



## A FIO PARTNERS PERSPECTIVE:

### Developing a Model of Executive Director Performance Appraisal

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There are four basic steps to developing a model for ED or CEO performance appraisal. (1) design the base of information on which the appraisal will take place; (2) determine the criteria for judging performance; (3) conduct the appraisal involving appropriate Board leadership; and (4) develop a performance enhancement plan and support it appropriately with resources.

#### **Step One: Gather information**

Consider the following possible inputs:

- Board member survey
- Key informant interviews
- Staff climate survey and/or norm check results
- Key documents review: audit, financial statements, strategic plan
- Executive Director state of the agency report
- Third party evaluation reports
- Exit interviews
- 360 process for direct reports

#### **Step Two: Determine model for generating discussion about performance**

The criteria provided are designed as a basis for discussion between the committee and the Executive Director. There are five types of criteria: Model 1 focuses on essential functions or key responsibilities; Model 2 focuses on key skills involved in carrying out the Executive's Director's role; Model 3 focuses on key attributes or characteristics displayed by the Executive Director; Model 4 focuses on key aspects of organizational health; and Model 5 is based on specific accomplishments that have been previously negotiated.

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An organization may use one or two of the models, or may draw from all five. Whatever model or combination of models is used, the items should be weighted appropriately by the committee before assessment and can be captured in the format provided in Model 1. Weight should reflect how important the item is to the organization at this stage of its development.

**Model 1: Essential functions**

Weight	Item	Evaluation				
		Exceptional	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
3	Maintains and controls the operations of ST, assists in the development of ST goals and objectives, and implements short and long-range strategic plans in fulfillment of the ST's mission.	5	4	3	2	1
2	Assumes responsibility for administration of all ST affairs in accordance with Board approved policies and procedures, work plans, budgets, special directives, and applicable federal, state and local requirements.	5	4	3	2	1
1	Directs all personnel matters including recruiting, hiring, supervision, training and evaluation of ST staff or delegates these tasks appropriately.	5	4	3	2	1
1	Creates an organizational climate that promotes healthy relationships between and among staff; maintains a stable work force, avoiding unnecessary turnover	5	4	3	2	1
1	Directs all financial matters in accordance with Board approved internal control structure, policies and procedures, and federal and state requirements. Coordinates an annual audit of ST funds.	5	4	3	2	1

Weight	Item	Evaluation				
		Exceptional	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
4	Serves as ST's principle liaison with relevant governmental entities and directs ST's leadership role in national, statewide and community level activities to ensure the establishment of effective partnerships.	5	4	3	2	1
2	Ensures the timely preparation and submission of required grant proposals and other funding requests, progress reports, audit reports, and other reports/submissions as necessary.	5	4	3	2	1
1	Pursues broad funding sources that augment the ability of ST to enact and enhance ST's mission and visibility.	5	4	3	2	1
4	Educates relevant public and private organizations regarding the mission, objectives and activities of ST. Maintains an excellent understanding of the political climate at the state and federal levels, which could have implications for ST services.	5	4	3	2	1
	Total					

## Model 2: Key skills

### Agency Mission and Service

- Understands the mission, goals and objectives of the organization
- Reinforces, supports and pursues the attainment of organizational goals and objectives
- Provides a positive influence in pursuit of program objectives
- Represents the organization professionally and appropriately
- Works to enhance the image of the organization internally and externally
- Leads organizational learning efforts, ensuring that employees engage in continuous learning and apply what is learned to improving practice

### Communication and Teamwork

- Employs effective and appropriate communication skills when listening, speaking and writing
- Works with others to solve problems
- Is reliable and follows through on agreed-upon tasks
- Seeks and accepts input
- Provides objective feedback
- Utilizes appropriate conflict resolution tools and techniques

### Flexibility and Adaptability

- Maintains a flexible, fluid approach to daily work and to changes in procedure, process, technology, responsibility, or assignment
- Able to accept and adapt to change, handle crisis, step outside one's role as necessary, maintain a positive attitude and sense of humor
- Is positive about new ideas/systems/changes

