

Board Use of Information Survey of Board Members of Public Sector Organizations in B.C.

About the Survey – ONLINE Introduction

The Auditor General of British Columbia is conducting a survey of corporate representatives and board members of public sector organizations in B.C. You may have recently received an email inviting your participation in this research project. R. A. Malatest & Associates Ltd., a professional research company, is administering the survey on behalf of the Auditor General.

As a member of a public sector board, you have been selected to participate in this survey research. The Auditor General is interested in hearing from you about the quality of information and support you receive in carrying out your duties. The findings of the survey will assist the Auditor General in assessing current board information practices in the main sectors of provincial Crown agency (commercial and service delivery Crown agencies; advanced education; K-12 education; health). The findings will also provide a comparison against the survey conducted in 2009, to identify progress since that time. The Auditor General's guidelines for board use of information, published in 2009, are available at: <http://www.bcauditor.com/pubs/2009/report6/board-use-information>.

Your responses to the questions will be kept strictly confidential. However, we will ask your permission at the end of the survey to provide your final qualitative comment to your organization anonymously. This is voluntary and optional, and will not affect the rest of your survey responses in any way. The survey will take about 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

If you require more information about the study, please contact:

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Or	
Office of the Auditor General 8 Bastion Square Victoria, British Columbia V8V 1X4	250-419-6000 (Victoria)

Section A. Introduction – background information

The following questions pertain to the public sector board that you work on.

A1. Please confirm that you are a member of the board of <<organization name>>

- Yes
 No

A2. <<Only respond to this question if you answered “no” to the previous question A1>> Do you currently sit as a member of any other public sector board in B.C.?

- Yes, please specify _____
 No [End interview: Unfortunately, you do not qualify for this survey. Thank you for your time.]

A4. Please indicate the primary position you serve on the board for << ORGANIZATION NAME>>.

- Board Chair
 Subcommittee Chair
 Director/ Trustee/ Governor
 Board Vice-Chair
 Other [please specify] _____

A5. Were you elected or appointed to this board?

- Elected
 Appointed
 Don't know

A6. How long have you served as a member on the board? (If you were a member for a period of time and left the board but came back on, please give your total number of years including all periods you served as a member)

- Less than 1 year
 1-2 years
 3-4 years
 4+ years

Section B. Knowledge about your role on the board of <<ORGANIZATION NAME>>

The following questions pertain to how well you were prepared for undertaking your role and responsibilities on the board.

Thinking about the << ORGANIZATION NAME>> board:

B1. Does the organization have a manual or guidelines outlining the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for board members?

- Yes
- Yes, but it is needs updating
- No
- Don't know

B2. Did you receive an orientation when you first started as a board member?

- Yes
- No.
- Don't Know

B2A. << IF ANSWER WAS "YES" TO **B2**, ELSE SKIP TO **B3**>> When did you receive the orientation?

- Within one month of starting as a board member
- Within six months of starting as a board member
- One year or more after I started as a board member
- Don't know

B3. Do you receive periodic training to assist you in fulfilling your board responsibilities?

- Yes
- No <<SKIP TO **B4**>>
- Don't know <<SKIP TO **B4**>>

B3A. <<ASK IF ANSWER WAS "YES" TO **B3** >> Who has provided training to assist you in fulfilling your board responsibilities?

Please select all that apply.

- The organization for which I am a board member
- Board Resourcing and Development Office
- The Crown Agencies Resource Office
- A private company or consultant
- A government ministry
- A membership association, e.g. B.C. School Trustees' Association
- Other, please specify _____

B4. <<ASK IF ANSWER WAS “YES” TO A4, ELSE SKIP TO C1>> In your opinion, do your board’s manual or guidelines document contain current best practices regarding board governance?

- Yes
- Some
- No
- Don’t know
- Not applicable

Section C. Your understanding of the organization

Thinking about your position on the board for << ORGANIZATION NAME>>:

C1. The following statements pertain to your understanding of the organization’s vision, goals and operations. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree, please indicate your agreement with the following statements.

Statement	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Don't Know
a. I am knowledgeable about the mandate the organization was created to address.	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. I am knowledgeable about the organization’s programs and services.	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. I am knowledgeable about the external environment in which the organization operates.	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. I am knowledgeable about the organization’s human, monetary and physical resources.	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. I am knowledgeable about the policies and procedures of the board.	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. I understand the expectations and needs of the organization’s clients.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Section D: Board access to information

Thinking about your position on the board for <<ORGANIZATION NAME>>.

