



Board Member Recruiting to Meet Your Needs

For most not-for-profits, the recruitment of board members is a major concern. Many not-for-profits will not attract high-demand individuals, and therefore, emphasis needs to be made on identifying people who have the skills needed and a passion for your cause.

The most likely board candidates are successful, with specific talents. They may be well known in the community, or have community influence. What accomplished, busy people like is a challenge — a challenge with a specific purpose and time frame that might make them say yes, or at least consider a job with your organization.

How do you offer this challenge?

- 1 First, do a board audit to find out what skills are missing. You can't recruit without a list of needed skills.
- 2 Approach a prospective board member through a mutual friend or professional contact.
- 3 Ask the prospective board member to do something specific that will benefit your organization.
- 4 Make sure the prospective board member has a clear understanding of your organization's mission and vision.
- 5 Give them background information on your programs and constituents.
- 6 Quantify the need, as best you can. How much time must the board member invest for the organization to succeed/move forward?
- 7 Establish a time frame. Does the prospective board member have the inclination to stick with it for the full term as specified in the bylaws?
- 8 Hold an open house for prospects. Give them a chance to see your board in action, and provide for a Q&A session. Tour whatever facilities your organization maintains.
- 9 If interest is shown, ask the prospective board member to fill out a board application for consideration by the entire sitting board.

After a prospect becomes a board member, have them sign a letter of commitment, stating their role, and the expectations the board has of them. Make sure you are not overloading your board with persons with the same or similar skill sets.

Remember: being a member of your board is an honor, and your organization deserves the best board members you can recruit.