### Initiative and Creativity

- Demonstrates initiative in day to day activities and develops new systems, projects, ideas or methods to improve the job or to complete assigned tasks
- Is self-motivated, enthusiastic, and able to visualize and anticipate opportunities
- Recognizes situations which can be improved or potential problems, and acts promptly to develop or propose solutions

### Planning, Scheduling and Prioritizing

- Organizes and plans personal work assignments
- Performs job tasks efficiently and in a timely manner
- Manages operating costs (if appropriate)
- Develops long-range plans for work unit (if appropriate)
- Prioritizes, coordinates and monitors tasks to ensure work completion

### Model 3: Key characteristics

**Integrity.** The board, the staff, and the community need to perceive the executive as honest, trustworthy, and operating in the best interests of the organization and the larger community or cause.

**Credibility.** Chief executives can achieve credibility through professional credentials and accomplishments; a close personal connection to an organization, cause, or community; or a track record of promises kept and results delivered over time.

**Charisma.** Beyond being a skilled communicator, the chief executive should be a compelling presence — able to speak about the work of the organization in powerful and inspiring terms, able to command attention and inspire confidence, and able to motivate others to follow and give.

**Initiative.** Chief executives can build the capacity for initiative at many levels of the organization, but are unlikely to be successful if they don't possess a considerable degree of personal courage, resourcefulness, and ingenuity. The most effective chief executives have the confidence to act, rather than always waiting passively for direction from others.

**Vision.** Successful chief executives are aware of the gap between current reality and what should be. Whether the vision involves increased success and impact for the organization, expanded services for the community, or significant social change, the chief executive can see a better future and has faith that it can become a reality.

**Competence.** Charisma and vision complement but do not replace actual skill. Chief executives need content and program expertise, as well as financial and general management skills. The board and other staff members can compensate for some weak areas, but not for overall incompetence.

**Responsiveness.** Effective chief executives listen well — to the community, staff, board members, stakeholders, and partners — and respond appropriately.

## Model 4: Organizational attributes

For example, the following are key attributes of a learning organization that an Executive Director should demonstrate, initiate or encourage:

An organization for which learning is a priority:

- Scans the environment for changes in relevant fields of service, shifts in demographics among consumers, actions of collaborative partners, key referral sources, competitors and potential competitors.
- Maintains a permeable organization boundary that allows information to flow freely into the organization from all levels.
- Insists on the importance of measurement and the implementation of ways to measure performance.
- Insists on documentation and conscious practice, ensuring that employees are aware of the philosophy, values, and protocols or standards that should guide their work.
- Maintains a climate of openness, encouraging employees to admit mistakes and learn from them.
- Recognizes performance gaps that guide areas for improvement and/or sets specific objectives that require the organization to improve its performance.
- Values risk taking on behalf of organizational improvement; encourages and values employees who are able to embrace change as a constant.
- Commits to continuous education, seeking ways to educate employees both formally and informally.
- Participates, and encourages other managers and supervisors to participate in learning activities and openly supports the acquisition and use of new knowledge and skills.
- Ensures that learning is applied to improve practice.

There may be other key organizational characteristics that are critical to functioning in your organization's field. Identifying them requires both thought and input from key stakeholders.

## **Model 5: Negotiated organizational performance objectives**

It is good practice to have a clear understanding about how the organization is expected to evolve or change in the coming year. Key growth goals, implementation of earned income or fundraising strategies, etc. may come into the discussion of performance. It should be remembered, however, that performance goals must be set from the previous year forward and should be mutually agreed upon between the Board and CEO/ED.

Note: The lists provided here are meant to stimulate the Board's thinking about what roles and abilities are most important for the organization at this stage of its evolution. They are not exhaustive lists and can and should be amended, depending upon the particular field and stage of organizational development.

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