

How to Select from Among Public Data Collection Tools

There is an increasing amount of freely available tools that you can use to collect data during a project. Several tools are mentioned at the end of this subsection. However, before you begin reviewing those tools, be sure that you are aware of the major types of tools, the advantages and disadvantages of using each, and general guidelines for applying each type of tool.



See “Overview of Major Methods of Data Collection” on page 398 to be aware of the major types of tools and impacts of using each of them.

In addition to the considerations mentioned in the above-referenced subsection, there are several additional considerations that must be addressed when selecting a publicly available tool.

1. **Focus**
For example does the tool focus on Boards, strategic planning, business planning, Chief Executive Officer role, employees, marketing, finances or evaluations?
2. **Purpose of the tool**
For example, to detect strengths and weaknesses, or to compare to certain “best practices?”



See “Maximum Performance – Different Things to Different People” on page 179 for information about best practices.

3. **Values and assumptions**
For example, does the tool assume a specific Board structure or top-down leadership?
4. **Languages**
English? Other(s)?
5. **Audiences for the tool**
To whom will the tool be applied?
6. **Administrator of the tool**
Who will guide the application of the tool? An outside person? Self-assessment? Will the data collection be participatory?
7. **User guide**
Are there adequate descriptions of procedures for how to use the tool and analyze the results?
8. **Duration and frequency**
How long will it take to use the tool? Is the tool to be applied at certain times? More than once?
9. **Cost**
What are any costs to obtain the tool? Use the tool?
10. **Availability**
How soon can the tool be made available?

Adapted from “Field Guide to Consulting and Organizational Development” – to obtain the entire book, select “Publications” at <http://www.authenticityconsulting.com>

11. **Technical support for the tool**
If you have questions or need guidance, can anyone help you?
12. **Modification**
You might need permission if you seek to modify the tool.