

Proactive Board Recruiting

Are you reactive or proactive when it comes to recruiting new Board members?

Reactive recruiting can leave you with more problems than solutions. Unfortunately, reactive recruiting is the way that many Boards go about bringing new people in. They wait until it's time to have new members in place and then hastily recruit friends and neighbors just to fill seats or reach the magic Board member number set out in their bylaws. Being proactive and having a plan to recruit the right people with the skills and talent you need can help ensure your Board is successful.

Proactive Board recruiting starts with evaluating the skills needed on your Board. A simple matrix can offer a fresh look at what your organization needs in its top leadership. Do you need someone with banking or finance expertise? How about someone with marketing or communications skill? Do you need an attorney? Someone with human resource experience? How about someone who is comfortable fundraising? Across the top of the matrix, write the skills your organization needs. You'll probably have some needed skills that are unique to your organization.

Sample matrix

	Banker	Attorney	Marketer	Fundraiser	(Skill)	(Skill)	(Skill)	(Skill)

Now down the left side of the matrix, list your current Board members. Then, check the boxes so you can see which of the needed skills are already on your Board.

	Banker	Attorney	Marketer	Fundraiser	(Skill)	(Skill)	(Skill)	(Skill)
Bob	X							
Sue			X	X				
David	X							
Ann					X			



This exercise should show you where your holes are. In the sample matrix, we can see that the organization needs someone who is an attorney. Be careful not to fall into the trap of thinking you can get just any attorney! You need someone who has an interest in the work the organization is doing and who is willing to serve. If that person is already a donor of the organization, all the better! They are already demonstrating their commitment to the cause.

Another useful tool in proactive board recruiting is a Board member agreement. This simple document details the things that you expect your Board members to do, like attend meetings, participate in fundraising events, and making a financial contribution to the organization. Giving a potential Board member a 'heads up' about their responsibilities can help them make a better decision about joining your Board and get them off on the right foot to being a great Board member!

