

Recruiting an Effective Board of Directors



Recruiting an Effective Board of Directors

An effective, high-functioning board of directors is at the heart of every successful mission-driven nonprofit organization. The existence of this board begins with recruitment. Recruiting an effective board of directors must be well planned, and above all else, strategic. Listed below are the steps to consider as recruitment begins.

1. **Development of a board profile.** The profile is an agreement among existing board members, staff, former board members and other stakeholders about what qualities should exist on the board of directors. These “qualities” might include geographic representation, age, gender, ethnicity, professional [marketing, finance, education, real estate fundraising, grant proposal writing] background and more. All candidates must exhibit passion for the mission of the organization.
2. **Completion of a board matrix.** Once there is an agreement of what qualities would constitute a strong board, an assessment is done of the existing board to determine what gaps exist.
3. **List of candidates.** From the gaps, the Board Development committee would begin gathering names of potential candidates for board membership. Names would be gathered from the same stakeholders who developed the profile. This might also include existing donors and funders. The list should be prioritized.
4. **Contact the highest priority candidates.** From the list of potential candidates, a member of the Board Development Committee, or the person supplying the name (if there is a personal relationship with the candidate) would call the candidate and ask for a meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to talk for about 30 minutes about the organization and the candidate possible involvement on the board.
5. **Meet with the candidate.** A staff person and a board member (preferably someone the candidate knows) meet with the candidate to briefly review the mission of the organization, the role of the board and to talk with the candidate about his or her interest in learning more and being a part of the organization.
6. **Application.** If the candidate expresses an interest in board membership, he or she is asked to complete an application. If the candidate declines interest in board membership, they are asked if they would like to serve on a committee, be invited to events, receive the newsletter, or some other way of becoming involved.
7. **Review of application and vote.** The Board Development committee reviews the application and if acceptable, brings the candidate to the board for a vote.
8. **Orientation.** Once approved, the new board member is invited to the facility for an orientation. The spouse is also invited, since the spouse’s approval will make the board members participation more meaningful. A tour of the facility is included along with introduction of staff. A board manual is presented with a brief review of what is included. The board member is encouraged to review the manual in detail prior to the first meeting.

Recruiting an Effective Board of Directors

Page 2

9. **Mentor.** An existing board member is assigned as a mentor to the new member for a period of 6 to 12 months.
10. **Introductions.** The new board member is introduced to the board of directors at the next meeting. A social time is scheduled either before or after the meeting to get to know the members on a personal basis.
11. **Follow up.** The mentor continues his or her duties as described, including, reviewing the responsibilities after 3 months and asking if the new member is comfortable with their participation and if they need any additional information to make their membership meaningful.
12. **Training.** All board members receive on-going training in board responsibilities as needed. The need for additional training is determined by the Board Development Committee.
13. **Evaluation.** The Board Development Committee conducts a periodic board member self-evaluation. The evaluation, completed by every board member, includes questions regarding performance of the Board and the performance of the responding board member. This evaluation takes place at least every three years or more frequently as determined by the Committee.

Indiana Nonprofit Resource Network provides affordable, accessible, and high quality training and custom consulting services such as board retreats. Visit <http://www.inrn.org> for more information.

You may freely copy and distribute this document, but please give us credit.

Share this document:

