



Board Assessment
And Development System

Supervisory Committee Assessment
And Development System

BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

Second Edition

Developed By

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SECTION 5

CREATING A DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The process of developing a custom volunteer development plan consists of six basic steps: identifying needs, developing a strategy, researching and allocating resources, developing an action plan, implementing the plan, and monitoring results.

1. Identifying Needs

Once you receive your assessment reports and complete group discussion of the results, this first step in designing a volunteer development plan is nearly completed. Using a flip chart, overhead, or other means visible to the entire group, the facilitator should document those specific performance areas where development is needed based on survey results. The facilitator should be sure to leave space between each area to list the strategies you'll use to address each development need.

The needs statements should be results- and behavior-oriented, concretely defining the results you want to achieve in terms of volunteer behavior. Using phrases from the actual assessment survey is a good starting point. For example, one volunteer development need statement might be: "Develop a thorough understanding of the credit union's complete financial position and trends."

2. Developing A Strategy

The group discussion mentioned above and a review of this manual will start your credit union on its way

to mapping out a volunteer development strategy. The focus should be on identifying, in general terms, "how" the individuals in the group, and the group as a whole will go about addressing their development needs. Using strategies outlined in this guide, with additions and modifications arising from group discussion, it is likely that the group will simply need to document the strategies already selected.

In some cases, several strategies may be required to address a single development need. If your list of strategies seems long, it may indicate a need to convert one complex "needs" statement into several. Occasionally, one strategy may address more than one developmental need. However, if this occurs frequently, there may be a need to break down the strategy into several elements.

Using the identified need for development outlined above, your credit union might develop the following strategies:

1. Conduct quarterly education sessions covering general financial principles and concepts, as applied to actual credit union financial data.
2. Provide all volunteers with reference materials to assist them in analyzing financial information.
3. In conjunction with senior management, define the type, depth, and frequency of financial information to be presented in the monthly Board meeting packet, along with format guidelines to increase the speed and ease of identifying significant trends and implications.

3. Researching and Allocating Resources

The majority of the tasks involved in identifying the resources available to carry out your development strategies will probably be handled by one or more members of senior management. This will require contacting various organizations, reviewing publications and periodicals, and networking with other credit union professionals to determine the best resources for cost-effectively addressing volunteer development needs.

The information gathered, along with cost information and management recommendations, should be presented to the entire group for approval and allocation of the necessary time and financial resources. It is important that the presentation not only outline alternatives, but also the trade-offs in choosing one resource over another.

Using the first developmental strategy outlined on the previous page, management could present at least three alternatives. First, the training could be developed and conducted by the credit union's President / CEO, Chief Financial Officer, Controller, or Training Officer. This may be the least expensive option in terms of financial investment. However, it will require the use of a significant amount of senior management time, which may not be available if current goals and responsibilities are to be completed. In addition, the person assigned may not have the necessary technical knowledge or training skills.

Another alternative might be to send volunteers to conferences or workshops. This is likely to be more costly, since travel costs will be involved. However, it will free up internal human resources for other projects. A disadvantage may be that the information presented must be generalized for all credit unions, so it may prove difficult or too time consuming for volunteers to apply the information presented to your credit union's unique situation.

The third alternative, which might be presented, would be to engage a professional credit union consultant / trainer to develop and conduct customized training programs. This alternative effectively resolves the limitations of the first two options. In addition, a professional may be able to provide addi-

tional insight and perspective into the general marketplace and your credit union in particular. However, the financial investment may exceed that of other alternatives.

4. Developing an Action Plan

This particular portion of creating a volunteer development plan requires considerable thought and attention to detail to ensure that the process outlined is practical and comprehensive. This is the step most likely to be skipped altogether or given less time and resources than it truly merits.

Experience shows that this step is the most critical for ensuring that an effective development plan is actually implemented and produces desired results. The group should be strongly encouraged to invest the time necessary to produce a comprehensive set of action plans. Since it is difficult to complete this type of work with a large group, it is recommended that the task of developing and documenting action plans be assigned to a small group of two to three members, including both management and volunteers.

A separate action plan should be developed for each strategy. In fact, at this time you will want to transform your strategies into goal statements that also define *who* is responsible for carrying out this goal and *when* it is to be completed.

For example, the strategy discussed previously might be revised to read: "Joan Smith, Chief Financial Officer, shall develop and conduct on-going quarterly educational sessions for all volunteers covering general financial principles and concepts, as applied to actual credit union financial data, and begin in June of this year." Essentially, this turns a strategy into a specific goal statement.

