

**Book:** *The Governance Factor, 33 Keys to Success in Healthcare*

**Author:** Errol L. Biggs, PhD, FACHE

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**Reviewer:** Lt. Col T. Bruce McFarland, USAF, CAAMA  
US Air Force  
Barksdale AFB, LA

## **Review**

This book is the perfect handbook for board members. The author has designed the book so that it can be used by both new and experienced members. The author focuses on 33 important keys that relate to board structure, board function, and board member responsibilities. This book is structured so that it can be perused in sections, allowing the reader to go to areas of specific interest or need.

This one of the best books dealing with governance to come along in years. It is presented in a clear and concise roadmap for achieving high performance. There are sample documents that can be adapted for use by any governing board. The book begins with the results of a random survey of Hospital CEOs and Public Company CEOs taken by the author. The survey addresses two or three main issues the CEOs indicated their boards were or should be addressing. The author then tabulated the top ten issues as revealed by the CEOs. He then list the top five questions the CEOs thought a board should ask itself in a self-assessment survey. The results of the survey confirmed the type of information the author includes in the book that will be helpful to anyone involved in healthcare organization governance.

Chapter 1 (**keys 1 to 6**) deals with board responsibility and what the board is supposed to do. The first six keys aid in what the board responsibility is for envisioning, formulating, and amending the organization's mission, vision, and goals.

Chapter 2, 3, and 4 (**keys 7 to 15**) discuss board responsibility from ensuring high level executive performance, ensuring quality of patient care, and ensuring the organizations financial health. These chapters were straight forward and easy to follow. Chapter 3 was especially well done and very informative for new board members. The questions posed for boards to ask dealing with Clinical performance and Patient Safety left no doubt about the importance of looking at measures that reflect the organizational performance and not just physician performance. Chapter 4 goes into what board members need to know about the important parts of financial statements and the key financial ratios. This would be especially helpful to board members that have little or no financial background.

Chapter 5 (**keys 16 and 17**) discuss the "stakeholders" or individuals and other organizations that have an interest and are involved in the services provided and how the hospital functions. This chapter goes into detail as to how the hospital must identify and interact well with the stakeholders or risk failing to achieve the hospital mission and goals.

Chapter 6 (**keys 18 to 29**) is designed to help the board answer what the author calls "The Goldilocks Question, Are We Too Big or Too Small?" Does the size of the board help or hinder getting important tasks done? Who should be board members and who should not be? What

should board be paid or not paid? What should be included in an effective board orientation program? There is also a valuable tool included in this chapter, a self-assessment process consisting of three steps.

Chapter 7 (**keys 30 to 33**) appropriately titled “Additional Information” provides answers from how a board should relate to its foundation, what healthcare jargon is helpful to know and web sites for board governance information.

At the conclusion of the book was an appendix with eight valuable tools to aid in topics such as, Conflict of Interest Policy, Model CEO Employment Contract, and Board Member Annual Performance Appraisal.

As I stated at the beginning of this review, this is the perfect handbook for any board member. I highly recommend this book for anyone new to a trustee position. The sample documents alone are worth the price of the book.

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