

# The Board Vector: A Toolkit to Assess Your Board

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Let's go back to high school physics for a moment...

*“Scalar” quantity*

1. *Noun* “Representable by position on a scale or line; **having only magnitude**”

“SPEED”: 55 MPH



*“Vector”*

1. *Noun* “A quantity possessing **both magnitude and direction...**”
2. *Verb* “To **guide** (as an airplane... or a missile) in flight by means of a radioed vector”
3. *Verb* “To **change the direction** of (the thrust of an engine) for steering”

“VELOCITY”: 55 MPH, NORTH



# THE BOARD VECTOR

To achieve the organization's greater potential, the CEO and board must:

1. Assess the board's current "magnitude" (capacity) and direction
2. Determine what the board's "magnitude" and direction need to be
3. Guide and change the board to propel the organization toward the greater vision

# Envision the organization's greater potential

## What is the organization's mission?

Mission: what is the organization's compelling value/purpose in making the world better?

## Where is the organization now?

(e.g. programs/services, geography)

## Where does the organization see itself in 3-5 years?

Vision: what is the vision of the organization's greater potential?



# Board assessment (1/4)

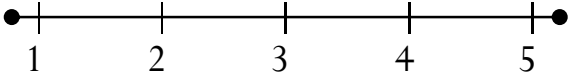
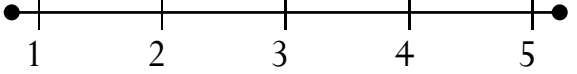
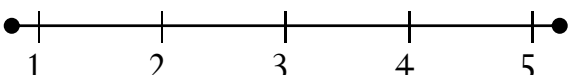
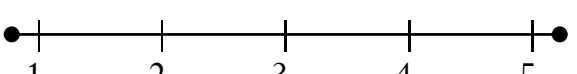
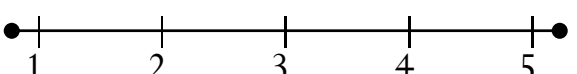
## Board Composition

	Assessment
1. There is the diversity of perspectives and backgrounds necessary to advance the organization toward the greater vision.	●   1   2   3   4   5   ●
2. There are people with expertise in the organization's substantive work as needed to advance the organization toward the greater vision (e.g., poverty, microlending, literacy, health care, education, global as well as well as country specific).	●   1   2   3   4   5   ●
3. There are people with the business experience/expertise and skills that are needed to advance the organization toward the greater vision (e.g., strategic, financial, legal, HR, PR, global if needed).	●   1   2   3   4   5   ●
4. People have positive personal qualities (e.g., integrity, positive energy, generosity of spirit, etc.).	●   1   2   3   4   5   ●
5. The board is continuously assessing/strengthening itself through recruitment and attrition to advance the organization toward the vision.	●   1   2   3   4   5   ●

BOARD COMPOSITION SUBTOTAL:

# Board assessment (2/4)



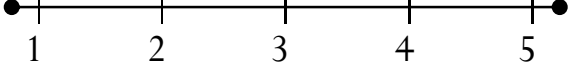
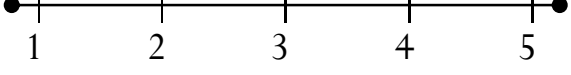

## Board Function and Structure

Question	Assessment
6. The board understands its role to help achieve the organization's greater vision (e.g., provide/access resources, fiduciary oversight).	
7. The board is the right size to advance the organization toward the greater vision.	
8. The board meets the right number of times and for the right amount of time necessary to advance the organization toward the greater vision.	
9. The board has the right committees necessary to advance the organization toward the greater vision.	
10. The board is focused on its role as opposed to management matters (in general and in board meetings).	

BOARD FUNCTION AND STRUCTURE SUBTOTAL:

# Board assessment (3/4)

## Board Effectiveness

Question	Assessment
11. The board is helping to develop the organization's revenues to achieve the greater vision (e.g., contributing money, raising money, providing expertise concerning fees for services).	
12. Board members support the CEO to help advance toward the greater vision (e.g., providing expertise as needed, showing recognition and appreciation).	
13. Board members serve as advocates and ambassadors to help advance the organization toward its greater vision?	
14. The board is currently fulfilling its fiduciary responsibilities (e.g., financial and legal oversight).	
15. The board chair fulfills his/her role in helping to advance the organization toward its greater vision (e.g., focusing the board on key issues, engaging the board, partnering with the CEO, leading meetings, role modeling for the board).	