It is very important that, although successful achievement of a goal may require time and effort from many individuals, only one person is named in the goal statement as having overall responsibility. This seemingly minor issue has proved an important tool in enhancing the probability that goals will be achieved.

For each goal statement, you'll also need to develop action steps that must be successfully completed to carry out the goal's requirements. Each action step should be listed in logical order, provide a description of the task to be completed, specify who is responsible for completing the task, how long it is

expected to take, when the task should be started and when it should be completed.

For example, some of the action steps relating to the above goal statement might include:

	TASK	WHO	TIME	START	FINISH
1	Brainstorm with volunteers to outline major topics for next four sessions.	Joan	4 hrs	MM/DD/YY	MM/DD/YY
2	Establish dates & reserve conference room.	Ken	1.5hrs	MM/DD/YY	MM/DD/YY
3	Research available training materials and place order.	Ken	6 hrs	MM/DD/YY	MM/DD/YY
4	Develop outline for session one.	Joan	8 hrs	MM/DD/YY	MM/DD/YY
5	Integrate actual financial data & trends.	Joan	5 hrs	MM/DD/YY	MM/DD/YY
6	Prepare handouts & visual aides.	Ken	4 hrs	MM/DD/YY	MM/DD/YY

It is also recommended that the action plans include a projected budget. The focus of this budget should be to project the estimated "out-of-pocket" or "hard" dollar expenses. This includes such items as travel-related expenditures, the purchase or rental of training or reference materials, and the cost of meeting

rooms and refreshments. The budget would not normally address staff or volunteer time for preparing, presenting or participating in developmental activities. In most cases, you would also exclude such costs as photocopying.

Mo/Yr	Item #	Expense Type	Description	Est. Cost
3/XX	1	Education & Travel	Deposit to reserve conference room	\$50
4/XX	2	Subscriptions & Publications	Order 7 copies of <i>Board Basic</i> & 3 copies of <i>Supervisory Committee Basics</i>	\$200
5/XX	3	Stationery & Supplies	Purchase binders and divider tabs for participants' training notebooks	\$128

Many credit unions already have a specific methodology and format for documenting goals, strategies, and action plans. These can be easily adapted for use in the volunteer development plan. However, to

assist those credit unions that may not have adopted a standard format for documenting the volunteer development plan, refer to these examples or contact Nice Enterprises, Inc. for examples.

5. Implementing the Plans

After your action plans have been completed, it is time to implement them. This is the most important component of your volunteer development plan. Remember, it doesn't matter how good the plan is if you don't actually carry it out. Recognize that circumstances may intervene that will require modifications to the plan. Be prepared to be flexible and ready to alter the plan, with approval of the group, if the situation dictates.

As implementation begins, you may find barriers that may not have been addressed in your action plans. These barriers can come from a variety of areas, ranging from the departure of key personnel, to insufficient resource allocations, to natural disasters. Bringing these barriers to the group's attention is the responsibility of the individual charged with carrying out the goal. By bringing such issues up for discussion and decision-making, appropriate modifications can be made. Often, hesitating to present issues / conflicts simply exacerbates the problem,

further inhibiting the probability of successful implementation.

6. Monitoring Results

Systems for monitoring results should be integrated into the action plans, thereby becoming a part of the implementation process. Establishing a reporting process wherein the group regularly reviews the status of development goals will provide several benefits.

First, it provides recognition of the efforts and accomplishments of those individuals responsible for implementing the plan. Second, it creates a sense of positive accountability that provides motivation for performance. In addition, a formal review process will encourage people to bring up barriers encountered much earlier in the implementation process. Finally, a good monitoring system will keep everyone informed and reinforces a sense of commitment to ongoing volunteer development.

and keep your emotions in check. Look for main points and central ideas. Respond to the speaker by listening, not by planning what you're going to say next.

- **Practice expressing emotions constructively.**

Be aware of your emotions; don't deny or ignore them. Accept responsibility for your choices and actions; your emotions belong to you. Don't argue just to save face; ask for feedback.

- **Learn how to read others and express your understanding of their perspective.**

Draw inferences - read body and facial language. Be sensitive to the other person. Gear your message to that person's personality.

- **Strive for clarity when you wish to share information or communicate an opinion.**

Know what you want the other person to understand. Analyze your attitudes toward both the topic and the person. Realize that some things are difficult and cannot be simplified. Be patient. Use the other person's language and terms. State ideas in the simplest terms. Use information the other person has and build upon it. Watch for and elicit feedback. Eliminate or reduce distractions.

