

Building Better Boards:

Find, Recruit, and Engage Great Members

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CEN

Center for Excellence in Nonprofits

It all starts with *Mission*

What is our mission?



What is the impact we are trying to achieve

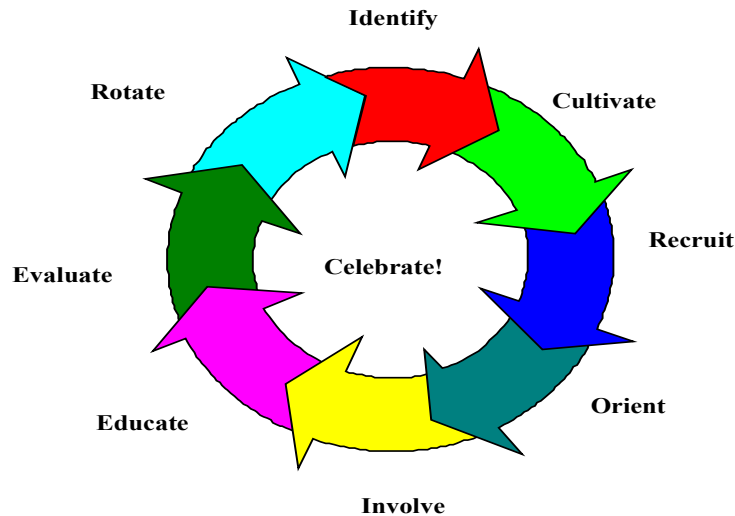


How will we achieve our impact?



What special skills and resources are required to achieve our impact?

The Board Building Cycle



Step 1: Identify board needs (Skills, knowledge, perspective, connections, etc., needed to implement the strategic plan). What do we have? What is missing? Identify sources of board members with the needed characteristics.

Step 2: Cultivate potential board members. Get them interested in your organization and keep them informed of your progress.

Step 3: Recruit prospects. Describe why a prospective member is wanted and needed. Describe expectations and responsibilities of board members, and don't minimize requirements. Invite questions, and elicit their interest and preparedness to serve.

Step 4: Orient new board members to the organization (program, history, bylaws, pressing issues, finances, facilities and organization chart) and to the board (recent minutes, committees, board member responsibilities, lists of board members and key staff members).

Step 5: Involve all board members. Discover their interests and availability. Involve them in committees or task forces. Assign them a board "buddy." Solicit feedback. Hold everyone accountable. Express appreciation for work well done.

Step 6: Educate the board. Provide information concerning your mission area. Promote exploration of issues facing the organization. Don't hide difficulties.

Step 7: Evaluate the board and individual board members. Engage the board in assessing its own performance. Identify ways in which to improve. Encourage individual self-assessment.

Step 8: Rotate board members. Consider establishing and using term limits. Do not automatically re-elect for an additional term; consider the board's needs and the board member's performance. Explore advisability of resigning with members who are not active. Develop new leadership.

Step 9: Celebrate! Recognize victories and progress, even small ones. Appreciate individual contributions to the board, the organization, and the community. Make room for humor and a good laugh.

What is our mission?



What is the impact we are trying to achieve



Who do we need to achieve our impact?



Role	Role Description

Board Matrix

Expertise / Skills / Personal Data

This worksheet can be adapted by the organization to assess its current board composition and plan for the future. The governance committee can develop an appropriate grid for the organization and then present its findings to the full board.

In considering board building, an organization is legally obligated to follow its bylaws, which may include specific criteria on board size, structure, and composition. Or the bylaws may need to be updated to incorporate and acknowledge any changes in the environment and community that have made modifications to the board structure necessary or desirable.

Remember, an organization will look for different skills and strengths from its board members, depending on its stage of development and other circumstances. One shortcoming many boards have is that they do not include representatives from the population they aim to serve who are often from low-income neighborhoods or are otherwise under-privileged.

