



USING A SCORECARD TO MONITOR YOUR NETWORK'S HEALTH



This Guide is part of our Network Know-How series, a collection of six easy-to-use resources highlighting key network design and management principles for social impact network builders. Each Guide includes real-world examples of network principles and clarifying questions to help you reflect on your network practice, focus your network strategy and develop an effective network plan.

The Network Know-How Guides were created by Network Impact, subject matter experts in the field of network theory. Network Impact created the guides for the Network Incubator, a program that ran from 2016 to 2018 for select members of ROI Community, a signature initiative of Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies.

The guides formed the basis for the Network Incubator curriculum and proved useful to the emerging networks that were part of the program. Schusterman Family Philanthropies worked with ROI Community and Network Impact to repurpose the guides as a publicly available resource to help developing and established network leaders further their work and scale their impact.

The case studies of emerging networks in the guides reflect organizations Network Impact worked with through the Network Incubator and in other settings. The networks featured are not necessarily grantees of Schusterman Family Philanthropies.

Network Know-How Orientation

The **Network Know-How Guide: Getting Started** includes a self-assessment to help you determine which Network Know-How Guides will help your network evolve. The Getting Started Guide also has an overview of the key themes each Guide covers and a glossary of important terms.

[Download all of the Network Know-How Guides here.](#)

The Using a Scorecard to Monitor Your Network's Health Guide can help you make informed decisions about what the network needs to succeed. This Guide offers tips for including members in assessing your network's health through the use of a simple scorecard.

This Using a Scorecard to Monitor Your Network's Health Guide addresses two common questions from network builders:

- **What is an easy way** to assess our network's health?
- **How can we apply** the results of our self-assessments to improve our network over time?

Using a Scorecard to Monitor Your Network's Health includes the following sections:

- 5** **The Scorecard:** A Fitness Tracker for a Healthy Network
- 10** **Creating Your Network Health Scorecard**
- 14** **Using Your Network Health Scorecard**
- 17** **Additional Resources on Network Health**



Monitoring Your Network's Health

Network Snapshot

When the 14 organizations in the Southwest Rural Policy Network (SWRPN) met to discuss the state of their network, they had several years' worth of data to inform their conversation.

SWRPN was able to reflect and compare results from self-assessments that members completed using a network health scorecard. These "checkups" cover four essential network health categories: **purpose, performance, operations and capacity**. It takes members only a few minutes to respond to the statements on the scorecard. And results provide a valuable snapshot of the network's current health and changes over time.





T·H·E S·C·O·R·E·C·A·R·D:

A FITNESS TRACKER FOR A HEALTHY NETWORK

Complex systems—from cars to people—benefit from regular checkups. For networks, monitoring conditions that promote network health can identify areas of strength and areas that might need attention.

Network Impact designed a network health scorecard to make tracking a network's health easier.

Compared to other ways of gathering feedback from members (e.g., monitoring member satisfaction covered in the *Network Know-How Guide: Clarifying Purpose and Value*), using a scorecard should be a group activity. The scorecard is designed to produce an assessment by members for members.

Sharing network health scorecard summary scores helps network members discuss topics they might not otherwise find on a meeting agenda but are vital to a network's health such as the network's ability to learn and adapt. Consistent checkups also allow networks to track changes over time to monitor their network health trajectory. We recommend scorecard questions for networks that are past the initial stages of development because the scorecard works best when all members are engaging at a level that allows them to knowledgeably respond.

KEY TERM

NETWORK HEALTH

Conditions in a network that help people participate, collaborate, add value to each other's work as well as produce outcomes they care about.

The chart is an excerpt from the network health scorecard. Following the chart is an explanation of how the SWRPN used the scorecard in their network development practice. You can find the complete **Network Health Scorecard** on the Network Impact website (www.networkimpact.org/downloads/NH_Scorecard.pdf).

