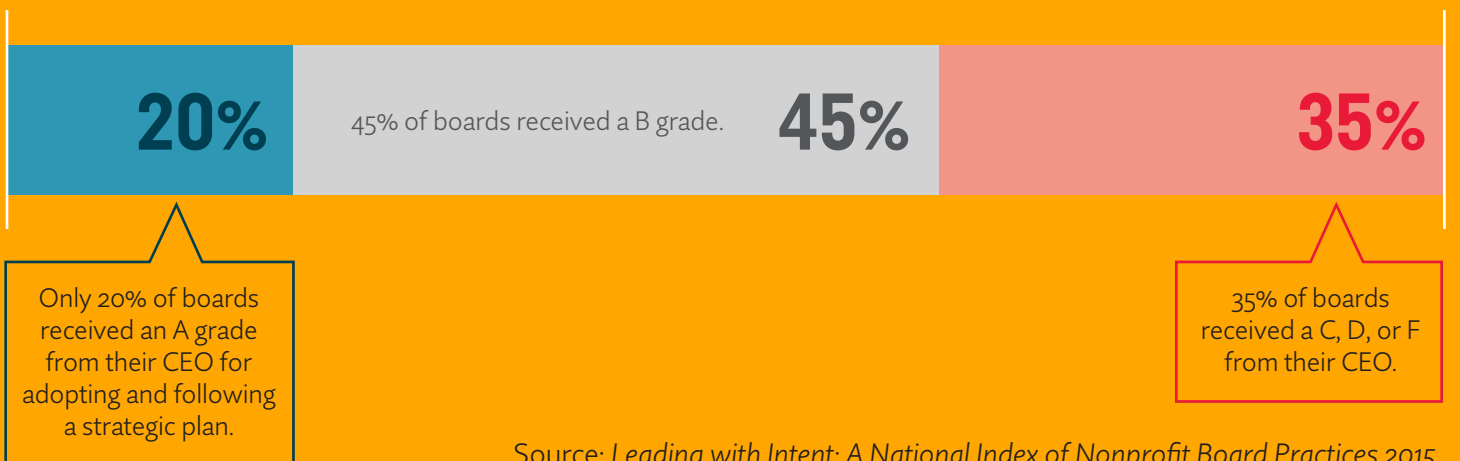
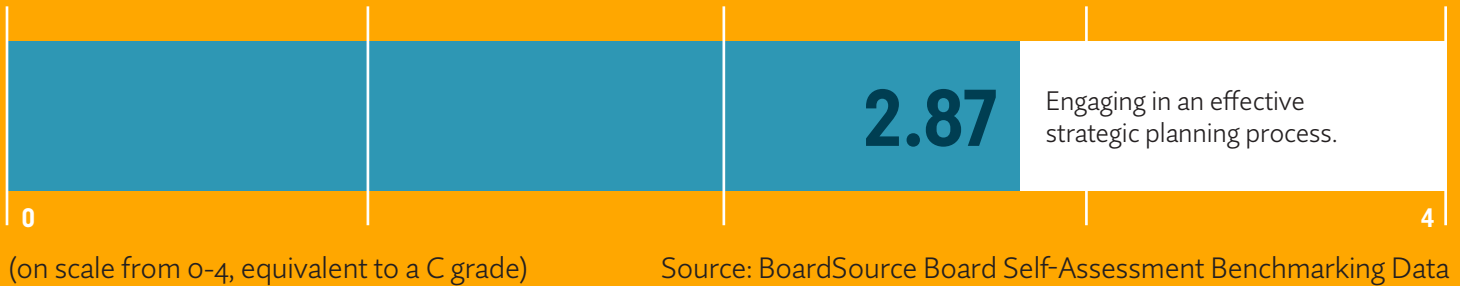


# NONPROFIT STRATEGY AND PLANNING BY THE NUMBERS

## Evolution & Progress

Strategy and planning remains at the top of the list of areas needing board improvement.

### EVOLUTION



Nonprofits most often focus on creating one of the following four documents when engaging in strategic planning, but reliance on formal strategic plans is lessening in favor of more flexible strategic frameworks.



#### STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Articulates organizational priorities and provides overarching guidelines for organizational operations, often instead of specific goals. Allows organizations to quickly and efficiently respond to change while still adhering to strategic principles.

#### OPERATIONAL PLAN/ ANNUAL PLAN

Incorporates strategic goals and their related objectives/strategies and identifies specific action steps as well as a monitoring and evaluation process. Contains clear metrics and timelines.

#### BUSINESS PLAN

Combines programmatic and operational goals with financial forecasts. Often used in developing a new program or generating earned income through some mission-related business venture.



#### STRATEGIC PLAN

Formal process for examining what actions are necessary to move an organization forward, taking into account its environment and context. Includes a written list of the actions needed to carry out a plan, often based on comprehensive data analysis, covering a period of time set by the board (usually 3- to 5-year horizons).

Given nonprofits' increasing desire for more flexibility, many organizations have begun experimenting with alternatives to formal strategic plans.

Frequently, nonprofits turn to strategic frameworks — combined with business plans and more robust annual plans — to guide their operations. Frameworks allow organizations to adapt to change and take advantage of opportunities as they are presented.

## KEY QUALITIES OF STRATEGIC FRAMEWORKS



Focus on big picture, not nitty gritty of plan itself



Flexible and nimble



Framework for prioritization and decision-making for management

"We understood implicitly that [a new strategic framework] wasn't about mapping out a linear plan to some pre-determined set of outcomes...Instead, we took inspiration from some of the ideas and concepts of emergent strategy, and focused on tackling the big questions about who we are as an organization."

– Anne Wallestad, president & CEO, BoardSource

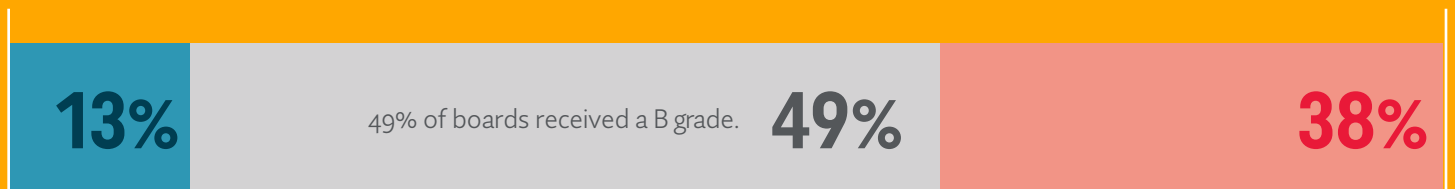
Featured [blog post](#) and [webinar](#) on how BoardSource developed its strategic framework

## MONITORING PROGRESS



(on scale from 0-4, equivalent to a C grade)

Source: BoardSource Board Self-Assessment Benchmarking Data



13% of boards received an A for monitoring organizational performance and impact.

38% of boards received a C, D, or F.

Source: *Leading with Intent: A National Index of Nonprofit Board Practices 2015*

Strategic plans were intended to be living documents that evolve with the organization, but too often, organizations failed to hold themselves accountable to achieve the timelines and goals set forth in the long-term plans.



Sources: [Driving Strategic Planning; Has Your Organization Successfully Moved from Strategic Planning to Implementation?](#); [Leading with Intent](#); [Strategic Planning Understanding the Process: A BoardSource Toolkit](#); [The Nonprofit Board’s Role in Mission, Planning, and Evaluation](#)