

Recruitment and Strengthening of Boards

Finding the right people to be on our Boards is important. Making our Boards stronger is even more important. This session will cover who to look for and where to look, and more importantly it will explore how to keep our Boards strong so that they can move forward with achieving their mission and improving our camps.

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Who to look for:

Who do you want to sit on your Board of Directors? Finding the right people to sit on a Board of Directors can be one of the most challenging tasks for a small not-for-profit organization. Is your organization stuck in the – “Warm body – check; pulse – check. Come on in, we’ll let you join our Board” mentality? This is a trend that we need to move away from if we want to insure that our organizations are to remain strong and vibrant.

Before you look for new board members make sure that you have your organization’s mission clearly defined. We need to know our mission so that we can share it with potential board members.

Points to ponder in our search (this is a good time to take notes on the discussion) taken from Help 4 Non-Profits:

- What are you looking for?
- How much money do you budget to recruit new board members?
- Do you have Board Development Committee?
- Recruit a Pool of Candidates for each seat you have open.
- How do we recruit prospects? Two Scenario’s
- Have an application process – get to know them as they get to know you.
- What to do when they are on Board...

How to Keep Our Boards Strong:

Once we have board members on board (pardon the pun...) we need to make sure that the board remains strong and stays the course that they have set out. Whose job is it to ensure that Board members are relatively happy? This would fall onto the Chair of the Board. Since many not-for-profit organizations, and especially summer camps, have a high turn over rate in the operational staff, the board needs to self monitor if that is the case. The Chair of the Board needs to take on the role of ensuring the mood of the board.

What are concrete things that we can do to help keep our boards strong? There is no easy solution. The best information that I have found is in an article in the Community Toolbox from the University of Kansas. Here are the 12 things they outline for strengthening and maintaining a Board of Directors:

- *Develop a system to assist Board members in understanding the Board and their roles on it.*
- *Design a process for welcoming, training, and mentoring new members.*
- *Maintain a healthy, effective relationship with paid staff.*
- *Hold effective meetings.*
- *Maintain a sensible work level for Board members.*
- *Develop a policy for dealing with urgent (and not so urgent) matters between meetings.*
- *Define terms of membership.*
- *Be aware of state and national laws that will affect the Board and the organization.*
- *Develop and maintain a conflict-of-interest policy.*
- *Organize an annual retreat.*
- *Have regular (if infrequent) formal evaluations.*
- *Celebrate your accomplishments!*

Resources:

From Charity Village (<http://www.charityvillage.com>)

A Ten-Step Checklist for Board Recruitment

<http://www.charityvillage.com/cv/research/rbod10.html>

From Help 4 Non-Profits (<http://www.help4nonprofits.com>)

Recruiting for Board Members – Process? What Process?

http://www.help4nonprofits.com/NP_Bd_Recruit_Article.htm

From Community Tool Box (<http://ctb.ku.edu/en>)

Maintaining a Board of Directors

http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/sub_section_main_1097.htm