- **Become familiar with the “group blocking roles” addressed under question seven. Take action to constructively discourage others from playing these roles.**

This section describes the various roles and suggests ways to discourage these behaviors. Take action to constructively discourage others from playing these roles.

- **Become familiar with the “group building roles” addressed under question seven. Take action to encourage yourself and others to fill these roles.**

Every volunteer is capable of fulfilling several of these positive roles. Take action to encour-

age yourself and others to do so.

- **Encourage all volunteers to explore the dynamics of your meetings and how to enhance group discussions.**

Hold a special meeting of volunteers to discuss the various roles people play in meetings. Explore the unique dynamics of your group. Focus on ways the group can work together to encourage group building roles, while minimizing interference from group blocking behaviors.



Board of Directors: Contributes constructively to discussions, providing perspective, relevant feedback, and concrete definition of expectations.

Supervisory Committee: Contributes constructively to discussions, providing perspective, relevant feedback, and concrete definition of expectations.

OVERVIEW

This question focuses on your personal contribution to group discussions. As discussed in relation to participation, the group deserves to receive the full benefit of your knowledge, opinions, and perspectives. However, in this case, the question zeroes in on the *quality* of your participation - in other words: “How constructive is your participation?”

In evaluating your performance in this area, consider both the behaviors you may exhibit that take away from group discussion (group blocking roles) and the positive and constructive behaviors that you may not be consistently carrying out (group building roles). These roles are outlined in this section.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Meetings represent a large portion of your time as a credit union volunteer. In every meeting - whether it involves the Board, a committee, the management team, the credit union's staff, or a member - you'll be in a stronger position if you can recognize the different personality roles and learn to manage them by fostering positive behaviors while minimizing negative behaviors. If you don't understand and manage these roles, meeting participants won't accomplish their work, consensus will be inhibited, and creativity will be stifled.

Group Blocking Roles

Many people aren't focused on achieving the group's goals. Instead, they have their own agendas. These personalities may gravitate toward confrontation or just be out of sync with the group. These people play non-productive roles that interfere with the meeting's goals. When people are in a meeting where "blocking" takes place, they communicate a sense that the meeting isn't much fun. Or they'll say, "We didn't accomplish anything." Avoid these roles at all costs:

The Withdrawer: Won't participate; converses privately; is the self-appointed notetaker.

Ask this person direct questions about topics in which he or she excels. Provide strong encouragement and appreciation for this input.

The Devil's Advocate: More devil than advocate, this person challenges ideas for challenge sake; creates disorder.

The group leader must stop any disruption immediately with, "That's an interesting point. However, it really provides no immediate solution to the issue before the group." It's important to neutralize the devil's advocate before he or she gains control or dominates.

The Self Gratifier: Talks irrelevantly about his or her own feelings and insights.

The leader can ask this type to comment on the group's subject. For example, ask, "How exactly do you see those circumstances (or beliefs) comparing with (or applying to) the credit union's experience?"

The Playboy: Self-focused; wastes group's time showing off; story teller; nonchalant; cynical.

Neutralize the playboy's stories by invoking lots of questions and comments. Handle the nonchalant attitude by asking pointed questions on important matters.

The Aggressor: Criticizes and deflates the status of others, disagrees with others aggressively.

Show aggressors you support each meeting participant - including the aggressor - by verbally praising worthy contributions and fairly correcting mistakes.

The Recognition Seeker: Boasts; talks excessively; conscious of his or her status.

Recognize these players for their achievements or comments before they have an opportunity to jump on the soapbox. Avoid overreacting. Look for opportunities to provide encouragement or praise when it's deserved.

The Special-Interest Pleader: Uses the group's time to plead his or her own case.

Deal with any pertinent issues of special-interest pleaders as early as possible - in or before the meeting. Be aware, however, that special-interest pleaders may sulk if the resolution isn't what they desired.

The Dominator: Tries to take over, assert authority, manipulate the group.

The most important aspect of managing dominators is recognizing them. That's because dominators aren't as outwardly dominating as aggressors. Once you've identified the dominators, handle them as you would aggressors.

The Blocker: Stubbornly disagrees; rejects other's views; cites unrelated personal experiences; returns to topics already resolved.

If blockers start to disagree and inhibit discussion, ask them to list their specific grievances in detail and in order, with suggested solutions. When unable to do this, blockers often will withdraw. If a blocker can articulate grievances, allow the group to minimize or discount these issues.

