



Facilitating a board performance review

‘EFFP provided us with a good structure for the appraisal process and their approach to the director interviews and workshops made it a very positive experience for all involved. We now have a clear plan of action and know where we need to concentrate our efforts.’

John Boot

President,
The Midcounties Co-operative

Summary

The Midcounties Co-operative is a consumer co-operative owned by its members, part of the global co-operative movement. The Society operates six businesses in the West Midlands and central southern England: in food retail, pharmacy, funeral, travel, motors and childcare, with annual gross sales of £748 million for 2008/09.

EFFP carried out a full appraisal of The Midcounties Co-operative Board including surveying and interviewing all directors. The purpose of the appraisal was to help the Board and individual directors better understand the issues affecting the performance of the board, to identify where improvements could be made and to set out a development plan.

The business challenge

In conducting an appraisal of both board and director performance the challenge was to reconcile a meaningful and useful outcome without imposing too much on directors’ time. Furthermore, there was an additional condition to ensure that the process was impartial, transparent and confidential.

How we helped

EFFP facilitated the entire process from an independent and impartial viewpoint. We initially met with a board sub-committee to define the scope and specific requirements of the Board and Directors. Then, by pulling together a variety of tools and techniques, a bespoke appraisal process was designed to meet these requirements, building on Midcounties’ own appraisal documentation.

The bespoke process included a whole board appraisal via an online survey, individual director reviews and interviews with a final workshop session including the entire Board. Individual interviews were designed to validate the survey data and to bring to the surface particular areas of concern. This was a very important aspect of the success of the exercise, as it allowed the analysis to look beyond the visible symptoms and focus upon the key underlying issues. The information was then collated and compared to best practice standards.



The outcome

At the end of the process the Board had a much better understanding of the issues affecting its performance, what it did well and where there were areas to improve. Moreover, individual directors enhanced their understanding of how their personal performance affects that of the whole Board and what they could do to improve.

A report was delivered to the Board setting out the detail of the analysis, together with a clear plan of action for further development.

Board and director performance appraisal

Board and director performance appraisals play an important role in delivering good governance. They feature as an important recommendation in all conventional governance codes of practice and whilst most boards understand the importance of carrying out these appraisals, this task often gets deferred because of the workload of the board.

Additionally, some directors can be apprehensive about the process and sceptical about its value to the business. However, using an independent, confidential and impartial facilitator ensures the board can take full advantage of the process without being detracted excessively from its main business.

About EFFP

EFFP is a specialist agri-food business consultancy, working across the whole supply chain. We combine our farming knowledge with food industry expertise to address structural, commercial and trading relationship issues from an objective and independent viewpoint.

As a national organisation, with a dedicated team of highly experienced sector and regional specialists, we not only assist individual businesses but also promote new thinking and transformational change across the complete chain. We reinvest all our profits back into the industry to help make that change happen.

We offer

- strategic insights into what is happening both globally and nationally, and crucially the implications for UK businesses;
- a range of business development services to help deliver growth, organisational and structural improvements and continuing professional development;
- expert advice and practical solutions to strengthen and integrate the supply chain back to farm level.

Speak to us

To discuss how EFFP can support your business please contact us.

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