Board Recruitment Cycle[[1]](#footnote-1)

STEP 1: Identify gaps in needs (Skills, knowledge, perspective, connections, etc.) that, when filled, will help your board implement the strategic plan.

STEP 2: Cultivate potential new board members. Get them interested in your organization and keep them informed of your initiatives and 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 – programs, history, bylaws, pressing issues, finances, facilities, organizational chart, etc. – and to the board – recent minutes, committees, board member responsibilities, lists of board members and key staff members.

STEP 5: Activate 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. Offer education about how to be a good board member. Don’t hide difficulties. Celebrate accomplishments.

STEP 7: Rotate board members. Establish and use terms 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 8: 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 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.

# Tools to Support the Board Recruitment Cycle

Successful implementation of the Board Building Cycle can be achieved using some simple tools.

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| Cycle Step | Tool/Process | Description |
| Identify | Board Member Profile Worksheet | An Excel spreadsheet or word processing table grid of what you have and what you need |
| Cultivate | Committees &Communication | A well-developed committee structure that pulls from the community and a well-thought-out procedure for staying in touch with potential members. |
| Recruit | Recruitment Packet & Policy | Give consistent information to each potential board member. |
| Orient | Written Orientation Process | Orientation is more than being told to read the handbook or attending a 3-hour meeting. It can take up to a year for a new member to feel like a solid contributing member of the group. |
| Activate | Clear Expectation | Members that are recruited and oriented well will be willing and ready to get involved and stay involved |
| Educate | Part of Every Meeting | Topic areas should include:* The board and how it operates
* The field in which the org does its work
* The organization
* The local, regional and broader environments
* Board best practices (from workshops, articles, books, etc.)
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| Rotate | Term Limits in Bylaws | For board members who hold a vast amount of knowledge and experience consider emeritus or honorary status, or creating an advisory committee. |
| Evaluate | Board Self- Assessment | The board should assess itself annually as should each individual board member.  |
| Celebrate! | On-going Appreciation | Build this into each, or most, board meetings. Consider how to include this in your annual meeting. |

1. Adapted from The Board Building Cycle, Berit M. Lakey, 2007, BoardSource [↑](#footnote-ref-1)