	Current Members						Prospective Members					
	A	B	C	D	E	F	A	B	C	D	E	F
Age												
Under 18												
19 – 34												
35 – 50												
51 – 65												
Over 65												
Sex												
Male												
Female												
Socioeconomics												
Low income												
Moderate Capacity												
High Capacity												
Race/Ethnicity/Disability												
African American/Black												
Asian/Pacific Islander												
Caucasian												
Hispanic/Latino												
Native American/Indian												
Disability												
Other												
Resources												
Money to give												
Access to money												
Access to other resources												
Availability for active participation												
Other												
Community Connections												
Religious organizations												
Corporate												
Education												
Media												
Political												
Philanthropy												
Small business												

	Current Members						Prospective Members					
	A	B	C	D	E	F	A	B	C	D	E	F
Social services												
Other												
Qualities												
Leadership skills												
Willingness to work												
Personal connection with org. mission												
Other												
Personal Style												
Consensus builder												
Good communicator												
Strategist												
Visionary												
Other												
Areas of Expertise												
Administration / management												
Entrepreneurship												
Financial management												
Accounting												
Banking and trusts												
Investments												
Fundraising												
Government												
International affairs												
Law												
Marketing / public relations												
Human resources												
Strategic planning												
Physical plant (architect, engineer)												
Real estate												
Representative of clients												
Special program focus												
Technology												
Other												

	Current Members						Prospective Members					
	A	B	C	D	E	F	A	B	C	D	E	F
Committees												
Finance												
Executive												
Fundraising												
Other												
Other												
New Networks												

Candidate	Owner	Strategy	Status	Notes

Your mission statement

About (Your organization)

Key Facts

- Founded
- Currently has how many board members?
- What is budget & staff size?
- What are your program offerings ?
- Your offices are located at:
- **Other information you wish you knew!**

Requirements for board service (Samples below)

- The full (your organization) Board meets on average (how many) times per year from (time) on the (day of the month).
- Individual Board members are expected to serve on at least one committee (Finance, Fund Development, or Governance), and these typically meet monthly either in person or via conference call.
- All Board members are expected to participate actively in organizational fundraising and to make a personal gift of significance to them when compared to their other philanthropic priorities. Each Board member has a \$XXX give or get goal.
- All Board members are expected to sign a formal “Conflict of Interest” statement annually.
- It is expected that Board members will attend X# of programs and that they will informally promote these events thru their personal networks.
- Each board member will play an active role in identifying, cultivating and recruiting new board members.
- **Do you have others?**

Board Member Commitment & Engagement - Define your cultural standards

The board assumes responsibility for its own performance and models governance behaviors that it would have others emulate, both inside and outside the organization. In addition, the (Your organization) Board of Directors has approved the following terms of engagement as formal expectations of individual board members:

1. We consider ourselves partners of the CEO. We recognize the need for shared leadership and practice it in our work. We are available to brainstorm and test ideas candidly, to try out best and worst case scenarios without risk.
2. We allow room for the CEO to manage. We recognize that it is the CEO's responsibility to manage the organization and its operations on a day to day basis. We stay informed through regular, timely updates and make suggestions without micromanaging.
3. We are good listeners. We are interested in hearing each other's views, and truly understanding all perspectives. We recognize that fully understanding and incorporating a diversity of viewpoints can help to shape high quality, innovative plans and decisions.
4. We ask the tough, probing and naïve questions. We routinely explore things from all angles through questioning and dialogue. We don't shy away from difficult subjects. We seek out ideas and opinions from all present.
5. We consistently apply high ethical standards. We exercise common sense and good judgment in executing all of our responsibilities. We are willing to discuss openly any areas of concern. We quickly address and remedy any issues.
6. We are proactive ambassadors for (your organization). We seek and pursue opportunities to talk with others about (your organization), our work and our accomplishments. We are advocates and fans, generating goodwill for the organization.
7. We are energetic about learning about and helping (your organization). We have passion, time and energy for learning about the organization and what we do. We actively seek out ways to apply ourselves in helping to ensure the organization's ongoing success.
8. Other info you would add:

BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION CHECKLIST

The governance committee should develop a checklist, similar to the following, for use by new board members indicating what they need to take responsibility for learning about during their first three months on the board:

Information	What to Do	Who	Date completed
Program	Tour of facilities Presentation by chief executive, key staff, video or other electronic media Written materials		
Finances	Presentation by chief executive, chief financial officer or treasurer Review of recent financials Learn how to read and understand financial statement		
History	Read written materials Meeting with Board Chair or ED		
Strategic Direction	Review of strategic plan		
Organizational Structure	Review of bylaws Review of organizational chart Introduction to key staff members		
Board Roles	Review of written materials Discussion with board chair or whole board		
Board Member Responsibilities	Review of legal responsibilities Signed letter of agreement Signed conflict-of-interest policy		
Board Operations	Review of board manual Meeting with board chair Accept committee or task force assignment Attend board meetings		

