The Muttart Foundation

Alberta

BOARD DEVELOPMENT

Board Building
Recruiting and Developing
Effective Board Members for
Not-for-Profit Organizations

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**Board Building – Recruiting and Developing Effective
Board Members for Not-for-Profit Organizations**

A Self-Guided Workbook

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An Important Note Before You Get Started

Not-for-profit organizations vary considerably in their makeup, their objectives and their methods of operation.

The information in this workbook is written generally and may not exactly fit the needs of your organization. It is meant to be a starting point for you to deal with some of the issues which face many not-for-profit organizations.

The publisher does not give legal or other professional advice. Therefore, if you are doubtful about acting on any information in this workbook or want clarification, you may wish to seek professional advice to make sure it answers your concerns and issues.

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

An effective board, committed to a purpose and skilled in governance and guided by an effective vision, is perhaps the greatest asset of a not-for-profit organization. While dedicated and talented staff and/or frontline service volunteers are also a critical part of the team, their time and energy would be wasted without the focus, direction, and resources that a board provides.

Recruiting, developing, and retaining appropriate individuals to serve in board roles is a difficult and time-consuming job. Healthy organizations are willing to make a major investment of time and effort in these activities to build a strong organization.

The continuing "Board Building" cycle for the lifespan of the organization includes:

- Evaluating the current and future leadership needs of the organization
- Recruiting board members with the necessary qualities
- Developing board members so that they become effective organization leaders
- Sustaining board members' interest and commitment

SYMBOLS

This workbook has three sections, each a part of the Board Building Cycle. You will find information, tools and techniques, references to other parts of the guidebook, and summaries in each section. The symbols shown below will help you find the information you require.
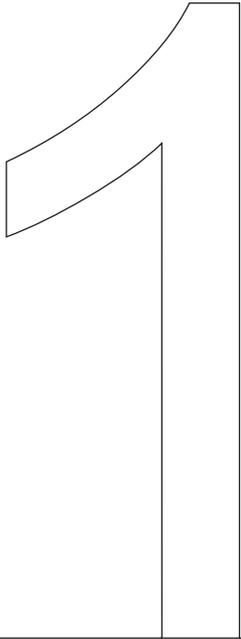
(▶) This symbol and/or message tells you where you can find more information related to the topic you are reading about in other areas of the book.

(✳) This symbol tells you that there is an activity you may wish to do.

(=) This symbol indicates a summary of the section.

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Recruiting for Success
Board Building: Evaluating; Recruiting; Orienting, Training & Developing

"How we recruit and develop board members, by identifying, interesting, involving and inspiring individuals, has a great deal to do with whether members serve or sit."
"Board Development" Information Bulletin (1993)

Renewing the board begins with assessing current board members' qualities and contributions. Some questions that you also need to answer are:

- What skills, attitudes, and values do board members bring to their roles?

- Are current board members able to fulfill their commitments?

- How is the present board representative of the community that your organization serves?

- Which board members will be leaving at the end of the current year?

- Which board members will be leaving next year?

- What qualities, experience, and connections to the community will be missing from the board when these board members leave?

- What is required to restore the balance of qualities, experience, and connections on the board?

- How will new board members be chosen?

- Who will coordinate the recruitment and development of new board members?

- When should recruitment and development of new board members take place?

- How will your organization make sure that the board is effective and committed?

- How does your organization attract and keep effective board volunteers?

Setting the Stage: Preparing to Recruit

Before attempting to recruit new board members, make sure that your organization has a strong foundation in place to attract and support the best prospects to the board. Some questions that you need to answer are:

- Does the community understand the purpose and scope of your organization?

- In what ways is your organization's mission relevant to, and valued in, your community?

- What is your organization's track record for meeting community needs effectively and efficiently?

- What kind of reputation does your organization have? For example, do you have a positive reputation for treating and involving volunteers and board members well?

- What kind of structural framework is in place for the operation of the board (e.g., bylaws, policies, job descriptions, strategic planning)?

- How clearly defined are your expectations of board members?

- How have you considered and dealt with reasons why people may not want to join your board (e.g., the organization's poor image, expectations of board members that are too high, liability issues that may scare the board, increased competition from other organizations)?

Recruiting: A Year-Round Activity

Effective recruiting takes time and effort, and needs to be an ongoing activity. Quality recruitment planning and activities are key to building a healthy organization. All members of your organization must recognize the importance of having skilled and committed leadership. Everyone must then invest the necessary time and resources to plan for recruiting board members.

When is Recruitment Important?

Why evolve a board when willing individuals want to continue to serve over a long period of time? While some organizations cannot fill vacant positions, others cannot vacate those that are filled. Consider the need to create limited terms and create change to:

- Better reflect the diversity of your community

- Create new opportunities for others, including youth to share diverse perspectives

- Provide opportunities for leadership development and succession planning

- Balance board member qualities required for current goals

At the same time a retention strategy and plan for succession are critical in sustaining a functioning board.

"It's pretty difficult to ask someone to support your cause, when you're not really sure what that cause is."
— *Diane Duca*

► **go to**

► **go to**

Recruiting: A Year-Round Activity

While each organization is unique, an Annual Board Recruitment Plan might include these tasks:	For additional information turn to:
1. Early in the year, the board appoints individuals to serve on the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee first reviews the bylaws and policies related to board recruitment. Their recruitment plan must not contravene the organization's bylaws.	Who Should Recruit? Page 11
2. The Board Chair identifies those board members who are leaving the board because they have completed their terms. The Board Chair also consults with members who have not fulfilled their responsibilities and asks them about leaving the board, if appropriate. Individuals who qualify for an additional term are evaluated before being invited to serve a second term. **Note: A second term should not be automatic.**	Board Member Self Assessment Page 64 – 66 & Assessing the Work of the Board Team Page 67
3. The Nominating Committee assesses the qualities of current board members, and considers what strengths will be lost as members complete their terms.	Consider the Composition of the Board Team Page 16 Consider Individual Board Member Qualities Page 17
4. The Nominating Committee considers the short-and long-term plans of the organization, and any special board qualities that are required to carry out these plans.	Consider the Changing Needs of the Organization Page 13

5. The Nominating Committee develops the selection criteria for prospective board members, and discusses the selection criteria with the entire board.	Consider the Composition of the Board Team Page 16
6. The Nominating Committee requests suggestions for suitable prospective board members from a variety of sources.	Where and How to Find Board Members Page 30
7. The Nominating Committee researches all of the prospective board members in more depth, and chooses suitable candidates to nominate.	Rebuilding the Board Page 13
8. The Nominating Committee may ask the board to approve the list of board nominees, although the board usually simply accepts the Nominating Committee's recommendations.	
9. The Nominating Committee designs a customized approach for recruiting each individual nominee, and assigns a recruiter or recruitment team to approach each board nominee.	Recruiting Tips Page 39
10. The recruiters carry out the recruitment plan and invite interested board nominees to stand for election	Recruiting Tips Page 39
11. If the bylaws allow, members outside of the Nominating Committee may nominate additional prospective board members.	Recruitment Bylaws and Policies Appendix One Page 75
12. The members of the organization elect the board at the annual general meeting (AGM).	Recruitment Bylaws and Policies Appendix One Page 75

13 The Board Chair welcomes new board members to the board. New board members are oriented to the board and assigned specific roles.	Orientation Page 48
14. The board may invite unsuccessful nominees to fulfill other roles within the organization that complement their qualities. The board may also refer unsuccessful nominees to a more suitable organization.	Recruiting: Issues to Consider Page 40

Who Should Recruit?

In most incorporated not-for-profit organizations, the members elect the board (depending upon how the organization is incorporated). The membership of most groups exceeds the number of people on the board. However, when an organization is new, the board may be both the founders and the only members. During that early phase of development some boards simply replace themselves as board members leave, without a membership vote.

A Nominating Committee or Board Development Committee is often used to identify prospective board members, and to screen these prospects as nominees for the membership to consider. The Nominating Committee:

- Is appointed by the board
- Includes several board members, as well as other members of the organization
- Is often chaired by a past Board Chair who has a good understanding of the organization

Note: In many cases, the membership elects a Nominating Committee or Board Development Committee from the general membership at the Annual General Meeting, rather than using the board for this process.

The composition of the Nominating Committee should allow for a mix of perspectives, including opportunities for new members with diverse links to the community. A Nominating Committee composed exclusively of past board members may have a narrow view of the changing community.

The role of the Nominating Committee may be simply to find willing and able prospective board members to fill board vacancies. However, many organizations recognize the need for a year-round Standing Committee to make sure that the board is effectively renewed and developed.

The Nominating Committee:

- Acts as a personnel or human resource entity with respect to the board and its internal/self- management issues

- Is often referred to as the Leadership Development Committee or the Board Development Committee

- Liaises with the staff as appropriate in order to effectively use the skills of, and maintain the commitment of, existing volunteers and members

Following is a list of duties for the nominating committee that you can use as a basis for this committee's terms of reference.

Duties of the Nominating Committee

- To develop and maintain records of board and board committee members including information on skills, interests, experiences, board-related orientation and training, and terms of service

- To work with the Board Chair to identify future board needs

- To analyze the strengths and weaknesses within the current board

- To identify necessary selection criteria for recruiting new board members

- To gather and to generate names of prospective board members

- To research and to screen prospective board members

- To recommend a list of possible board nominees to the board

- To work with the Board Chair to make sure that proper nomination and election procedures are followed

- To review bylaws, policies, and procedures on recruitment, selection, assessment, and training of board members and to make recommendations for change to the board on an annual basis

- To make sure that orientation, training and other development opportunities are available to the board and to individual board members

- To make sure that the effectiveness of both the board and individual board members is assessed on a regular basis

Individual board members contribute to board recruitment by:

- Providing suggestions for prospective board members

- Cultivating future prospective board members

- Helping with recruitment activities as needed

Members of the organization contribute to board recruitment by:

- Providing suggestions regarding prospective board members to the Nominating Committee

- Carefully considering whom to vote for

- Considering letting their own name stand for election

"Businesses have their recruiters and search firms and professional sports teams have their scouts; for us it's the Nominating Committee."
– *Brian O'Connell*

The Board Chair may:

- Be a member of the Nominating Committee
- Assist the Nominating Committee by offering his or her opinion about what member qualities the board may require in the future
- Assist with approaching board nominees

Note: Staff members should not be involved formally in nominating activities. However, consider consulting them in the process. Direct involvement is seen as potential conflict of interest.

REBUILDING THE BOARD

Developing selection criteria is the first step in the search for the right individuals to fill board roles. As with any major decision, creating a shopping list of criteria makes the job easier. Selection criteria help to:

- List the member qualities that the board needs in order to operate effectively
- Identify prospective board members who have these qualities and can best fill the role

When identifying qualities your board requires, consider the possible biases that may be reflected in your criteria. Do the criteria reflect the needs of the organization and the make-up of the community it serves, or is the "shopping list" likely to build a board very similar to the existing board?

Selection criteria to consider include:

- The changing needs of your organization
- The composition of the board team
- Individual board member qualities

CONSIDER THE CHANGING NEEDS OF THE ORGANIZATION

Organizations are dynamic; they grow and change with emerging community needs. As a result, the selection criteria used to recruit new board members needs to be re-evaluated on a regular basis. Employers modify their selection criteria each time they hire new staff. The board's selection criteria should also change based on current needs, resources, and situation. While basic member qualities are not likely to change dramatically, some selection criteria may need to change to meet the current needs of your organization.

Changing organizational needs that can reflect board recruitment include:

- Type and model of board
- Level of decision-making
- Development stage
- Focus and goals
- Special projects and campaigns
- Senior staff's abilities
- Image and profile in the community

These changes and their potential impact are described in more detail below.

Type of board

The scope of work performed by board members differs in organizations that are operated solely by volunteers, and in organizations that have a paid senior staff person responsible for management. All types of boards must carefully choose board members based on their ability to govern. They must have skills related to the model of governance practiced in the organization. These might include planning and policy-making.

However, organizations operated solely by volunteers must also consider the management skills of board members who are being considered for the Executive Committee. Board members, who are on the Executive Committee or organizations with no paid or senior staff person, must also have skills and abilities in coordinating and implementing the day-to-day operations of the organization (e.g., bookkeeping, supervision, and program development).