BOARD EFFECTIVENESS SUBTOTAL:

# Board assessment (4/4)



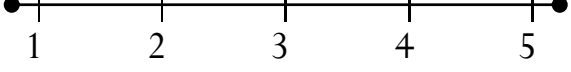
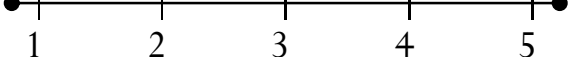
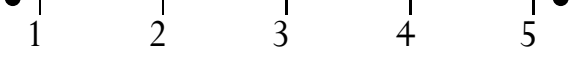
## Board Culture and Values

Question	Assessment
16. Board members are passionate about the mission and the greater vision.	
17. Board members are respectful of clients, staff, and all constituents.	
18. The board is enthusiastic and ambitious for the organization in serving the community.	
19. Board members are respectful of each other's perspectives and comments.	
20. The board is committed to measurement, accountability, and transparency.	

BOARD CULTURE AND VALUES SUBTOTAL:

# Organizational assessment (1/3)



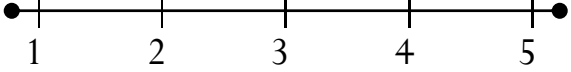
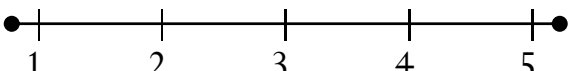

## Mission and Vision

Question	Assessment
21. The organization's mission is vital in making the world a better place.	
22. The core programs/services are high impact.	
23. The core programs/services are unique and innovative.	
24. The core programs/services are either scalable or replicable.	
25. There is a vision of the organization's greater potential.	

MISSION AND VISION SUBTOTAL:

# Organizational assessment (2/3)

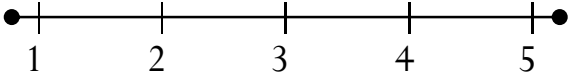

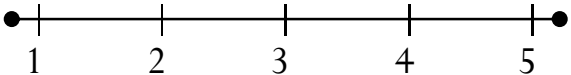
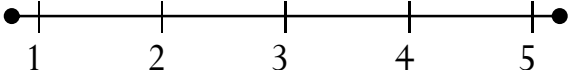

## Financial model

Question	Assessment
26. It is clear how much money and contributed non-monetary resources (e.g., technology) will be required to achieve the greater vision.	
27. There is a fully modeled, three to four year revenue and expense plan to achieve the greater vision (e.g., philanthropy, corporate partnerships, government funding, fees for services).	
28. It is realistic for the organization to achieve the revenue/resources needed to advance the greater vision over the next twelve months.	
29. It is realistic for the organization to achieve the revenue/resources needed to advance the greater vision over the next three years.	
30. The organization has effective controls in place to track, monitor, and report the organization's finances.	

FINANCIAL MODEL SUBTOTAL:

# Organizational assessment (3/3)

## Capabilities

Question	Assessment
31. The organization has the CEO it needs to achieve the greater vision.	
32. The organization has the senior team/staff necessary to accomplish the greater vision.	
33. The organization has an effective model to measure, track, and model outcomes for the purposes of iterative planning and controls.	
34. The organization has the infrastructure to achieve the greater vision (e.g., technology, real estate).	
35. The organization has the cash reserves necessary to embark on the its plans for the greater vision.	

CAPABILITIES SUBTOTAL:

# Assessment totals

## *Board total*

COMPOSITION SUBTOTAL:

FUNCTION AND STRUCTURE SUBTOTAL:

EFFECTIVENESS SUBTOTAL:

CULTURE AND VALUES SUBTOTAL:

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BOARD TOTAL:

*OUT OF:*

**100**

## *Organization total*

MISSION AND VISION SUBTOTAL:

FINANCIAL MODEL SUBTOTAL:

CAPABILITIES SUBTOTAL:

