Board Assessment: Engaging New Constituencies

For each statement below, circle a number from 1 (not at all or never true) to 5 (very or always true) to rate how well it describes your board. Then decide how important this particular practice is to the success and sustainability of your organization right now ... a "1" might mean it's insignificant, and a "5" might mean that your survival depends upon it. If you think something is important, make a note to yourself about the goals you'd set to improve for the next year.

	Does this describe your board?	Does this matter right now?	Why We Ask
Adapt Programming			
1. The board regularly examines how the organization's programs fit with community trends and needs, and makes changes to meaningfully serve or attract new segments of the community essential to mission and programmatic success.	1 2 3 4 5 *not true* *very true*	1 2 3 4 5 *not at all* *very much*	Board members have an additional "reach" into the community served by the organization. In their day-to-day roles, they have awareness and access to information about trends, changes, and opportunities in the community. In their strategic role, they can blend their broader perspective with periodic research and analysis to bring a fresh lens to the question, "How do we need to adapt our programs and projects to better serve the whole community?"
Identify New Partners & Relationships			
2. The board routinely considers groups and constituencies with whom the organization needs to be working with to stay relevant and be most successful in achieving its goals.	1 2 3 4 5 *not true* *very true*	1 2 3 4 5 *not at all* *very much*	As programming and project needs shift, opportunities for partnership and innovative collaboration shift as well. Board members play an important "scouting" and "connecting" role, expanding its relationships with groups in parts of the community that might be evolving in their importance for the organization's mission and focus.
Become an Ally			
3. The board explores ways the organization can listen, lead, or operate differently in order to be a better ally to other organizations, groups, or constituencies within the community.	1 2 3 4 5 *not true* *very true*	1 2 3 4 5 *not true* *very true*	Long term partnerships are often built by respecting and supporting others' work first. A posture of "working along-side" others and supporting others *before* you explore ways to work together can be especially helpful when bridging historical differences in your community. Respect is demonstrated by consciously adjusting your organization's approach so that your group does not duplicate others, stepping back so others can lead; and taking full leadership in areas where your group adds the most value.

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Set Goals for Engagement

4. The board sets goals for engaging new constituencies within the community that are a priority for achieving its mission and long-term success. Goals are translated into measurable targets for members, volunteers, new donors, newsletter subscribers, or deeper partnerships from these constituencies.

Does this describe your board? 1 2 3 4 5 *not true ... very true*

Does this matter right now? 1 2 3 4 5 *not true ... very true*

Why We Ask: Successful programming and long-term community support are fueled by the right constituencies or sets of people being involved. Organizations grow when they regularly ask, "Who must passionately support and own this change for its long-term success?" Those general intentions to engage new parts of the community are made tangible by setting specific goals and targets for who is involved at different levels of the organization. A broad base of supporters and volunteers provides a diverse and committed pool from which to draw future leaders for the organization. Constituency goals matter at every rung of the "engagement ladder."

Board Diversity

5. The board has set a goal to diversify board members in at least one area (geography, gender, race/ethnicity, age, faith community, etc.). The board has a committee or plan to ensure it cultivates new relationships, continues to shift its internal culture to support diverse perspectives, and holds itself accountable.

Does this describe your board? 1 2 3 4 5 *not true ... very true*

Does this matter right now? 1 2 3 4 5 *not true ... very true*

Why We Ask: The healthiest eco-systems often exhibit high levels of diversity. To move against the natural tendency to recruit "people like us," diversity awareness, goals, and focus often benefits from clear commitment and leadership. The board's internal diversity goals will be most vital if they line up strongly with the organization's mission, values & programmatic or project goals (rather than, "well, we know we should be more diverse").

Monitor Progress

6. The board monitors with whom the organization is/isn't working or engaging as members and donors. The board pays close attention to where its volunteers, participants, and supporters are coming from in relation to its goals.

Does this describe your board? 1 2 3 4 5 *not true ... very true*

Does this matter right now? 1 2 3 4 5 *not true ... very true*

Why We Ask: Once goals for engagement are set, regular monitoring (1-2 times per year) can allow the group to maintain the focus and original energy they had for the goal. As progress is achieved, momentum and enthusiasm for the changes will get a boost, too.