Network Health Scorecard Sample

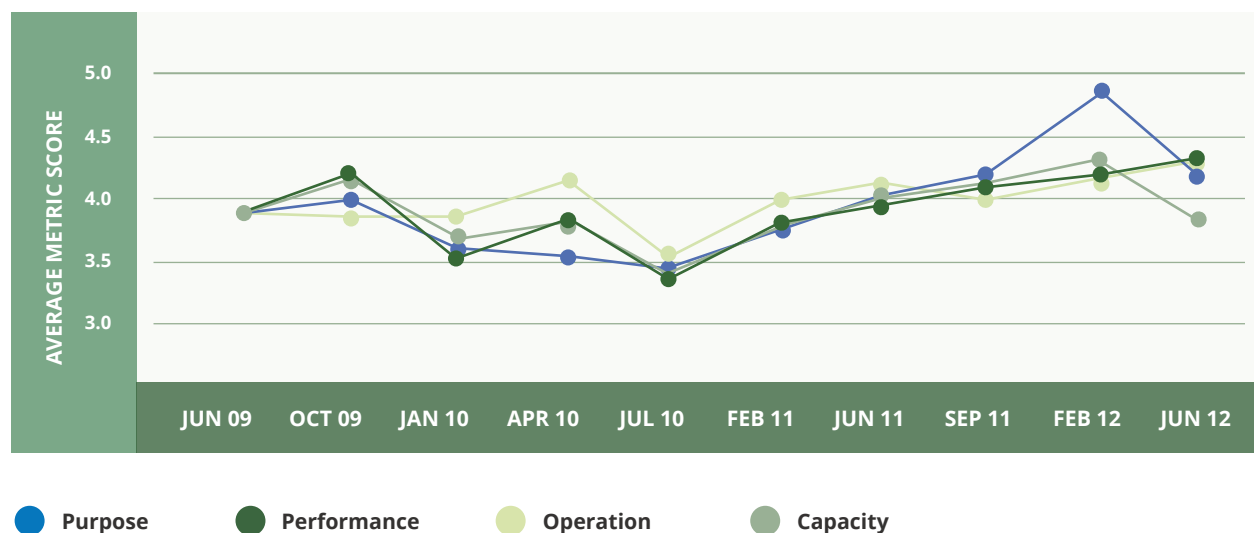
Please review each statement and provide your rating for the network as a whole for a basic network diagnosis of strengths and areas of growth.	1 NOT SO MUCH	2	3	4	5 TOTALLY!
<p>CATEGORY: NETWORK PURPOSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All members share a common purpose for the network. • Together, members have identified strategic goals and objectives for the network. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>CATEGORY: NETWORK PERFORMANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members are adding value to each other's work. • Members are creating new knowledge or insights together. • The way the network communicates with stakeholders builds support for the network. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>CATEGORY: NETWORK OPERATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision-making processes encourage members to contribute and collaborate. • The network's internal communications systems are serving it well. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>CATEGORY: NETWORK CAPACITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a network, members have the material resources needed to advance network goals. • As a network, members have the skills they need to advance network goals. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

In Practice

Using the Network Health Scorecard to Chart Progress for the Southwest Rural Policy Network (SWRPN)

Regular reporting using the network health scorecard has allowed SWRPN to document its network's progress, providing valuable information for internal reflection and external funders. Joyce Hospodar, the member who chairs the network's evaluation committee, summarized the scores over four years on a 5-point scale, with 1 being the lowest score and 5 the highest. Performance and operations scores gradually increased over time, which affirmed that stabilizing operations with a consistent network coordinator and dedicating resources to network infrastructure issues—such as communications to support information sharing—were paying off. When discussing the performance scores, members noted that the introduction of small-funding support for specific projects helped focus work directly on policy, which positively affected network performance. These results reinforced the decision to renew mini-funding opportunities the following year.

Network Metrics Over Time



1 Reflection Activity: Network Advantage

Based on your experience, what conditions help members produce or get value from your network? (Think about what helps the network thrive.) For example, one health condition could be the foundation of trust among members that is essential for accomplishing network goals, or it might be an efficient communications infrastructure that allows for fast, easy exchanges. Some networks include an inclusion-related condition such as, “The network is inclusive (no one is on the periphery).”

List the conditions that are vital to your network’s health:



C·R·E·A·T·I·N·G
Y·O·U·R
N·E·T·W·O·R·K
H·E·A·L·T·H
S·C·O·R·E·C·A·R·D

When creating a network health scorecard, your goal is to create a tool that monitors your network's vital conditions and is a good fit for *your* members and context.

From the list of conditions you listed in Reflection Activity 1 and drawing from other network examples, if needed, draft a scorecard for your network using the reflection activity on page 13. (The Additional Resources section at the end of this Guide has links to other scorecard examples.) For networks in the early stages of development, scorecards tend to be short—typically with fewer than 10 questions. For more mature networks, the scorecard should be more comprehensive with closer to 20–25 questions.

Common Network Health Conditions

While conditions that support a thriving network depend on your network's specific circumstances, the following is a list of core network health conditions that many networks include in their scorecard:

Shared purpose: A common understanding of and approach to solving a problem through agreed-on actions.

Value generated for members: Benefits that members realize as a result of network participation.

Trust: The glue that holds network relationships—and thus, networks—together.

