



Boardroom Ethics & Compliance Assessment Tool

A Self-Assessment Framework for Ethical & Purpose-Driven Board Leadership

This tool is designed to help boards assess their commitment to ethical leadership, compliance integration, and long-term corporate responsibility. It is inspired by the three-step purpose-driven leadership model and tailored for boardroom governance.



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Section 1: Purpose & Ethical Leadership

Objective: Assess whether board members have a clear, intrinsic commitment to ethical leadership beyond regulatory obligations.

Question	Scale (1-5)	Comments/Actions Needed
Do board members explicitly discuss corporate purpose beyond financial performance?		
Are ethical considerations regularly factored into strategic discussions?		
Do board members individually reflect on their purpose and ethical legacy in governance?		
Has the board clearly defined the company's ethical purpose?		
Are ethical dilemmas actively debated and resolved, rather than avoided?		

➤ **Next Steps:** If most responses are 3 or below, consider organizing a board retreat focused on ethical purpose discovery.

Section 2: Tension Resolution & Ethical Decision-Making

Objective: Evaluate how well the board balances short-term pressures with long-term ethical responsibilities.

Question	Scale (1-5)	Comments/Actions Needed
Does the board regularly review ethical risks and dilemmas beyond regulatory requirements?		
Are compliance and ethics seen as strategic enablers rather than regulatory burdens?		
Are there open discussions about moral dilemmas, such as whistleblower protection, ESG trade-offs, and executive accountability?		
Has the board ever engaged in a structured "ethical foresight" session to predict future risks?		
Are compliance officers, ethics professionals, or external experts consulted on major decisions?		

➤ **Next Steps:** If the board scores low, consider introducing "tension resolution" discussions in meetings to address ethical blind spots.

Section 3: Narrative Building & Ethical Influence

Objective: Assess whether board members effectively communicate and reinforce ethics and compliance within the organization.

Question	Scale (1-5)	Comments/Actions Needed
Do board members actively champion ethics and compliance in internal and external communications?		
Has the board set a strong "tone from the top" on ethical leadership?		
Are board members trained in ethical storytelling to communicate the importance of compliance?		
Is there a mechanism for employees to see how board decisions reflect corporate values?		
Have board members participated in speak-up culture initiatives or direct engagement with frontline employees on ethics?		

➤ **Next Steps:** If the board lacks strong ethical storytelling, develop "We Will" statements to reinforce compliance culture.



Section 4: Accountability & Ethical Governance (“I Will” & “We Will” Commitments)

Objective: Ensure the board is accountable for ethical leadership and compliance oversight.

Question	Scale (1-5)	Comments/Actions Needed
Are board members required to make personal ethical commitments (e.g., an “I Will” statement)?		
Is there a process for evaluating individual director accountability for ethical oversight?		
Does the board hold executives accountable for ethics and compliance performance?		
Are compliance-linked KPIs used in executive compensation and incentives?		
Does the board have a whistleblower response policy that is actively reviewed?		

► **Next Steps:** If accountability mechanisms are weak, consider implementing board-level ethics scorecards and director pledges.

Section 5: Structural Integration of Compliance in the Boardroom

Objective: Assess whether compliance and ethics are institutionally embedded rather than treated as an afterthought.

Question	Scale (1-5)	Comments/Actions Needed
Is compliance a dedicated agenda item at every board meeting?		
Does the board receive regular, independent compliance reports (not just from management)?		
Is there a dedicated ethics & compliance committee separate from the audit committee?		
Are ethical considerations integrated into M&A, strategy, and risk assessments?		
Does the board have direct engagement with compliance officers beyond annual reports?		

► **Next Steps:** If compliance is not structurally embedded, consider formalizing ethics oversight mechanisms at the board level.

Scoring & Interpretation

20–25 points per section: Highly Ethical Board – The board demonstrates strong compliance leadership and ethical oversight.

15–19 points per section: Moderate Alignment – Some ethical governance practices exist, but improvements are needed.

Below 15 points: High-Risk Board – Ethical and compliance structures are weak, and immediate corrective action is recommended.



Contact

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