

Recruiting Board Members

How does board recruitment happen for your ministry? Your bylaws probably require the election of board members at the annual meeting. But the process of identifying potential board members should start many months—even years—earlier.

Maintain a list of potential board members, noting their particular qualifications. Then, as members rotate off your board, you have a list of potential people to fill the slots.

Involve potential board members in the organization's volunteer activities—perhaps service on an advisory board. After observing their gifts and abilities in these roles, select those to be groomed for board membership.

Develop a recruitment packet to give potential board members. The packet might include your bylaws, most recent audit report, videos, and board member expectations.

Decide who should mentor prospective board members. This responsibility might be carried out by certain board members.

Here are some key board recruitment strategies:

- **Start with the qualifications.** Determine the experience, expertise, talents, and gifts needed for your board members. Include fund-raising or personal donation expectations, if applicable. Provide written expectations.

- **Clarify expectations of board members.** Be sure prospective board members are very clear about what your ministry expects of them.

- **Expect board members to bring wisdom.** Their wisdom may include business experience in finance or management or experience with other ministry boards. It is often helpful if they have ties to the constituencies that your ministry serves.

- **Strive for constituency representation.** Board members should be representative of the ministry's constituencies in

“Decide who should mentor prospective board members.”

terms of race, income level, geographic location, sex, and other constituency characteristics.

- **Look for board members who will actively participate in board meetings.** Board attendance is important but members must be willing to positively express themselves during board deliberations. This is the way members share their wisdom.

- **Avoid conditional board members.** Generally, board members should all accept the same responsibilities. Think

twice when prospective board members want to attach conditions to their membership.

- **Exercise care when recruiting “name” board members.** Recruiting a “name” board member is fine if the individual commits to attend board meetings and participate equally with other board members.
- **Avoid selecting “token” board members.** Be sure that board members qualify on their own merits. If an individual does not meet the established member qualifications, the individual should not be selected on the basis of tokenism.
- **Select board members who are committed to your mission.** Commitment to your specific mission and willingness to promote your ministry are vital in those who will serve as agents for your ministry. 

Reprinted from
FOCUS on Accountability