Reflective action: A system or process for assessing progress and outcomes and acting on what members learn.

Connected members: Bonds in closely knit networks are a source of valuable social capital. Bridges—people who connect different clusters or groups—provide access to information, ideas and connections outside a network's core.

Communication: An efficient communications infrastructure that allows for fast, easy exchanges.

High-performance coordination: Roles and processes that facilitate members' work.

Distributed leadership: Creating space for everyone to step up and contribute.

2 Reflection Activity

To create a network health scorecard specifically for your network, think about who will respond to your survey, what categories or themes you are most interested in, and what questions you want to ask for each category or theme.

Respondents: When developing your scorecard, envision who will respond to the network health questions. A network health scorecard is designed for network members who understand and identify with the network's mission. Larger, more open networks can use the scorecard with a core group of active network members. List the potential network scorecard respondents below. In most cases, this will be member categories (e.g., individuals who participate in committees or have attended at least three meetings in the last year—not individual names).

Categories or themes: Look for categories or themes among the network health conditions you listed in Reflection Activity 1. (For example, in the sample scorecard, the categories are network purpose, performance, operations and capacity.) Make a list of categories, and then narrow it down to four or five that you want to include on your scorecard.

Network health questions: For each category, draft statements that describe what the condition looks like in your network. (For example, if assessing the level of trust between network members is a network health condition, the scorecard could say, "Rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following: 'Members treat each other with respect,'" since this statement assesses a potential source of trust among members. You may want to start with a limited number of questions (5 to 10) to make the design process more manageable and encourage members' participation.

Make a list of possible statements for your network health scorecard.



U·S·I·N·G Y·O·U·R
N·E·T·W·O·R·K
H·E·A·L·T·H
S·C·O·R·E·C·A·R·D

Using Your Network Health Scorecard

You can refine the statements you drafted in Reflection Activity 2 to create your network's own custom scorecard.

- 1** Network members can complete the scorecard as a pen-and-paper activity, or it can be set up as an online survey (or even part of a survey to members that also includes questions related to value propositions). For some networks, members complete the brief scorecard quarterly, while for others it is an annual exercise. Timing can vary depending on your network's level of activity.
- 2** Ask each network member to rate how well the network is doing on each of the network health conditions listed on the scorecard. Remind them that results are anonymous.
- 3** First compile the average scores for each statement into a table to show how many members selected each score, then average scores for each statement to provide a summary snapshot of network members' perspectives.
- 4** Share the scorecard results with members as a tool for internal reflection and to prompt discussions.
- 5** The network can track scorecard results over time to monitor any changes that may be useful for internal assessment and document the network's journey for supporters and funders.
- 6** As your network evolves, you may want to add to your scorecard. For example, recently, many networks have expressed an intention to focus on equity in their network practice and have added related statements to their scorecard to gather member feedback and track progress.

Using scorecard results to improve your network

After summarizing members' responses to scorecard questions, you can share them with members and then facilitate a discussion about what the results mean. Discussion prompts could include:

- **In what areas** is the network showing signs of good health?
- **Where** are our scores lowest?
- **What** circumstances have affected our network's health?

Use the feedback as input for your decisions about what to focus on to improve your network. For example, the SWRPN noticed that ratings related to network purpose and capacity dipped after reaching an all-time high (see line graph on p. 8). The decline in scores prompted discussion among members about collective purpose and gaps in capacity that the network could address.



A·D·D·I·T·I·O·N·A·L
R·E·S·O·U·R·C·E·S· O·N
N·E·T·W·O·R·K H·E·A·L·T·H

Featured Networks in This Guide

Southwest Rural Policy Network (SWRPN)

A network of 14 organizations from the states of Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado working on issues that affect people and communities of the rural Southwest. The SWRPN fosters personal and professional connections, shares best practices and designs new strategies for change. More at www.crh.arizona.edu/programs/rprp.

Further Reading

Connecting to Change the World

Peter Plastrik, Madeleine Taylor, & John Cleveland

Measuring Dimensions of Network Functioning: The KnowHow2GO Network Survey

Tania Jarosewich, Nushina Mir, & Linda Simkin, *The Foundation Review*

Network Effectiveness: Diagnostic and Development Tool

Monitor Institute



Network Impact conducts research, builds tools and provides advice to change agents who are building and using networks for increased impact. Over the last decade, Network Impact has developed frameworks and tools to monitor a network's development so that network members, organizers and supporters can be more deliberate in their efforts to support effective network practice. Find more information and resources at www.NetworkImpact.org.

Acknowledgments



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