



EVALUATE BOARD CANDIDATES

Now that you have a list of prospects, you should evaluate how well each one fits your profiles. We have developed a [prospect information sheet](#) to help you evaluate and narrow down the list of candidates.

After narrowing your list, you need to speak with each candidate to determine whether there is a *mutual* fit. Is the candidate interested in serving on your board? This is a prospect's opportunity to learn about the organization and the board and what is expected of board members. It also gives current board members a chance to gauge a prospect's interest and determine whether he or she is right for service on your board at this time.

If you are interviewing a number of potential candidates, you may want to use a rating sheet outlining key issues to compare candidate qualifications and help you develop the final slate. We have developed a [sample candidate rating form](#).

As a final step before formally nominating candidates for the board, it is wise for the board chair, the chair of the governance committee, and/or the chief executive to meet with the candidates. Here are important things to cover:

- Present them with a board member job description and the letter of agreement that new board members are asked to sign and discuss any specific expectations, such as levels of financial contribution and involvement in fundraising or providing professional advice related to board decisions.
- Ensure that they know how often the board meets and what is expected concerning meeting attendance and committee work. Give them a general sense of how much time will be required and provide them with a schedule of board and committee meetings.
- Ask potential nominees about the other boards on which they serve and whether they'd be overcommitted if they joined another board.
- Beware of certain red flags, including candidates who
 - are trying to pad a resume or enhance their position in the community without actually expecting to do much work or who expect to be deferred to because of their celebrity status
 - bring a personal agenda to the board, such as the music lover bent on making the orchestra play more pop music, the health center patient who is intent on fixing the clinic's scheduling problems, or the political activist committed to changing the organization's approach and values
- Assuming the interview revealed no negative or worrisome information, before concluding, ask potential candidates if they would be willing to serve if nominated and elected. If a candidate expresses willingness to serve, let the candidate know when the election is expected to take place and how he or she will be notified of the outcome.

After you have evaluated every candidate, develop a list from which you would like to recommend one or more for nomination to the board.

You also should keep in touch with exciting prospects who will not be presented for nomination at this point — maybe they were too busy or didn't meet the current needs, but they could be valuable board members in the future. Consider asking them to serve on a [committee](#) or on your [advisory council](#). These opportunities will show the prospects that you value their input and will keep them connected to the organization until the time is right for them to be presented for nomination as board members.

Tools and tips to help you navigate the recruitment process.

“Having support from LinkedIn so we can find professionals to help pro-bono and volunteers for our board of directors is invaluable to our continuance. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!”

— 2014 Board Recruitment Center Survey Respondent

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Additional Resources

For more information about strategic board recruitment, check out these additional resources:

Publications

- *Diversity in Action: A BoardSource Toolkit (PDF)*
- *New Board Member Collection*
- *The Board Building Cycle: Nine Steps to Finding, Recruiting, and Engaging Nonprofit Board Members, Second Edition*
- *The Nonprofit Board Answer Book: A Practical Guide for Board Members and Chief Executives, Third Edition*
- *The Nonprofit Policy Sampler, Third Edition*
- *Recruiting a Stronger Board: A BoardSource Toolkit (PDF)*

Ready for the next step?

Now that you have evaluated all of your candidates and developed a final slate, it's time to begin [the nomination process](#).

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