

Board Recruitment Workbook

This workbook is a step-by-step guide to board recruitment. It contains information and worksheets that walk you through the process and help you set recruiting goals, develop a recruitment packet, and manage contacts with prospective board members.

If you want help in engaging your board in recruitment or teaching them how to find qualified board members, please contact us to schedule a training workshop.

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Six Steps to Successful Board Recruitment

1. Evaluate your current board and set recruiting goals.
2. Identify who will handle board development and the process for board elections.
3. Develop board recruitment materials.
4. Reach out to prospective board members and invite involvement.
5. Screen interested candidates and recommend a slate of new board members to the full board.
6. Elect and train new members.

Board Composition

Conducting a Gap Analysis

Use a Board Composition Worksheet (a good one is available at <http://www.uwkc.org/nonprofit/governance/board/>) to collect information about your board's composition, including demographics, skills and community connections. Add any characteristics that might be relevant to your organization (i.e. language ability, connections to ethnic or religious communities, etc.). Once your board members have filled out the chart, look for gaps using the worksheet on recruiting goals on the next page.

What Type of Composition does the Ideal Board have?

The perfect board composition depends on the mission and goals of your organization.

Skills usually sought in board members:

- ❖ **Financial literacy:** Do you have board members who understand accounting? Are comfortable with financial statements? Can discuss cash flow and investments without zoning out?
 - Where to look: Accountants, Bank employees, business school graduates, government fiscal managers

- ❖ **Legal expertise:** Is there a lawyer on your board, or someone with connections to the legal profession? Would you be able to find pro bono assistance if needed, or just occasional legal advice?
 - Where to look: Attorneys in private practice, large law firm employees, legal aid organizations, bar associations and other professional groups

- ❖ **Fundraising:** Do some of your board members have fundraising experience? Are they comfortable asking for money? Do they know people of means who might contribute?
 - Where to look: People with experience gained at other nonprofit organizations, professional fundraisers, professional organizations like Northwest Development Officers Association or the Puget Sound Grantseekers Association, funders (program officers or foundation board members)

- ❖ **Real Estate/Facilities:** If your organization's plans call for changes to or expansion of your facilities, do your board members have the real estate, construction or project management skills needed to guide the process?
 - Where to look: Professional associations, large institutions with substantial facilities, relevant government departments (i.e Dept. of Construction and Land Use), chambers or commerce, rotary clubs

- ❖ **Media:** Can your board members help get the message out about your organization? In the event of bad publicity or a scandal hitting the papers, can they help you plan a response?
 - Where to look: local newspapers and television stations, PR firms

Worksheet on Recruiting Goals

Part 1

Our top strategic goals for the next few years (or, key issues our board will face):

1. 2. 3.

To reach these goals/address these issues, we will need the following expertise and connections:

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Now, circle skills and expertise not currently represented on the board.

Part 2

Our Board composition analysis shows the following gaps:

Demographics: Skills: Community Connections:
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Part 3

Based on the information shown above, our top priorities for board recruitment are:

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Worksheet on Board Nominations & Elections

Our primary contact(s) for Board Development is/are:

We will encourage prospective board members to get to know our organization in the following ways:

To be nominated for board membership, a candidate must complete the following steps:

Our elections process (as stipulated in our by-laws) is:

Our desired board size (again, check your by-laws) is: _____

New board members will be elected at the _____ monthly meeting.

We will have _____ vacancies, and hope to elect _____ new members.

Building a Prospective Board Member Packet

General Info about the Organization

- Factsheet with Mission, Programs and Goals
- Case Statement (Why this organization is important)
- Brochure, past newsletters, press clippings, etc.
- Annual Report, financial information
- Calendar of upcoming events
- Info on giving and volunteering
- _____
- _____

Board Materials

- Board Job Description
- Board Application
- Information about who to contact
- Information about the board nomination process
- Cover letter thanking the prospect for his/her interest/consideration
- _____
- _____

Meeting with a Prospective Board Member

- Thank the person for his or her time and interest
- Restate the purpose of the meeting
- Present the work of the organization, and why you are excited about it
- Offer to answer any questions
- Be honest about the reward and challenges of board membership
- Listen to the candidates reasons for being interested and the types of board work he or she would like to be involved in
- Explain the commitments of being a board member, and do not offer to make exceptions or downplay the commitment
- Ask the person to join the board
- Explain the timeline for board elections, and determine when the person will make a decision
- Follow-up with any additional information the candidate needs to make a decision
- If the person does say no, respect their decision. However, do listen to what they say and respond accordingly, i.e. if the person says “I’m too busy serving on another board at this time,” you might ask whether you can follow up with the person in six months or a year. Remember, like fundraising, board development is a process of relationship building.

Board Development Checklist

Phase I: Planning

- Board composition assessment complete
- Board recruitment goals set
- Key board development contacts identified
- Timeline in place
- Community outreach plan developed
- List of board prospects identified and assigned to recruiters
- Board candidate packet/application available

Phase II: Outreach and Candidate Identification

- Community outreach plan implemented
- Meetings set with board prospects
- Interviews set with self-nominated community members

Phase III: Development of Board Slate

- Review pool of interested candidates, compare with recruitment goals
- Determine which candidates to recommend

Phase IV: Elections

- Present slate of candidates to board for vote
- Follow-up with successful candidates, schedule board orientation
- Follow-up with unsuccessful candidates and encourage other types of involvement with the organization

Phase V: Orientation

- Schedule a board orientation for new board members (invite current board members as well)
- Match each new board member with a committee assignment
- The Chair should meet individually with each board member within two months and ensure that they are feeling comfortable and address any problems early

Sample Orientation Agenda

- Mission and goals, history of organization, current programs
- Budget and financial reporting (funding sources)
- Major issues facing the organization
- Role of board members (ideal and real)
- Overview of board manual
- Social time/relationship building (consider assigning board buddies or mentors)