Level of Decision-Making

The bylaws and policies of your organization describe the role of the board. They define:

- Who makes decisions in the organization
- The scope of those decisions
- The amount of responsibility that is delegated to the senior staff and/ or to the Executive Committee

Prospective board members will be interested in your organization's philosophy of governance. Board members must be prepared to make decisions, and to let staff or service volunteers make decisions, according to the policies of your organization.

Development stage

Organizations change and grow in stages. In each stage, the organization has unique needs and characteristics which require appropriate board involvement.

New organizations need specific skills, a lot of support, and close supervision. For example, a new organization may need board members who have experience in developing bylaws, creating public awareness, designing systems, and securing core funding for the organization. Board members in new organizations are often involved in a hands-on capacity. As the organization matures, it needs a different set of skills and member qualities. In more mature organizations, the full board becomes more involved in governance issues and less involved in the day-to-day operation of the organization.

Those board members who derive satisfaction from hands-on management may become frustrated or disruptive when the board begins to shift the focus to governance issues. These board members may find it more satisfying to serve in a service volunteer capacity. The board needs to help volunteers choose the role that is most satisfying to them.

All organizations, regardless of age or maturity, go through stages of innovation and change followed by a period of stability. Effective board members possess qualities that meet the needs of the organization regardless of the stage it is in.

Focus and goals

Both the short-and long-term plans of your organization influence the specific qualities needed at a board level. If your board is considering a major change in mission, image, or clientele, consider adding new board members who can help to support the new direction.

For example, an organization that previously focused on treatment and rehabilitation changes its mission to prevention.

For example, an organization that previously focused on the needs of older people expands to provide counseling services for the entire family.

For example, a sports organization that previously served elite athletes decides to offer recreational sports opportunities for young people.

For example, a local non-fiction writers' group broadens its focus to become a provincial organization.

Special projects and campaigns

Sometimes organizations need board members with specialized technical skills in order to successfully take on special projects. If your organization is going to do a capital fund-raising or building campaign, focus your recruitment efforts on individuals who have extensive specialized experience in these areas. Consider how they can frame and facilitate effective dialogue with less experienced board members related to the project.

If your board plans to restructure the organization extensively, or to revise bylaws, consider recruiting people who have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet this challenge. While they should not be expected to undertake these activities alone, they do need to be able to guide focused dialogue with others on the board related to these decisions.

Note: During a special project or campaign, your board needs to maintain all on-going board responsibilities. Make sure that, if certain board members focus on the special project, the remaining board members have the ability to carry out the on-going tasks and continue to maintain some connection to the special initiative.

Senior staff's abilities

A paid manager, such as an executive director, fulfills different functions than the board does. However, you must consider the ways in which the qualities of the staff and the board complement each other. It is critical to consider compatibility when selecting a paid manager.

The board may need to perform a coaching, supervising, and managing role if your organization has:

- Less experienced staff
- Limited resources
- Senior staff who are hired on contract or part-time basis.

For example, a daycare board chooses to hire a part-time manager to deal with staff supervision and other personnel issues, while the daycare board takes responsibility for managing the finances of the organization.

Image and profile in the community

Board members are your organization's formal link to the community and to the people that your organization serves.

Board members' actions and their relationship to the community can influence the success of your organization. When recruiting members to make an effective board, understand the linkages that your organization requires, and the image individual board members and your board composition reflects.

What implications would each of these situations have on the organization involved?

The board of a social service agency is composed exclusively of individuals from the same political party.

Small business fuels your community's economy, but your organization has never recruited individuals who operate businesses that support your organization's mission.

One of your board members, a local celebrity who assisted you with special fundraising events, has been charged with fraud.

A board member frequently expresses personal views that are often mistaken as the philosophy of your organization.

CONSIDER THE COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD TEAM

The boards of not-for-profit organizations are composed of individuals who each bring diverse gifts and levels of commitment. The overall balance of the board is as important as the abilities of each individual member. You cannot base effective recruitment exclusively on finding eight excellent prospective board members. The Nominating Committee must consider:

- How the prospective board members and the existing board will work together
- How the qualities of each prospective board member will influence the rest of the board team

CONSIDER INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER QUALITIES

When selecting prospective board members, consider the qualities that they need to serve the board effectively. These qualities include:

- Specific skills
- Ability to communicate
- Level of commitment
- Willingness to invest "working capital"

Recruitment must be based on specific criteria that relate to your organization's needs. Choosing board members is an art as well as a science. Many essential board member qualities are impossible to label and assess objectively, so they are difficult to include in job descriptions and checklists. These qualities include:

- Good judgment
- Compassion
- Respect for others

Consider prospective board members by using a variety of selection criteria that include:

- An interest in your organization's mission and the people that your organization serves
- A sense of integrity
- The skills to work effectively with others
- A willingness to learn and grow
- A sense of a wider community
- An orientation to the future
- Enthusiastic support for your organization
- Geographical location

- A commitment of time
- A willingness to use special skills
- An ability to support board fund-raising activities
- A sphere of influence

An interest in your organization's mission and the people that your organization serves

The underlying values that inspire and motivate committed prospective board members are:

- Passion for a cause
- Care and concern for the needs of individuals or groups
- Desire to make the world a better place

These values are difficult to develop and nurture if the volunteer has no real commitment to your organization's mission. Prospective board members are not likely to sustain interest in your organization or to follow through on commitments unless they are interested in and connected to your cause.

A sense of integrity

A sense of integrity means that the prospective board member:

- Is willing to place the good of your clients or organization above his or her own self-interest
- Acts as a steward or trustee for the values and resources that belong to your community
- Performs his or her role according to high ethical standards

The skills to work effectively with others

Working on a board requires prospective board members to be team players. Productive board discussion and decision-making are based on the prospective board members' ability to:

- Respect each member's viewpoint
- Respect the democratic process
- Work effectively in a group
- Bring a reasonable dose of self-confidence to their role
- Share their viewpoint without bowing to peer pressure
- Accept public scrutiny and criticism
- Communicate with tact and diplomacy
- Focus on building productive relationships

A willingness to learn and grow

Prospective board members who have a positive attitude toward continued learning are critical for developing a dynamic board that is able to deal with change and development. Individuals who value lifelong learning will support appropriate board development activities.

A sense of a wider community

Prospective board members who have a broader view of the community and the world are an asset to most organizations. Prospective board members who understand your organization's connections to various groups in the community are better able to be an advocate for your organization. Because board members have a wider circle of contacts, they are also more likely to be able to assist in resource development, planning, and board and membership recruitment.

An orientation to the future

The role of a board is to:

- Guide the organization into the future
- Make sure that there are resources for future development

Prospective board members need to be interested in the growth and development of your organization.

Enthusiastic support for your organization

Prospective board members must be:

- Enthusiastic supporters of your organization
- Ambassadors for your organization's mission and for the people that your organization supports

While prospective board members may not agree with every aspect of the operation, they should have a strong desire to support and develop the work of your organization in a positive way.

Geographical location

Consider the prospective board members' geographical location if:

- It affects the practical operation of the board
- Representation by location influences the views of the prospective board members

Geographical location is a particularly important consideration for a provincial or regional association. In these cases, consider the mechanics of traveling to meetings, communication, and equitable representation.

A commitment of time

Prospective board members must be both willing and able to carry out their responsibilities. This requires them to commit a specific amount of time to board activities. Consider prospective board members' ability to:

- Manage their own schedule
- Handle the number of commitments they already carry
- Be available at critical times in your organization's year
- Be successful based on their past record with other organizations

Set clear expectations for time commitment, and inform prospective board members of this early in the recruitment process. Prospective board members can then judge more accurately their ability to serve your organization.

A willingness to use special skills

The need for specialists on the board changes with the needs and staffing of your organization. The special skills that each prospective board member brings to the board are worthwhile only if the individual is willing and able to use them.

An ability to support board fund-raising activities

A major responsibility of many boards is to make sure that there are adequate resources available to carry out the work of the organization. Some boards delegate aspects of resource development to staff or other volunteers. However, the board must be prepared to actively work to secure financial support for your organization.

Prospective board members must be in a position to assist by giving or generating funds. In other words, they must be prepared to play a leadership role in one or more of the following:

- Donating to the organization
- Participating in fund-raising activities
- Using their skills, time, and connections to secure funding through external sources

Every prospective board member may not be able to contribute financially. However, each individual must be willing to accept responsibility for developing resources. You must be clear about the expectations for resource development for each prospective board member.

A sphere of influence

The board is a corporate body and must make decisions collectively. However, the formal and informal power that prospective board members have, or are perceived to have, will have an impact on your organization.

The ability of prospective board members to further the cause of, or to govern your organization may be linked to their sphere of influence, whether it be geographical, within a sector, or among a specific age or socio-economic group. Consider the respect that prospective board members receive from their peer group or from the wider community, and whether they will use that influence to the advantage of your organization.

Some people are not willing to share all aspects of their influence with your group. However, they may be very willing to use their network to help your fundraising efforts, to organize a special event, or to lobby and/or advocate on your organization's behalf.

INVESTMENT OF "WORKING CAPITAL"

Chait, Ryan & Taylor (2005) describe the critical qualities of board members as the working capital they are willing to invest in the organization. These investments are linked to action and change leadership, rather than traits, which may or may not develop into action. The building of a board that appear strong in traits, but that never performs as a team in support of the organization's vision, is common. Working board capital is found in diverse parts of the community and not only in individuals traditionally considered for board roles.

These kinds of capital are:

- **Intellectual** – all board members use their abilities and technical expertise in meaningful discussion and organizational learning. Specialties are not reserved for individual technical tasks. The board is not a composite of isolated individual skill sets, but a structure that uses shared knowledge and operates as a community of practice.
- **Reputational** – the work of the whole board shapes and influences the board's status and credibility, rather than a belief that a few individuals will buoy the organization's image. The organization's reputation can be the primary attraction for other kinds of community involvement.
- **Political** – the board balances power inside the organization rather than depending upon a few connected individuals exercising external power. They influence and set priorities that position the organization to achieve its purpose.
- **Social** – board members strengthen relationships to enhance the commitment,

effectiveness and diligence of the board. Inclusiveness, trust, shared values and common purpose all encourage the building of social and network capital key to organizational relationships and collaboration.

Chait, Ryan and Taylor (2005) also suggest that board members as leaders have three key roles. They must have the ability to carry out their fiduciary (or trustee) role, be strategic in their thinking and actions, and to be generative (adaptable and able to create new ideas and direction). Consider how these roles and investments of working capital match the abilities and commitment of prospective board members.

SIX COMPETENCIES OF GOVERNANCE: WORKING TOGETHER

Chait, Holland & Taylor (1996) suggest six areas of competence required for effective governance. These influence both the work of the board collectively and the capacity of board members individually to contribute to the dialogue.

These elements are:

- **Contextual dimensions** – the way in which the board understands and takes into account the culture and norms of the organization it governs. They consider the characteristics, culture, vision, mission and traditions into account and reinforce the organization's values in their work.
- **Educational dimensions** – the necessary action to be knowledgeable about the

organization, their own roles and responsibilities and others they may work with.

- **Interpersonal dimensions** – the building, development and nurturing of a functional working team capable of shared goal setting, self-assessment, leadership development and collective achievement.
- **Analytical dimensions** – the ability to view the whole or broad perspective on issues, while assessing each part. The willingness to question, explore and consider differences of opinion.
- **Political dimensions** – developing and maintaining healthy relationships with major stakeholders and communicating with key constituents
- **Strategic dimensions** – envisions a direction and develops strategy to act proactively in support of the organization's goals

Reflection and dialogue are critical processes in exploring what governance means to an organization and how the board chooses to govern. (Seel & Iffrig, 2006). They further suggest that to be effective and add value to the organization board capacity needs to be built to:

- Learn, analyze, decide and act
- Manage internal dynamics of the board and respond to the organizations political climate

They describe the need for board growth and learning related to organizational culture, roles and responsibilities, inclusiveness of diversity among board members, experimentation and tolerance to ambiguity. At the same time the ability to respect, communicate, and consult with others who share interests and values, is important. Creating vision and direction and shaping strategy is the final primary focus.

BOARD COMPOSITION ANALYSIS TOOL: RECRUITMENT CRITERIA

Develop a chart which highlights the critical qualities your organization requires in prospective board members. Example #1. Use the blank grid below to customize for the current needs of your organization. List the broad qualities, working capital and specific skills you need to deal with opportunities and challenges facing your organization.