D1. The following statements pertain to the board's access to information that is needed to enable members to carry out their board duties effectively.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree, please indicate your agreement with the following statements.

Statement	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	88 Don't Know
a. All the information you need for board meetings does exist.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. The information you receive for board meetings is timely and current.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. The information you receive for Board meetings links both financial and non-financial information.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. The Chair takes responsibility for ensuring board members are fully informed on decision items.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section E. Quality of information received

Thinking about your position on the board for <<ORGANIZATION NAME>>.

E1. The following statements pertain to the quality of information that you receive in order to exercise your duties as a board member.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree, please indicate your agreement with the following statements.

Statement	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Don't Know
a. The information you receive for board meetings is clearly presented.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. The information you receive for board meetings focuses on critical organizational issues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. The information you receive for board meetings is tailored to your needs (at the right level of detail).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. The information you receive for board meetings facilitates informed decision-making.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. You feel comfortable voicing concern when you do not receive the information you require.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. You receive information that compares actual performance against plans.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. When appropriate, the information you receive provides a historical context.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. You receive forward-looking information (it helps determine if performance can be sustained or improved in the future).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. The information you receive explains all important options and trade-offs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. When appropriate, the information you receive discusses the consequences of making certain decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. In general, you have full confidence in the accuracy of the information presented to you.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section F. Understanding of the information provided

Thinking about your position on the board for <<ORGANIZATION NAME>>:

F1. The following statements pertain to the quality and timeliness of the information you receive in order to exercise your board duties.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree, please indicate your agreement with the following statements.

Statement	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Don't Know
a. You have sufficient time to understand the information provided to you before board meetings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. The information you receive has suitable explanatory narratives to assist with understanding.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. You have resources, including qualified staff, at your disposal to assist with the interpretation of the information provided to you.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section G. Use of information

Thinking about your position on the board for <<ORGANIZATION NAME>>:

G1. The following statements pertain to the quality of information given to your board.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree, please indicate your agreement with the following statements.

Statement	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Don't Know
a. Board debates are guided by appropriate and sufficient information.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. The existing decision-making framework ensures that decisions are made with an awareness of the risks involved and a consideration of potential alternate courses of action.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. The information you receive highlights the nature and extent of risks to the organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section H. Board Chair statements

Thinking about your position on the board for <<ORGANIZATION NAME>>.

H1. <<ASK IF A4 = Board Chair, ELSE SKIP TO J2>> {The following statements are intended for board Chairs only.}

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree, please indicate your agreement with the following statements.

Statement	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Don't Know
a. The board does not face technological barriers that prevent members from accessing the information they need.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. The board actively seeks the information that it needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. When appropriate, the board requests information from external sources.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Minutes are recorded for all board meetings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. A process is in place that allows board members to access the organization's management staff, other than through the CEO, Superintendent/ Secretary Treasurer or President only.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. It is my responsibility to ensure the board is fully informed on decision items.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Board and management clearly understand what information should be provided to the board and when.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. The board only requests information that is needed to discharge its responsibilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. The board is composed of directors with the right mix of educational backgrounds.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. The board is composed of directors with the right mix of skill and experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. The board periodically devotes time toward evaluating the quality and timeliness of the information it receives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section J. Closing

J2. Overall, you have access to sufficient information, provided to you within appropriate timelines, to support your ability to make effective decisions for your organization.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Don't Know

J3. Would it be beneficial to your board to receive additional guidance, training and/or support on some or all of the following governance issues?

Please select all that apply.

- The quality and quantity of information that is appropriate for a board to request and receive.
- An appropriate evaluation process for board information.
- Good practices on how boards should use information in their decision-making processes.
- Good practices for boards in orientation and professional development.
- Good practices for board governance in general (beyond access to and use of information).
- Other: *please describe additional guidance, training or support that would be useful for your board to improve your ability to govern effectively:* _____
- Our board does not need any additional guidance, training or support on any of these matters.

J1. Do you have any final comments you would like to add about the information and support you receive as a board member?

1. _____

2. None/no other comments

J4. <<ASK IF QJ1=Answered>> Do you agree to share your comments, un-attributable to you, to your organization?

- Yes
- No

**That completes the survey!
Thank you for taking the time to participate.**