

Eight Factor Model of Committee Effectiveness

When assessing the effectiveness of an individual committee, Collegiate Project Services scores a committee on the following eight factors. Each committee receives a score from one to four on these eight factors, and the results are graphically displayed in the form of a profile.

Outcome factors

1. Results. The committee has achieved successes and has shown progress toward its measurable goals. Members of the committee can cite specific examples of success. Members of the committee can cite statistics that have improved as a result of committee efforts. All (or most) committee members consider the committee a success.

2. Commitment/Morale. All (or most) committee members are committed to the committee goals. Committee members are highly satisfied with the committee. Committee morale is considered good. All (or most) of the committee members are motivated and putting forth effort for the committee to be successful.

Process Factors

3. Focus. The committee has a clear charter (written), unambiguous boundaries and measures, alignment with the sponsor and the executive committee, hard measures, processes for aligning interim objectives with final objectives, short-term and long term objectives, and role clarity as expressed in role tables. In interviews, committee members agree on what the committee is currently focusing its efforts.

4. Communication. The committee has good internal communication (ground rules, open communication, trust) and good external communication (e.g., the committee develops and implements a communication plan to various stakeholders).

5. Leadership Sharing. All members pitch in and do their fair share. From time to time different people on the committee step forward and take leadership roles. It is not the same one or two people over and over doing all the work.

6. Group Processes. The committee uses formal processes for meetings, group decision making, group problem solving, and conflict reduction.

Environment Factors

7. Structure. The committee is adequately structured to accomplish its goals. That is, the right people are on the committee in order to make decisions, the right person is the sponsor of the committee, and the right number of people are on the committee (i.e., committee size is not too large).

8. Support. The committee receives the support it needs to be successful. This includes a budget, discretion to act on its own (within boundaries), release from other duties, a supportive management sponsor, appropriate extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, a meeting space, access to needed resources, psychological encouragement, an assigned facilitator (as needed). In addition, the committee is seen as critical by the larger organization.

How to Use This Tool

This tool is used to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of a committee in order to improve the way the committee is functioning as a group, and also to improve the results the committee is achieving. There are three sources of data gathering with this tool. The first source is to have committee members fill out the instrument based on their personal experiences with the committee. The second source is to have suppliers and customers of the committee (including the committee sponsor) fill out the instrument. Finally, you can have an unbiased (third party) observer of the team fill out the instrument based on his/her observations of the committee and/or interviews with committee members. Often times we will collect information from all three sources in order to have a broad context for describing and understanding the strengths and weaknesses of a committee.

How to Interpret Scores

Scores on each factor of this instrument range from Level One through Level Four. In general, Level Three and Level Four scores on a factor tend to reflect committee that are functioning fairly well in that area, and are therefore more likely to be successful as a committee. Level One and Level Two scores reflect committee that are not functioning as well as they could in that area, and therefore have lots of opportunity for improvement. Our work with this tool has shown that if scores on the outcome factors (Results and Morale) are low, then the committee should focus on improving the process factors (Focus, Communication, Leadership Sharing, and Group processes) that are under their control. The committee should also seek help from the committee sponsor for improving the environment factors (Leadership Support and Structure) that may be causing a barrier to committee success. Occasionally we have found that a committee may score well on the Results factor, and yet doesn't do well as a committee on some of the process factors (such as Focus, Communication, Leadership Sharing, and Group Processes). In these cases we have learned that the committee has achieved success, but at a cost (e.g., one or two people doing the work, wasted effort because of poor processes, lack of communication and teamwork) that will someday have a negative impact on committee performance. In these cases, we still urge the committee to attempt to improve, despite the good results they are getting.

Committee Diagnosis Questionnaire

Read each statement and circle the number that best describes your committee.

RESULTS

- No results.** The committee has achieved no measurable results. Committee members have a difficult time solving the simplest of problems.
- Minor results.** The committee has achieved minor success on problems that have resulted in small savings in time or money. The committee is beginning to tackle problems of more significance.
- Good results.** The committee has solved significant problems resulting in substantial time or money savings. The committee is empowered to make a few decisions.
- Excellent results.** The committee has a history of solving major problems and is on its way to being self-directed.

