



**Valley Water Staff S.W.O.T. Survey
Board Executive Summary
4/25/24**

Valley Water Board members,
Please find below a summary of potential Board-related items identified in the Leadership Team S.W.O.T. survey at Valley Water. This is not an exhaustive list of all items identified, rather the most common themes/issues identified that potentially become ideas or challenges which would require Board level consideration for solutions. These, along with Board responses to the survey, will be reviewed and discussed during the work plan retreat.

STRENGTHS

1. **Highly Qualified and Dedicated Staff:** Many responses highlight the excellence, dedication, and professionalism of the organization's staff. This includes their expertise, hard work, and passion for serving the community.
2. **Leadership and Management:** There is an emphasis on effective leadership and management, including the role of experienced board members and CEOs in guiding the organization's mission and vision.
3. **Diversity and Inclusion:** The value of diversity and inclusion within the workforce is noted in multiple responses, along with efforts to ensure representation and equity.
4. **Communication and Transparency:** The efforts made by the organization to communicate effectively with both employees and the public, as well as its commitment to transparency, are mentioned in several responses.

WEAKNESSES

From the provided responses, several common themes emerge regarding areas of weakness or challenges faced by the organization:

1. **Lack of Focus and Mission Creep:** Many responses mention concerns about the organization straying from its central mission areas or taking on services that are not within its core mandate.
2. **Political Interference and Board Dysfunction:** The impact of political dynamics, including board politics and decision-making influenced by political reasons, is noted as a significant challenge. Board dysfunction and micromanagement by certain board members are also mentioned.
3. **Loss of Institutional Knowledge:** The loss of experienced staff and institutional knowledge due to retirements is identified as a challenge for the organization.
4. **Cross-Agency Communication and Collaboration:** Several responses highlight the need for improved communication and collaboration between different units or departments within the organization, as well as with external agencies or partners.

OPPORTUNITIES

From the provided responses, several common themes regarding opportunities for improvement or growth emerge:

1. **Leadership Development and New Leadership:** There is an opportunity to focus on training and growing leaders from within the organization, as well as leveraging the potential of new leaders in key areas such as IT and legal.
2. **Focus on Mission and Prioritization:** Many responses highlight the opportunity for Valley Water to prioritize and focus on essential capital projects that align with its core mission, while streamlining processes to be more nimble and efficient.
3. **Community Engagement and Transparency:** There is a consensus on the importance of engaging with the community, providing transparent and informative communication, and building trust through effective communication at all levels of the organization.
4. **Opportunities for Grants and Funding:** Valley Water has the potential to acquire federal grant funding for watershed management projects, climate resiliency initiatives, and other water-related projects by leveraging partnerships and relationships with stakeholders.

THREATS

From the provided responses, several common themes regarding threats and challenges faced by Valley Water emerge:

1. **External Pressures and Environmental Challenges:** The impacts of drought, climate change, and other environmental factors pose significant threats to Valley Water's operations and resources.
2. **Board Dysfunction and Mistrust:** Internal challenges related to board dynamics, mistrust between board members and staff, and conflicts regarding decision-making authority hinder effective governance and operations.
3. **Community Perception and Public Trust:** Negative public perception, often influenced by media coverage and board behavior, impacts Valley Water's reputation and its ability to engage with stakeholders effectively.
4. **Staffing and Talent Retention:** Concerns about brain drain, difficulty attracting and retaining experienced talent, and reliance on temporary workers or AI solutions without adequate succession planning are highlighted.

Compiled and submitted by:

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