

Board Member Recruitment

Quality board recruitment is a constant activity for high performing boards. Board members are always on the lookout for committed members who will help lead the organization into the future. The Governance Committee is charged with overseeing and shepherding a strategic and dynamic approach to new board member identification, recruitment, and retention. It begins with the creation of a clear process for board recruitment which every board member understands and uses. The Governance Committee develops the process, but also works with the board to identify what characteristics, talents, and expertise is needed in new members to move the organization forward and meet the goals of the strategic plan.

Sample Board Recruitment Process

Step One: Determine Future Needs of the Board

The Governance Committee reviews which board members will be cycling off the board to determine the number of seats that need to be filled. The Committee also reviews the strategic priorities of the organization to see what skills will be required to complete the plan. Finally, the committee may complete a board matrix to assess what skills currently exist within the board and determine the gaps between the current skill sets and future needs. This gap analysis becomes the roadmap for determining what skills and expertise will be recruited for the future board.

Step Two: Board Members Refer Names for Consideration

Armed with a clear understanding of what is needed, Board members identify prospective candidates and submit their names and a synopsis of their background to the Committee for consideration. These names may be presented at any time of year – not just prior to the selection of the new members. It is important that when a board member refers an individual, that the board member not mention this to the individual, to avoid building an expectation that he/she will be asked to serve on the board.

Step Three: Assessing Fit and Presenting Names to Board

The Governance Committee reviews the fit of recommended prospects against the priorities of the Board. The Committee creates a running list of potential candidates and vets this list with the full

board. The names are presented at the board meeting and Board members are asked to communicate their thoughts about candidates on the list directly to the Chair or members of the Committee. If there are no objections, the Committee will decide which candidates to connect with and set up meeting times. If there are objections, the Committee will discuss these with the involved parties and make a decision in the best interests of the board.

Step Four: Meeting Candidates and Exploring their Interest

Selected members of the Governance Committee will approach approved candidate(s) and discuss possible board service and ascertain their interest in serving. If a candidate is interested, the Board President, Executive Director and one or two members of the Committee will meet with the candidate, discuss the expectations of board service and whether this would be a good fit.

Step Five: Approving the Candidate

If the Committee approves the candidate, the name and resume will be circulated to the board for comments and final approval. If there is consensus from the board, the candidate will then be placed in nomination at a board meeting or the annual meeting for a formal vote by the board.

Step Six: Welcoming the Candidate

The Governance Committee Chair calls each candidate to inform him or her of the Board's decision and invites the nominees to an orientation session. The Board Chair may send a welcome letter to new members, thanking them for their interest, and establishing a supportive board culture. The letter should include the Board's meeting schedule for the upcoming year so that the new member can plan appropriately.