OWNERSHIP/MORALE

- No ownership.** There are feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction among committee members. Committee members refuse to get involved in team activities.
- Some ownership.** Some committee members believe in the team concept, while others remain negative about working together as a committee.

3. **Ownership.** Committee members feel a growing sense of teamwork and self-confidence as they learn to work together. Most committee members get involved in team activities.

4. **High ownership.** All committee members believe in the team concept and are involved in team activities.

FOCUS

1. **Not focused.** Members do not understand or do not agree on the mission of the committee and their individual responsibilities.

2. **Unclearly focused.** It is not clear if committee members understand the mission. Members are more focused on "What is my role?"

3. **Focused.** The mission of the committee is clear to most committee members. Most of the committee efforts are focused on mission accomplishment.

4. **Highly focused.** Each member knows and is committed to the mission of the committee. All the committee's efforts are focused on mission accomplishment.

TEAM PROCESSES

1. **Poor team processes.** Little is accomplished at committee meetings. The committee does not use formal problem solving or decision-making tools.

2. **Emerging processes.** Committee meetings are for information sharing only. Members are beginning to use problem solving and decision-making tools.

3. **Good processes.** The committee meetings are effective. Use of meeting roles and tools are evident. Committee members are fairly accomplished at solving problems and making decisions.

4. **Excellent processes.** Meetings are extremely effective; every committee member is highly accomplished at solving problems, making decisions, and reaching consensus.

COMMUNICATION

1. **Poor communication.** There is no open communication, committee members do not demonstrate listening, and conflict is not handled well.

2. **Cautious communication.** Discussions are usually guarded. Committee members do not "open up" to each other, and conflict is avoided.

3. **Emerging communication.** Most committee members share ideas and are supportive of one another, yet they still tend to avoid conflict.

4. **Good communication.** Committee members are tactful, but express themselves openly and honestly. Members listen to each other, express concern and understanding, and demonstrate respect for each other.

LEADERSHIP SHARING

1. **No leadership shared.** Only the committee leader demonstrates responsibility, and the committee leader performs most of the tasks for the committee.

2. **Cautious leadership sharing.** Committee members are cautious in accepting leadership responsibilities; they still rely heavily on the committee leader.

3. **Emerging leadership sharing.** Many committee members share the leadership function, and the committee is becoming less dependent on the committee leader.

4. **Shared leadership.** Committee members themselves assume leadership responsibilities, including giving recognition and praise, without depending on the committee leader.

LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

1. **No support.** The committee receives no help or gets no resources from management. Committees are seen as a distraction to getting work done.

2. **Minimal support.** The committee receives verbal support but only minimal resources from management. Very few of the committee's ideas are implemented.

3. **Increasing support.** The committee receives strong support in time and other resources from management. Many of the committee's ideas are implemented. Ideas that are not implemented are discussed with the committee by management.

4. **Strong support.** The committee's contribution is valued and recognized by the organization. The committee gets all the resources it needs.

STRUCTURE

1. **Poorly structured.** Skill needs have not been defined and assessed. The committee lacks the appropriate functional or cross-functional representation. The committee's size is unmanageable and/or inappropriate for the task.

2. **Partially structured.** Skill needs have been defined and assessed; committee members and resources have the skill set needed to accomplish the goals and objectives. The committee does not have the appropriate functional or cross-functional representation. The committee's size is unmanageable and/or inappropriate for the task.

3. **Somewhat structured.** Skill needs have been defined and assessed; committee members and resources have the skill set needed to accomplish the goals and objectives. The functional or cross-functional representation is appropriate for the assignment. The committee's size is unmanageable and/or inappropriate for the task.

4. **Effectively structured.** Skill needs have been defined and assessed; committee members and resources have the skill set needed to accomplish the goals and objectives. The functional and/or cross-functional representation is appropriate for the assignment. The committee's size is manageable and suitable for the task.