

The Board Bucket

Chapter 14

Mastering the Management Buckets

20 Critical Competencies for Leading Your Business or Nonprofit, by John Pearson



A resource to supplement the materials in the
ECFA Governance Toolbox Series No. 1: Recruiting Board Members
Leveraging the 4 Phases of Board Recruitment
Cultivation ► Recruitment ► Orientation ► Engagement
www.ecfa.org/Content/Governance-Toolbox-Series-1

The Board Bucket Core Competency:

“We believe that board members must sense God’s call to serve on the board of directors. We invest time in cultivating, recruiting, orienting and engaging board members in their strategic role as stewards of our organization. The first step in organizational sustainability is to inspire board members to be highly committed and generous partners in ministry.”

Mastering the Management Buckets: 20 Critical Competencies for Leading Your Business or Nonprofit
The Board Bucket (Chapter 14, pages 191-200) www.ManagementBuckets.com

The 4 Phases of Board Recruitment & Engagement

If you don’t plan to engage board members—don’t waste your time recruiting them!

- ☐ 1. Cultivation
- ☐ 2. Recruitment
- ☐ 3. Orientation
- ☐ 4. Engagement

7 Steps for Recruiting Board Members

Excerpted, by permission, from “The Board Bucket” chapter of *Mastering the Management Buckets: 20 Critical Competencies for Leading Your Business or Nonprofit*, by John Pearson (Regal Books, 2008)
www.ManagementBuckets.com



- ❶ **RECRUIT** for passion – not position.
- ❷ **PRAY** before prospecting.
- ❸ **DATE** before proposing!
- ❹ **INSPIRE** your prospect to give generously.
- ❺ **PROPOSE** marriage.
- ❻ **CONTINUE** dating!
- ❼ **LEAVE** a legacy.

If you work in a large for-profit company, you may not have relationships or influence with your corporate board. But sometime in your career, you'll likely be invited to serve on a church or nonprofit board. This chapter on THE BOARD BUCKET, the first of seven buckets in the CORPORATE arena, is written both for church and nonprofit leaders and their current and prospective board members.

Peter Drucker said that all boards have one thing in common—they do not function! That may be your experience too. So, while the content of this bucket is focused on the nonprofit world, you'll find excellent resources at the end of this chapter that will be helpful for both for-profit and nonprofit organizations.

* * *

One day while Jesus was mentoring his disciples, he smiled (tongue-in-cheek) and said, “Show me the money!”

Actually, he said, “Show me your heart.” Well...in reality, he said “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:21 NIV)

As we discussed in THE DONOR BUCKET, this is one of the most profound stewardship principles in Scripture, yet it is rarely practiced where it matters most—with board members of churches and nonprofit Christian organizations.

These arresting words from Jesus would look good on a t-shirt. President Bill Clinton should have said it this way, “It’s the heart, stupid!”

The heart issue is the foundational building block for the four stages of building a board: cultivation, recruitment, orientation and engagement.

While there are numerous balls in THE BOARD BUCKET, there are six key balls—best practices—for recruiting exceptional board members in Christian

organizations and churches. It's the first step toward effectiveness and if you ignore or short-cut any of these six steps, you'll pay for it sooner or later. At the end of this chapter, you'll also find a brief list of topics and board resources, if you want to go deeper into this bucket. But first things first. Let's get the right board members on the bus.

1 BALL #1:

Recruit for Passion—Not Position.

Invite the already convinced zealots!

Recruit board members for their passion—not their position. Don't swallow the board myth that says you need a CPA, an attorney, a pastor and a fundraiser on your board. People in those positions make great volunteers, but might be less-than-loyal, uncommitted board members.

Instead, recruit highly committed people, with board governance skills, who are zealots for your ministry—and have already demonstrated multiple times their high passion for your mission.

If you need a volunteer, recruit a volunteer. If you need a board member, recruit a board member.

2 BALL #2:

Pray Before Prospecting

Why settle for second best?