Example – #1

Board Recruitment Criteria	The board now includes members who:	The board requires new members who:
General Qualities		
Are committed to our mission	✓	✓
Are willing team members	✓	✓
Are able to commit adequate time		✓
Specific Criteria		
Have resource development/fund-raising skills		
Have previously served on Board committee	✓	✓
Desired Community Balance		
Contribute to equal rural and urban mix	✓	✓
Contribute to ethno cultural diversity		✓
Contribute to age diversity		✓

Board Recruitment Criteria	The board now includes members who:	The board requires new members who:
General Qualities		
Specific Criteria		
Desired Community Balance		

Adapted from: Nordhoff, N.S. (1982)

"The presence of at least one critical thinker on the team is important…one who is unafraid to label a bad idea by its proper name."
– *Cyril Houle*

WHY BOARD MEMBERS SAY YES

There are two parts to the equation:

- What a board requires from its members
- What board can offer in return

The concept of fair exchange is a principle which applies to board recruitment. Board members are asked to commit volunteer time and skills to govern, and sometimes to manage, the organization. Consider: "What satisfaction can prospective board members hope to receive from our organization in return for their commitment?"

To recruit successfully and to retain board volunteers, your organization must understand what motivates them. Each prospective board member is unique. He or she may choose to join your board for a variety of reasons. Some of these reasons are publicly stated, and other reasons are less visible. As with other volunteer roles, prospective board members are not paid, so you must identify other benefits that might attract them.

Successful board recruiters can identify and communicate the benefits as well as the responsibilities of the job. Consider the possible needs of prospective board members and both the concrete and the less tangible benefits that your organization can offer. These might include:

- Opportunities to contribute to the welfare of the community
- Effective use of the prospective board member's skills and time
- Convenient meeting schedule
- Networking possibilities

An individual's initial motivation to join a board may change over time. Many boards lose valuable members because they fail to understand the developing needs and interests that motivate individuals. Failure to offer new roles and opportunities usually leads to high turnover of board members. You are making a wise investment in keeping a strong and effective board if you can identify and develop new opportunities to challenge individual board members.

Many issues influence the likelihood of a person becoming a board member. The biggest issues are:

- The desire to serve
- The desire for mutual benefits

THE DESIRE TO SERVE

Altruism is the ability to give unselfishly and to benefit the welfare of others. This is a strong motivator for most volunteers. An individual's altruism may be enhanced by the desire to voluntarily enrich an organization or community that has benefited the individual, his or her family, or perhaps a business. Consider the diversity of motivations related to prospective board members.

THE DESIRE FOR MUTUAL BENEFITS

Many people hope to contribute their time and skills in exchange for opportunities that benefit them, while also complementing the needs of the organization.

A prospective board member may be seeking an opportunity:

- To further the individual's and the organization's values and ideals
- To learn about a cause or an issue, your organization, or a specific function
- To explore career development options
- To participate in a democracy
- To apply the individual's expertise and experience
- To add balance to paid work
- To feel personally fulfilled
- To pursue a personal focus
- To repay the organization

These opportunities for board members are described in more detail below.

To further the individual's and the organization's values and ideals

Organizational leadership allows board members to actively support an organization that promotes values and activities that are important to them.

For example, individuals who support bilingual education choose to serve on the executive of a school's French immersion parent organization.

For example, a student who has concerns about environmental issues joins the board of a local recycling society.

To learn about a cause or an issue, your organization, or a specific function

Many individuals volunteer as a means to lifelong learning. Their board involvement allows them to enrich their understanding of issues or societal needs. They may be interested in learning and applying new skills or theory, or they may be interested in getting a better look at how the organization operates.

For example, enhancing financial management experience by serving as treasurer.

For example, developing a broader knowledge of the community by serving on a board with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

For example, gaining knowledge of the capacity of people with disabilities by serving on the board of an organization that supports community living.

To explore career development options

Many individuals find that volunteering on a board is a valuable way to research prospective career paths and to gain experience within a not-for-profit organization.

For example, someone considering a career in journalism serves on the Advocacy Committee of the board.

To participate in a democracy

Many individuals believe that their responsibility as a citizen is to take a leadership role in an organization that works for the good of the community. These people consider serving on a board to be part of the democratic process. They see board involvement as both a right and a privilege.

To apply the individual's expertise and experience

Many individuals are looking for opportunities to use their skills and knowledge in a meaningful way.

For example, a retired educator continues to use her expertise by chairing the board of a literacy organization.

For example, a homemaker, skilled in financial management, serves a treasurer on a board that assists street youth.

To add life balance to paid work

If the format or content of an individual's paid work does not allow for diverse opportunities, they may seek the opportunity to add variety or challenge by becoming a volunteer board member in another setting.

For example, a computer programmer who is interested in people serves on the board of a family counseling organization.

For example, a social worker serves on the Program Committee of a children's theatre group.

For example, a bus driver who enjoys sports and the outdoors provides board leadership in a youth organization.

To feel personally fulfilled

Many individuals find that freely-chosen and satisfying volunteer roles provide the ultimate opportunity to fulfill themselves personally. Many board roles provide such rewards.

To pursue a personal focus

Many board members focus their time and energy in specific organizations that relate directly to their own interests or to the needs of a family member or friend. This is very common in groups that advocate for, or provide services related to, health, special needs, or personal interests.

For example, a family member who has lost a relative to chronic disease serves on a local chapter board related to that condition.

For example, a parent of a child with learning disabilities serves on the board of an organization that advocates for more integrated education opportunities.

For example, a visual artist serves as a board member for a provincial arts council.

To repay the organization/ reciprocity

Most people are grateful when they receive the services of a not-for-profit organization. These graduates may, at a later date, choose to repay the organization by contributing volunteer leadership.

For example, a bereavement society recruits board members from families who have previously used their counseling program.

For example, a former Girl Guide or Scout volunteers as a District Council or Group Committee member.

For example, a new citizen serves on the board of a settlement association.

to do

important

Creating Fair Exchange

What can your organization offer prospective board members in exchange for their time, skills, and support? How would your organization use each of these motivators to encourage appropriate board members to serve in your organization?

Our organization can provide board members opportunities to:

1. Further the individual's and the organization's values and ideals

_____

_____

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2. Learn about a cause or an issue, our organization, or a specific function

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_____

3. Explore career development options

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4. Participate in a democracy

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5. Apply the individual's expertise and experience

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6. Add life balance

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7. Feel personally fulfilled

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8. Pursue a personal focus

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9. Repay the organization/exercise reciprocity

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BENEFITS OF BEING A BOARD MEMBER

Take the time to identify the benefits or being a board member in your organization. This requires you to spend 20 minutes at the beginning of the next meeting, or to explore this topic in more depth at a retreat. Ask your existing board members to answer to the following questions:

- What attracted you to become a member of this board?
- What do you find most rewarding about your role in this organization?
- How can the board make the board roles more attractive to both current and prospective board members?

Record the answers so that the answers can be shared. Large group discussion may encourage more ideas. If your board is less outgoing, consider doing the exercise privately.

This activity may also be useful for reinforcing the positive aspects of your board and for identifying improvements that may encourage greater commitment from existing members.

Adapted from: Hutchinson, B. (1984)

WHERE AND HOW TO FIND BOARD MEMBERS

Recruitment of new board members usually starts many years before a prospective board member is willing or able to serve on your board. Organizations that attract skilled and committed board volunteers recognize that leaders must be developed. These organizations devote time and effort to prepare people to serve on their boards. Like professional athletes, most effective board members have spent many years developing their skills, confidence, and commitment to the role.

Supporting Leadership Development In Your Organization

Many organizations provide their members with opportunities to develop leadership skills and experience over a period of time. Make an effort to give young people within your organization responsibilities based on their ability and willingness to contribute. These responsibilities might include:

- Leadership roles, such as junior leaders
- Develop board internship opportunities
- Advisory committee members
- Executive members of youth programs

You can encourage adults in your membership to contribute time and expertise by:

- Assisting with a special project or event
- Serving on an Ad Hoc Committee or a Standing Committee
- Acting as an advisor

These responsibilities give individuals an opportunity to develop a better understanding of your organization.

Prospective board members may come from within your organization. Provide opportunities to allow interested individuals to work in a variety of roles, with varying degrees of leadership responsibility.

Encourage growth and development of individuals through:

- Involvement in special events
- Leadership training
- Committee membership
- Shared leadership positions

Cultivating Interested Prospective Board Members

Individuals recruited from outside your organization must have opportunities to:

- Become aware of your organization
- Develop an interest in your organization's mission and its work
- Be involved as a committee member or in other adhoc roles, before committing to a board role.

Prospective board members usually become aware of your organization through:

- Your organization's public profile
- The network of people or groups with whom your board and staff personally communicate
- Receiving services from, or providing services for, your organization

You may need to help prospective board members develop a relationship with your organization, so that they can make an informed decision. Then, if you decide to invite these people to consider board nomination, they will not be strangers to your organization. You can develop this relationship with prospective board members and spark a deeper interest by:

- Inviting them to special events
- Circulating your annual report and newsletter to them
- Asking them to assist in their area of expertise on a short-term basis

IDENTIFYING THE RIGHT PERSON

You can use several approaches to identify the right person to nominate to the board. For example, you may want to identify:

- Key qualities
- Critical selection criteria

Visualizing key qualities

Think about the key qualities that you are seeking and use these in a sentence to describe each prospective board member.

For example, a mature student, with good communication skills, who is concerned about the environment, and who is willing to devote ten hours a month to board work.

For example, a healthcare professional, who lives in your rural community, and who believes in palliative care in the home.

For example, a parent, with children attending ABC Daycare, who has skills in fundraising, and who is likely interested in serving on the board for two or more years.

Using critical selection criteria

Brainstorm names of prospective board members that meet your two most critical selection criteria. Then, consider any other desired selection criteria and characteristics.

For example, community members want to start a not-for-profit after-school program for older children to address concerns about child safety and vandalism. They need eight people to serve on their board. They are looking for individuals who have a concern for children and who live and/or work in their community. To identify potential board member, they:

- List parents who have school children aged seven to eleven years old.
- Narrow this list to families needing after-school care.
- Consider under-represented views that should be brought forward and families of children they would especially like to target. For example, individuals who can bring a perspective to the needs of children with disabilities.
- Identify possible barriers to board involvement, such as lack of child care during board meetings

- Narrow the list further by contacting prospects and asking them about their interest in the program and their willingness to serve on the board.
- Also consider other people who meet the criteria for board membership. They contact professionals working with children such as the public health nurse, the community recreation worker, and teachers, as well as local business owners and retired community members.

Before making their final decision from the list of potential board members, they consider each individual's:

- Personal and professional qualities
- Ability to contribute to the board team

Sources of Prospective Board Members

Prospective board members can be found by:

- Looking within your organization first
- Considering who is not using your service/joining your organization, but should be
- Asking for suggestions from your current board and staff
- Looking for retiring members of other boards
- Asking experienced board members from affiliates
- Asking community leaders
- Asking retired or semi-retired individuals

- Looking in the business and corporate community
- Consulting with volunteer centres
- Looking in professional associations and educational institutions
- Looking in churches and service clubs
- Asking critics of your organization

Note: Be careful not to allow individuals outside your organization to choose prospective board members for you. Use their suggestions as a starting point or consider inviting the suggested prospective board members to serve on a committee. Be sure that your expectations of board members are accurate when you are asking another party to a assist you with recruitment.

These sources of prospective board members are described in more detail below.

Looking within your organization first

You are more likely to find individuals who support your cause and share the organization's values within your organization. These people have already demonstrated a level of involvement through their membership, service as a volunteer, financial support, or their use of your organizations' services. They may also have demonstrated the important human qualities that are critical to the job such as fairness, respect, and judgment.

Some organizations ask retiring board members to replace themselves with a person who has similar qualities. This technique might be useful at a brainstorming level. However, it does not consider the changing needs of the board and the need for diversity. It is very easy for a board to become a body of individuals who all share the same values and interests and who think alike. This composition may not reflect the true nature of your community, nor will it encourage the development of fresh ideas. You need to think about who is not at the table, as well as who is there.

Considering who isn't using your services/joining your organization, but should be

Members and customers stay away when they do not see their needs and values reflected in the policy and direction of an organization. Approach individuals who can bring varied perspectives to your board while also supporting the core purpose of your group.

Asking for suggestions from your current board and staff

While many excellent suggestions may come from staff, carefully consider their ideas. Be careful that conflict of interest, either real or perceived, does not become an issue for your organization.

