

Organizational Capacity Checklist

This assessment tool is designed to take a snapshot of an organization at a point in time by assessing its needs and strengths. It is most informative when completed by a cross section of board and staff members (at least six people total); organization stakeholders can be invited to participate as well if deemed appropriate. The responses to these questions measure perception as well as reality and will be somewhat subjective. The choices “Satisfactory,” “Needs Improvement,” “Not Aware” or “Not Applicable” are intentionally broad and the answers you will receive are meant as general indicators only.

It is very useful to complete this checklist at times of organizational transition or before taking on major initiatives. Areas which receive a significant number of “Needs Improvement” ratings obviously are worth noting. Likewise, when an area receives a wide range of ratings it frequently indicates a gulf between perception and reality that may be remedied by increased communication between staff and board. For example, board members may not be sufficiently aware of program policies that are in place and staff may not be aware of governance policies.

This tool is most useful when completed honestly. This may be accomplished by keeping responses anonymous. This is not a test. No organization is expected to receive only “Satisfactory” ratings. Responses will help fuel conversations about your organization whether you are considering a new programming venture, planning a board and staff retreat or working on a long-range plan. Make sure to date the checklists and keep copies for your files.

Organizational Capacity Checklist

	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Not Aware	Not Applicable
MISSION & PURPOSE				
Do you have a written mission statement?				
Is the aesthetic vision or philosophy clear?				
Does the board understand your mission?				
Does the staff understand your mission?				
Is your constituency clear about your mission?				
Do you and your funders have the same concept of your mission?				
Do you have a process to review your mission regularly?				

PROGRAMMING

- Is vision provided by artistic leadership (on staff and/or board)?
- Is there consistency in your programming direction?
- Do you have an annual program planning process?
- Do you have a method to evaluate programs?
- Method to determine constituents' needs?
- People within and outside your organization have program input?
- System for program budgeting?
- System for post-program budget review?
- System for analyzing cost-effectiveness?

GOVERNANCE

- Does the board understand their function and duties?
- Do you have a written board job descriptions?
- Are by-laws current'?
- Procedures in place for evaluating objectives?

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Satisfactory Needs Improvement Not Aware Not Applicable

System for board member recruitment, orientation and education?

Procedures in place for evaluating board members?

Does the board have structured committees?

Frequency of board meetings?

Attendance at board meetings?

Effective use of time at board meetings?

Board participation in programs?

Regular financial reporting to the board?

Board members donations of time/expertise/cash?

Board members commitment?

STAFF

Is there a clear organizational structure?

Is everyone clear on reporting relationships?

Does each staff member have a job description?

Is there administrative as well as artistic leadership?

Communication between staff, board, writers/teachers?

Size of staff in relation to programs?

Staff experience in relation to work?

Amount of time staff works?

Use of consultants or p/t contractors?

Salary scale of staff?

Staff morale?

Work environment?

Satisfactory Needs Improvement Not Aware Not Applicable

FUNDRAISING

Process of setting annual fundraising goals?
Ability to meet those goals?
Development plan for organization?
Grant writing capacity?
Individual donor research capacity?
Level of corporate support?
Major gift support level?
Involvement of board in fundraising activities?
Volunteer support of fundraising efforts?
Board training on fundraising?
Mix of contributed income (corporate/government/foundation)?
Development materials?
Systems for acknowledging gifts?
System for tracking donor information?
Mechanisms for membership and renewal?

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Annual budgeting process?
Board mechanism for regular review of finances?
System for regular cash flow monitoring?
Computerized accounting system?
Annual audit by CPA?
Formal policy to maintain integrity of restricted accounts?
Staff understanding of financial systems?
Board understanding of financial systems?

Satisfactory Needs Improvement Not Aware Not Applicable

MARKETING

Understanding of organization's current constituency?

Understanding of target "audience" or constituency?

Clear idea of the competition?

Tracking of attendance/sales/registration at programs?

Annual marketing plan?

Marketing/promotional materials?

Earned income strategies?

Ability to meet earned income goals?

Size and accuracy of organizational mailing list?

PUBLIC/COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Clarity of image conveyed to the public?

Mechanism for handling community input?

Annual public relations plan?

Effectiveness in representing the organization to its constituencies?

Quality and effectiveness of publications?

PLANNING

Strategic plan in place?

Plan reviewed and updated annually by board and staff?

Board and staff involvement in planning?

Periodic facilitated or retreat planning sessions?