

Consultant to Nonprofits

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Host a Board Recruitment Event

Having a board recruitment event gives Boards and Executive Directors a chance to work together on this important responsibility. Every Board needs to be active in bringing in new members. There are whole books written on recruitment. The focus for this article is a sample process for planning and hosting a successful board recruitment event.

What Are You Looking For?

Determine what skills you need to develop on the Board. This is an analysis specific to your organization. If you have three lawyers you don't need another one. Does your Board need someone with financial management, marketing, building management, human resources or other skills? Did I forget fundraising? No I didn't forget it. People with fundraising skills are either already on a Board that they are very committed too or they are burnt out. If you know someone who isn't in one of these categories and is a skilled fundraiser, roll out the red carpet. Otherwise plan on developing fundraising skill for all of your Board members.

Develop a Board member job description. It should define competencies and basic responsibilities and include additional ones that will make boards effective in the 21st century. Include participate in and chair a committee, make a personal financial commitment and participate in the organization's events and fundraising. Add desired characteristics. ALL Board members should identify people to invite to the event and the guests should have skills and characteristics in the job description.

The Event Plan

Plan your event carefully. Schedule the event for after work. Choose as interesting a venue as possible. The venue should be within your budget and be an attractive setting for hosting potential members. Do you have access to a local arts center, small museum, college campus, country club or member's home that will work for your program? Think outside the box to find a venue that will be inviting. Start with "light refreshment and mingling." A PowerPoint slide show running silently in the background with pictures highlighting your programs can provide conversation starters. As people are eating dinner make your pitch. Be sure that Board members and staff are dispersed among all the tables.

The Pitch – ED & Board Member

The ED should talk about the programs and his/her vision for the future of the organization. Any big plans in the works should be highlighted. The basic rule to remember: People are interested in being part of a success and they are not interested in being part of a failure. It is much better to make your case based on how good your organization is than to appear like you are in desperate need of help. Keep your program upbeat !

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Bits and Pieces

Looking for a Grant Idea?

The Starbucks Foundation funds literacy programs for youth, ages 6-18. The foundation invites proposals from organizations working with underserved youth in the area of reading, writing and creative/media arts. Grants are in the \$5000 - \$20000 range.

Besides social services agencies, those of you working with creative and media arts, small museums and historic houses may want to take a detailed look at the grant information on this one. It may be a hidden gem for you.
<http://www.starbucks.com/aboutus/grantinfo.asp>

Upcoming Conferences

Technology in the Arts
October 20-21, 2006
Pittsburgh, PA
www.technologyinthearts.org

AFP-NJ Chapter 2006
Conference on Philanthropy
November 3, 2006
Whippany, NJ
www.afp-nj.org

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<http://marionconwaynonprofitconsultant.blogspot.com>

The Board Member's presentation outline may include:

Roles and Responsibilities of the Board

Responsibilities of Individual Board members

What You Are Looking for in New Board members

Skills being sought - Finance, Marketing, Legal, Financial

Qualities of Board Members - Passion for the mission, team player, commitment to community

Interactive Activity

Pass out large sheets of construction paper. Ask each person to draw a picture that represents their association with the mission of the organization or what they could envision it being if they are a guest. Have everyone share their picture with people at their table. The facilitator can ask volunteers at each table to share with the whole group. This activity helps wind the evening down on a positive tone still focused on the mission of your organization.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

Ask each guest to fill out an "Interest Form" rather than an application. Explain that the ED and a Board Member will follow-up with a tour of your facilities or invitation to one of the organization's events.

Closing the Deal

Once you have completed the post recruitment visit, it is time for the close. Either the ED or Board member should now ask the invitee to join the Board and feel comfortable about making a sales pitch. If the person has stayed with you up to this point you should be able to close the deal. Now's the time for the application.

Summary

This is only one suggestion for a recruitment plan. There really is no one size fits all that works for all organizations. Each organization has a different set of parameters to deal with when recruiting board members. It is worth it to make the investment of upfront analysis and planned recruiting to attract the type of board members you need.

Think it through and Good Luck!

Marion

Board Recruitment Resources

Books

Board Recruitment and Orientation: A Step by Step Common Sense Guide
by Hildy Gottlieb

Called to Serve: Creating and Nurturing the Effective Volunteer Board
by Max Dupree

Recommended Websites

Boardsource.org

CharityChannel.com
-Nonprofit Boards and Governance Review

Workshops Offered by Marion Conway

Upcoming workshops include:

- The Nonprofit Board - Responsibilities, Leadership and Emerging Trends for the 21st Century September 20
- Technology Planning and Funding for Nonprofits September 26
- Benchmarking for Nonprofits October 4
- November 5

Workshops or consulting on these subjects is also available.

- Strategic Planning
- Planning a Board Retreat
- Visionary Leadership
- The Search for an Executive Director