

# BOARD MEMBER RECRUITMENT

Just like building a championship sports team, building an effective board does not happen overnight and is an ongoing process. However, if done correctly, it can ensure the success, longevity and viability of an organization. When recruiting new board members, it is vital to envision and identify the proper mix of competencies, demographics, experience and influence to form a cohesive team and benefit your hospital.

Elected and appointed boards face additional challenges: it is not always easy encouraging potential leaders to run or seek appointment. Your hospital may have strategic partnerships with local organizations who can help you identify qualified candidates in your community.

To execute a successful recruitment program in your hospital, the following process is recommended:



## ASSESS

Take time to conduct thorough assessment of your board's composition to identify gaps and needs. Do not simply look around the room! Utilize a Board Compositional Matrix to engage your board in a thoughtful discussion, which may include the following questions:

- Whose voice are we missing in the board room?
- Do we accurately represent the population we serve?
- What skills, demographics and expertise would benefit our organization?

## PLAN

Once governance needs are identified, develop a plan with agreed upon goals and delineate action steps among your board or responsible committee. This may include:

- Identifying potential candidates through the hospital's or system's councils and committees
- Participating in community activities or events that target your desired candidates
- Engaging with local community groups and professional associations

## IMPLEMENTATION

Assessing and planning are certainly key steps in the process. Both steps will ensure success for the most important step – implementation. This consists of ensuring board and staff are knowledgeable about the organization as they meet with potential candidates, creating connections in the community, using those connections to establish a leadership pipeline and actively recruiting a new board member.

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EDUCATE STAKEHOLDERS



CREATE CONNECTIONS



DEVELOP A LEADERSHIP PIPELINE



RECRUIT



**Educate Board Members and Staff** – Equip your trustees and key staff with talking points about your organization, community and service area. Ensure they have a copy of your board member job description so they can share information about a trustee’s roles and responsibilities.

**Create Connections** - Seek board member candidates through your hospital’s existing network of trustees, staff and physicians, as well as community-based activities. Consider connections through local philanthropic organizations, volunteer centers and religious groups. Your organization may need to look outside of already-established networks; if so, spread the responsibility of developing connections equally without making assumptions about an individual’s networks.

**Develop a Leadership Pipeline** - Recruiting new members can be difficult, given the significant time commitment of board service and the steep learning curve in health care. Rather than asking a potential candidate to commit to full board service, invite them to serve on a committee, council or task force that meets quarterly. This is a great way to familiarize and engage them with your organization without the commitment board meetings.

**Recruit** - Your hospital’s nominating committee or governance committee will be charged with recruiting new board members. Once the official invitation has been approved, offered and accepted, congratulations! Now, your board must be prepared with a new board member orientation to ensure your newest recruit is welcomed and informed appropriately to your hospital or health system.

## EVALUATION

As with all good processes and plans, an evaluation at set intervals closes the feedback loop and provide an opportunity for learning and improvement.

Evaluate your recruitment process with an honest and transparent discussion. Some questions to help get the conversation started may include:

- Did we meet our goals and objectives? If so, what was helpful? If not, where did we fall short?
- Did we develop new connections?
- Did we learn more about our community?
- Do we have a leadership pipeline in place?
- How can we better engage with community members?

## CREATING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Your legacy as a trustee carries on well beyond your board service. Lead your hospital into the future by fostering relationships and developing deep community ties – and help grow your hospital’s network of mission-minded candidates. By building, updating and evaluating recruitment processes, hospitals and health systems will be better equipped to navigate the complexities of health care and sustain success for the organization.