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A Crucial Task of the Board

The relationship between the Library Board and the Library Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is a very important one, and can affect the success of the library itself. This relationship begins with the task of appointing the Library CEO by the Library Board. In Section 15 of the *Public Libraries Act*, it is clear that the library board appoints a CEO:

Chief executive officer -

(2) A board shall appoint a chief executive officer who shall have general supervision over and direction of the operations of the public library and its staff, shall attend all board meetings and shall have the other powers and duties that the board assigns to him or her from time to time. R.S.O. 1990, c. P.44, s. 15 (2).

While the Library Board focuses its attention on setting strategic direction and plans, the management of library operations is delegated to the Library CEO. The relationship between the Library Board and CEO again plays a role in that the Library Board directs the Library CEO through decisions made a meeting (by majority vote), by written policy and by approved budgets and plans. With that delegation of authority, the CEO will take actions consistent with the board's mission, vision, values and policies; be responsible for the management of all library employees; and implement and manage all operational practices and activities. As part of this ongoing and continuous relationship, the Library Board and Library CEO need to engage in performance appraisal, planning and review. The CEO performance appraisal is a crucial task for the Library Board, and it requires a degree of planning and preparation.

Why CEO performance appraisal

The Library board's relationship with the Library CEO is a constructive partnership. You need each other for the library to be successful.

This relationship starts as soon as you hire someone. There needs to be a systematic orientation and training program for the new CEO, even if the person is internal to the organization, that identifies the role of the board, chair, and others to ensure that there is a smooth entry.

The process of performance appraisal facilities communication between the library board and the library CEO while ensuring that the board's priorities are achieved.

Sometimes, CEO appraisals can be seen as punitive, but it is really just a milestone in a process where each of the partners confirms that they are doing the things that are supposed to be done. We ensure we are in touch with each other and we have a partnership that is working. You also want to assess performance and impact for success in your lead employee. You want to make sure your CEO will be successful – if your CEO isn't successful, you are not successful.

A good appraisal process should:

- Ensure that the library's strategic goals are met
- · Create a strong partnership between the library board and library CEO
- · Encourage the CEO's personal development
- · Provide an early warning system for possible problems.

A Board Member's Perspective





• W Transcript

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Principles of Library CEO Appraisal

Being a CEO in today's world is a challenging role. These trusted leaders are required to be decisive, consistent, communicative, persistent, and multi-faceted. It is the board's role to follow these guiding principles:

- Continuous process throughout the year Conversations and updates should be frequent and open channels of communication should be maintained. The appraisal process will include a formal review at year's end.
- Clear expectations One of the basic principles underlying the appraisal is that the
 process be a collaboration, meaning that both the CEO and the board develop and
 agree on the process to be followed. Also, strict confidentiality be maintained
 throughout and that the assessment be based on objective measures.
- Constructive and honest feedback One purpose of the CEO appraisal is
 improvement and so an important guiding principle is to provide constructive feedback.
 Performance appraisal should not be an opportunity to criticize or reprimand. There
 may be issues to address, but that feedback should be constructive and honest in
 order to remedy the issues.
- No surprises The maxim of "no surprises" should be paramount. The CEO should
 not be surprised by issues raised during a performance appraisal. Any issues or
 concerns that arise over the course of the year should be addressed as they arise to
 prevent them from becoming bigger issues than they need to be.

Note that if the same issues are recurring despite ongoing conversations and feedback, that becomes a different issue of performance management rather than performance appraisal.

Next: The Evaluation Process >>

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