Looking for retiring members of other boards

Consider cultivating relationships with effective leaders in other organizations. Be sure that their interests and values are compatible with the mission of your organization. Be prepared to wait until these leaders' current volunteer commitments allow them to consider your request. Keep them informed and involve them in special events or informal meetings in order to keep your organization visible to them.

Asking experienced board members from affiliates

If your organization is affiliated with branches or similar groups in other geographic areas, ask these affiliates to refer volunteers or members who may be relocating to your community. Your organization may benefit from prospective board members who are already knowledgeable about many of your organization's values and methods of operating. At the same time, you can gain new ideas and points of view.

Other sources for referrals include Newcomers' clubs, Welcome Wagons, private relocation services, and other groups that serve those who are relocating.

For example, to meet new neighbours, volunteers who were active in their former school council, neighbourhood association, or community league also may be interested in being involved with boards of similar groups in their new community.

For example, a national conservation organization may refer a board member who has been active in the local branch to a similar branch in a new community.

Asking community leaders

Most community leaders do not have the time to serve in additional roles. However, these people are often excellent resources for assisting in recruitment. Most community leaders have large networks of people that they know or serve.

When meeting with community leaders be sure to describe the qualities that you are seeking and the commitment that your organization requires. Those you select to consult with also need to understand the mission of your organization. Most community leaders will likely assist you if you are considerate of their time.

Some example of community leaders include:

- The clergy
- Those who hold, or have sought, political office
- Active board members and volunteers in other organizations
- Leaders in the media
- The Chamber of Commerce and other business-related organizations
- Professionals in areas related to your cause
- Leaders within specific ethnocultural communities

Asking retired or semi-retired individuals

If experience, time, and skills are critical to your board needs, consider recruiting individuals who are retired or semi-retired. Since the role and format of paid work is changing, individuals of diverse ages and interests are members of this growing segment of the population.

Consider involving individuals in your organization long before they retire, so that their commitment and skills are even stronger when they have additional time to contribute. To locate individuals nearing retirement, consult retirement planning sessions and volunteer programs within corporate or professional groups. Seniors associations, professional organization, and alumni groups also provide leads.

Looking in the business and corporate community

Recruiting appropriately-skilled employees of business organizations within your community may be a mutually beneficial relationship. Many corporations and small businesses encourage their employees to volunteer for board service as a way to gain experience, develop new skills, and generate good will. In return, not-for-profit organizations may gain:

- Resources
- New ideas
- Skills
- A means of broadening the member and volunteer base

Corporate employees who are beginning in management roles may be more able to contribute the time and energy required for a board role than their more senior colleagues. Consider both types of corporate employees. However, remember that those who do not already have other commitments can grow and develop within your organization, giving more years of service.

Consulting with volunteer centres

Volunteer centres are most effective if they have a board bank, a database of individuals who are interested in board leadership, and who have been interviewed to determine their skills, values, and interests.

Looking in professional associations and educational institutions

If you need specialized skills to fill a board role, consider contacting a professional organization or educational institution that focuses on that skill area.

For example, individuals with a strong interest in financial management might be found within an association representing accountants. Students in a college business-management program might also offer these skills at a different level.

Looking in religious communities and service clubs

Organizations that do service work may have members who are interested in diversifying their volunteer service. Many of these individuals have valuable organizational and governing skills gained within the other organization. Consider looking at service and faith-based groups that have already demonstrated interest in your organization through financial or volunteer support.

Asking critics of your organization

Individuals who have criticized the work of your organization, but who have compatible values, may develop into strong allies if they are given the right support. Many of these individuals are passionate about a cause and are able to speak out because of their genuine concern. Identify, listen to, and cultivate more positive relationships with such individuals. They may be potential board members in the future.

INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

Lack of quality information is often the reason that prospective board members decline to join organizations. Prospective board members want honest, complete, and meaningful information that relates to their needs. The information needs to be clear and concise and in a format that is best suited to the prospective board member.

For example, one individual may prefer a print package to read at his or her leisure. Another individual may prefer a one-on-one orientation. Yet another individual may prefer a group presentation.

You need to distribute meaningful, user-friendly information throughout the recruitment process. Select information that the recruiters can use to support their discussion with the prospective board members.

To avoid duplication or gaps, keep a written record of information that the recruiters distributed. Record:

- What kind of information was distributed
- To whom it was distributed
- Who distributed the information

This information forms the first step in orienting prospective board members to the board and to your organization. If the prospective board member does not join the board, he or she will at least have more awareness of your organization.

Common Questions From Prospective Board Members

- What is the purpose or mission of your organization? How do your programs and services relate to this purpose or mission?

- Whom do you serve? Who are your members? In what ways are the people you serve satisfied with your service? How do you know that the people you serve are satisfied?

- Does your organization have a strategic plan? How does your organization plan for major changes in the future?

- How is the financial health of your organization? Who are your major funders? Are they satisfied with your organization's performance? What is the board's involvement in budgeting and fundraising?

- How is the board structured? What committees exist and what is their purpose? In what capacity are board members expected to serve on committees?

- How is policy developed in your organization? Who is involved?

- Do you have job descriptions or terms of reference for board members, officers, and committees?

- What is the board's relationship to the staff and to volunteers? How do the board, staff, and volunteers work together?

- Does your organization have board member's and officer's liability insurance?

- How much time is required to serve as a board member? Is there any expectation that the prospective board member needs to provide financial support?

- What do you think the prospective board member could contribute to the board?

Checklist: Information for Prospective Board Members

This checklist can form the first page of your organization's Orientation and Development file that is kept for each board member. The board Chair or Board Development Committee uses this information to plan for the future.

Make sure that all prospective board members receive the following:

1. Information about your organization, programs, and staff

This might include:

☐ **Fact sheet:** a short overview of your organization that includes the organization's mission and purpose, whom the organization serves, the organization's history, its programs and services, and its funding sources

☐ **Brochure:** lists the highlights of your organization

☐ **Annual report:** includes highlights of the organization's work and its financial statements

☐ **Newsletters:** include any back issues that you believe are relevant to the prospective board member

☐ **Programs and services summary:** include only if it is not contained in the other documents

☐ Staff organization chart: shows he names, positions, and levels in your organization

☐ **List and biographies of senior staff members:** include the executive director and other members who hold senior positions in your organization

☐ **Summary of major funding sources:** lists the major funding sources and describes in detail how your organization obtains and allocates funds

☐ **Summary of strategic plan or a similar document:** outlines your organization's strategic direction for the next three to ten years

☐ **Samples of publicity generated by your organization:** include newspaper articles and media releases

☐ **Other**

2. Information about your board and how it operates

This might include:

☐ Board member job description

☐ Information about the role of the board and how it operates including board member code of conduct

☐ Board and committee structure chart

☐ List and biographies of current board members

☐ Worksheet for estimating resources required from board members

☐ Orientation and development opportunities for board members

☐ Board manual table of contents

☐ Other

RECRUITING TIPS

Your efforts are never wasted.

- Be sure to acknowledge the recruiting teams, even if they did not succeed in recruiting anybody this year.

- Customize your recruitment approach whenever possible. Know why your organization wants the specific individual and what your organization can give in return.

- Be sure to highlight each prospective board member's unique qualities when inviting him or her to join the board. Help the prospective board member to recognize how important he or she is to your organization.

- When approaching prospective board members, do not guarantee that the individual will automatically be elected. Make sure that all recruiters are aware of this guideline. You may ask about the prospective board member's willingness to serve only after the Nominating Committee has explored the board needs and the suitability of the prospective board member for the position.

- It is a good idea to use two members of the Nominating Committee as a recruiting team to meet with prospective board members. You will meet with the best success if the recruiters are peers of the prospective board members or are mutually respected by the prospective board member. Choose your recruiting team carefully, matching the recruiting team to the prospective board member.

- Use personal visits to approach prospective board members. Personal visits generally meet with the most success.

- Make sure that your presentation to the prospective board member is honest when you describe the time, energy, expectations, and challenges that are associated with the role. Doing this will lead to more realistic, committed, and enthusiastic board members joining your organization. Be careful not to oversimplify the amount of responsibility that the role dictates. Doing this shows lack of respect for the role, the individual and the organization.

- Emphasize the orientation, training, and other development activities that are available to board members.

- Do not be afraid to personally invite new members to consider joining the board. About 87% of individuals who volunteer were asked by a friend, family member, or colleague. The most common reason for not volunteering is, "Nobody asked me!"

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important ⚠

If prospective board members say no, remember:
- They may say yes in the future
- They may suggest other prospects
- They may support you in some other way
- It was probably a good public relations opportunity for your organization

RECRUITING: ISSUES TO CONSIDER

Not-for-profit organizations are fortunate to be supported by people who are willing to volunteer time, contribute ideas, and share skills. The qualities that each individual brings to the organization are potentially valuable. Carefully consider the appropriateness of prospective board members so that their board service is a positive experience for the individual and for the organization.

If the individual is not ready or suited for board work, make sure that you find an appropriate role for them. If the interested individual serves the organization in some other capacity, their contribution may lead to becoming a board member in the future. The Nominating Committee is responsible for assisting these individuals to become involved in your organization. To do this, the Nominating Committee may ask for the assistance of other board members, the executive director, the volunteer manager, and/or other staff and volunteers.

Interested individuals who are not currently suitable for a board role could be alternatively involved in:

- Serving on a committee (Ad Hoc, standing, or advisory)
- Coordinating a special project
- Contributing viewpoints as a focus group participant
- Acting as a service volunteer
- Being a financial contributor

You can also refer the individual to another organization that may be more suited to his or her needs.

Many organizations develop policies to deal with the recruitment of board members from the following groups because they are commonly recruited to boards:

- Past staff
- Past board members
- Clients and their families

Former staff

Past staff may be good board volunteers. They are informed, experienced, ready to participate, and need little orientation or support.

However, former staff may find it difficult to separate the role of staff and board member. After all, they are used to being in a staff position.

Just like anyone who is new to a board position, past staff will need guidance on the responsibilities of being a board member. Past staff, who serve as board members need to be aware that they should not focus on the management or operations. These activities are the responsibility of paid staff, the executive committee, or service volunteers. A board may have difficulty governing the organization if some of its board members are confused about their roles. Often, this confusion leads to hard feelings between board and staff.

Occasionally, past staff members are motivated by the need to right a wrong and need to be made aware if they use their board role inappropriately. Former staff who

have recently been employed by your organization may need time to gain objectivity in their decision-making.

Past staff members can be very committed to the work of the organization and may make excellent board members. To make sure that your decision to bring on past staff is a positive experience, consider developing a policy that requires at least a two-year waiting period before staff may seek board election.

Past board members

Past board members are well-acquainted with both the work and the role of the board and can make valuable contributions. Since they are coming to a new board with new challenges and changes in the community, past board members need to be able to objectively reconsider decisions made by former boards. Occasionally, new board members may over-rely upon the opinions and skills of experienced board members when developing their own leadership skills.

You may want to ask effective board members to serve additional consecutive terms in order to provide the continuity and experience that the board requires. However, your organization's bylaws need to set limits on the number of consecutive terms that a board member can serve. You may also want to encourage a waiting period between terms. This allows less experienced board members opportunities to develop their skills. It also provides vacancies which can be filled by new and diverse members.

Clients and their families

Many organizations feel strongly about the need to involve clients and their families as board members to provide a balanced perspective. Clients and families with a deep commitment to a cause often have the passion and values that are critical to board membership. If a client or a client family is being considered as a prospective board member, there are some recruitment and orientation issues that you may need to consider.

When clients or client family members become board members, they need to be aware that they are being asked to make decisions that will support the purpose of the organization as a whole. Their focus is on the needs of the organization, all of the people that the organization serves, and lastly on the individual client's or family member's involvement. Because of the client's or client family's special involvement in the organization, he or she needs to be aware of the possibility of conflict-of-interest situations that might arise.

For example, the parent of a young athlete sits on the board of the track club. He is in a position to decide who will receive funds for travel. This position leaves him in a perceived or real "conflict-of-interest" situation, where he may be judged as favouring his child.

In other situations, particularly in self-help organizations, individuals may use volunteering as part of their personal healing or recovery process. As board members, they need to be able to focus externally and be aware that they are being asked to

make decisions that will support the purpose of the organization as a whole.

