

QUESTIONS BOARD MEMBERS OF ASSOCIATIONS SHOULD ASK WHEN CONSIDERING RECRUITMENT OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS.

Many associations are not only governed by their boards of directors, but are also actively run by those boards too. There may be a part-time administrator to support the board, but the heavy duty work of recruiting members, organizing programs and ensuring communications, is done by the board members. The Board role in associations can be very “shirt sleeves” and not at all “advise, counsel, and oversight.”

What questions should Board members ask themselves when recruiting Association Board members?

Do We Have the Right Mix of “Trophy” Directors and “Hard Workers?” In an ideal world every board member would bring both. In the real world, however, big names are not likely to have the time to devote to day-today board tasks. But they provide important external credibility. You might want to create a clear mix of esteemed names and reliable recruits. The culture of the Board needs to stress that both times of skills are of value on the Board.

Do We Have a Communicatins Guru on the Board? Your events may be top-notch and your programming committee is setting new attendance records. But the newsletter hasn’t gone out in a while and the awards committee is still sitting on a bunch of plaques. If accomplishments are not communicated clearly, members have a right to ask, “why bother?” Seek out one board member who has career experience managing communications programs.

Have expectations been clarified in writing? If board members are expected to attend monthly board meetings, it’s probably a good idea to let them know up front. It is a great compliment to be invited to sit on the board of a professional organization. Such a great compliment that the invitee may forget to ask what is required. And the board is so delighted to have an engaged candidate that they forget to explain what is expected. Make sure you explain the quid pro quo up front so neither party is disappointed.

Are we engaged in a continuous process of talent identification for the Board? It is very easy to postpone outreach for new directors until the month before the outgoing directors’ term expires. Resist that urge. Building relationships today will help provide a much large pool for the future. In turn a much larger pool will allow for selection based on a mix of candidates, who will meet the needs and come onto the board with the appropriate expectations.

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