Right now—before you finish this chapter—begin your *Top 50 Prospects Prayer List*. Effective CEOs, senior pastors, and development officers know that it takes up to 36 months to bring exceptional board prospects into the board circle.

Jim Brown, author of *The Imperfect Board Member*, writes, "The problem is, most board cultures are developed by default, not by design."

Change that! The Lord wants you to have an extraordinary board. Imagine the potential when you energize exceptional board members who give spiritual oversight and excellent governance to your God-given mission.

Why settle for second best? Why recruit untested, uncommitted good candidates when—with prayer and hard work—the Lord could bless you with a sterling board team?

Recruit With Prayerful Intentionality and Board-Approved Criteria!

The 6 D's:	HANK	JOAN
1) Discerning Decision-Maker: Policy, Financial, Hire/Fire CEO	✓	✓
2) Demonstrated passion for the mission	✓	✓
3) Documented team player	✓	✓
4) Diligent and faithful participant	✓	✓
5) Doer (walks the talk)	✓	✓
6) Donor (#1, #2 or #3 giving priority)	NO	✓

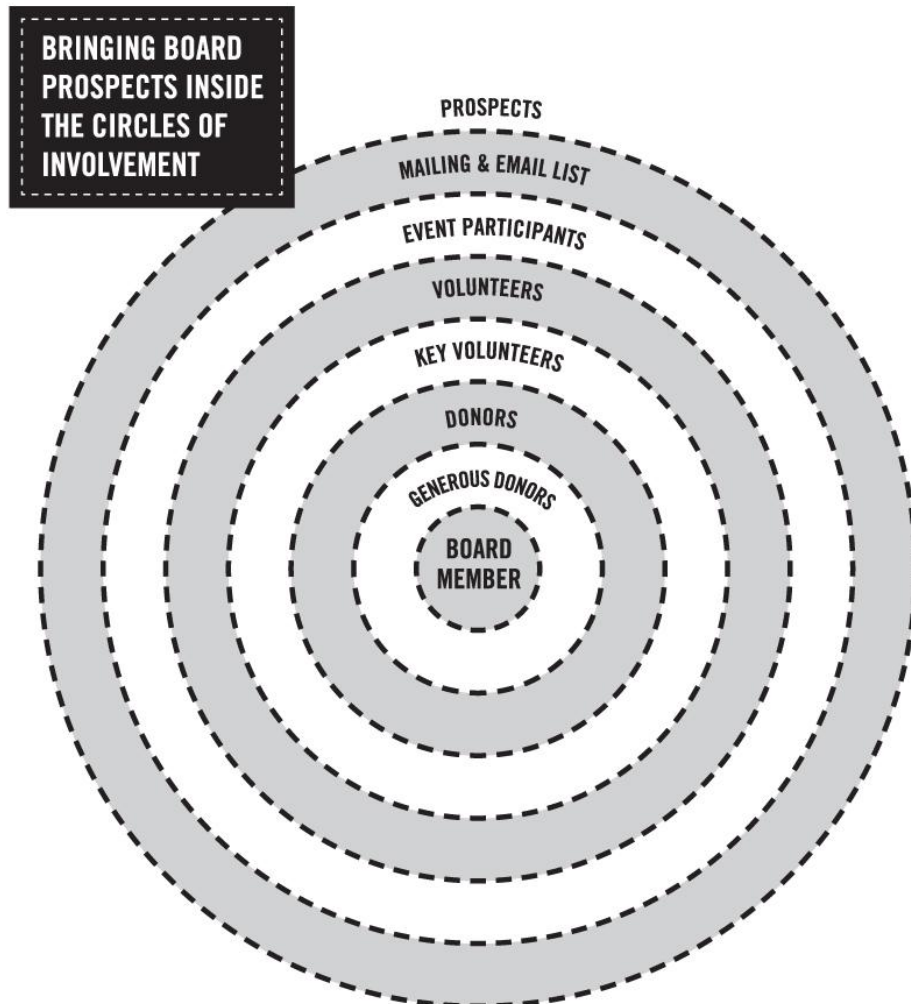
3 BALL #3:

Date Before Proposing!