The Topic Jumper: Continually changes the subject.

Tactfully suggest these people focus on the discussion at hand. Be aware that topic-jumpers may resent redirection if they're humiliated or embarrassed in front of the group.

Group Building / Maintenance Roles

Group blocking roles disrupt meetings. But their positive counterparts, the group building / maintenance roles, greatly enhance any meeting's productivity or group process. Try to assume one or several of these roles during a meeting:

The Initiator: Suggests new or different ideas for discussion and approaches to problems.

Be sure that at least one initiator attends your meeting. Initiators stimulate ideas and start participants thinking.

The Opinion Giver: States pertinent beliefs about discussion and others' suggestions; gets things moving / progressing.

Your responsibility is to ensure the meeting atmosphere allows these types to voice their opinions or provide constructive insight.

The Elaborator: Builds on suggestions of others.

Be sure these players speak before the group makes a final decision.

The Organizer: Keeps communications open; encourages participation.

Organizers track the discussion, agenda, and time. Learn to rely on them, and don't be afraid to let them assist you in bringing issues to closure.

The Tester: Raises questions to "test out" whether the group is ready to come to a decision.

Testers are willing to take some heat to ensure the group makes the best decisions possible. They need the leader's moral support and constantly must be acknowledged for their new ideas - even if the ideas aren't always correct.

The Clarifier: Gives relevant examples; offers rationales; probes for meaning and understanding; restates problems.

These individuals help focus the discussion. Call on the clarifier when the group reaches an impasse.

The Compromiser: Willing to yield when necessary for progress; mediates differences; reconciles points of view.

Compromisers need no management, but watch that they don't inadvertently yield on points that shouldn't be compromised.

The Tension Reliever: Uses humor or calls for a break at appropriate times to draw off negative feelings.

Although their role is often overlooked, tension-relievers perform a vital function. They know how to use humor or when to call a break to draw away negative feelings, reduce tension within the group, or lighten up the meeting's atmosphere. Encourage tension-relievers when they act. Otherwise, the meeting may get too hot.

The Encourager: Praises and supports others; friendly; encouraging.

These "Cheerleaders" provide positive reinforcement and good feelings within the group. They praise and support others, build up others' self-esteem, and enable all to function at their best. Allow them to help you provide positive feedback to their peers - the other role players.

SECTION 11

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

IF YOU NEED FURTHER ASSISTANCE

Contact Nice Enterprises, Inc. at 1-800-TRY-NICE if you have questions about . . .

- the role of the credit union coordinator or survey administration procedures;
- information contained in this manual; the individual or group assessment results reports;
- designing and implementing a development plan;
- action plan or budget formats.

NICE ENTERPRISES, INC.

Nice Enterprises is a multi-disciplinary, Evergreen, Colorado-based, management consulting firm dedicated to providing credit unions across the United States and Canada with solutions that work, while maintaining the highest standards of quality and integrity. For more than a decade, we have served over 600 credit unions varying in size from less than \$1 million to more than \$1 billion in assets.

Our associates combine decades of consulting and “real world” credit union experience with extensive advanced education. Backed by an experienced, multi-disciplinary team, we provide our clients with the experience, wisdom, and skills necessary to achieve their desired results.

All our products, services, and systems are individually developed and priced, based on a detailed analysis of your credit union’s unique needs, in order to deliver both value and the maximum results

you desire. Nice Enterprises, Inc. stands committed to providing you with experienced consultation, leading to increased profitability, productivity, and success for your organization. The *Board* and the *Supervisory Committee Assessment and Development Systems* are just one example.

We provide custom credit union consulting services that address the full spectrum of management issues, including such areas as . . .

- Strategic Planning Systems / Programs / Facilitation
- Comprehensive Business Plan Development
- Scenario Planning Programs / Facilitation
- Financial Modeling and Forecasting
- Leadership Development Programs
- Training Needs Assessments / Plans
- Board Orientation and / or Development Programs
- Teambuilding Programs
- Management and Staff Training Assessment Programs
- Operational Analysis / Process Re-engineering
- Salary Administration / Performance Appraisal Systems
- Employee Empowerment Surveys
- Membership Surveys and Demographic Studies
- “Board Basics” and “Supervisory Committee Basics”
- “The Strategist” Monthly Newsletter

If you would like more information about any of these products, or a complete, up-to-date listing of the services offered by Nice Enterprises, Inc., contact us at 1-800-TRY-NICE, or visit our web page at www.trynice.com.