For example, a recent participant in a drug-abuse rehabilitation program is asked to serve as a board member of a counseling agency.

For example, a person whose spouse is deceased is asked to be the treasurer of a bereavement organization even though she is still actively grieving.

Clients and Consumers as Board Members

Consider the following questions as part of a board membership or nominating committee discussion.

- Are clients and consumer, or their families, encouraged to serve on your board?
- What does your organization gain from their perspective?
- What challenges does their involvement create for them, for your organization, and for the board?

Many other individuals are recruited because of special talents, qualities and/or unique perspectives. These groups include:

- Service volunteers
- Different sectors
- Young people
- Hands-tied contributors
- Specialists
- Letterhead board members

When recruiting individuals from these groups you must make sure their roles and responsibilities as a board member are clear. Care and planning when selecting these individuals will allow them to contribute fully if

elected to the board. Points for you to think about when recruiting form those groups are described below

Service volunteers

Many volunteers with high commitment and interest may wish to serve in several roles within an organization. For example, one individual might serve as a board member, a volunteer counsellor, and a bingo worker in the same organization. This may become a role problem for the board member and the organization. When board members serve in many volunteer capacities in the same organization, they may find it difficult not to use their board role to advise or direct the work of staff and other volunteers. They may try to make decisions about issues that are the responsibility of staff.

To help these board members, you need to clearly define each volunteer role in your organization. If you imagine each role as a hat that the individual wears, you can see why there is confusion when a volunteer wears too many hats. Even if the board member can clearly separate their responsibilities, there may be confusion when others view the board member as wearing their board hat when in a service volunteer role.

Diverse Perspectives

Diversity and fair community representation are critical to the success of your organization. Each board member brings a set of views, values and connections within the community.

Carefully consider the issue of diversity as it relates to your organization. Consider recruiting more than one person who can bring the perspective of a particular segment of the community to your board. This allows each individual to contribute all of their qualities and not just act as a spokesperson on particular issues. Make sure that you choose prospective board members for their unique perspectives, as well as the other qualities and the commitment and working capital that they can bring to your board.

Young people

Some boards choose youth representatives to provide valuable input into board decisions and to encourage leadership development in young people. If your organization chooses youth representatives, consider the legal responsibilities of governing boards. Some incorporation policies allow underage individuals to serve on boards as long as they are members of the organization and they are willing to accept the same legal responsibilities as the adult board members.

Other ways that your organization can also benefit from the perspective of younger members, without legal responsibility, include having them participate in:

- Advisory committees
- Board internships
- Focus groups
- Other activities that include their views

Hands-tied Contributors

Prospective board members are recruited because of their viewpoints, expertise, or connections. Be sure to consider the prospective board member's ability to actively contribute these skills and knowledge to your organization. Conflict-of-interest situations may arise because of business, employment, or other relationships. Some prospective board members may not feel comfortable with advocacy roles that may confuse your organization's views with their employer's or family's beliefs.

For example, someone who sits on the boards of several not-for-profit organizations that compete for funds cannot ethically share information.

For example, a person may perform paid work that is too interrelated with the affairs of your organization to allow them to freely participate without conflict of interest.

Specialists

Lawyers, architects, accountants, and doctors, and other professionals may not wish to perform professional duties on behalf of your organization because of liability or professional codes. However, these professionals may be valuable advisors to your board. Be sure to clarify the scope of the consultation role that you ask professionals to contribute. Consider using this intellectual working capital to facilitate meaningful board discussion rather than assign isolated technical tasks to the individual.

Many volunteers choose to be board members to provide variety and balance to their paid work. These volunteers may not feel rewarded if they are asked to contribute paid vocational skills for no remuneration. Be sure to consider underemployed, developing, or unemployed specialists who may have a desire to use their technical skills more fully.

For example, a physician may not want to be medical advisor to a social services agency but may be willing to help the board learn more about the relationship between health and the clients' ability to find employment.

For example, an accountant may choose to serve on the Nominating Committee rather than the Finance Committee.

For example, a professional trained in another province or country and whose qualifications are not formally recognized here may wish to use their skills and experience in a meaningful way.

Do not overload your board with visible specialists unless the board intends to use these special skills. The perception of some funders is that you are wasting resources if you hire outside help, when you have specialists on your board.

Letterhead board members

All organizations could benefit from a well-known or philanthropic mentor as a board member. Fame, wealth and power are attributes that most organizations seek. However, few individuals would appreciate being recruited for these qualities.

Be sure to define the board member's role clearly, to make sure that all board members take on an active role which utilizes their skills and experience.

Consider the feelings of active board members if you elect letterhead board members, who only enhance your organization's image but never actively participate. Your organization will pay a price because there is a board liability risk to any board member who neglects his or her responsibilities through inactivity.

HARD-TO-RECRUIT-TO BOARDS

When it is difficult to recruit prospective board members, you may be tempted to reduce your standards to a minimum to stretch the truth in order to attract prospective board members or to take any warm body willing to participate. If you are having difficulties recruiting effective board members, make sure you re-evaluate your recruitment plan. Can you define the benefits of being a board member in your organization? Are you offering prospective volunteers a "fair exchange"?

(!) **important**

Consider how customized recruitment strategies can help your organization deal with ongoing challenges.

In each of the following situations:

- Identify the barriers that the organization and the recruiters may face in finding interested volunteers

- Brainstorm a list of the types of people who might be attracted to these roles

- Discuss ways to design each board role to improve the quality and quantity of board member in the future

- Discuss strategies to recruit effective board members for the group.

"I live in a small community in which there are not enough people to fill all of the volunteer roles. How can my organization attract board members when many volunteers are already overworked?"

"Several of our organization's board members are appointed by the organization's funders. The people who are appointed are often not interested in, or committed to, the job."

"Our organization's board is made up of representatives from other organizations. Each board member represents the views of his or her own organization. Many of these board members serve on my organization's board only because it is part of their paid job responsibility. As a result, we have trouble working as a team and we find that the commitment to the job is low."

"Our organization is in a crisis. Funds are low and several board members have resigned. My organization does good work, but nobody wants to take the risk of being associated with us. How can we renew our board?"

"Our rehabilitation organization serves needy, but unpopular persons within the community. How can we attract board members?"

RECRUITING FOR SUCCESS

Effective boards are the product of a planned building process that continues all year. This process begins with the current board members deciding what qualities and skills are needed to govern, and in some cases, manage the organization. From this point, the recruiting activities are coordinated by a standing committee called the Nominating or Board Development Committee. The Nominating Committee develops selection criteria for potential board members which reflect the necessary qualities and skills outlined by the board.

Whenever possible, the Nominating Committee recruits new board members from the organization's membership or from other individuals who are involved with the organization. Potential board members who do not have previous experience with the organization must have compatible values and interests.

The Nominating Committee considers what motivates certain individuals to serve as board members and incorporates this information into its recruiting plan. The board and Nominating Committee must make sure that a fair exchange occurs that balances the benefits offered to the volunteer board member with the skills, time, and commitment members bring to the board.

Effective boards are willing to cultivate prospective board members. People often need to gradually become involved in the organization through other activities before taking on a board role. Involving young people in leadership development activities also develops a source of future board members.

2
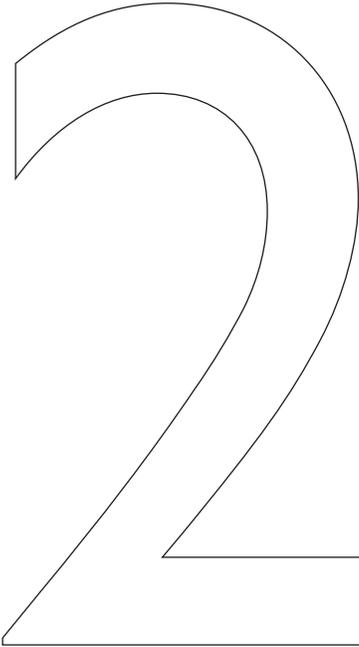
Orienting, Training and Developing the Board

Effective board development is an ongoing process. It is an investment in:

- The individual board member
- The board as a working group
- The organization and its ability to serve the community

Orientation, training, experience, and recognition all contribute to board development.

Board development activities provide members with:

- A common frame of reference
- The knowledge and experience needed to be effective board members
- The motivation to reflect, critically think and generate new ideas
- The skills to make informed decisions, and to be creative and innovative
- The attitudes necessary for mutual support and respect
- The confidence to be advocates for the organization

- The skills and knowledge to provide leadership to the organization
- The motivation to sustain their board role

Effective board development acknowledges and enhances the skills, interest and experience that board members bring to your organization. To retain committed members, boards must be willing to meet the individual board members' needs for challenging work that suits the time and expertise that they are willing to contribute.

"We get so totally tied up in today's needs, that we don't reserve a realistic part of our resources for developing the talent and dedication necessary to carry and expand the association's efforts tomorrow."
– Brian O'Connell

Value Added Development Activities

Board development takes time, energy, and resources. Board development activities must be:

- Relevant to both the individual board member and to the board as a group

- Customized to meet the needs of both individual board members and the organization's goals

- Cost-effective in both time and dollars

- Convenient in both format and location

- Timely and related to the organization's priorities

- Useful for the individual's board role as well as for their lives outside the board

Board development activities include:

- Orientation

- Ongoing training

- Opportunities for group reflection and dialogue

- Assessment and evaluation opportunities

- Progressively responsible assignments

- Recognition of commitment and involvement

Board development activities relate to:

- Understanding the organization's cause and purpose

- Understanding the organization's structure and systems

- Understand the organization's people

"When board members do not receive adequate orientation or training, they often invent a role for themselves."
— *Irma Finn Brosseau*

"No amount of orientation can make an outstanding board from a group of poorly or inappropriately selected people."
— *Diana Duca*

ORIENTATION

New board members appreciate and benefit from an effective orientation to the organization no matter how much experience they have. An effective orientation helps new board members to understand the purpose and the mission of your organization, its major activities and issues, and how the board operates.

Many new board members may already have a base of information and experience. A group orientation and ongoing mentoring are excellent ways for board members to share this expertise. Effective board development enables all board members to make decisions and to take actions from the same base of information.

Objectivity is one of the greatest contributions that a new board member can make to your organization. New board members bring an outside perspective that lets them see issues more clearly than those members who are invested in the issues. Actively solicit observations and ideas from new board members by asking for:

- Observations and suggestions for the operation of the board

- Reflection on processes they experience

- Ideas about new ways of meeting the organization's mission

- Observations and suggestions on a host of other issues

Assign specific duties to new board members immediately to get them involved. The quickest way to lose enthusiastic board members is to give them nothing to do. Assign new board members to committees or special projects so that they get to know both the people and the organization.

WAYS TO HELP A NEW BOARD MEMBER

To contribute effectively to your board and organization, new board members need relevant information that meets their time and learning needs. Methods of orienting board members include:

- Group sessions
- Board orientation manual
- Audiovisual and online resources
- Mentors
- Chair coaching/ check-in

These orientation methods are described in more detail below.

Group sessions

Most organizations hold group orientation sessions for new board members within the first month of their term. Some initiate orientation before inviting prospective board members. You may want to include all board members in this orientation especially for issues or procedures related to the operation of the board. At the same time members may build relationships early in their term.

Group sessions could include:

- Presentations
- Discussions
- Tours
- Techniques that reinforce the information

Orientation is usually a shared board/ senior staff function.

Board orientation manual

Most organizations develop a board manual that describes the purpose and operations of the organization. This board manual is:

- User-friendly
- Updated regularly
- Given to each board member while serving on the board

Note: Many groups put the board manual into three-ring binders to make it easier to use and to update. Others use electronic files which are easy to store and update.

Audiovisual and multimedia materials

Audiovisual and media presentation tools allow new board members to learn at their own pace and on their own time. As part of your board orientation, consider using:

- online orientation modules
- audiovisual materials
- hybrid sessions using both face to face and online or reading materials

Mentors

Mentors are effective in helping new board members feel comfortable and in acting as a resource person to assist them. Partner new board members with willing and experienced board members.

Chair Coaching/ Check-In

The Board Chair monitors each new board member's comfort and concerns with his or her role.

important !

What does a new board member need to know?

Who is the most appropriate person to provide the orientation?