Bring board prospects inside the circle of involvement.

Thoughtful adults don't propose marriage on the first date. Effective CEOs don't propose board service to "B List" prospects. Think of this as a 36-month dating experience. But don't mention marriage (board service) up front.

As you pray through the process, slowly bring the prospect inside the circles of involvement. Today, he or she may be unfamiliar with your ministry, so add them to your mailing list and invite them to an event. Test their interest with a volunteer role. Just like in dating, continue to evaluate over many months if your prospect demonstrates growing interest, and ultimately passion, for your important mission.



If Cliff turns out to be a lousy volunteer, drop him! You've saved yourself from marrying a lousy board member. If Susan gives 110 percent and recruits friends and families beyond expectation—you've got a live one! Keep dating!

4 BALL #4:

Inspire Your Prospect to Give Generously

Model and teach The Treasure Principle.

When you're sharing these principles with other team members and board members, take out Ball #1 in THE DONOR BUCKET and review the principles of generous giving (your heart follows your money). Talk about the biblical values in Randy Alcorn's book, *The Treasure Principle*. The idea of extravagant generosity is not just for board recruitment. It is not a fundraising gimmick. It is a core value for the fully devoted follower of Christ. Don't settle for second best when you're "dating" a board prospect.

Recruit intentionally, with generosity in mind, and you'll breathe new life into your ministry. As you "date" board prospects, challenge them spiritually to become generous givers to your mission. Explain why you need a team of highly committed donors who demonstrate through their giving where their hearts are.

Without waving the carrot of board service (you haven't proposed yet), inspire your prospect (and the spouse, if the person is married) with the opportunity to make your ministry one of their top three annual giving priorities. That's the definition of a generous giver for your ministry.

If a prospect says no, that's OK. You've discovered where his or her heart is—before the wedding. (He or she may already be highly committed, even a generous giver, to two or three other ministries.) That's the good news—you took the temperature on their passion before you popped the question.

Here's the bad news—there are thousands of nonprofit CEOs that have "married" board members way too soon—and the commitment, the passion, the giving and the heart never followed. Save yourself the agony and do it right by starting your prospect prayer list today.

MEMO TO CEOs! If your nonprofit board of directors meets monthly, your "board" meeting may feel more like a "staff" meeting. Jim Brown says that "the best boards keep their noses in the business and their fingers out!" Frequent board meetings exacerbate the temptation for board members to become too hands-on and the appropriate line between board and staff roles then becomes fuzzy.

While every board culture is unique, many of the most effective nonprofit boards meet quarterly for eight to 12 hours. Some board meetings include an overnight stay with spouses invited for the evening meal. Then telephone conference calls are scheduled in between quarterly meetings, if needed.

5 BALL #5:

Propose Marriage

Once your prospects have moved into the generous giving circle, then it's time to invite them onto the board.

You'll know when it's time to propose marriage (board service). The prospect will have already demonstrated a high level of commitment, all the time moving towards the center of the involvement circle. They will meet all of the previously established board criteria. Plus, the Lord will confirm it to you and your nominating committee.

But again, here's a reminder. Never, never, never invite anyone to serve on your board who is not already a generous giver to your ministry. In my consulting work, I've found I can never say this too many times.

The board candidate does not need to be wealthy—just generous. Generally that means that during this person's term of service on the board, he or she will make your ministry their first, second or third highest annual giving priority. No exceptions. Remember, Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Where this core value is practiced, board members attest to the remarkable culture change that happens on the board. Passionate, highly committed board members—who follow their money with their heart—become incredible zealots for your mission. Wow!

So when you have prospects that are highly committed to your church or ministry—and meet all the board criteria—pop the question and invite them to serve on your board.

Give them a full ministry briefing, in advance of asking for their decision. Many organizations provide prospects with a *Board Nominee Orientation Notebook*, filled with helpful background information (staff salaries, board minutes, financials—soup to nuts) so the nominee can make an informed and prayerful decision about board service.