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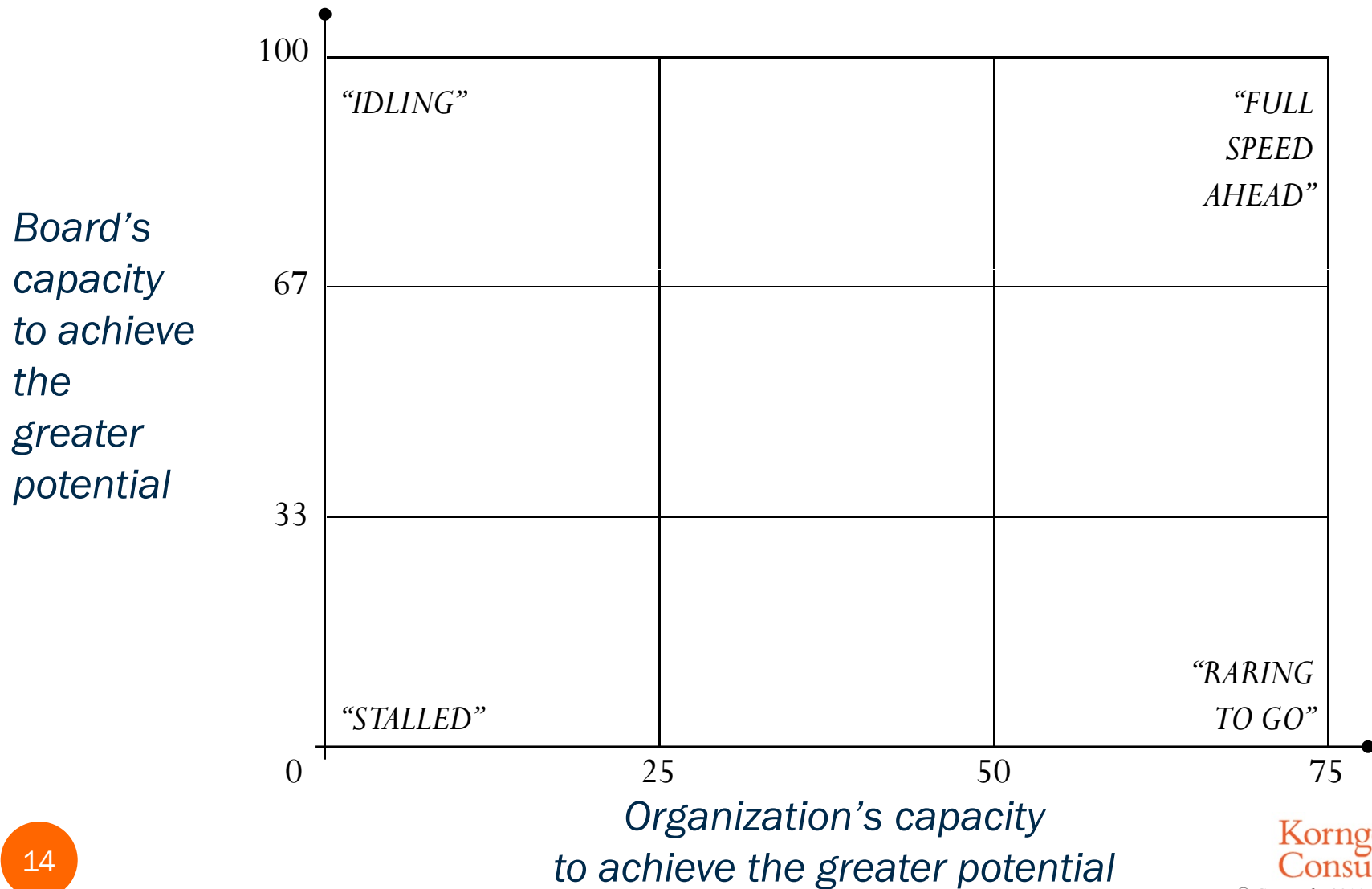
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ORGANIZATION TOTAL:

*OUT OF:*

**75**

# Charting your board and organization's capacity to achieve the greater potential



# The position indicates where the organization is in achieving its full potential

## *“Idling”*

- Key takeaway: the board has the right people, ready to add value, but they need the CEO and senior staff to engage with them on vision and strategy, and to use them effectively
- Board: right people, eager to engage/help; underutilized
- Organization: squandering its board; not maximizing its potential

## *“Stalled”*

- Key takeaway: the organization could be in jeopardy now or in the near future, unless there are changes
- Board: lacks the capacity that is needed and is not engaged, thereby not providing crucial leadership
- Organization: lacks the capacity to meet vital community needs or to advance forward

## *“Full speed ahead”*

- Key takeaway: the right board is fully engaged, partnering with the CEO to propel the high-achieving organization toward its greater potential
- Board: supportive, engaged, and eager to push ahead with the CEO (iteratively assessing)
- Organization: robust, high-achieving, and advancing at optimal speed (iteratively assessing)

## *“Raring to go”*

- Key takeaway: the CEO and organization are raring to go, but the board is holding it back
- Board: lacks the vision and/or the ambition and/or the capacity to help advance the organization toward its greater potential
- Organization: high-achieving, has a vision of its greater potential, and evidence to support the value, viability, and sustainability of the vision; stuck because of the board

# Key levers are useful in guiding and changing the board

1. A board chair who “gets it” (“gets it” meaning the need to develop/change the board in order to advance the organization to its greater potential)
2. Two board members who get it
3. A board member who’s an excellent candidate to succeed your board chair in advancing the organization
4. An outsider (non-board member) who gets it and who’s an excellent candidate to succeed your board chair
5. A significant funder who gets it and will engage with you to help
6. A serious enough financial threat; or a meaningful enough financial opportunity
7. A serious enough public relations or media threat; or a meaningful enough public relations or media opportunity
8. A serious enough political threat; or a meaningful enough political opportunity