Checklist: Orientation of New Board Members

Information	Time	Place	Resource Person
1. Values Discussion • Discuss the beliefs and values of the organization • Relate to the programs and services of the organization			Board Chairperson Full Board Discussion
2. Board manual, structure and governance • Review contents of manual and discuss board responsibilities • opportunity for discussion			Chairperson (with assistance form designated board members and senior staff)
3. Committee Orientation • Committee orientation • Task assignments • Review of committee terms of reference & minutes			Committee Chairperson
4. Facility and Program Visit(s) • Familiarize new member with facilities, activities and individuals (paid and volunteer) involved in the organization.			Executive Director (with assistance from other staff and/or volunteers) Chairperson (if there is no paid senor staff)

Contents of a Board Orientation Manual

1. Table of Contents *The contents of a board manual will vary with the model of board governance/style of operations*	• Contents of manual • All pages should be numbered and dated
2. Mission Statement	• Include information about the organization's values and beliefs
3. History/Background	• Fact sheet • Organization's history • Minutes and annual report/audit of the previous year • Pocket containing brochures/other promotional materials
4. Board Structure/Operations	• Meeting and special event information for current year (days, dates, location) • Board and committee structure chart • Board agenda format • Board member job description
5. Bylaws	• Constitution • Bylaws
6. Policy Manual	• Framework policies and long-term strategies • Board self-governance policies • Operational policies • Advocacy policies
7. Financial Summary	• Annual budget • Annual audit • Investments • Property • Insurance • Fiscal calendar • Summary of funding sources
8. Board Committees	For each committee include: • Committee terms of reference • Committee year-end reports, goals and objectives for current year
9. Board List	• Name, position, length of service • Addresses and phone numbers • Biographies

TRAINING/ DIALOGUE

As board members gain experience and face new challenges, additional training and discussion opportunities for individuals, as well as the board team, often increases effectiveness and interest. Opportunities might include:

- Information sessions at board meetings
- Inservice training and workshops
- Retreats
- External workshops and conferences
- Books, audiovisual materials, and electronic resources
- Distance education
- Meetings reserved for reflection and unstructured dialogue

These activities are described in more detail below.

Information Sessions at Board Meetings

Many boards schedule short information sessions, before or after formal meeting times, to stay informed. Use board members, staff, or outside resource people to facilitate these sessions. Researching and preparing materials for these sessions can be a useful development activity for individual board members.

Inservice Training and Workshops

Schedule special sessions to address issues that require more time to explore in depth. Consider a needs assessment to make sure that the format, content, process, time, and location are appropriate. A neutral individual, facilitating the discussion, allows all board members to participate equally in the training.

Retreats

Retreats often provide time for the discussion required for board members to get to know each other, to explore new ideas, and to plan for the future. Many boards hold an annual weekend retreat. Other boards hold several one-day mini-retreats. Invest in an external facilitator or resource person so that all board members can participate equally in the discussions. If possible, charter a bus to take board members to the retreat location. This provides a stress-free journey and allows more time for informal discussions. Board members arrive feeling refreshed and ready to work.

External Workshops and Conferences

Individual board members often benefit from attending specific external training events that relate to their board role. Provide funds to assist the board member with the training event, or identify other ways to compensate the person. Corporate sponsors and foundations sometimes offer bursaries for training events.

Ask the individual board member to write a report, give a presentation, or find another way to share the information he or she gained at the conference or workshop with the rest of the board.

Books, Audiovisual Materials, and Electronic Resources

There are many excellent print and electronic resources that can assist not-for-profit organizations. There are also a variety of materials that explore transferable concepts from other sectors. Review books and magazines, circulate resource lists, and make board members aware of materials, both within your organization and in specialized resource centers.

Distance Education

Use teleconferences, video-conferencing, self-directed learning resources, and other methods of development to assist board members who may be geographically isolated or wish to use asynchronous opportunities for learning.

Progressively Varied and Responsible Assignments

As board members develop within their roles, the needs and issues which initially motivated them to join the board may change or disappear. The board must make new challenges and experiences available to sustain their involvement.

Identifying what each board member wants to be involved in, and what roles would best match their interests and skills can be done in a number of ways. One way is to have the Board and Committee Chair regularly review with each member their satisfaction with their role and the associated activities. Regular self-evaluation by individuals also encourages development.

Many people thrive on more responsibility, while others are happy to continue doing the same thing. Some individuals are motivated through involvement in new issues or functions. The key to maintaining involvement is to make sure that different and changing needs are recognized and met. The matching of board and committee skills and needs with board tasks and projects is an important role for both the Board and the Committee Chairs.

"One of the constant lessons of leadership is that people grow with responsibility and are capable of far more than what appears on the surface."
– Brian O'Connell

"Most people do not drop out from overwork. They drop out from boredom."
– Harold Seymour

(!) **important**

Identify the resources board members want to share with your organization and what they hope to receive from your organization.

Matching Board Members' Skills and Needs

One of the biggest challenges for a Board Chairperson or a Committee Chair is learning how to place the right board member in the right job. The future success of your board depends on a good fit between the board member and the assigned tasks.

Consider the direct approach. Volunteers will gladly do what they enjoy. To find out what board members want to do, talk to them about the skills they want to give to your organization and those they want to learn from your organization. A simple technique for gathering this information is described below.

Glad Gifts

List all of the activities, interests, and skills that the person would like to contribute to your board and to your organization. List the gifts the board member willingly offers.

Quests

List all activities, interests, and skills that the board member would like to learn or would like to influence. This represents potential areas of growth and involvement for the board member and will help you to plan training and development activities.

No Thank You

Things the board member doesn't want to do. Remember there are some tasks which are mandatory to the board role.

The Chair's task is to assign board members to projects and committees that tap into one or two of the Glad Gifts and provides an opportunity to annually develop at least one Quest area. You will want to avoid No Thank You's or at the very least, acknowledge that there is an element of No Thank You's in many desirable jobs.

-Adapted from the work of Ivan Scheier

RECOGNITION

Recognition is a critical aspect of board development and retention. Board members need to be recognized and to receive feedback on their performance. Recognition measures effort and success. Use ongoing and timely recognition to encourage and sustain board involvement.

How do you develop a recognition strategy? Make recognition a priority. Take the time and effort to recognize contributions on a regular basis. Make sure that the recognition is sincere, specific, and appropriate to the individual and his or her contribution. Recognition might include:

- Thank you letters for specific actions, as well as broader involvement
- Verbal recognition at board, committee, and annual general meetings
- Board member special events and social opportunities
- Dedication of a facility, space,

object, or equipment within the organization to a board member or workgroup

- Opportunities to share accomplishments of their board work with each other and with their peers
- Gifts of gift certificates related to the board member's interests
- Communicate the board member's unique qualities and contributions to them. Show them why they are appreciated within the board
- Professional or personal development courses
- Recognition certificates or plaques
- Express appreciation to the board member's family and/or employer, where appropriate
- Complimentary tickets to the organization's events
- Naming an event or award after a board member
- Inviting a board member to participate in more challenging tasks and projects that acknowledge their skills
- Nominate appropriate board members for community awards
- Nominate appropriate board members for roles on regional, provincial, or national boards, or broader-based community "umbrella" organizations

Note: Many cultures/religions consider public recognition of volunteer service to be offensive. Some individuals are simply uncomfortable with attention. Consider how these beliefs apply to volunteer board recognition in your organization.

MOTIVATION AND BOARD RETENTION

Nonprofit organizations operate with highly diverse board governance models, which include varying amounts of oversight, planning, idea generation, connecting and decision-making. The organization's chosen governance model affects the kinds and amount of direct contact boards have with staff, programs and operations. While an all-volunteer organization with a board active in management and governance requires hands-on and regular attention by the board, Policy Governance boards that delegate all management functions to a senior staff person have little direct connection to operations. Each of these scenarios and those in between, appeal differently to each prospective and current board member.

Chait, Ryan and Taylor (2005) note that official board work is highly episodic. The board is not required to actively engage the majority of the time. They also describe some board work as intrinsically undemanding and unsatisfying, and consequently not very motivating. At the same time some activities that board members enjoy are discouraged because they do not fall into the range of roles played by boards or at least the governance model of some boards. When recruiting board members be clear what the real expectations and limitations of the role are in your organization's context.

Lack of role clarity and recognition are the most stated reasons why people voluntarily leave paid and unpaid work. Meaningful recognition needs to be personalized, timely, and suited to the needs and motivation of the individual.

Board efforts often go unrecognized because staff and/or front line volunteers are not aware of board work or are uncomfortable in acknowledging board members.

What does your board do to recognize the accomplishments of individual board members? Work groups? Committees?

"Who has ever been moved to join a board thinking- I really want to hold this organization to account? But this, of course is part of what the job demands. While people might agree to join to affiliate with a mission, they are more apt to participate when they can see the results of their work and the opportunity to have influence." (Chait, Ryan & Taylor, 2005, p.19)

=) **summary**

ORIENTING, TRAINING, AND DEVELOPING THE BOARD

Board members bring a variety of skills, values, and interests to an organization, which can be focused and enhanced through training and development.

New board members benefit from a thorough orientation to the:

- People within the organization
- Way in which the organization and the board operates
- Key beliefs and goals that direct the organization's activities

Individual and group board training develops new skills that help the board and the individual to work effectively. A variety of experiences and increasingly responsible roles provide the challenges and development opportunities many board members need to sustain their involvement.

Recognizing the accomplishments of individual board members and of the board team is important for maintaining involvement and enthusiasm. Formally acknowledging progress and celebrating successes is vital for encouraging the ongoing participation of the board members.

3

Evaluating the Board

BENEFITS OF BOARD EVALUATIONS

The benefits of evaluating your board and individual board members include:

- A focus on the importance of a board role, and the commitment that board volunteers make

- A regular review of individual and group work plans that makes sure that tasks get done, and that people receive the support they need to carry out their responsibilities

- Accountability reviews that demonstrate how effective the board and its members are in carrying out the work of the organization

- Opportunities for recognition that motivate and retain board members

- Opportunities for improvement for the board and its members

- A database of information that can be used for future recruitment

DESIGNING EFFECTIVE BOARD PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance reviews of the board and its members are based on actions that the board planned and the results that they achieved. Evaluation needs to look at both the:

- Accomplishment, product or results of the goal

- Process by which the goal was accomplished

The product of a board's efforts is the what that the board wants to accomplish. These accomplishments or results require concrete, measurable goals that the board uses to measure its progress and products.

✳ **to do**

How Are We Doing?

In what ways does your board monitor and evaluate its work, the performance of individual board members, and its impact on your organization?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How could your board benefit from regular evaluation activities?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What evaluation activities need to be developed to make your board more effective?

_____

_____

_____

_____

For example, a board that is involved with youth-at-risk may work towards a variety of results. The results could include:

- Community-based program sites
- A set of revised bylaws
- A decrease in shoplifting in the community

Evaluating the board's process requires the board to look at how the goal was accomplished. Process evaluation focuses on the timelines and the resources that were used to accomplish the goal. Boards also need to evaluate such things as the board's information gathering techniques, its problem-solving approaches and its decision-making techniques.

Be sure to consider both the what and the how when evaluating the work of individual board members and the work of the board. This approach gives a truer picture of what accomplishments are actually costing the organization.

For example, a committee focused only on accomplishment might burn out skilled volunteers or staff by creating unrealistic deadlines.

For example, an individual board member, who only focuses on the process or method of work and not the results, may accomplish little of value for the organization. In fact, this person may cost the organization time and money.

Use the following methods to design effective evaluation tools:

- Use job descriptions, mission statements, board goals, and committee terms of reference to develop evaluation criteria.

- Use performance reviews to recognize individual and board achievements, as well as areas for development. Include strategies to create desired change as part of the evaluation.

OBSERVING THE BOARD'S PROCESSES

Observing the Board's Process

Board meetings are the primary discussion and decision making tool of the board in governing. Enhancing meeting effectiveness is key to performance. Choose a sensitive and objective board member or another objective individual to observe the board's process as it carries out its activities at a meeting. The observer must be able to summarize and to communicate the observations in a constructive manner. The observer's role is not to give advice, but to provide observations that can be used for feedback and discussion.

