3 The level of reporting from the committees is sufficient to provide the board with a full understanding of committee issues and decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.4 Our board:				
a. has the right number of members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. has the appropriate number of independent directors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. has the right mix of skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.5 With respect to the questions you have just answered, what are the key strengths of the board? What are the areas for improvement?				

Board/management relations

	Strongly Disagree (4)	Disagree (3)	Agree (2)	Strongly Agree (1)
3.1 Our board:				
a. works constructively together	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. challenges management assumptions, where necessary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. collectively arrives at the best option for the organisation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.2 A written job description for the CEO, approved by the board, is reviewed regularly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.3 Our board, as a whole:				
a. sets the CEO's performance targets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. reviews the CEO's performance annually.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.4 Careful consideration and regular reviews are allotted for:				
a. talent workforce strategy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. succession plans, particularly for the CEO.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.5 There is clarity in the understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of the board and management.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.6 There is mutual trust and respect between the board and management.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.7 Our board is satisfied that the level of delegation of authority to management reflects the right balance of authority and decision-making.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.8 Management is comfortable to come forward with unpleasant news and raise issues of concern with the board.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.10 Our board is satisfied with the organisations' performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.11 With respect to the questions you have just answered, what are the key strengths of the board? What are the areas for improvement?				

Planning and strategy

		Strongly Disagree (4)	Disagree (3)	Agree (2)	Strongly Agree (1)
4.1	Our board has the appropriate level of involvement in the formulation of the organisation’s strategy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.2	Board decisions are specifically aligned with the strategy and direction of the organisation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.3	Our board actively monitors the organisation’s performance against the strategy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.4	Our board:				
	a. clearly understands its role in overseeing the execution of the strategy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	b. is confident that execution of the strategy will lead to the desired outcomes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.5	Our board thoroughly deliberates and reviews decisions relating to strategic initiatives without getting impeded by too much detail.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.6	Our board ensures that the strategy plan and initiatives related to it are aligned with the risk management framework.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.7	With respect to the questions you have just answered, what are the key strengths of the board? What are the areas for improvement?				

Accountability and governance

		Strongly Disagree (4)	Disagree (3)	Agree (2)	Strongly Agree (1)
5.1	Board members understand their governance responsibilities as outlined in legislation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.2	Board members act at all times in the best interests of the organisation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.3	Board independence is upheld at all times.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.4	There are processes in place to ensure the proper conduct of directors in relation to actual or perceived conflicts of interest.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.5	Our board ensures that the organisation adheres to corporate social responsibility principles.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.6	Our board actively involves its stakeholders by soliciting input on decisions that impact on the long-term future of the organisation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.7	Our board's risk appetite is clearly articulated and well understood.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.8	Our board maintains a balanced scorecard or other measurement framework that:				
	a. effectively evaluates performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	b. has a good mix of financial and non-financial KPIs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.9	With respect to the questions you have just answered, what are the key strengths of the board? What are the areas for improvement?				

Board leadership and competencies

	Strongly Disagree (4)	Disagree (3)	Agree (2)	Strongly Agree (1)
6.1 A written code of ethics for the board has been established and is approved annually by the board.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.2 Our board takes responsibility for fostering an appropriate organisational culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.3 Our board:				
a. is collectively capable of carrying out its duties and responsibilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. has a suitable mix of skills and experience to confidently perform its duties and responsibilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.4 All board members arrive well prepared for board and committee meetings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.5 All board members actively participate in meetings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.6 All board members exercise independence of thought and mind.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.7 Each director has an understanding of the market forces and key issues affecting the organisation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.8 All board members have a sound understanding of:				
a. the organisation as a whole	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. the organisation's strategic objectives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. the organisation's operations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. the organisation's strengths and weaknesses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. the organisation's material risks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. the organisation's performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly Disagree (4)	Disagree (3)	Agree (2)	Strongly Agree (1)
6.9 All board members have:				
a. a basic understanding of financial statements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. the capacity to analyse basic trends to evaluate performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.10 Our chair has an inclusive personal leadership style that promotes:				
a. focused discussion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. effective fact based decision-making.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.11 Overall, how would you describe the chairs performance?				
6.12 What matters would you like to see the organisation's board spend more time addressing?				
6.13 Are there any new or different qualities or competencies that our board needs to build?				
6.14 With respect to the questions you have just answered, what are the key strengths of the board? What are the areas for improvement?				

Evaluating and reporting

	Strongly Disagree (4)	Disagree (3)	Agree (2)	Strongly Agree (1)
7.1 Our board ensures that:				
a. forecasts are established annually	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. forecasts are managed effectively	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. operating budgets are established annually	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. budgets are managed effectively	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.2 Business cases presented to the board are, where appropriate, accompanied by rigorous analysis.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.3 Management ensures that:				
a. issues arising in board meetings are acted upon	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. questions raised by the directors are answered satisfactorily.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.4 Our board consistently monitors performance information and reports and is therefore forewarned of possible problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.5 Our board takes appropriate corrective action in response to possible problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.6 Our board adds significant value to the organisation's performance through its oversight and monitoring of management's activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.7 With respect to the questions you have just answered, what are the key strengths of the board? What are the areas for improvement?				

About Right Lane

Right Lane is an Australian management consulting firm that specialises in moderating executive team and board workshops and facilitating strategy and planning processes.

Right Lane was established in 1997 to help private, not for profit and public sector clients to clarify and accelerate their future plans. Over the past 15 years, we have helped the executive teams and boards of more than 60 organisations to define and adapt their direction and strategy, identify and clarify their priorities, align their efforts with their aspirations, get their major projects started and finished, and measure and improve their performance.

In 2011, Right Lane became, to our knowledge, Australia's first 'for benefit' management consulting firm. This means that we have capped our return on shareholder funds at reasonable levels, rather than seeking to maximise financial returns, which allows us to concentrate on our mission of contributing to society by helping organisations that do good do better.

Our areas of focus

- Developing and managing strategy and planning processes for clients
- Implementing strategy through aligning and engaging the organisation, and measuring and monitoring performance
- Leading strategic projects, such as pre-merger analysis, pricing, new product feasibility and growth options evaluation
- Facilitating clients' board and executive team workshops

For more information

For more information about this research or services offered by Right Lane please contact Marc Levy (marc@rightlane.com.au, 03 9428 5336).



For more information, please visit

www.rightlane.com.au

Or phone **+613 9428 5336**