Moving Board Donors to Generous Givers

Do you have people on your board today who are not generous givers? Your CEO and/or board chair should plan a one-on-one appointment with each board member. Invite each person to lunch or dinner and mentor your board member on what Jesus taught about giving and why a totally committed board member is so critical. Then ask your board members for their gifts and their hearts.



Bonus Worksheet: The Generous Giving Continuum

☒ Check the box that best represents your current board policy on board member giving—and where you'd like it to be in 12 months:

The Generous Giving Continuum	1 We do not believe giving ought to be a criteria for board service.	2 It's the elephant on the table. Our board needs to talk about it—and make a policy decision.	3 We discussed this and have decided NOT to make a board policy on giving.	4 By policy, all board members must be donors of record, but not necessarily at the Top-3 level.	5 By policy, all board members must prioritize their giving to our ministry at the Top-3 level.
Our board's current policy is:					
In 12 months, I'd like to see our policy be:					

**“FOR WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS,
THERE YOUR HEART WILL BE ALSO.”**

MATTHEW 6:21 NIV

6 BALL #6:**Continue Dating!**

Help your board members hone their board governance competencies.

The wedding (board member installation) is only the beginning. Ensure that all board members hone their board competencies regularly. Most will bring a diversity of expectations into your board room. They'll also bring the delightful dysfunctional baggage they've picked up from other board experiences.

Use your board meetings, your conference calls, your mailings and at least one board retreat each year to help members become life-long learners on board best practices. Introduce them to board governance workshops, books, articles, websites and CDs. Invite resource people (consultants, other CEOs, professors, etc.) to train, motivate and inspire your board team. Bless your board members and they'll be a blessing to your ministry!

7 BONUS BALL #7:

Leave a Legacy
Grow a great board!

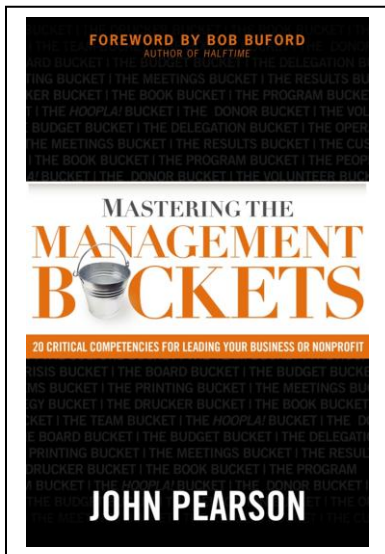
My friend and consulting colleague, Bob Andringa, says that one of the greatest legacies a CEO can leave to an organization is a great board. He should know. As managing partner of The Andringa Group (TheAndringaGroup.com) and former president of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities, Bob has consulted with more than 200 boards over the years. When he speaks or writes books on board governance, nonprofit leaders listen!

A Chinese proverb says that if you want one year of prosperity, grow grain. If you want 10 years of prosperity, grow trees. If you want 100 years of prosperity, grow people.

At this point in your management buckets journey, you may be on overload or just slightly overwhelmed with the CAUSE, COMMUNITY and CORPORATION buckets. You may have a growing list of “I know what I don’t know.” Don’t despair. When you perfect the core competencies in the CORPORATION buckets, you then have the infrastructure for sustainability. Don’t neglect THE BOARD BUCKET.

Another Chinese proverb reads, “The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second best time, is today.” Start growing a great board today.

Notes:



Bucket Bottom Line

When you are effective in THE BOARD BUCKET, it creates a remarkable ripple effect in THE DONOR BUCKET, THE RESULTS BUCKET, and THE VOLUNTEER BUCKET (to name a few). However, when you have low commitment and low passion among board members – and lackluster giving versus extravagant generosity – you will never fully recover and gain organizational momentum until you fix the problems in THE BOARD BUCKET.

What is God’s vision for your board recruitment strategy?

Engage Your Board at Every Meeting With More Governance Help and Resources!

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