Meeting Observer Checklist

- Use a neutral party (paid or volunteer) to assist in assessing the content, use of time, flow, and participation in regular board meetings
- Ask them to summarize their observations, and make recommendations for improving the meeting process

(✳) **to do**

Meeting Observer Checklist

Rate items: 1 – Poor
             2 – Needs Work
             3 – Adequate
             4 – Very Good
             5 – Excellent

_____ Meeting scheduled at convenient time/location

_____ Majority of board members were in attendance

_____ Agenda and supporting documents circulated prior to meeting

_____ Meeting began on time

_____ Agenda items relevant to mission, goals, and objectives of the organization

_____ Agenda items related to board work (not staff or committee issues)

_____ Structure and leadership of meeting encouraged thoughtful discussion

_____ Agenda items were clearly identified as for information, discussion or decision

_____ Reports were tabled, and only questions and/or discussion related to them were considered

_____ Decision-making method being used, such as collaboration or simple majority, was identified before the decision was made

_____ Appropriate information was available to make decision

_____ Atmosphere was relaxed and friendly

_____ All board members were encouraged to participate

_____ Motions were accurately recorded in the minutes

_____ Meeting duration was appropriate to the needs of the group and the issues to be addressed

_____ Staff and board members presenting information were prepared and effective

Strengths of the meeting:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Suggestions for future improvement of effectiveness:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

TOOLS FOR BOARD MEETING EVALUATION

At the end of each meeting, encourage board members to complete a brief evaluation of the meeting. Board members can write their responses and give them to the secretary. The secretary tabulates and distributes the results with the minutes of the meeting.

Be sure to plan a method for dealing with suggestions and implementing strategies to improve board meeting performance.

You can use the following exercises for board meeting evaluations.

Exercise: Start Doing and Stop Doing

- Take 10 minutes at the end of the board meeting to review meeting effectiveness
- Ask members to list the productive and nonproductive parts of the meeting by completing the following phrases

Note: You could use a similar approach to assess other areas of board work, such as planning and fundraising.

At our board meetings, we should:

Stop doing…

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Continue doing…

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Start doing…

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Exercise: After the Board Meeting Review

- Encourage board members to complete the following review at the meeting or within 24 hours, so that their observations are fresh
- May be used after every meeting, or less frequently as a tool in meeting planning

✳ **to do**

Board Meeting Review

Please complete the following questions to assist in making our board meetings more productive and enjoyable.

Meeting Date:

What was the most valuable thing accomplished by this meeting?

_____

_____

_____

What did you like least about the meeting?

_____

_____

_____

Topics were:

☐ Excellent
☐ Good
☐ Average
☐ Below Average
☐ Poor

Topics were related to the purpose of our organization:

☐ Excellent
☐ Good
☐ Average
☐ Below Average
☐ Poor

Effective use of time:

☐ Excellent
☐ Good
☐ Average
☐ Below Average
☐ Poor

Participation of Members

☐ Excellent
☐ Good
☐ Average
☐ Below Average
☐ Poor

Enjoyable/Interesting

☐ Excellent
☐ Good
☐ Average
☐ Below Average
☐ Poor

Other Comments:

Please provide examples where possible.

Name : _____
(Optional)

EVALUATING INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER PERFORMANCE

Use performance reviews for individual board members during and at the end of their terms.

Use mid-term reviews:

- To help individual board members to focus their efforts
- To give due recognition
- To identify training or support that board members may required

Use end-of-term reviews:

- To help the board decide whether the board member is suitable, or has the desire to serve another term
- To allow the board member to discuss his or her satisfaction with the board role and the organization
- To get suggestions to improve the board's future performance

The Board Chair, the Board Development Committee, the Nominating Committee, or other designate board members are responsible for coordinating evaluation activities. Summarize and document the evaluation and development plan for future reference.

Use your organization's board member job description, combined with the individual's personal goals for the year, to evaluate individual performance.

⊛ **to do**

BOARD MEMBER SELF-ASSESSMENT

Encourage each individual to assess their effectiveness as a board member several times throughout their term by completing this checklist:

☐ I support the mission and values of this organization

☐ I am willing to further the work of this organization with my time, skills, and financial support

☐ I understand the role of the board and my legal and ethical responsibilities as a board member

☐ I have attended the majority of regular and special board meetings and other events requiring board participation.

☐ I prepare for meeting by reading background materials and researching issues for discussion

☐ I actively participate in board meetings by listening, discussing, and presenting complete information as required

☐ I carry out my other board responsibilities (e.g. committee member, fundraising, advocacy and/or education in an effective and timely manner).

☐ I am willing to support and help other board members in their development

☐ I am interested and willing to participate in development opportunities including workshops, information sessions, conferences, and taking on new roles.

☐ I try to be an objective decision maker, considering the effect of issues on individuals, the organization, and the community.

☐ I avoid participation in board issues that are self-serving or may be perceived as conflict of interest

☐ I recognize the board must "speak with one voice" and I avoid taking action on issues unless instructed by the board.

☐ I enjoy my service as a board member in this organization. If not, I am actively working to the change the issues and/or activities which are a barrier, or I am reconsidering my commitment to this organization.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Board Member Self-Assessment: End of Term Review

- May be used mid-term, at end of a tem in preparation for second term, or as a retirement/exit interview tool.
- The individual board member completes the self-assessment to prepare for a discussion with the Board Chair or the Board Development Committee.

End-of-Term Review

My greatest satisfaction from serving on the board this term is:

My board service, this term, improved the organization's services, finances or image in the community by:

_____

_____

_____

_____

My strengths as a board member are:

_____

_____

_____

_____

My weaknesses as a board member are:

_____

_____

_____

_____

I am interested in serving an additional term:

☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes, I would be interested in serving as:

☐ Chair
☐ Vice-Chair
☐ Secretary
☐ Treasurer

Standing Committee Chair:
Which Committee?

_____

Ad hoc Committee Chair:
Which Committee?

_____

Other:

_____

I have attended _____ of _____ regular board meetings

I have attended _____ of _____ special board meetings

I prepare for board meetings by reading background materials and research issues decision:

☐ Always
☐ Often
☐ Sometimes
☐ Seldom
☐ Never

I am an active participant in board meetings, feel comfortable discussing issues, and recognize the roles and responsibilities of the board:

☐ Always
☐ Often
☐ Sometimes
☐ Seldom
☐ Never

I would like to further develop myself as a board member by:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

If I do not continue to serve on the board, I would like to contribute to the organization by:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chair: _____

Concerns and/or Issues:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

EVALUATING THE WORK OF THE BOARD TEAM

Conduct a thorough board evaluation at least once a year. The Board Development Committee, the Nominating Committee, an Ad Hoc Committee of the board, or an outside facilitator coordinates this review. Schedule the review to coincide with the annual evaluation of the senior staff person, and before annual planning events or the annual general meeting. Present the results to the board, along with a plan for dealing with the issues of concern. Use the results to plan future training and recruiting strategies.

Effective boards routinely review how well they are carrying out:

- Their core responsibilities as a board
- Their plans for the year
- Specific aspects of their work

Such reviews motivates the board by:

- Recognizing achievements
- Identifying tasks which need further attention
- Focusing the working committees and individuals

Board evaluation is often based on the annual goals and the workplan that the board has set for itself. Periodic reviews leave no surprises at year-end. Some reviews focus only on areas that are of most concern to the board at the time.

For example, rather than evaluating all areas of work done by the board, the board may review meeting effectiveness, recruitment efforts, or resource development.

For example, short, one-issue evaluations might be done at board meetings. Evaluations of more extensive activities might be done through a written questionnaire that is reviewed and discussed at a retreat or a special meeting.

Assessing the Work of the Board Team

Use the following evaluation to identify your board's strengths and areas for future areas for future improvement. One process you can use is to:

- Have each board member individually complete the questionnaire.
- Identify one person to compile the results and comments.
- Set time aside to have the board discuss the results.
- Develop strategies to make the desired changes. Put the strategies in your board's annual work plan.
- Monitor and evaluate your progress.

✳ **to do**

Board Evaluation

		Comments on strengths or ideas for improvement
The board operates with clearly defined: • Mission and Goals • Bylaws	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know	
Board members understand their own and each other's role and duties	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know	
Job descriptions have been developed and are used for: • Individual board members • Executive positions • Committee Chairpersons	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know	
The board uses committees and/or work groups to divide board work fairly or delegates appropriately to staff	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know	
Committees have a Terms of Reference statement which defines their roles and responsibilities	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know	
Board members follow through on plans and commitments	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know	
Board members understand their legal/ fiduciary obligations and ensure they are being met	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know	

Board Evaluation continued

		Comments on strengths or ideas for improvement
The board composition reflects our community diversity	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know	
The board represents the interests of the organizations' membership	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know	
Board members are elected for a specific / limited term	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know	
Recruitment of effective board member nominees is a year round activity	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know	
Trusting and respectful relationships exist between board members and other individuals within the organization	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know	
Individual board members are evaluated annually to assess and recognize the skills and time they have contributed and to identify the role they will play in the future	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know	
The board evaluates its work annually in relationship to the goals and plans they have made	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know	
The board communicates clearly and regularly with appropriate staff, volunteers, funders, and the wider community	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know	

Board Evaluation continued

		Comments on strengths or ideas for improvement
Written policies to guide decision making exist and are organized in a policy manual	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know	
Policies exist in the areas of: • Personnel (paid and volunteer) • Finances • Programs and Services • Policy Development	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know	
Board meetings deal primarily with developing policy, planning, developing financial resources, advocacy, and evaluating the organization's work	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know	
The board has a written plan that is used to monitor and evaluate the organization's direction	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know	
All board members are encouraged to participate in discussions	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know	
Conflict is dealt with openly, respectfully and effectively	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know	
The board makes sure adequate resources are available to undertake the work of the organization	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know	

Board Evaluation continued

The board is operating effectively by:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Areas which could be made more effective are:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Board Evaluation continued

Areas for Improvement:

Issue	Start Date	Complete Date	Delegated To	Resources Required

EVALUATING THE BOARD

Regular evaluation of the performance of individual board members, and of the board as a whole, helps to reinforce activities that are going well, and to focus or to initiate future actions. Evaluations of the whole board can be done internally or they can be conducted by an external evaluator not connected to the organization. Self-evaluation tools are an effective method of doing individual assessments. The Board Chair is responsible for initiating whatever evaluation process is used.

In addition to evaluating the board's and individual board member's performance, board evaluation is the starting point for the next board recruiting cycle.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1
Guidelines for Bylaws and Policies for Electing, Training, and Evaluating Board Members

The bylaws and policy manual of your organization need to clearly explain board composition and recruitment. Look for the following information in your board manual.

Status of the Nominating Committee

The Board Development Committee or Nominating Committee is a permanent standing committee of the board. The bylaws define this committee's responsibilities.

Nominating Committee Composition

A board member chairs the Nominating Committee. This board member is often a past president, and has a broad base of knowledge about the organization. The remainder of the committee is usually composed of the organization's members who may, or may not, serve on the board. Staff usually are not included on the committee. The size and exact composition of the committee must fit your organization. Your major concern is to choose a committee that considers its task important, and that is able to represent the membership fairly.

Nomination

Your organization's bylaws and policies need to define deadlines, rules, responsibilities, and procedures for the nomination and election process.

Who May Serve on the Board

Your organization's bylaws need to clearly define the eligibility criteria for board members. This prevents hard feelings or conflict-of-interest situations.

In most membership organizations, any member in good standing may be nominated for a board role. This would exclude those who do not qualify because of serving a maximum number of terms, or paid staff members or their families, who may be in a conflict-of-interest situation. Some organizations allow staff to hold board membership in a non-voting capacity.

Size of the Board

Your organization's bylaws define the minimum and maximum numbers of board members needed to represent your organization. Your organization's board size needs to be sufficient to manage the board workload, to make informed decisions, and to meet a quorum requirement.

Board and Committee Structure

Your organization's bylaws define the structure of the board and how it uses its committees. Use this information to determine how many board members need to be recruited, and what qualities these individuals must have.

Electing Board Members

The membership generally elects board members at the organization's Annual General Meeting. Each member in good standing has one vote for each ballot.

Complex societies with geographical or sectional membership can elect board members in a different way. The bylaws can state that certain sub-groups of the membership must elect the board members.

For example: A provincial organization with regional groups in Alberta can ask that the regional groups elect the members of the board. The members from each region can assemble and vote for a board member at the AGM. As an alternative, the members from each region can hold separate meetings at different times and places to elect the board members.

The bylaws can ask that there be a number of board members from certain sectors, even though the membership-at-large elects the board members at the AGM.

For example: In an organization with ordinary, senior and junior members, the bylaws might specify the board makeup. The board must have at least two board members from the senior members and at least two board members from the junior members.

