

Nonprofit Success

Four Critical Success Factors



Defining Nonprofit Success

Success can be defined in many ways. However, patterns for successful nonprofit organizations and boards of directors are apparent.

For the purpose of this reflection, success means that the organization is well run; the focus is clearly on the accomplishment of its mission; the board of directors concentrates on governance, policy, planning, sustainability and growth; and the organization has a positive brand within its service area.

Four critical success factors can be found within this definition of success. Most often, successful organizations have:

1. A well-informed, passionate, engaged board of directors
2. A relationship built on respect, candor and open communication between board members
3. A knowledgeable, dedicated lead staff person
4. A relationship built on respect, candor and open communication between the lead staff person and all members of the board of directors

Take the time to discuss and define each of these factors with your board of directors and staff leadership team. Complete the attached form for each of the four critical success factors, asking, “What does it look like?” and “How can we make it happen?”

#1 A well-informed, passionate, engaged board of directors

What is it?	What does it look like?	How to make it happen?
Well-informed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • •
Passionate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • •
Engaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • •

#2 A relationship built on respect and open communication between the board members

What is it?	What does it look like?	How to make it happen?
Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • •
Open Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • •

#3 A knowledgeable, dedicated lead staff person

What is it?	What does it look like?	How to make it happen?
Knowledgeable and Dedicated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • •

#4 A relationship built on respect and open communication between the board members and the lead staff person

What is it?	What does it look like?	How to make it happen?
Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • •
Open Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • •

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