

**Social Enterprise Associates**  
**Tip Sheet #3**

*This document provides non-profit organizations and its leaders with tips and logistical steps to successfully recruit board members & professional volunteers, and identifies different types of board members for organizations to best find suitable candidates.*

# NGO Board Member & Professional Volunteer Recruitment

## Finding suitable human resources for your good causes

### Tips for Recruiters

Finding new board members or professional volunteers can be a challenge. Here are some suggestions to assist your organization in being more successful with recruitment.

#### **DO:**

- Take seriously your responsibility to ensure the future of leadership of your organization
- Make recruitment a regular, on-going activity of the whole board
- Seek counsel and involvement of your key development staff in all recruitment
- Be frank, honest, and positive about the challenges facing the organization
- Establish and adhere to board recruitment standards and selection criteria
- Treat each board candidate as if he/she is a major gift donor. You'll never go wrong!
- Leave yourself & candidate a gracious "out"
- Document recruitment activity; make it part of donor or prospect file

#### **DON'T:**

- Wait until a crisis drives recruitment
- Settle for less than who you really need and want
- Misrepresent or sweep organizational challenges under the rug: they may be just the things to "hook" a board candidate
- Say yes to just anybody
- Ask the candidate prematurely
- Recruit outside the board for officer positions!

#### **Remember:**

- Do your due diligence, check references and check background. A bad decision or someone who doesn't fit may be worse than no one at all
- People are rational actors – they do things for a reason. Find out why they are interested
- Know your value proposition – what you offer people, your 'special sauce'
- Follow the Golden Rule: treat people how you want to be treated. Respect their time
- Thank them

## Board & Professional Volunteer Recruitment (cont'd)

### Steps to Success

Ensure board policies are in place, up-to- date, and you have insurance. Review annually

1. **Board Self Evaluation:** ensure board conducts a self-evaluation and knows its strengths
2. **Gap Analysis:** identify the gaps and who you want to recruit. What type or profile?
3. **Develop A Prospect List:** specific names of people or organizations you want represented
4. **Identify Existing Relationships:** chart who you know and relationships you already have
5. **Establish Relationship Web:** if existing relationship don't generate who you need, draw a web to see how you can connect personally to your Prospect List
6. **Follow a Plan:** write out a recruitment plan with timeline, who does what, and how. Stick to it. Review it at every board meeting (and hopefully more often than that).

### What Type of People Do You Need on Your Board?

Different boards need different types of people. Have you done an inventory of who is on your board and who you need? Key factors include age of the organization, mission of the organization, existing personnel, and missing skills.

#### Activist

- Usually attracted to and most effective in a new organization
- A self starter, risk taker, and free thinker
- Willingly devotes high energy and many volunteer hours
- Personally invested in the mission
- Independent - may have little tolerance for rules, policies, and processes
- Likes a dynamic leader

#### Client

- Knows how the organization operates and what it does
- Many boards do not have the members they serve on their board
- Might be self-conscious, quite and deter to E.D. or others on opinions

#### Donor / Funder

- Typically already supporting organization financially
- Often cares about the mission, the budget, how they are linked and how money is spent
- Willing to do so much, but no more

#### Elected Official / Community Leader

- Comes to the board with own mission and constituency
- May have an agenda that is open to lobbying by special interests
- Relationships are important. May seek quid pro quo
- Visibly increases energy level when they want to be re-elected or has an issue in play

#### Emeritus

- Usually attracted to and most effective in an established organization
- Invests his or her name or representation in the organization
- Not willing to devote much time; doesn't bother with rules and reports; much more interested in tone, vision, and strategy
- Often a forward thinker and big picture thinking
- Founders may be part of this group (and may have strong personal agenda)

#### Professional

- Includes lawyers, CPAs, business people, etc.
- Usually attracted to and most effective in a mature organization
- Demands accountability, dependability, and generally accepted business practices
- Results oriented; less sympathetic to surprises/informality

#### Volunteer

- Has history with organization and relationships with staff and potential clients
- May find board involvement not as satisfying as volunteering
- May have difficulty moving from operations level to policy level involvement
- Prefers specific tasks to long term responsibilities