There are other possibilities. The entire membership may vote by write-in vote. Persons could become board members by virtue of their office, such as presidents of regional bodies.

You may devise any system that is logical and workable for your society, as long as your bylaws and policies clearly explain it.

Acclamation

Make every effort to nominate more prospective board members than there are vacancies on your board. Winning by acclamation is seldom a good solution. Some acclaimed board members feel that they have less power to make decisions than those who have been elected.

As an alternative to acclamation, use the skills of unsuccessful candidates on committees, on projects, or in service volunteer roles. Through this experience, these people may become future board members.

If acclamation is your only option, distribute ballots on which board members write yes or no beside each name of a prospective board member. Acclaim only those people who receive more yes than no votes, and fill vacant positions at a later date.

Terms of Office

Your organization's bylaws need to specify terms of office for board members. Most organizations limit the length and number of terms that an individual may serve. Specified terms allow board members to plan ahead, and many prospective board members are more likely to say yes to a finite, rather than an indefinite, length of service. This planned turnover of members also allows for new blood and fresh ideas. Although many organizations use one-year terms, two- or three-year terms provide for better continuity and development. However, the length of the terms must meet the specific needs of your organization.

If the terms are longer than one year, it is a good idea to have staggered terms of office. Terms of the board members overlap so that a proportion of the board comes up for election each year. The membership influences the makeup of the board and indicates whether they want change. However, there is stability, since the entire board will not change in any one year.

For example: Assume your board has nine members. You want to have board members serve three-year terms, with three board members elected every year. In the first year of the society, or in the year you amend the bylaws to provide for staggered terms, you would elect:

- Three board members for one-year term
- Three board members for two-year terms
- Three board members for three-year terms

In year two, and in all following years, there will be three vacancies on the board to fill at the AGM.

Many organizations allow board members to serve for several terms. You may want to appoint or elect willing and effective board members to a second term. Conduct an evaluation of the board member's performance and the needs of the organization before you reappoint the board member. Second terms are not automatic. Most organizations also require board members to resign for a minimum of one year before serving for a third term.

If your organization is implementing a policy on Terms of Office, and has many long-serving board members, ask the board members to draw lots to decide who will serve one-, two-, or three-year terms. Any future recruits to the board then serve under the terms of the new policy.

Rotation of the Executive and Committee Chair Positions

Define the executive and committee chair terms, because board candidates are often recruited for their ability to serve in specific roles. You can define this as a procedure for planning, or spell it out in your bylaws. Whichever method you choose, make all prospective board members aware of the expectations.

For example, on one board, the board chair is expected to serve for a two-year term, followed by a one-year term as past chair.

On another board, the board chose to stagger the terms of executive roles, so that all experienced members do not leave at the same time.

You may also wish to specify prerequisites for holding executive and committee chair positions.

For example, the board chair must have previously served as vice-chair, or all members must serve as an ad hoc or standing committee chair, before moving to an Executive position. New members seldom serve on the Executive, unless they have considerable experience with the organization and / or the role.

Conditions for Remaining a Board Member in Good Standing

In your board policy, document the specific expectations of board members, as well as the action that is taken if they do not follow procedures. You may not be able to measure all of the expectations, but there are some that are important to measure.

For example, expectations for board members could include:

- The minimum number of meetings that a board member must attend
- Willingness to serve on one or more board committees
- Support of and participation in fund raising activities

Other more difficult measures can be included in a board member assessment at the middle or end of a term.

Removal and Resignation of Board Members

The bylaws must address resignation and removal from office.

A board member may resign by giving notice in writing, with a fairly short period of time required for the notice.

Removal is a difficult issue that requires special care. The membership elects a board member, usually at the AGM. If anyone else removes the board member, it means that person is overturning the will of the general meeting. A general meeting can remove a board member, but this can create division and animosity for a long time. Your bylaws should have some safeguards and stringent requirements for removing a board member.

Here are appropriate safeguards:

- If other board members can remove a board member, then there must be a special meeting of the board. There must be notice to all board members, including the board member being removed. There must be a special majority, such as three-fourths, to remove the board member.
- If the way to remove a board member is by a general meeting, then use the rules for giving notice for a motion. A simple majority is sufficient to remove a board member at a general meeting.
- Take special care if the board member represents a segment of the organization, such as the junior members. It may be appropriate to allow only that segment to remove that board member.

Filling a Midterm Vacancy on the Board

The bylaws must state how to fill a vacancy if a board member resigns, dies or is removed from office.

There are several possibilities:

- The rest of the board may appoint someone to serve the remainder of the term of the departing member.
- The rest of the board may appoint someone to serve the term until the next general meeting.
- The general meeting that removes a board member from office may appoint someone to serve the remainder of the term.
- The sector or local who appointed or elected the board member may appoint or select someone to serve the remainder of the term.
- The organization may leave the vacancy unfilled, providing that there is still a quorum for the board.

APPENDIX 2
Sample: Board Member Job Description

_____

(Name of Organization)

Job Description

Position:

Board Member

Authority and Responsibility

The Board of Directors is the legal authority of (Name of the Organization). As a member of the Board, a Board member acts in a position of trust for the community, and is responsible for the effective governance of the organization.

Requirements

Requirements of Board membership include:

1. Commitment to the work of the organization.
2. Knowledge and skills in one or more areas of Board governance: policy, finance, programs, personnel, and advocacy.
3. Willingness to serve on committees.
4. Attendance at monthly Board meetings.
5. Attendance at meetings of assigned committees.
6. Attendance at Annual General Meetings.
7. Attendance at membership meetings.
8. Support of special events.
9. Support of, and participation in, fund-raising events.
10. Financial support of (Name of the Organization).

Term

Board Members are elected by the membership at the Annual General Meeting. Board Members serve for a two-year term. Board Members may be released at the end of the elected term, by resigning, or according to (Name of the Organization)'s bylaws.

General Duties

A Board Member is fully informed on organizational matters, and participates in the Board's deliberations and decisions in matters of policy, finance, programs, personnel and advocacy.

The Board Member will:

1. Approve, where appropriate, policy; and other recommendations received from the Board, its standing committees and senior staff.
2. Monitor all Board policies.
3. Review the bylaws and policy manual, and recommend bylaw changes to the membership.
4. Review the Board's structure, approve changes, and prepare necessary bylaw amendments.
5. Participate in the development of (Name of the Organization)'s organizational plan and annual review.
6. Approve (Name of the Organization)'s budget.
7. Approve the hiring and release of the executive director, including the executive director's employment contract, based on the recommendation of the Personnel Committee.
8. Support and participate in evaluating the executive director.
9. Support and participate in fund raising activities.
10. Assist in developing and maintaining positive relations among the Board, committees, staff members, and community to enhance (Name of the Organization)'s mission.

Evaluation

A Board Member's performance is evaluated annually based on the performance of assigned Board requirements and duties.

Review Date and Approval Date

The Personnel Committee annually reviews the Board member job description.

Recommended changes are presented to the Board.

Approval Date: _____

Review Date: _____

Note: A Board Member job description for boards without management staff also needs to spell out management or operational duties expected of board members.

APPENDIX 3
Board Composition Analysis Tool:
Recruitment Profile Composition Review (Detailed)

This board composition analysis tool helps identify the skills, experience, contacts and values members of the board bring to the organization. It can be used to develop a profile of the board members, and to evaluate and identify their areas of influence. This tool is useful in identifying the types of people the board needs to effectively govern the organization.

1. Customize the grid for your board by listing indicators relevant to the work of your organization. Insert the names of current board members.

2. Use the grid to assess the qualities and indicators which describe each board member.

3. Identify which board members will be retiring or resigning and consider the attributes your board will be losing when they leave.

4. Remember, some desired qualities will likely change each year depending upon the needs of the organization.

Use the first grid as an example.

Use the second grid as a tool to customize for your organization.

Board Composition Review – Example

Qualities	Indicators	Current Board	Future Board
Supports the Values and Mission of the Organization	• Past or current member of organization • Demonstrated support of activities that further the mission		
Personal Qualities	• Positive and constructive • Able to work as part of a team • Future oriented • Willing to be involved in training and development		
Time and Financial Support	• Able to devote adequate time and energy • Willing to be involved in fund-raising and other resource development activities		
Area of Influence	• Corporate and business • Local media • Unions • Political • Funders • Government • Other not-for-profit organizations		

Board Composition Review – Example

Qualities	Indicators	Current Board	Future Board
Specific Skills	• Constitution/Bylaws • Policy development • Planning • Board recruitment • Grantsmanship • Annual giving • Planned giving • Capital giving • Other fundraising • Budgeting/Fiscal control • Contracting/ Negotiations • Advocacy/Lobbying • Public relations • Development/Training		
Board Committee	• Finance • Personnel • Nominating • Resource Development		
Gender	• Female • Male		
Age	• Over 65 • 51-65 • 36-50 • 21-35 • Under 21		
Experience	• Years on the Board • Years active in other roles within the organization		

Board Composition Review

Qualities	Indicators	Current Board	Future Board
Supports the values and mission of the Organization			
Personal Qualities			
Time and Financial Support			
Area of Influence			
Specific Skills			

Board Composition Review

Qualities	Indicators	Current Board	Future Board
Board Committee			
Age			
Experience			

GLOSSARY

AGM: An abbreviation for Annual General Meeting which is the yearly meeting of the organization's membership. New board members are elected at the annual general meeting.

Board Members: Individuals who are elected or appointed to govern the organization.

Chair: Used interchangeably with terms Chairperson, Chairman, Chairwoman, or President.

Executive Committee: Acts on behalf of the Board within the powers granted to it by the full Board. Might consist of the Chairperson, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. This group is sometimes referred to as the executive.

In boards without executive directors, or other paid management staff, this committee may manage the organization. This volunteer group is sometimes referred to as the Management Committee.

Ex Officio: By virtue of office. For example, the Chairperson of the board is an ex officio member of all board committees because of their position. They may choose to be involved in providing and/or seeking information.

Nominating Committee: A standing, or ongoing, committee of the board that recruits potential board members and presents the nominees to the board and to the membership. They may also organize the election at the annual general meeting. Other responsibilities could include orienting and training board members. This group is sometimes referred to as the Board Development Committee or the Leadership Committee.

Service Volunteers: Individuals who volunteer their time and skills to implement programs and services.

RESOURCES

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Tyler Scott, K. *Creating caring and capable boards: Reclaiming the passion of active trusteeship.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2000.

*The following organizations offer
free Canadian online resources
related to nonprofit board
governance and the themes
of this workbook.*

**The Board
Development Program**
www.albertabdp.ca

The Muttart Foundation
www.muttart.org

**The Resource Centre for
Voluntary Organizations (RCVO)
Grant MacEwan College**
www.rcvo.org

**The Centre for
Community Leadership
Niagara College**
http://www.communityleadership.
net/index.php/weblog/detail_news/
news_resources/47/

**Non-Profit Sector
Leadership Program
Dalhousie University**
http://www.dal.ca/
Continuing%20Education/
Continuing%20Management%20E
ducation/Non-Profit%20Sector%20
Leadership/Resources.php

**Board Development
United Way of Canada
– Centraide Canada**
www.boarddevelopment.org

**Voluntary Sector Knowledge
Network (VSKN)
Centre for Non Profit
Management
Victoria, BC**
http://www.vskn.ca/index.htm

INDEX

THE BOARD DEVELOPMENT WORKBOOK SERIES

Board Building – Recruiting and Developing Effective Board Members for Not-for-Profit Organizations

1. What made this workbook useful to you/your organization?

2. What would make the workbook more useful?

3. What changes has your organization made as a result of using this workbook?

4. What future topics would you like included in this workbook series?

5. Other comments (for further comments, please use the back of this page).

Optional Information:

Name: Title:

Organization

Address:

City: Postal Code:

Phone: Fax:

Please return this completed form to:

Board Development Program
Alberta Culture and Community Spirit
Board Development Program
907, 10405 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4R7
Phone: (780) 427-2001
FAX: (780) 427-4155

☐   Please indicate if you would like additional information about the Board Development Program and how it can enhance the effectiveness of your not-for-profit board, and create a better understanding of board member roles and responsibilities. Contact us about other workshop titles, workshops and our Board Development Newsletter.

Personal information collected on this form is protected under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The information is collected under the authority of the Government Organization Act for the purposes of administering the Board Development Program. If you have any comments or questions, please contact the Board Development Program at (780) 427-2001.